Welcome to the Phenomenological Research tutorial. The purpose of this tutorial is to summarize the basic theory, principles, and structural design components of phenomenology, as a philosophy and as a research approach. Emphasis is on distinguishing two main schools of phenomenology and determining the appropriateness of phenomenology for a research question. In addition, this tutorial provides key resources, as well as examples of phenomenological research design and analysis.

Upon successful completion of this tutorial, you will be able to:

- Explain how phenomenology fits into the research continuum
- Explain the basic theory, principles, and structural design components of phenomenology
- Determine the appropriateness of phenomenology for a research purpose and research questions
- Describe data collection and analysis procedures for phenomenology
- Summarize the strengths and limitations of phenomenology
- Outline next steps to take regarding phenomenology

This tutorial is organized into seven sections that each include tips and strategies associated with a topic:

1. Introduction
2. Origins and Characteristics of Phenomenology
3. Phenomenological Research Design
4. Process: How to Do a Phenomenology
5. Next Steps: Is Phenomenology Right For You?
6. Additional Resources
7. Evaluation
8. Phenomenological Research
Section 2: Origins and Characteristics of Phenomenology

Slide 1

Welcome to the Origins and Characteristics of Phenomenology section.

This section of the tutorial provides background information on phenomenology, including details about its origin and use as a research method in various disciplines. In addition, this section presents a definition of phenomenology and illustrates its relation to the research continuum.

Slide 2

In this section of the tutorial, focus on the following objectives:

- Describe the origins of phenomenology as a research method
- Distinguish between two main schools of phenomenology
- Contrast phenomenology to other qualitative methods
- Explain how phenomenology is used by various disciplines

Slide 3

What is Phenomenology?

Phenomenology is a collection and analysis of people's perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon.

Other terms for "perception" include:

- the lived experience
- how people relate to a phenomenon
- how people understand a phenomenon
- the meaning people give a phenomenon

Slide 4

What is a Phenomenon?

A phenomenon is an event, an experience, or something that happens to someone. A phenomenon is something that is finite and definable rather than nebulous or unclear.

Some examples of a phenomenon include:

- giving birth
- losing a first tooth
- failing or passing a test
- interviewing someone

Slide 5

The Continuum of Inquiry
In the Continuum of Inquiry graphic, the long arrow represents the state of current knowledge within a problem area. At one end of the continuum, much is known about how people experience a particular phenomenon. At the other end, very little or nothing is known about how people experience it. Phenomenology is most typically used when very little or nothing is known about how people experience a particular phenomenon.

The Continuum of Inquiry graphic description

The Continuum of Inquiry depicts how the state of current knowledge aligns with both types of inquiry and research approaches.

A horizontal line with an arrow on the right represents the state of current knowledge within a paradigm or problem area.

The far left side of this axis represents a state where very little or nothing is known. This idea is depicted in a box above the horizontal line representing the state of current knowledge. The far right side represents a state where much is known, and this idea is depicted in a box above the horizontal line representing the state of current knowledge. Each of these boxes contains an arrow pointing down to the horizontal axis.

A specific method of inquiry can be placed at a point either at or between the boxes to represent that a particular method of inquiry applies when very little or nothing is known or when much is known.

A box labelled Phenomenology is located towards the little is known end of the state of current knowledge arrow.

Below the line representing the state of current knowledge are three rectangles of varying length, stacked one atop the other.

The top rectangle represents Qualitative Approaches and it begins at the “little is known” end of the state of current knowledge arrow and extends three quarters of the way across.

Below qualitative approaches, the middle rectangle represents quantitative approaches. This rectangle begins about a quarter of the way along the state of current knowledge arrow and continues all the way to the “much is known” end of the arrow.

The bottom and final rectangle represents mixed methods utility. This rectangle begins at the start point of the Quantitative Approaches and ends at the end of the Qualitative Approaches; thus covers the space where they are both applicable.

Slide 6

Benefits of Using Phenomenology

As a research method, phenomenology can help you:

- Understand the human factors involved in an experience. It answers the question of how people perceive a phenomenon in order to place it within a context.
- Clearly understand human perceptions. While other methods only give you a partial view (filtered through your own interpretation of information), phenomenology focuses directly on people’s experiences with perceptions of a phenomenon.
- Understand why people react a specific way to an event or experience, since people respond to situations based on their perceptions.
Slide 7

Benefits of Using Phenomenology

As a research method, phenomenology can also help you:

- Predict how people will react so you can plan for the impact of the changes brought about by a phenomenon.
- Examine how transferable responses may be to someone else. For example, if a person attends a protest rally on baby seals or abortion, the person will perceive that experience in a certain way. Phenomenology can help answer the question “How transferable are those experiences to others with similar backgrounds or in similar circumstances?”

