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A Comparison of Phenomenological Studies Carried out in Türkiye and the US

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
Phenomenological inquiry, a prominent qualitative research paradigm, has gained momentum in recent years, particularly within educational studies. Despite numerous studies mapping qualitative research or adopting phenomenological designs, comparing the national and international studies utilizing phenomenological design remains under-researched. This study addresses this gap by reviewing 10 theses and dissertations employing phenomenological inquiry, with five conducted in Türkiye and five in the US. The inclusion criteria for the studies were adopting a phenomenological research design and having an educational field of interest. No specific timeline or context was set for the inclusion criteria of the studies. The content analysis revealed the similarities and differences between Turkish and American studies in terms of research design, research questions, participant selection, data collection tools, and data analysis. The results showed that both sets of studies had research questions focusing on "what" and "how." Both sets of studies employed purposeful or criterion sampling, along with semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. Data analysis consistently involved coding transcriptions from interviews. The review concludes by emphasizing the potential benefits of this comparative analysis for novice researchers and graduate students undertaking phenomenological studies.	

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Türkiye ve Abd'de Yürütülen Fenomenolojik Çalışmaların Karşılaştırması

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ÖZET	MAKALE BİLGİSİ
Fenomenolojik araştırma, özellikle eğitim çalışmalarında son yıllarda ivme kazanan bir nitel araştırma paradigması olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Nitel araştırmaları haritalayan veya fenomenolojik tasarımları benimseyen birçok çalışma olmasına rağmen, fenomenolojik tasarımı kullanan ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmaların karşılaştırılması yeterince çalışılmamıştır. Bu çalışma, fenomenolojik araştırma tasarımını benimseyen ve eğitim alanında faaliyet gösteren 10 tez ve doktora tezini inceleyerek bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmalardan beşi Türkiye'de, beşi ise ABD'de gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma kapsamına alınan çalışmaların kabul kriterleri, fenomenolojik bir araştırma tasarımını benimsemek ve eğitim alanında faaliyet göstermekti. Çalışmaların kabul kriterlerine özel bir zaman çerçevesi veya bağlam belirlenmemiştir. İçerik analizi, Türk ve Amerikan çalışmaları arasındaki benzerlikleri ve farkları, araştırma tasarımı, araştırma soruları, katılımcı seçimi, veri toplama araçları ve veri analizi açısından ortaya koymuştur. Sonuçlar, her iki çalışma setinin de "ne" ve "nasıl" odaklı araştırma sorularına sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Her iki çalışma seti de amaçlı veya kriter bazlı örnekleme ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeleri temel veri toplama yöntemi olarak kullanmıştır. Veri analizi, tutarlı bir şekilde görüşmelerden alınan transkripsiyonların kodlanmasını içermiştir. İnceleme, bu karşılaştırmalı analizin fenomenolojik çalışmalar yapan yeni araştırmacılar ve lisansüstü öğrenciler için potansiyel faydalarını vurgulayarak sona ermektedir.	*Alınma Tarihi*:27.01.2024 *Çevrimiçi yayınlanma tarihi:* 31.03.2024
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Introduction

Depending on the type of problem that needs to be researched, researchers adopt either a qualitative or quantitative way. This choice shapes the procedures to be followed while undertaking a research study. In line with the aim of the paper, qualitative research design will be the focus of the researcher.

According to Merriam (2009, p. 5), qualitative research is "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible". Qualitative research design yields the researcher a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the phenomenon created by the participants (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2018). In qualitative studies data is gathered in a naturalistic way, researchers observe participants in their natural settings (Creswell, 2009). This type of data gathering allows researchers to observe participants in the environment in which the issue or problem occurs and to observe how participants interact with their environment. Naturalistic data gathering also allows researchers to capture the emotions and behaviors of participants that are not available in other data collection tools. Hence, data become more useful and valued thanks to its natural context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Questions starting with "how" rather than "why" or "to what extent" are asked (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) in qualitative studies and researchers strive to be open to the possibility of discovering unexpected insights and new directions for the research. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) and they are often interested in peoples' understanding of the context of the research topic and they create meaningful interpretations.

As a leading qualitative research type, phenomenology is exploring how people understand and give meaning to a precise experience (van Manen, 2014). Patton (2015, p. 288) points out that phenomenology pursues to figure out the "meaning, structure, and essence, of the lived experience" of a phenomenon for the people. Phenomenological research "is an attempt to deal with inner experiences unprobed in everyday life" (Merriam, 2002, p. 7). Patton (2015, p. 115) indicated that phenomenology focuses on "exploring how human beings make sense of an experience and transform experience into consciousness". Since phenomenology may be considered as a good starting point for novice researchers (Creswell, 2013), this study is hoped to be beneficial for graduate students and novice researchers. Although this is a need, very few studies analyzing phenomenological research design were conducted in Türkiye. To the researcher's knowledge, no studies compared national and international studies utilizing phenomenological research design. Further research is necessary in this area to fill gaps in understanding what the similarities or differences are between the national and international studies adopting phenomenological research design within the literature. Therefore, this study has the potential to expand the literature relevant to the research questions. The main purpose of this research is to reveal the differences or similarities in researchers' methodological tendencies in their master's theses and doctoral dissertations. In this sense, the research questions of this paper are as follows:

1)What are the similarities between phenomenological studies carried out in Türkiye and the US regarding their research design, research questions, participants and sampling methods, data collection tools, and data analysis?

