



## Review Article

## Phenomenology Qualitative Research Inquiry: A Review Paper

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## ABSTRACT

Phenomenology is the qualitative research inquiry that explores the lived experiences of the individual. This paper discusses phenomenology as a qualitative research methodology and its roots, characteristics, and steps to conduct the study. The relevant literature was searched using the database library, including PubMed, Google Scholar, PakMediNet, Medline, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature CINAHL. Literature was searched using keywords including phenomenology, qualitative inquiry, roots of phenomenology, steps of phenomenology, and characters of phenomenology. The essential essence of phenomenology is to understand the lived experiences of individuals. The participants truly share the lived experiences which they witnessed. It is concluded that phenomenology is a qualitative inquiry that addresses the real-life experiences of individuals.

## INTRODUCTION

Phenomenology is the method of inquiry of interpretive paradigm. It is also best known as the science of the essence of consciousness and perception, which describes the idea and meaning of the lived experience of individuals [1]. Moreover, the core element of phenomenology is to understand phenomena like caring, healing, and wholeness as witnessed by a specific person who has lived through that event. Phenomenology is the inquiry method that deals with human experience in which individuals perceive them as appearing to consciousness. Individuals share their lived experiences robustly when they go through that phenomenon [2]. According to

Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is best related to essence; the essence comprises not only perception but also unsoundness. In contrast, it is termed philosophy, which places essence into being. Renowned philosopher Immanuel Kant in 1764, exhibited that phenomenology is the study of any event. Philosophy acts as a movement despite a set of doctrines described by Herbert Spiegelberg in 1975 [3]. Wagner, in 1983 explained that phenomenology is defined as philosophy and method, an approach to thinking and looking at yourself, others, and everything. Lived experiences are the prime focus of phenomenology. Additionally, lived experiences are most

appropriate for the real-life experiences of the individuals stated by Schutz in 1970. Merleau-Ponty, in 1956 specified that the prime objective of phenomenology is to explain the lived experience [4, 5].

## METHODS

The relevant literature was searched using databases like PubMed, Google Scholar, PakMediNet, Medline, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature CINAHL. Literature was searched using keywords including phenomenology, qualitative inquiry, roots of phenomenology, steps of phenomenology, and characters of phenomenology.

### Phenomenological Roots

The phenomenological viewpoint emerged primarily in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This initial period comprises three phases: Preparatory, German, and French [6].

#### Preparatory Phase

The eminent philosophers of this period were Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf. Stumpf described phenomenology as scientific inquiry. The idea of intentionality was seen in the work of Spiegelberg as the prime focus, and it was extensively elaborated. According to Merleau-Ponty, internal perception is meaningless without external perception.

#### German Phase

The esteemed philosophers of this era were Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Husserl explained that it is a scientific inquiry that provides an in-depth understanding of human beings. It further indicated that phenomenology is the basis of all philosophy and science. The ideas of essences, intuiting, and phenomenological reduction were formulated in this era. Hence, essences offer a tremendously true and common understanding of the event. It is well said that extensive interpretation is vigorously obtained by intuiting. The researcher perceives as imagine to the phenomena to differ from the data unless some understanding develops.

#### Phenomenological reduction

It gives a return to genuine knowledge about an event that has been investigated. Husserl nicely explained that individuals go back to themselves to get real and original knowledge. When there is doubt about beliefs or assumptions related to an event under examination that can lead to the start of phenomenological reduction, Merleau-Ponty characterized that whole reduction as not truly possible due to cordial association with the world. Concerning this reduction process, firstly, the researcher has to categorize the preoccupied concepts related to the event under study. Bracketing is increasingly important for the researcher to remain neutral in either belief or disbelief

of being of an event. For the achievement of descriptions genuinely, bracketing will remain persistent and continuing.

#### French Phase

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, the leading philosophers were Gabriel Marcel, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. The main idea constructed in this era was the embodiment and existence of the world as well. The ideas linked to belief describe how all performances are developed based on a perception of real knowledge about an event. The embodiment describes as consciousness which is knowledge of the existence of the world in which an individual lives.