Slide 8

Origins of Phenomenology

Phenomenology originated as a philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl. As a philosophy, Husserl’s phenomenology focuses on the detailed description of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. Central to Husserl’s philosophy is the concept of epoché, which means “freedom from suppositions.”

Epoché centers around the idea that people cannot feel that they know things without reflecting on them, and that only what people think about things gives them meaning. Husserl felt that the perception of the experience itself is the source of knowledge, and that obtaining knowledge is a matter of getting input from people who have experienced a phenomenon directly.

Applying epoché to studies requires researchers to recognize their own biases, recognize the impact those biases have on their analysis of data, and purposely set those biases aside.

Slide 9

Evolution of Phenomenology into Two Main Schools

Husserl’s phenomenology began as a pure reporting process, without analysis. Husserl wanted to capture how people perceived things, what they thought of things, and how they lived things. Over time, and with the help of others, Husserl’s philosophy evolved into a variety of approaches. Today, these approaches are far from unified. However, there are two main traditions that we commonly see in practice—descriptive (or transcendental) and interpretive phenomenology.

Slide 10

Two Main Schools of Phenomenology

Descriptive (transcendental) phenomenology looks at how to transcend individual experience by reducing the reported experiences from individuals into patterns and themes so you can understand (“transcend”) the commonalities. Individuals such as Amadeo Giorgi honed descriptive phenomenology.

Interpretive phenomenology looks at the same kinds of experiences and collects the same data as descriptive phenomenology, but instead of reducing the reported experiences from individuals into patterns and themes, the researcher looks for the psychological or sociological factors that
Phenomenological Research

influenced the response. Interpretive phenomenology stems from Martin Heidegger’s philosophy, and individuals such as Clark Moustakas honed his ideas.

Slide 11

Guiding Principles

Both main schools of phenomenology share the same philosophical underpinnings of humanism and constructivism; both are qualitative approaches to data collection and interpretation.

Phenomenology aligns with qualitative research because it is based on the idea that individual perceptions guide actions and responses. There can be no absolute reality because people understand actions only in terms of the way they perceive them. Data analysis consists only of the participants’ own words about the phenomenon.

Slide 12

Phenomenology Compared to Other Qualitative Methodologies

To better understand what phenomenology is, and is not, it is useful to compare it to other research methods. The table below summarizes the goals and data collection approaches for several qualitative methodologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Goal or Focus</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Analysis</td>
<td>Tell a story about an experience from the voices not normally heard</td>
<td>Recording participants’ stories through interviews with one or two people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Examine an issue in a specific location over a period of time</td>
<td>Observations, documents, interviews and other types of data from multiple sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
<td>Develop theory about a process inductively from data collected</td>
<td>Interviews with up to 30 individuals: data from other sources include observations, testing, surveys, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Describe different aspects of a culture and how culture influences behavior</td>
<td>Observation, interviews and focus groups from multiple sources and conducted over a prolonged period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>Describe one aspect of human experience not bounded by time or location</td>
<td>First person sources (interviews, journals, focus groups) from 8-12 people or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slide 13

Disciplines That Use Phenomenology

All disciplines can use phenomenology for very specific purposes. For example, phenomenology can be used in:

• Psychology, to see how parents experienced the loss of a child from SIDS and why they experienced it the way they did.
• Nursing, to ask how patients experienced nursing care and to look at which parts of that experience resonate for the patient.
• Epidemiology, to find out how people experience the process of using a specific drug.
• Public policy, to determine how people experience the physical process of going to vote in local elections.
• Education, to find out how people experience teaching English as a Second Language to third-grade students in an inclusive classroom.

Slide 14

Self-Assessment

Next, you will take a short self-assessment to check your comprehension of the information presented in this section. There is no time limit or record of your score.

Self-Assessment Tip

• You may go back and review the information in this section before starting the self-assessment.

Slide 15

Multiple Choice

1. Phenomenology is __________.

Select the correct answer:

a) verbatim transcription of people’s descriptions of a certain type of life event
b) a collection and analysis of people’s perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon
c) a psychological interpretation of people’s lived experiences as perceived by a professional
d) a sociological critique of the meaning people give a phenomenon bounded by location and time

Answer

b) a collection and analysis of people’s perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon
The focus is on understanding how individuals perceive an experience.

Slide 16

True/False

As a research method, phenomenology can help you understand the human factors involved in an experience, examine how transferable human responses may be to other people, and predict how people react to a phenomenon.

