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Research Article

Colaizzi's Methods in Descriptive Phenomenology: Basis of A Filipino Novice Researcher

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ABSTRACT

Descriptive phenomenology is a common methodology employed in social science research to investigate and describe people's lived experiences. It is both a philosophy and a scientific technique, and it has undergone several modifications as it expanded from the original European movement to encompass the American movement. This paper discussed and explained the process in applying Colaizzi's method in descriptive phenomenological research under the field of education. This paper used a published research study, which the process of Colaizzi was utilized to give enough help in sorting, organizing, analyzing and presenting the narrative dataset. The main objective of using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenology method was to generate an exhaustive description of the phenomena addressing the challenges of student moms in the midst of pandemic. Descriptive phenomenology is particularly beneficial for correctly describing the problems of student moms, and the result may be applied as the voice of this group of students during pandemic. This can be a basis of School Institutions in crafting policies as well the National Government.

Keywords: *Colaizzi's Method, Descriptive Phenomenology, Novice Researcher*

Background

Phenomenology is a 20th-century philosophical concept whose major goal is the thorough exploration and description of phenomenon as clearly experienced, without hypotheses concerning its cause and effect and as free from unquestioned prejudices and preconceptions. According to Giorgi (2009) Phenomenology is a form of qualitative study in which the emphasis is answering the question "what is

it?" rather than queries of frequency or quantity such as "how much" and "how many." Whereas quantitative research aims to answer these frequency and magnitude questions and thus clarifies why the matter occurs, qualitative research, such as phenomenology, works to explain and describe the phenomenon. As a qualitative approach, phenomenology does not contradict the quantitative method, but rather ad-

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dresses a new inquiry in order to better elucidate the essence of the experience or phenomenon.

Comparison of transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology

Transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology and hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology approach. Phenomenology derives from philosophical systems that was developed over centuries; nevertheless, many scholars acknowledged Edmund Husserl with coining the term "phenomenology" with in early twentieth century (Kafle, 2011). Seeing a portion of Husserl's intellectual history can give knowledge into his transcendental method to deal with phenomenology. Husserl's underlying work centered on mathematics as the object of study (Jones, 1975), however then moved to observe other phenomena. In Husserl's transcendental phenomenology or commonly known as the descriptive approach the researcher's main objective is to accomplish transcendental subjectivity. A state where 'the influence of the researcher on the investigation is continually measured and prejudices and biases neutralized, in order for the researchers not to influence the object of study (Lopez, 2004). The transcendental carries no definitions, anticipations, postulation or hypotheses to the phenomena. Instead, the researcher accepts the idea of a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, which uses participants' experiences to make a description of the essence of a phenomenon.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, otherwise called interpretive phenomenology, begins from the work by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger instigated his theological career, but moved in academia while studying philosophy. Heidegger's philosophical quest began in collaboration with Husserl's work, but later he challenged some important phases of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. The fundamental disconnection from his predecessor

was the concentration of phenomenological exploration and Husserl was concerned in the essence of knowledge. In a hermeneutic approach to phenomenology, theory can help research participants make decisions and solve research questions with a focus on exploration. Theory can give a good understanding on the findings of the study.

Phenomenological data analysis using Colaizzi's Methods in Descriptive Phenomenology

Before explaining the data set analysis procedure, a brief description of data collection and transcripts formation is summarized below.

The main tool used to collect data and access valid and factual information was a semi-structured in-depth interview (face-to-face). Every interview took 20-30 minutes. The interview began with general questions yet was proceeded by a casual and malleable approach. The interview process was really based in the level of engagement of the participants. The data were analyzed by the researcher thematically using Colaizzi's methods in descriptive phenomenology. Each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content: for each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted. These statements must be recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and lines numbers: meanings should be formulated from these significant statements; the formulated meanings should be sorted into categories, clusters of themes, and themes: the findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study: the fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described: finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