2)What are the differences between phenomenological studies carried out in Türkiye and the US research design, research questions, participants and sampling methods, data collection tools, and data analysis?

Qualitative Research Design

Creswell (1998, p. 99) defines qualitative research as "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting".

Qualitative research is used to assess attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and underlying motivations and to understand the context and meaning of social situations. For that reason, psychologists, educators, sociologists, and anthropologists mostly use qualitative methods for their studies (Van Maanen, 1983). "Qualitative research focuses on exploring the meaning and understanding of a particular topic or phenomenon (Thomas, 1989). The researcher is looking to understand the meaning, context, and experience of the phenomenon from the perspective of the people living it. The researcher is not looking to generalize the results, but rather to uncover the nuances, perspectives, and meanings associated with the phenomenon (Patton,1990).

While quantitative studies have a specific matter that can be assessed in numbers, in qualitative studies, there are complex subjective realities such as emotions, values, or beliefs based upon an individual's lived experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). It can offer insights that are difficult to gain from more quantitatively focused approaches, such as surveys and experiments, and can provide a more holistic understanding of the topics being explored. The phenomenological approach is particularly useful for exploring topics that are difficult to measure and quantify numerically, such as emotions, values, and beliefs. Qualitative research is an important tool for gaining insights that may be overlooked through quantitative research methods. As Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 23) stated ''qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon''. Qualitative research is used to investigate the relationships between people and their environment and to understand how people make sense of their lives. (Creswell, 2014). It can also help to uncover underlying assumptions and ideologies that shape people's perspectives and actions. Qualitative methodology is an umbrella term consisting of grounded theory, case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and biography (Creswell, 1998).

Phenomenological Inquiry

The objective of the phenomenological approach is ''to understand meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation'' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 9). According to van Manen (2014), phenomenological studies interpret the results rather than explain them. The purpose of phenomenological research is to understand the perspective of others and determine the patterns that arose from the experience of the participants (van Manen, 2018). In a phenomenological case study, it is imperative to focus on a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and the lived experience of the participant. The lived experience reflects on both the active and passive direct experiences of participants as a result of the case.

It is granted for researchers to "describe the achievements, attitudes, behaviors, or other traits of a group or subject" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 217). Overall, the phenomenological approach can be a valuable tool for researchers who are looking to uncover and understand complex issues in depth. By allowing researchers to gain access to the subjective experiences of participants, it can provide a unique and valuable perspective that can supplement existing literature (Creswell, 2009). The goal is to use observations of the individuals to understand the broader phenomenon and the experiences of those affected by it (Creswell, 2003).

There are three different approaches adopted by phenomenologists: descriptive (transcendental) which is represented by Van Manen and Martin Heidegger; hermeneutic (interpretative) which is represented by Husserl, Giorgi, and Moustakas who follows Husserl the founder of phenomenology and existential (Creswell, 2013). Existential approach is consistent with hermeneutic approach. The main difference between descriptive and hermeneutic phenomenology is concerning the researcher's role. According to the hermeneutic view, the researcher can interpret the phenomenon rather than just describe it. Van Manen (2016, p. 26) indicates that ''the researcher mediates between interpreted meanings and the thing toward which the interpretations point''. It is also claimed that the researcher can't get rid of all the preassumptions, prejudice, and preconceived conceptions and all descriptions are interpretations at last (Van Manen, 2016).

On the other hand, hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the description rather than interpretations of the experiences shared by participants (Creswell, 2013). Moustakas (1994) presented a four-step framework for data analysis as follows: bracketing, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. According to Moustaka's (1994) guidelines, epoche, which is s Greek word, is the first step. It means having no judgment prior assumptions or prejudice and approaching the phenomena with an open mind and fresh way.

In that way, the ultimate goal which is to reach the essence of the phenomena can be achieved (Creswell, 2013).

Methodology

To achieve the main purpose of the study, content analysis as a qualitative research method was mainly adopted in this current study. For this purpose, five national and five international theses and dissertations were analyzed. National theses and dissertations, which were analyzed in this paper, were obtained from "the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center," which is an online platform storing and organizing the studies and allowing users to search for and access them. All of the national studies were Master's theses. Given its reputation as a comprehensive database for educational journals, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) was utilized as the search engine to access international studies. All of the international studies were PhD dissertations. A criterion sampling technique was used to choose the studies. The criteria for the studies were adopting a phenomenological research design and having an educational field of interest. Apart from these two criteria, the studies were chosen randomly to prevent selection bias. No specific timeline or context was set for the inclusion criteria of the studies. Content analysis technique was used to analyze the studies. The theses and dissertations were analyzed by focusing on five different criteria: research questions, sampling method, data collection tool, data analysis, and trustworthiness issues namely reliability and validity assurances. In terms of ethical considerations, no ethical approval was required for this study. All the theses and dissertations examined in this study were openly accessible, making them publicly available data.