Select the correct answer:

a) True
b) False

Answer:

a) True
As a research method, phenomenology has many benefits. It can help you understand the human factors involved in an experience, examine how transferable human responses may be to other people, and predict how people react to a phenomenon. It can also help you clearly understand human perceptions and understand why people react in a specific way to an event or experience.

**Slide 17**

**Multiple Choice**

How did phenomenology originate?

Select the correct answer:

a) As an academic movement organized by scholars who wanted to popularize the concept of epoché  
b) As a transcendental movement followed by those who believed that personal experience is the source of knowledge  
c) As a political movement centered around giving voice to the perspectives of those not normally heard  
d) As a philosophical movement focused on the describing consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view

Answer:  
d) As a philosophical movement focused on the describing consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view

Phenomenology originated as a philosophical movement focused on describing consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. Edmund Husserl founded the movement. Later, Martin Heidegger and others influenced the development of phenomenology.

**Slide 18**

**Matching**

Match the items to the appropriate school of phenomenology.

Connect the matching items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1 - items</th>
<th>Column 2 - school of phenomenology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>transcendental</td>
<td>a) Descriptive Phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Moustakas</td>
<td>b) Interpretive Phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction into patterns and themes to find commonalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amadeo Giorgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology or sociological factors influencing responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Heidegger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer:  
Another name for descriptive phenomenology is transcendental phenomenology. Amadeo Giorgi helped to hone the descriptive school of phenomenology, where the focus is on reduction of data into patterns and themes to find commonalities. Martin Heidegger and Clark Moustakas influenced the development of interpretive phenomenology, where the focus is on uncovering psychological or sociological factors influencing responses.
Slide 19

Multiple Choice

The goal of phenomenology is __________.

Select the correct answer:

a) to describe one aspect of human experience not bounded by time or location
b) to examine an issue in a specific location over a period of time
c) to explain different aspects of a culture and how culture influences behavior
d) to tell a story about an experience from the voices not normally heard

Answer:
a) to describe one aspect of human experience not bounded by time or location

Data for phenomenology include first-person sources (interviews, journals, focus groups) to obtain human perceptions of experiences.
Section 3: Phenomenological Research Design

Slide 1

Welcome to the Phenomenological Research Design section.

This section of the tutorial provides information on appropriate research topics for a phenomenology, guidance on formulating a phenomenological research question, and examples illustrating the use of phenomenology with other qualitative methods. In addition, this section discusses sample size, the role of the researcher, and ethical considerations in doing a phenomenology.

Slide 2

In this section of the tutorial, focus on the following objectives:

- Identify appropriate types of research topics explored with phenomenology
- Illustrate how phenomenology may be embedded in the design of another research method
- Explain important theoretical and conceptual framework considerations
- Examine the role of the researcher in a phenomenology

Slide 3

Appropriate Research Topics for a Phenomenology

Not all research topics are appropriate for phenomenology. The goal of phenomenology is to understand human interaction with a phenomenon. Therefore, the best research topics involve questions that consider how and why people do what they do, or how they feel or interact with a phenomenon.

Examples of research topics that have been explored using phenomenology include:

- the impact of personal expectations on the experience of being married and divorced
- how parents/guardians and special education students perceive the transition to life after high school
- the experiences of nursing program graduates as they progress from being practical to registered nurses
- how clinicians view their own competency in treating transgender individuals

Slide 4

Formulating the Research Question

When formulating a research question for a phenomenological study, be sure you can:

Ask a question that can be answered.

Suppose a research question asked, “What is the best method of training nurses?” A phenomenology cannot allow you to draw a valid conclusion since people will be reporting on efficacy in terms of quality of skills rather than a measured assessment. A better question for a phenomenology would be “How do nurses perceive the quality of their training?”
Ask the right people.
Suppose a research question asked, “Why do patients respond better to nurses who explain everything than to nurses who don’t?” If you interview nurses for your study, you will not be able to draw conclusions because the nurses do not have the perspective to be able to explain why patients respond the way they do. You need to interview the patients to uncover this.

Slide 5

Can Phenomenology Be Used With Other Methodologies?

Phenomenology can be embedded in the design of another research method, such as a case study or ethnography.

A phenomenological case study looks at how people experience a phenomenon in a specific case bounded by time and location. For example, the case study might examine how people experience the campaigning process for an election in a certain town. To include phenomenology, the researcher would interview campaigners, politicians, and voters to get their perspectives. The researcher would then put the data together to draw conclusions.

A phenomenological ethnography could look at how people experience the orientation process in a certain corporate culture. The researcher could interview recruiters, new hires, people who did not get hired, and managers. They could be asked what cultural expectations there are surrounding the orientation process and how they experienced it.