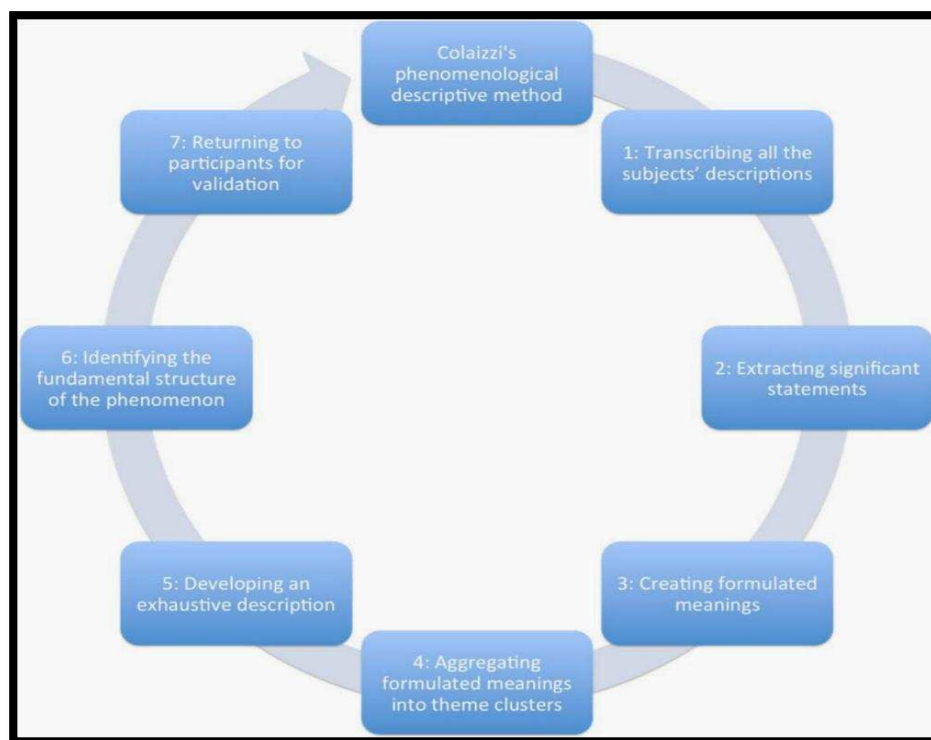


Figure 1. A summary of Colaizzi's strategy for phenomenological data analysis taken from the study of (Salman Alzayani, 2015)

Step 1

All the transcribed data were read several times to get the sense of experiences and stories shared by the participants. In this stage, the researchers familiarised themselves with the data or information, by reading through all the participant accounts several times.

Step 2

At this stage of the analysis, important statements and phrases related to challenges of student mothers were extracted from each script. These statements were coded according to "transcript and codenames" written on separate sheets. After extracting important statements from the script, two researchers compared the studies of and reached consensus and 160 important statements were extracted from the scripts. Table (1) shows examples of important statements specific and extracted from the participants.

Step 3

Meanings were framed in an important statement. Each of the fundamental meanings

is coded as a category because it reflects a thorough description. Likewise, the two researchers associated the formulated meaning to the original meaning while maintaining the consistency of the description. Though, minimal modifications were originate between the two researchers. The formalized meaning was derived from the important statement. After that, the entire statement and its meaning were confirmed by expert researchers, who found that the process was properly semantically consistent. Table (2) shows one example of how an important statement was transformed into a formalized meaning.

Step 4

After agreeing on all formulated meanings, it was grouped into categories to identify a unique structure of clusters of themes and they were coded to include the formulated meanings where they belong. Then, a composition of themes were formed, with groups of theme clusters built together that reflected the issues of a particular Vision. In fact, all of these themes are internally converging and externally

diverging. That is, each formulated meaning is classified into only one theme cluster that distinguishes meaning from other structures.

Since then, the two researchers have compared the themes with the help of specialist

researchers and confirmed the accuracy of the overall themes.

There were 8 theme clusters under 4 Emergent Themes for the challenges encountered by the student mothers.

Table 1. Examples of Significant Statements

| Significant Statements | Codenames |
|---|-----------|
| "...mas inuna ko raw kasi ang maglandi kaysa mag-aral, I am being judged by others, they don't know my struggles..." | Karen |
| "I am a victim of my emotions, pero bakit ganun maka-judge ang ibang tao parang ang dumi ko sa paningin nila. | Luz |
| " Bago pa ang pandemic ok naman pagdating sa pera, pero nung pandemic na problema namin mag asawa kung saan kami kukuha ng panggatas ni baby" | Sunshine |
| " nawalan ng trabaho asawa ko, hindi rin siya nakapagtapos, kaya hirap din siya maghanap ulit ng trabaho kaya hirap kami ngayon sa pera..." | Jessie |
| "minsan walang consideration teachers namin, ang daming activities na binibigay, tpx habang ginagawa ko lahat yun minsan umiiyak si baby...nahihirapan ako sir sa pagiging estudyante ko ngayong pandemic." | Shane |
| "ngayong pandemic sir, ako mismo nag-aalaga sa anak ko habang nagkklase kami hindi ko alam minsan kung ano ang uunahin ko...nakakalito sir at nakakapressure" | Rose |
| " gusto ko na sumuko sir I feel like so depressed with all the judgement, responsibilities at lalo na sa pandemic na ito... sa katotohanan sir hindi na ako masyado nakakatulog dahil sa dami ng iniisip ko." | Melody |
| "natutula nga po ako minsan, napapaluha dahil sa kakaisip ng mga bagay bagay sir...natatakot na hindi ko maintindihan" | |
| "hindi madali sir, parang nadedepressed ako lagi kakaisip sa baby ko, sinisisi ko sarili ko kung bakit nangyayari to sa amin..." | Rose |

