Lecture 4

Phenomenology and Grounded Theory

Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so. —Douglas Adams

Phenomenology

Definition

- Phenomenology: Derived from Greek Phainomenon (appearance) and logos (science).

- It involves reasoned inquiry into the nature of appearances and seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it.

Key Figures

- Edmund Husserl (1859-1938): Founder of the phenomenological movement.

- Moustakas: A significant contemporary figure in phenomenology.

Core Concepts

- Lived Experience: Understanding experiences within specific groups (e.g., clinically inflicted pain).

- Unique Viewpoints: Each person's view of the world and their social reality are equally valid.

- Essence of Experiences: Phenomenology attempts to describe the essence of experiences as lived by individuals.

Research Approach

- Description and Understanding: Describing the meaning of experiences in terms of what and how they were experienced.

- Subjective Lived Experiences: New meanings and appreciations are developed to inform or re-orient understanding.

Goals

- Essence and Structure: The goal is to produce a statement that succinctly evokes the phenomenon.

- Meaning and Interpretation: Researchers seek to understand the essential meanings and structures of human experiences.

Types of Phenomenology

1. Descriptive (Transcendental) Phenomenology:

   - Focuses on describing experiences of participants with minimal researcher interpretation.

- Emphasizes transcendental subjectivity, where the researcher's biases are neutralized.

2. Interpretive (Hermeneutical) Phenomenology:

- Acknowledges that pre-understanding cannot be entirely bracketed.

- Researchers interpret phenomena through their own experiences.

Bracketing
- Definition: A methodological device in phenomenological inquiry that involves deliberately setting aside one's own beliefs and preconceptions about the phenomenon under investigation.
- Purpose: To better examine the consciousness itself, free from the researcher's biases and prior knowledge.

Examples of Bracketing in Practice:
- Researcher Triangulation: Multiple researchers independently analyze the data to confirm that bracketing has been appropriately maintained, ensuring objective examination.
- Member Checking (Participant Validation): Participants review the findings to ensure that the identified essences accurately resonate with their experiences, validating the data's authenticity.

Examples of Phenomenological Questions

- What is the essence of being a mother?

- What is the essential structure of a caring nurse-client interaction?

- What is it like to experience a heart transplant or pain?

Procedures

1. Determine Suitability: Identify if phenomenology is appropriate for the research problem.

2. Understand Philosophy: Grasp the philosophy behind phenomenology, including bracketing and individual experience.

3. Data Collection: Use multiple in-depth interviews or other forms of data collection.

4. Broad Questions: Begin with open-ended questions to gather textural and structural data.

Interviews

- Dominant method for data collection in phenomenology.

- Seidman's Three-Interview Series:

  1. Focused life history for context.

  2. Reconstruct the experience.

  3. Reflect on the meaning of the experience.

• Phenomenological interview must contain three main domains:

1. contextualization (natural attitude and lifeworld).

2. apprehending the phenomenon (modes of appearing, natural attitude).

3. clarifying the phenomenon (imaginative variation and meaning).

March 2024

Data Analysis

- Horizontalization: Laying out all data as equals.

- Significant Statements: Highlighting statements that provide understanding.

- Organizing Clusters and Themes: Grouping data into themes.

- Phenomenological Reduction: Returning to the essence of the experience to derive inner meaning.

Strengths and Challenges

- Strengths: Offers deep insights into human experiences.

- Challenges: Bracketing personal experiences can be difficult, and participants must have experienced the phenomenon in question.

Grounded Theory : The overarching goal of grounded theory is to develop theory

Definition

- Developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss.

- Grounded Theory (GT) involves generating theory from qualitative data, working inductively from the ground up.

Key Concepts

- Theoretical Constructs: Derived from qualitative data analysis.

- Systematic Methodology: Involves generating a general explanation of a process, action, or interaction grounded in participants' views.

Grounded Theory (GT) is a research method that operates in a reverse fashion compared to traditional research, which may initially seem contradictory to the scientific method. In traditional research, hypotheses are typically formed before data collection. In contrast, GT involves collecting data first and then generating theories from the data. Because of this approach, some researchers refer to the theory generated using GT as the "reverse-engineered" hypothesis.

Definition of coding

• Coding =
- Process in which data are fractured, conceptualized and reordered in a new way

- Process in which « codes » are given to parts of sentences, whole sentences, paragraphs etc

Types of Coding

1. Open Coding:

  - Initial phase involving breaking down data into segments to interpret them.
  - Detailed analysis to discover, name, and define concepts.
  - Example: Analyzing interview data from arthritis sufferers to identify pain relief issues.

2. Axial Coding: (table in page 4)

  - Links and relationships between concepts and categories from open coding.

  - Focuses on causal relationships and integrating codes around central categories.

  - Example: Developing a model to explain arthritis pain relief strategies.

3. Selective Coding:
  - Focuses on the most important categories to form a theory explaining the subject.
  - Relates the core category systematically to other categories.
  - The step which focuses on the main idea, and finalizing the theory.

Research Process

1. Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis: Insights from early data shape further data collection.

2. Analytic Codes and Categories: Developed from data, not preconceived hypotheses.

3. Memo-Making: Informal notes about data and theoretical connections.

4. Theoretical Sampling: Selecting participants based on emerging data.

5. Constant Comparative Method (CCM): Comparing data from different categories to refine theory.

6. Literature Review Delay: Initial data collection and analysis are done before incorporating previous research.

- Discriminant sampling: The last sampling step in grounded theory.

- Bracketing: The process of deliberate holding in abeyance any preconceived beliefs and opinions one has about the phenomena under investigation.

- Phenomenology is rooted in philosophy

Example

- Study on Birth Management: Focus groups of women and healthcare providers developed a theory on strategies to minimize risk and maximize integrity during childbirth.

Questions

1. Phenomenology Questions:

- What is phenomenology?

- What are the two types of phenomenology?

- What is the main research tool used in phenomenology?

- What is the meaning of "Horizontalization"?

2. Grounded Theory Questions:

- What is the purpose of Grounded Theory?

- What are the types of coding in Grounded Theory?

- Give one advantage of GT.

- What is the meaning of theoretical sampling?

Main Strategy: The primary categorizing strategy in qualitative research is coding
Difference from Quantitative Coding
Quantitative Coding: Involves applying a preestablished set of categories to the data according to explicit, unambiguous rules. The end goal is to generate frequency counts of items in each category.
Qualitative Coding: The goal is not to count things, but to "fracture" the data and rearrange them into categories. This process facilitates comparisons within the same category and aids in developing theoretical concepts.
As Strauss (1987) describes, this helps in breaking down the data and reorganizing it to uncover deeper meanings and relationships

	Model component	Description	How to identify	Example
A	Causal condition	events or incidents that lead to the occurrence of a phenomenon	Point out by: when, while, since, because, due to, on account of.	breaking a leg
B	Phenomenon	central idea	Ask: what is this data referring to?	pain
C	Context	Set of properties and that pertain to a phenomenon and conditions within the strategies are taken	Under the specific condition…	Located in, of high intensity
D	Intervening conditions	Broad and general condition bearing upon strategies	Time, space, culture, economic and technological status, career, history and individual biography.	Person age, other illnesses, past history with pain
E	Action / Interaction strategies	Respond, handle, carry out a phenomenon	Action oriented verbs or participles	Keep warm, go for emergency help
F	Consequences	Outcomes to a phenomenon	Events or happenings, actual or potential.	Pain relief