Slide 6

When using phenomenology with another method, take note...

While you can embed phenomenology in another type of methodology, you should not combine it with another method in a qualitative study to create a mixed methods study. Doing so affects the integrity of the phenomenology or may even result in the researcher conducting two separate studies instead of one cohesive study.

Slide 7

Reminders About Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

In designing a phenomenological study, remember:

- Humanistic concepts inform phenomenology—people’s perceptions both reflect and affect how people feel about a phenomenon. Changing perceptions relate to changing activities, so integral to changing people’s perceptions is making changes in the phenomenon.
- Phenomenology requires gathering people’s perceptions based on their own words. Researcher interpretation should be primary, not secondary, and not based on an interpretation of perceptions from people’s actions.
- People do not always consciously understand why they perceive a phenomenon the way they do. Sometimes what they perceive is not actually what is happening. People’s perceptions can change, so their conscious perceptions can change. Also, as people talk about their perceptions, unconscious perceptions emerge. This is similar to the way that, in ethnography, observation changes how a participant behaves. As you will see later, validation strategies, such as triangulation, are important ways to address this issue.
What Is a Typical Sample Size for a Phenomenology?

Phenomenology is about getting depth, not breadth, on people’s perceptions. In determining an appropriate sample size, the goal should be to obtain enough data appropriate to the study, from a sufficient number and variety of individuals. Most often, participant numbers are between 5 and 15. Often, the sample size is between 8 and 12.

Sample Size Examples

Below are some examples of sample sizes used in phenomenological studies:

- For a study on how cooperative education could grow talent among South Africans, Groenewald (2004) uses a sample size of 10 managers, 5 at educational programs, and 5 at collaborating enterprises.

- For a study on the experiences of people with HIV/AIDS in China, Zhou (2010) uses a sample size of 21 HIV-infected adults, 15 men, and 6 women, ranging in age from 21 to 46.

- For a study on women’s experiences of prostitution and substance abuse, Sallmann (2010) uses a sample size of 14 women, who identified as white, black, or biracial, and ranged in age from 19 to 48.

- For a study on how older women perceive their body/self's from the perspective of food and eating, McCormick (2011) uses a sample size of 15 women, ages 62 to 91, all members of a large senior center in a rent-subsidized apartment community.

Sample Size Considerations

Phenomenology is not meant to result in generalizations. The value of the results of a phenomenological study lies in their transferability. Using larger numbers will not necessarily produce more insight into the experience of a phenomenon. Moreover, analyzing the data for larger numbers of participants is impractical if you consider that an hour-long interview may yield a 20-page transcript.

The Role of the Researcher

In a phenomenology, the role of the researcher is to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from people who have experienced a phenomenon. Avoiding bias is very important. If the researcher collects the data, the researcher should be careful that his or her questions do not present any bias. If the researcher has assistants collect the data, the researcher should carefully train them to avoid biased questions.
**Tips on Avoiding Researcher Bias**

Here are some tips on how to avoid bias in a phenomenological study:

**Do not...**

- Lead the participants—implying by your questions, facial expressions, or gestures the perspective you want them to share.
- Push participants to continue answering questions they don’t want to answer.
- Share your own stories with the participants.
- Share participants’ stories with other participants.

**Slide 13**

**Tips on Avoiding Researcher Bias (Continued)**

Here are some tips on how to avoid bias in a phenomenological study: (Continued)

**Do...**

- Record the interviews.
- Use a researcher’s journal to record your reflections, ideas, and thoughts about possible connections among data and participants.
- Conduct an ongoing review of responses by the participants, including a review of the researcher’s conclusions.
- Understand the process of bracketing. (This topic will be explored in greater detail on the next screen.)

**Slide 14**

**Bracketing in Phenomenology**

In qualitative research, the researcher “brackets” his or her personal experiences, biases, and perceptions prior to conducting research in order to allow the participants to express their own experiences without being influenced by the researcher, and during data collection so that the researcher can analyze his or her perceptions separately from those of the participant. In a phenomenology, bracketing is particularly important so that the participants’ perceptions of a phenomenon remain intact.

For an example of bracketing in a phenomenology, visit the link for a transcript of mock interviews (good and bad): [http://researchcenter.waldenu.edu/Research_Tutorials/Phenomenological_Research/documents/PHEN_GoodAndBadPhenomenologyInterviews_programtranscript.pdf](http://researchcenter.waldenu.edu/Research_Tutorials/Phenomenological_Research/documents/PHEN_GoodAndBadPhenomenologyInterviews_programtranscript.pdf)
General Ethical Considerations

In designing a phenomenological study, keep in mind these general ethical principles, which apply to all human subject research:

- Respect unless you have a scientifically valid reason. Do not include subjects who will not likely benefit from the research.

