

Trusted Advisor Relationships of Executive Women in the Corporate World: The Phenomenological Approach and Beyond

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Introduction

- Phenomenology
- Study on Executive Women and Trusted Advisors (this only requires sentence capitalization)

A Word on Phenomenology

- Human instrument in qualitative inquiry - central theme of the 9th TQR Conference
- Qualitative **Inquiry (lowercase)** - responsible decision making regarding the who, what, where, when, why and how of the phenomenon
- Phenomenology from Husserl to Giorgi and Moustakas
- Giorgi (2008) raised concerns about phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and generalization in descriptive qualitative reporting

Executive Women and Trusted Advisors

- According to Wasylyshyn (2015) insert comma trusted advisor relationships have become indispensable to organizations. These relationships transcends (transcend) coaching and mentoring dyads.
- Such relationships may have benefitted executive women in their career building and advancement.
- Research Question: What is the lived experience of having a trusted advisor for female corporate executives?

Methodology

- Data Collection
- Data Analysis

Data Collection

- Nine executive women from male-dominated industries were interviewed by asking only the modified (still unclear on how it was modified, perhaps you should say “variation of”? Address this in paper too.) research question
- “In your own words and with as much detail as you can, please tell me about a time in your career as a senior corporate official that you had to rely on a person or persons for advice or guidance pertaining to your work or career?”
- The prepared guiding questions were not utilized during the interview

Data Analysis

- A wealth of information
- Complete overwhelm
- Sifting through the reams of transcribed data in search of meaning units. (delete period)

Phenomenological Reduction

- Issues
- Solutions

Phenomenological Reduction - Issues

- Collected between 75 and 150 meaning units per participant
- Themes were very varied
- Individual and composite rich textural descriptions

Phenomenological Reduction – Solutions

- Sought a method to facilitate drastic data reduction
- Repeatedly revisited (a description of?) what constituted a meaning unit
- Narrowed clusters of meaning
- Criteria (you really only have one criterion here) for useable themes – those common to all nine participants were considered useful
- Individual and composite rich textural descriptions

Imaginative Variation

- Issues
- Solutions

Imaginative Variation - Issues

- Identify structures to vary possible meanings, perspectives, and fantasies – putting the ego back after epoche
- Created very lengthy individual and composite structural descriptions
- Structural decisions problematic and eventually opted for universal structures such as space, time, self, and self and others
- Questions regarding essence –
 - Define essence
 - Is it the common elements experienced by all nine or was it a synthesis of the typical experience as it played out for all nine women?
 - Is this the definition of essence universally held by qualitative researchers and scholars or might there be some ambiguity?
- For this study a combined distilled description was used

Imaginative Variation - Solutions

- Employed universal structures according to Moustakas – to facilitate possible meanings, perspectives, and fantasies
- Universal structures space, time, self, self and others were deemed adequate to facilitate structural descriptions
- Questions regarding essence
 - Was it the common elements experienced by all nine or was it a synthesis of the typical experience as it played out for all nine women?
- Opted for combined distilled description

Dilemmas and Lessons Learned

- Other Dilemmas
- Lessons Learned

Other Dilemmas

- Sheer volume (more than 500 pages in writing and 1200 meaning units) - Series of compromises
- Reasons for overwhelming quantity of data?
- Challenge marrying practice and theory, specifically the philosophical approach of Husserl through the Moustakas method
- Challenge to make philosophical approach relevant in a business environment

Lessons learned

- Keep the research question typed out and taped up
- Measure every meaning unit according to (it's not really "according to," but "as relevant to." the research question
- Be prepared to apply patience and read and reread and write and rewrite many times over.
- This methodology is about an in-depth connection to the phenomenon
- Question: In retrospect the question arises whether the uncovering of this type of qualitative information might have been reported more effectively in a different qualitative methodology

Food for Thought

- Might a different methodology have done more justice to the wealth of information provided in the interviews (Didn't you just say this on the previous slide?)
- How appropriate is transcendental phenomenology for business and corporate settings?

Discussion and Questions

References

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