



# Phenomenology as Qualitative Research: A Critical Analysis of Meaning Attribution (Routledge Advances in Research Methods)

*John Paley*

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Phenomenology originated as a novel way of doing philosophy early in the twentieth century. In the writings of Husserl and Heidegger, regarded as its founders, it was a non-empirical kind of philosophical enquiry. Although this tradition has continued in a variety of forms, 'phenomenology' is now also used to denote an empirical form of qualitative research (PQR), especially in health, psychology and education. However, the methods adopted by researchers in these disciplines have never been subject to detailed critical analysis; nor have the methods advocated by methodological writers who are regularly cited in the research literature.

This book examines these methods closely, offering a detailed analysis of worked-through examples in three influential textbooks by Giorgi, van Manen, and Smith, Flowers and Larkin. Paley argues that the methods described in these texts are radically under-specified, and suggests alternatives to PQR as an approach to qualitative research, particularly the use of interview data in the construction of models designed to explain phenomena rather than merely describe or interpret them. This book also analyses, and aims to develop, the implicit theory of 'meaning' found in PQR writings. The author establishes an account of 'meaning' as an inference marker, and explores the methodological implications of this view.

This book evaluates the methods used in phenomenology-as-qualitative-research, and formulates a more fully theorised alternative. It will appeal to researchers and students in the areas of health, nursing, psychology, education, public health, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy and logic.

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