For more information on general ethical considerations in research, visit Walden’s Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at http://researchcenter.waldenu.edu/Office-of-Research-Integrity-and-Compliance.htm.

Additional Ethical Considerations for Phenomenology

Furthermore, phenomenological research entails additional ethical considerations:

- Be sure not to intrude or exert pressure on subjects. Allow them to respond freely and to stop responding when they want to.

- Do not lead your subjects. Strictly adhere to what subjects share, and do not share your own perspectives with them. It is easy to manipulate subjects and bias the results, so you must be careful not to project your own attitudes or perceptions through the wording of your questions or your reactions to participants’ responses.

- Choose appropriate people for subjects. Participants should have a direct relationship to the phenomenon in question. Since phenomenology is about collecting people’s perceptions, choose responsive and communicative subjects. The goal is to obtain multiple perceptions of a specific phenomenon, so the more you can narrow the focus, the better the study will be. For example, stratifying the participant pool according to age or time spent with the phenomenon can make your focus too broad to get enough detail on your topic.

Self-Assessment

Next, you will take a short self-assessment to check your comprehension of the information presented in this section. There is no time limit or record of your score.

Self-Assessment Tip

- You may go back and review the information in this section before starting the self-assessment.
Multiple Choice

Which of these would make an appropriate research question for a phenomenological study?

Select the correct answer:

a) Why do teachers at one school perform better than those at another school?
b) What is the best method of training teachers?
c) How do teachers fit in to the overall culture of a school?
d) How do teachers perceive the quality of their training?

Answer:
d) How do teachers perceive the quality of their training?
It focuses on the perception of a phenomenon and allows the researcher to draw a valid conclusion by asking a question that the appropriate participants can effectively answer.

Slide 19

Multiple Choice

Phenomenology is about getting breadth on people’s perceptions, so an appropriate sample size is 50 or more individuals.

Select the correct answer:

a) True
b) False

Answer:
b) False
Phenomenology is about depth, not breadth, on people’s perceptions, so an appropriate sample size is 5 to 15 individuals.

Slide 20

Matching

Match the items in the appropriate columns based on the question that is being asked.

In a phenomenology, what should a researcher do and not do?

Connect the matching items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The researcher should...</td>
<td>Force participants to answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The researcher should not...</td>
<td>Avoid asking biased questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share participants’ stories with other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Record the interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use a researcher’s journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead the participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer:
In phenomenology, avoiding bias is very important. The researcher should avoid asking biased questions, record the interviews and use a researcher’s journal. The researcher should not lead the participants, force them to answer questions, or share their stories with other participants.

**Slide 21**

**Multiple Choice**

Why is bracketing important in phenomenology?

Select the correct answer:

a) It fosters understanding between the researcher and the participants.
b) It helps keep the participants’ perceptions of a phenomenon intact.
c) It prevents participants from sharing their answers with each other.
d) It aids the researcher in distinguishing one participant from another.

Answer:  
b) It helps keep the participants’ perceptions of a phenomenon intact.

In qualitative research, the researcher ‘brackets’ his or her personal experiences, biases, and perceptions prior to conducting research to allow the participants to express their own experiences without influence from the researcher, and during data collection so that the researcher can analyze his or her perceptions separately from those of the participant.

**Slide 22**

**Multiple Choice**

For a phenomenology, it is acceptable to use gestures to indicate how you would like participants to respond.

Select the correct answer:

a) True  
b) False

Answer:  
b) False

In phenomenology, it is NOT acceptable to use gestures to indicate how you would like participants to respond. In all human subject research, certain ethical principles apply. For example, subjects should be given proper and informed consent and should be treated fairly. Phenomenological research entails additional ethical considerations, such as choosing appropriate subjects and not leading their responses in any way.
Section 4: Process: How to Do a Phenomenology

Slide 1

Welcome to the Process: How to Do a Phenomenology section.

This section of the tutorial presents information on how to collect and analyze phenomenological data. In addition, this section explains how to ensure quality in a phenomenological study.

Slide 2

In this section of the tutorial, focus on the following objectives:

- Describe data collection procedures for a phenomenology
- Compare and contrast how data is analyzed
- Explain how to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings

Slide 3

How to Collect Data: Sources

Phenomenology requires direct responses from participants, so it has a limited range of data collection sources. Appropriate ways to collect data include:

- Interviews;
- focus groups;
- journals;
- open-ended questionnaires; or
- other similar products that capture individuals’ responses to a phenomenon in their own words

Researchers may use the Internet and other technologies to collect data. For example, researchers can conduct interviews via email or do focus groups via online video-conferencing services such as Skype.