#### Fundamental characteristics of the phenomenological method

Phenomenology is a rigorous, systematic, and critical analysis of an event. The prime purpose of this method is to explain the structure of the lived experience of an event. This methodological inquiry starts from phenomena of interest, and they aim to understand the subjective meaning of the lived experience of an event. The method is utterly based on the interpretive domain [7]. It primarily focuses on individual experiences through in-depth interviews, inductive analysis, and reflexivity. In phenomenology, the researcher chiefly specifies their ideas and preconceptions related to an event under investigation and consideration of particular perceptions linked to the interpretation of facts [8]. The philosophical questions have tremendous meaning that begins with what and how. It always undertakes questions about the true nature of lived experience. The reduction has been recognized as an essential technique in phenomenology. Van Manen exhibited that a real understanding of an event is only possible when done practically [9]. Colaizzi undertakes in 1978 that phenomena of interest should be described initially after that, gather the descriptions, read the descriptions extensively, go back to the novel transcript, and develop comprehensive explanations. Streubert posed in 1991 that bracketing the researcher's suppositions is increasingly important. It poses the true understanding of lived experiences of the individuals and is especially linked with incredibly important characteristics of lived experience [10]. The concept of transcendental reduction has been reported in the inquiry. The present methodology mainly undertakes the discovery and analysis of individuals residing there. It predominantly comprises deeper conservations.

#### Six core steps of phenomenology

The prominent philosopher Spiegel Berg has comprehensively stated the six fundamental essentials. Descriptive phenomenology primarily focuses on analyzing, exploring, and describing the phenomena under

investigation. Moreover, it broadly and extensively poses those experiences. Spiegelberg explained it has three steps such as intuiting, analyzing and describing. Intuitive requires being involved in the phenomena [6]. Intuitive is defined as using the basis of feeling to be factual, even without conscious logic. In the intuitive step, the researcher plays a key role as an instrument in the interviewing method. The researcher has to act as a tool to gather data and listen to descriptions of the quality of life by interview procedure. Analyzing this step, more importantly, deals with identifying the essence of the event, which is under study and encompasses how data is gathered and presented.

### **Describing**

In 3<sup>rd</sup> step, the written and verbal description has been made clear. It is especially dependent on the arrangement and grouping of an event. Concerning the quality of life, phenomenology explains all the categorizing critical components. Phenomenology of the essence pertains to searching the data in terms of themes and developing the relationship by precise phenomena [11].

### **Phenomenology of appearances**

It poses the attention as the event looks. It generally emphasizes the attention of the phenomena as it discloses by dwelling with facts.

### **Constitutive Phenomenology**

It studies phenomena as they are founded in our consciousness. This notion formulates a sense of animated adventure regarding a relationship with the world [12].

### **Reductive phenomenology**

The researcher also constantly speaks about the biases, expectations, and preoccupations. It is vital to preserve objectivity considered equally critical in this step. For the achievement of genuine reduction, the phenomenological reduction is critical [13].

### **Phenomenological Hermeneutic philosophy**

This philosophical approach provides the nature of understating for a specific event: Furthermore, this methodology permits incredibly sensitive knowledge about a human being. This philosophy describes an interpretation of the phenomena. Gadamer explains that it fills the gap between the familiar and unfamiliar linked to our worlds [14].

### **The rationale for choosing phenomenology as a method**

Nursing is a noble profession that renders a holistic approach to care delivery. Nursing certainly encourages caring for a human being, deeply emerging holistically. Not only holistic care but also avoidance of reductionism is a key component of nursing practice being a professional. Nurses are frontline workers of any health care delivery system. Nurses experience a variety of lived experiences.

To explore lived experiences of nurses and patients, phenomenology is a robust study because lived experiences and perceptions cannot be quantified for the above reason.

### **Researcher role**

The researcher takes accountability in transforming the data, as lived experiences are essential to describe a specific event. Firstly, transformation happens as individual experiences are converted into language. The second transformation happens as the investigator converts, which is seen and heard in real experience. Thirdly, the investigator transforms understating the event under study into abstract classes that can lead to the essence of real experience. In the 4<sup>th</sup> step, the investigator converts those essences into written format. In the fifth step, the written file has been changed into an understanding that could simplify the previous steps.

### **Data generation**

The purposive sampling method is normally utilized in this inquiry method. Participants have been approached for the study having certain knowledge about the phenomena. The investigator gets access to the participant when they voluntarily consent to participate. Before conducting the interview, the participants should be prepared for an actual meeting. In the initial interview, the investigator should get informed consent and permission for tape recording. Open-ended will be used to help this process. When a participant feels tired of descriptions, an interview must be ended. Data generation will remain to continue till saturation has been accomplished. Ethical consideration: Informed consent should be obtained before tape recording. The privacy of participants must be guaranteed. While disseminating the data in the manuscript, do not show the participant's identity.