Table 2. Examples of the Process of Creating Formulated Meanings from Significant Statements

| Significant Statements | Formulated Meanings |
|--|--|
| "...mas inuna ko raw kasi ang maglandi kaysa mag-aral, I am being judged by others, they don't know my struggles..." | participant is receiving judgement from other people |
| "I am a victim of my emotions, pero bakit ganun maka-judge ang ibang tao parang ang dumi ko sa paningin nila. | participant felt being discriminated by the individuals around her |

| Significant Statements | Formulated Meanings |
|---|--|
| “ Bago pa ang pandemic ok naman pagdating sa pera, pero nung pandemic na problema namin mag asawa kung saan kami kukuha ng panggatas ni baby” | participant described her life as more difficult amidst pandemic compared before the breakout of virus |
| “ nawalan ng trabaho asawa ko, hindi rin siya nakapag-tapos, kaya hirap din siya maghanap ulit ng trabaho kaya hirap kami ngayon sa pera...” | participant explained that loss of job of her husband resulted to financial difficulties on their family |
| “...sa dami ng lesson activities namin sir, napapabayaan ko na anak ko...may nag aalaga din naman mga pinsan ko pero iniyakan parin ako ni baby” Sunshine | participant indicates that she is encountering problems due to bulk of school activities |
| “minsan walang consideration teachers namin, ang daming activities na binibigay, tpx habang ginagawa ko lahat yun minsan umiiyak si baby...nahihirapan ako sir sa pagiging estudyante ko ngayong pandemic.” | participant described her difficulties on how to manage because inconsiderate teachers |
| “ngayong pandemic sir, ako mismo nag-aalaga sa anak ko habang nagkklase kami hindi ko alam minsan kung ano ang uunahin ko...nakakalito sir at nakakapressure” | participant explained that she is performing dual roles amidst pandemic resulted to confusion and pressure |

Table 3. Examples of How the Emergent Themes were Created from Unrelated Clusters of Themes and Formulated Meanings

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Clusters | Emergent Themes |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| participant is receiving judgement from other people | Judgement of other People | Cultural Stigma |
| participant felt being discriminated by the individuals around her | Feeling Discriminated | |
| participant described her life as more difficult amidst pandemic compared before the breakout of virus | Impact of Pandemic | Financial Difficulties |
| participant explained that loss of job of her husband resulted to financial difficulties on their family | Loss of Job | |
| participant indicates that she is encountering problems due to bulk of school activities | Bulk of School Activities | Conflict in Obligations |
| participant described her difficulties on how to manage her responsibilities because of her dual roles and inconsiderate teachers | Dual Roles | |
| participant explained that she is performing dual roles amidst pandemic resulted to confusion and pressure | Pressure in Responsibilities | Mental Health Struggles |
| “... I feel so pressured, stressed and very anxious, I don't know what to do it seems like I want to end this, I am just thinking the future of my baby...” sunshine | Stress and Anxiety | |

Table 4. Example of Thematic Map

| Cultural Stigma | Financial Difficulties | Conflict in Obligations | Mental Health Struggles |
|---|--|--|---|
| Judgement of other People • Receiving judgment from other people, • flirtatious as described by the society | Impact of Pandemic • Struggling in money • loss of jobs • problematic for baby's milk | Bulk of School Activities • Being pressured and confused in performing dual roles • bombarded with lesson activities | Pressure in Responsibilities • Lack of sleep • feeling depressed • feeling of giving |
| Feeling Discriminated • being hurt by other people's nasty comments • rejection | Loss of Job • pandemic as reason of difficulties • feeling of giving up in studies | Dual Roles • making decision on what to give up • teachers are not considerate | Stress and Anxiety • pressured • stressed • blaming oneself |

Step 5

In this stage of Colaizzi's analysis, the emergent themes that were identified will be explained into an exhaustive description. Afterwards, the two researchers invited expert researchers who examined the results of the findings in terms richness and completeness to give the right description and to validate that the exhaustive description shows and describe the challenges of student mothers amidst pandemic. After all, the validation was established by the research experts.

Step 6

This stage is almost the same with the last step, but it doesn't need exhaustive meanings. In this stage, a decrease or reduction from the results of the study were applied in which misrepresented or overrated descriptions were eliminated from the general structure.

Step 7

This stage looked for validation of the findings of the study through "member checking" strategy. The research findings gave it back to the participants to discuss the results of the study. The participants' comments on the study were attained through emails. After all, the participants revealed their approval and happiness toward the results which truly represented and described their experiences amidst pandemic.

Conclusion

This research paper presented the process of writing a descriptive phenomenological study. It discussed and explored the "The Battle Cry of Filipino Student Mothers amidst Pandemic" a published research paper. It is indeed that the Colaizzi's methods in descriptive phenomenology are commonly used by the researchers to get the essence of a certain phenomenon and describe the experiences of a group of people. From gathering the data, sorting, arranging and presenting with a story were done as part of phenomenological research. Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenology is very useful to describe the challenges of student mothers accurately, which the result can be used as voice of this group of students amidst pandemic. This can be a basis of School Institutions in crafting policies as well the National Government

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