Slide 4

How to Collect Data: Consistency

Most often, phenomenology researchers collect data by using interviews. For example, McCormick (2011) interviewed each woman in her study four times for 1–1 ½ hours per interview. Sallman (2010) interviewed each of her participants for 45 minutes to 3 hours. Zhou (2010) interviewed each of the adults in her sample for 2–3 hours.

However, you can collect data using a combination of these sources. Unlike some other types of qualitative studies, you must collect the same type of data from each participant. If you interview a participant and give them a questionnaire, you must also interview, using the same questions, and give the same questionnaire to all the other participants. For example, Groenewald (2004) interviewed each of his participants, and also had them write essays about their viewpoints.

Slide 5

How to Collect Data: Protocol

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The researcher must be sure to develop a data collection protocol (a set of questions for prompting responses). This will ensure complete and thorough data collection. The protocols for different types of data such as interviews, focus groups, and journals, will be different, but they are basically a set of core questions or prompts to which people can respond.

For example, Sallman (2011) used prompts such as “Tell me more about that,” “What was that like for you?” and “Can you give me an example?” Prompts can also be questions specific to the topic in discussion. The frequency of prompts during an interview will naturally vary, depending on how forthcoming and communicative each participant is.

Slide 6

How to Analyze Phenomenological Data

Once a researcher collects data, how does the researcher analyze it?

Generally, data analysis involves reviewing the collected data, identifying themes, and synthesizing the results. Techniques will vary based on the type of phenomenological study and its purpose.

Slide 7

How to Analyze Phenomenological Data

For example, McCormick (2011) transcribed her recorded interviews, which yielded about 3,000 pages of transcripts. She assembled the transcripts into a book for each participant. McCormick read and re-read the books, listened to the recorded interviews without reading the transcripts, and then listened to the interviews while reading the transcripts. She analyzed each book separately. Then, she analyzed the interviews across books. Her goal was to “allow the full array of themes to emerge.” Rather than “fragment the transcripts through line-by-line coding,” she read the books as whole texts, to allow themes to emerge “continuously, unexpectedly.” She used the themes to develop “meaning-clusters” which formed the basis for her description of the phenomenon.

Slide 8

How to Analyze Phenomenological Data

Sallman (2010) applied a hermeneutic analysis. She used a research team to read the interview transcripts, write summaries of them, and begin identifying themes. The team shared the summaries to reach a consensus about the themes and reviewed theoretical literature to clarify the themes. Sallman then re-read the transcripts to examine the themes and produce new themes. She drafted the research manuscript, which she shared with the research team, other reviewers, and some of the study participants. She then integrated their feedback into the final manuscript.

Slide 9

How to Analyze Phenomenological Data

Groenewald (2004) used a process of “explication” rather than “analysis.” While analysis involves breaking data into parts, explication allows examining data in its whole context. Groenewald’s
explication began with a conscious bracketing of the self. He then listened repeatedly to the audio interviews to get a sense of each participant’s perspective as a whole, extracted units of meaning from each interview, and clustered them to form themes. He then summarized and validated each interview and wrote a composite summary reflecting the common and individual themes.

**Slide 10**

**How to Analyze Phenomenological Data**

In general, descriptive phenomenological studies categorize participants’ responses and look at patterns and themes. Interpretive phenomenological studies, especially those conducted by psychologists, examine what people state about their perspectives and then consider what in their background might explain why they have those perspectives.

Data analysis techniques for phenomenology are the same as those used in other qualitative research methods. Researchers can use the techniques in various ways, depending on the type of study and the philosophical views of the researcher. For a resource book on qualitative data analysis, see the additional resources listed in Section 6 of this tutorial.

**Slide 11**

**Threats to Trustworthiness in a Phenomenology**

In a phenomenological study, researchers look for trustworthiness. Threats to trustworthiness include:

- too shallow a view of participants’ experiences with the phenomenon
- bias in interpretation
- leading participants’ responses
- not collecting enough data
- reading into the data and not letting the data speak for itself

**Slide 12**

**How to Ensure Quality in a Phenomenology**

To ensure quality in a phenomenology, be sure to:

- Record interviews.
- Collect enough data. For example, interview participants several times in case their perspectives change from one day to the next. Each day, let each session begin with the option for them to summarize their previous answers.
- Triangulate by using multiple data sources to build a complete picture of participants’ perceptions of a phenomenon.
- Conduct member checks correctly. Do not merely ask participants to confirm whether what they said matches a transcript of the interview. Instead, ask the participant to confirm whether what they said is what they wanted to say. This gives the participant a jumping off point to provide more response.
How to Ensure Quality in a Phenomenology

Also be sure to:

• Get feedback from participants on your conclusion.