### **Data treatment**

Several ways are used to cater to the treatment data, including the open-ended interviewing method, tape recording, and verbatim transcription is effective in increasing the data collection accuracy. The robust and high-quality tape recorder is increasingly essential for recording. It is equally essential for the researcher to make handwritten notes. To add some more description, a second interview may be carried out. In case of tape recorder fails, the researcher may write hand notes which avoids any dire circumstances. The researcher should write any ideas or feelings during the interview that may help reduce phenomenology. For the data collection and verbatim transcription, the researcher must listen to the tape recorder during reading transcription for accuracy [14].

### **Data analysis**

The main purpose of data analysis is to preserve the

uniqueness of each individual's lived experiences. The data analysis starts by listening to the participant's verbal description and reading and rereading the verbatim transcriptions [15]. Investigators absorb the data that may support classifying and extracting substantial reports, then record these statements into index cards. After that, record it in the record management file. It is reported that by free imagination difference, the investigator develops some links among statements gathered during the interviewing process. For data storage and retrieval, the microcomputer and word processing software may be used effectively for better outcomes.

### Trustworthiness and Authenticity of Data

Persistent utilization of method and bracketing of previous knowledge guarantees accurate data descriptions. To confirm the data analysis's credibility, the investigator goes back to every participant. The researcher must return to the analysis and revise the theme if the elements seem uncertain [16]. For establishing the genuineness and credibility of the data, the negative descriptions of an event may be beneficial. Lastly, an audit trail is reasonably important to create authenticity and trustworthiness. It is affirmed that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are essential to establish trustworthiness. Moreover, credibility substitutes internal validity, transferability for external validity, and dependability for reliability. Finally, confirmability acquires the objectivity of an event that is under investigation. The utilization of triangulation will support to reduce the biases. More importantly, triangulation helps strengthen a study's credibility and dependability [17].

### Application in practice

Crotty described that the phenomenology of nursing is an inquiry into nursing as a phenomenon. Life experiences are best explored in this inquiry, like the experiences of nurses who work in psychiatric wards. In addition, caring, reassurance, sympathy, and empathy are rightly linked with the subjective domain and are best explored by phenomenological inquiry. Coping with breast cancer female best experiences or perception about the disease [18].

### Application in nursing education

Nursing education provided the greatest domain for conducting a phenomenological study, like the educational experiences of students and teachers, students' performances, and emerging cultural sensitivity [19].

### Application in nursing admiration

In nursing admiration, phenomenology inquiry is a great option to explore the phenomena such as nurses' professional attitude and behavior, job satisfaction, job stress, qualities of a successful leader, and motivational derive of nurses [20].

**Table 1:** Application of Phenomenology Inquiry in Nursing Practice

First Author	Sample size	Objective of the study	Study population	Results
White JH et al / 2021 [21]	13 nurse managers	To understand the experiences of hospital nurse	Nurses	Nurse managers highlighted the nurses emotional and physical wellbeing
Chegini Z et al/ 2021[22]	15 nurses	To describe the experiences of critical care nurses caring for patients	Nurses	Emotional support as well as psychological counselling play vital role in maintaining nurses' optimal mental health
Jang HY et al/ 2022 [23]	14 nurses	To understand and describe the experiences of nurses who cared for patients with COVID-19	Nurses	The results of this study are valuable primary data for developing suitable measures for health professionals' well-being during outbreaks of infectious diseases
Morrell-Scott N et al / 2022 [24]	18 student nurses	To perceive final -year student nurses around their perception of the role of the nurse	Student nurses	It is perceived that students undertake a very task-orientated role, and holistic care was mentioned by the participants marginally
Dahal P et al/ 2020 [25]	16 nurses	To describe the lived experiences of nurses who provide aesthetically pleasant care in nursing practice for cancer patients	Nurses	The inductive knowledge from the experiences of the nurses informs the nursing discipline and profession to promote aesthetics in nursing

## CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that phenomenology is a qualitative inquiry that focuses on the real-life experiences of individuals. Phenomenology inquiry can be used in nursing practice, nursing education as well as nursing research to explore the phenomena considerably.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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