• Do not over-generalize in your research. The specific nature of the group being examined should be shared, while specifics are hidden.

• List the credentials of the peer reviewer to help add trustworthiness to your study.

For more information on ensuring quality in qualitative research, see the additional resources in Section 6 of this tutorial.

Slide 14

Self-Assessment

Next, you will take a short self-assessment to check your comprehension of the information presented in this section. There is no time limit or record of your score.

Self-Assessment Tip

You may go back and review the information in this section before starting the self-assessment.

Slide 15

Multiple Choice

The following are appropriate ways to collect data for a phenomenology except:

Select the correct answer:

a) interviews  
b) journals  
c) focus groups  
d) observation

Answer: 

d) observation

Phenomenology requires direct responses from participants, so it has a limited range of data collection sources. Appropriate ways to collect data include interviews, journals, focus groups and other products that capture individuals’ responses to a phenomenon in their own words.

Slide 16

Multiple Choice

For a phenomenology, researchers should collect different types of data from each participant.

Select the correct answer:
Unlike some other types of qualitative studies, you must collect the same type of data from each participant in a phenomenology. If you interview a participant and give them a questionnaire, you must also interview, using the same questions, and give the same questionnaire to all the other participants.

Slide 17

Arrange The Following In a Sequence

For a phenomenology, in what order would the researcher typically perform the following steps?

Arrange the following in the correct sequence:

1. Review data
2. Synthesize results
3. Identify themes
4. Collect data

Answer:

For a phenomenology, the researcher typically collects data, then reviews it, identifies themes, and synthesizes the results. Techniques will vary based on the type of phenomenological study and its purpose.

Slide 18

Multiple Choice

The trustworthiness of a phenomenological study may be compromised as a result of

Select the correct answer:

a) bias in interpreting data
b) not leading participants’ responses
c) collecting a sufficient amount of data
d) letting the data speak for itself

Answer:
a) bias in interpreting data

In a phenomenology, researchers look for trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of a phenomenological study may be compromised as a result of bias in interpreting data, as well as leading participants’ responses, not collecting enough data, reading into the data and not letting it speak for itself.

Slide 19

Multiple Choice
For a member check, the researcher should ask participants if what they said is what they wanted to say.

Select the correct answer:

a) True
b) False

Answer:
a) True
For a member check, you should not merely ask participants to confirm whether what they said matches a transcript of the interview. Instead, ask the participant to confirm whether what they said is what they wanted to say. This gives the participant a jumping off point to provide more response.
Section 5: Next Steps: Is Phenomenology Right for You?

Welcome to the Next Steps: Is Phenomenology Right for You? section.

This section of the tutorial provides guidance on determining whether phenomenology is an appropriate method for your research topic. In addition, this section presents information on what to do before proceeding with phenomenological research.

In this section of the tutorial, focus on the following objectives:

- Determine whether phenomenology may be appropriate for your research topic
- Identify next steps to take before beginning a phenomenology

Questions to Ask Yourself

If you are considering doing a phenomenological study, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Are you examining a phenomenon, as opposed to a bounded case?
- Is determining the lived experience of people in relation to a specific phenomenon going to directly answer your question or fill a gap in research or practice?
- Does the basic premise of phenomenology—that perspective directly impacts or is impacted by the nature of the phenomenon—fit your study?
- Will you be able to collect information from the appropriate participants?

If the answer is “Yes” to all of the above, then phenomenology may be an appropriate research method for you.

What is the Goal of Your Research?

When deciding whether phenomenology is right for you, also examine the goal of your study. The chart below lists possible goals and possible research methods to use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your goal is to…</th>
<th>Then consider using…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop theory</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at how something is done in a specific location</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell a story</td>
<td>Mixed Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put people’s experiences in a contact of society of organization as a whole</td>
<td>Mixed Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a correlation or examine the relationship between two variables</td>
<td>Quantitative Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slide 5

What Else Can You Do On Your Own?

If you are a student…

• Do a literature review.
• Identify the research or practice problem.
• Determine the research question and clarify your research goal.
• Determine if phenomenology is appropriate.
• Go to the next section for resources.

If you are faculty wanting to get more involved in phenomenology research…

• Go to the next section of this tutorial for additional resources.
Section 6: Additional Resources

Slide 1

Welcome to the Additional Resources section.

This section of the tutorial presents a list of resources for more information on phenomenological research. In addition, this section has a glossary of phenomenology terms and brief descriptions of major philosophers who have influenced the development of phenomenology.

Slide 2

In this section of the tutorial, focus on the following objectives:

- Locate additional resources on phenomenology
- Reference a glossary of terms used in phenomenology
- Identify phenomenology theorists to explore for further information

Slide 3

Seminal Works in Phenomenology

Here is a list of seminal works in phenomenology:

Philosophical Foundations


Slide 4

Seminal Works in Phenomenology (Continued)

Here is a list of seminal works in phenomenology: (Continued)

Phenomenology as Method

Slide 5

Summary

In summary, phenomenology is collection and analysis of people’s perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon. Phenomenology originated as a philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and evolved into a variety of approaches. Two main traditions commonly in practice today include descriptive (or transcendental) and interpretive phenomenology.

Appropriate research topics for phenomenology involve questions that consider how and why people do what they do, or how they feel or interact with a phenomenon. Since the goal of a phenomenology is getting depth, no breadth, on human perceptions, sample sizes are small, typically ranging from 5 and 15 participants. The researcher must be careful to avoid bias when collecting data and follow general ethical considerations that apply to human subject research.

Slide 6

Summary (Continued)

Phenomenological data must capture individuals’ responses to a phenomenon in their own words. Appropriate ways to collect data include interviews, focus groups, journals, and open-ended questionnaires. Data analysis involves reviewing the data, identifying themes, and synthesizing the results. Techniques will vary based on the type of phenomenological study and its purpose.

To ensure the quality of a phenomenological study, researchers should be sure to record interviews and collect enough data, as well as use strategies such as triangulation and member-checking.

Slide 7

Resources on How to do a Phenomenology

Here are resources on how to do a phenomenology:


Slide 8

Resources on How to do a Phenomenology (Continued)
Here are resources on how to do a phenomenology: (Continued)


**Slide 9**

**Examples of Phenomenology Issues**

Here are the phenomenology articles used as examples in this tutorial:


**Slide 10**

**Resources on Qualitative Methods**

Here are resources on qualitative methods:


**Slide 11**

**Glossary of Phenomenology Terms**
Here is a list of terms you may see as you explore phenomenology in more depth:

**Intentionality** – the disposition of human consciousness toward the world; the basis for the idea that all human thinking is thinking about something.

**Noema** – the phenomenon that is experienced.

**Noesis** – the way in which the phenomenon is experienced; how it is perceived, processed, either consciously or at an intuitive level.

**Epoché** – freedom from suppositions; bracketing.

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**Slide 12**

**Glossary of Phenomenology Terms (Continued)**

Here is a list of terms you may see as you explore phenomenology in more depth: (Continued)

**Phenomenological Reduction** – repeated reflection and description of a phenomenon, until the experience of it is understood with meaning; focusing on the essence or nature of the phenomenon by drilling past the perceptions.

**Imaginative Variation** – varying perspectives and frames of reference; trying to understand the why behind the differences in comments; this is similar to examination of discrepant cases to understand why; in phenomenology, you do this to try to understand what to include in the essence.

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**Slide 13**

**Phenomenology Theorists**

Here is a list of major phenomenology theorists to explore further:

**Edmund Husserl** – While phenomenology existed in practice and in various forms prior to the beginning of the 20th century, Husserl was the first to formally conceptualize it, defining phenomenology as “the science of the essence of consciousness” as experienced from the first-person perspective.

**Martin Heidegger** – In Being and Time (1927), Heidegger set forth his own ideas about phenomenology. Heidegger believed that we frame everything based on what we know. Rather than examine our experience by bracketing, we should examine it in context of our relationship to the world. As a result, Heidegger's phenomenology is more interpretive in nature.

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**Slide 14**

**Phenomenology Theorists (Continued)**

Here is a list of major phenomenology theorists to explore further: (Continued)

**Jean-Paul Sartre** – In Being and Nothingness (1943), Sartre developed his ideas about phenomenological ontology, a study of the consciousness of being. He defined the self as a series of freely chosen acts of consciousness. His phenomenology late evolved into his philosophy of existentialism.
Maurice Merleau-Ponty – In Phenomenology of Perception (1945), Merleau-Ponty draws upon the views of his predecessors to develop a vision of phenomenology that focuses on the role of the body in human experience.

Slide 15

Welcome to the Evaluation section.

Please go to https://waldenir.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1NwVAtCGkqvgol to complete an evaluation of this course. Your feedback is appreciated.

Please go to http://waldenir.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_019Rp34Q2LB8vju to complete an