Findings and Discussion

Turupcu (2014) explored early childhood teachers' views on observation as an informal assessment method for young children's education. There were four questions addressed in the study, three with 'what' and one with 'how'. The participants of the study were six early childhood teachers working at a private kindergarten in Ankara. Convenience sampling was used in the study. All participants were female young teachers who were graduates of Early Childhood Education at different universities and they had at least 5 years of experience in their profession. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. The first version of the interview was checked by two experts in the field. The required changes were made according to their suggestions. To revise items in terms of ambiguity, sequence, and relevancy, pilot studies were conducted with two teachers. The final interview contained 12 main questions. In addition to interviews, observation was used as the second data collection tool. The observation sheet as a guide was completed, and it was revised by two experts in the field and the final form was benefited during observation. Observation sessions were also audio-recorded upon permission. These recordings were transcribed and

analyzed by a research assistant from the department to reduce the researcher bias to enhance reliability and validity. The data was transcribed and coded by the researcher. Data was analyzed using three C's techniques (Coding to Categorizing Concepts) suggested by Lichtman (2016). During this data analysis procedure, there was a second coder to reduce the bias and enhance the validity of categories. The second coder was an expert from the field, who knew the whole process of this study. Finally, the researcher made a last introspective meeting and the participants' interpretations of their views and actions were obtained. These meetings were audio-taped. Thereby, the member-checking was used to meet the criteria for the study's trustworthiness. One of the limitations of the study was the limited number of participants. Observation sessions were done with just three teachers. Also, male teachers' views were neglected since all the participants were female. For further research, male teachers might be included in the study and the study might be conducted in other cities as well apart from Ankara.

Çetin (2022) aimed to gain insight into the lived experiences of EFL instructors, professional development unit members, and directors in online teacher professional development (OTPD) programs during emergency remote teaching (ERT). The study had one research question with 'how'. A total of 18 participants, six directors, six PDU members, and six instructors at six different foundation universities in Ankara, Türkiye participated in the study. The study adopted criterion sampling from purposeful sampling strategies. All the participants had master's degrees. Semi-structured interviews, conducted and recorded on *Zoom* were used as data collection tools. Three different interviews depending on a comprehensive literature review were created. Five experts gave feedback on the interview questions. Four interviews were conducted for the piloting process. Listing limitations and weaknesses in addition to the bias and assumptions the researcher provided confirmability of the study. Moreover, triangulation of data from multiple participants and multiple institutions was utilized to promote the trustworthiness of the study. Moreover, member checking was beneficial to increase the credibility of the study. Finally, two research fellows (holding PhD) assessed the steps of the study externally which also bolstered the trustworthiness of the study. Data were analyzed according to the six steps formed by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009): 1. Reading and Re-reading, 2. Initial Noting, 3. Developing Emerging Themes,4. Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes, 5. Moving the Next Case, 6. Looking for Patterns Across Cases. MAXQDA 22 which is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software program was utilized in this study. Conducting the study only in foundation universities might be argued as a limitation of the study. Therefore, further research can be conducted in state universities as well.

Yiğit (2022) investigated the views and classroom practices of early childhood teachers regarding behavioral problems in children with divorced parents. The participants were 15 early childhood teachers working in state early childhood education institutions in Düzce, Türkiye. Criterion sampling was used to select the participants. The study had six main research questions, five with 'what' and one with 'how'. Data were collected through semi-

structured interviews and observation. To ensure the internal validity of the interviews the researcher benefitted from three experts' opinions. Moreover, to test the intelligibility of the questions, piloting the interview was conducted with three early childhood teachers. After the expert opinion and the piloting, the interview had 10 open-ended questions. After the interviews were completed, five teachers (among 15) were randomly selected for observation. The researcher aimed to reveal whether the teachers' opinions on the research topic were consistent with their class practices. There was a second observer to avoid researcher bias and enhance the reliability of the process. To manage the observation process, observation form, checklists, and anecdotal records were prepared. Three experts' opinions were received for these forms. For data analysis, the researcher used the process suggested by Creswell (2007) which consists of transcription, coding, researcher diary writing, and category creation. The researcher benefitted from an inter-coder (researcher and an expert) agreement to ensure reliability. As a suggestion for further research, participants from different cities could be included in the study.

Kürkçü (2021) examined curriculum development practices in Türkiye through experiences and perceptions of outstanding curriculum academics who participated in curriculum studies during the Republican Period. The study had three research questions; two with 'how' and one with 'what'. Data were collected through primary education curriculum documents and online semi-structured interviews. A purposeful sampling method was used to select the participants who were 7 professors (from different cities and universities) involved in curriculum studies. Firstly, a historical document analysis was done to illustrate the improvement of the curriculum studies and secondly, scholars' experiences and perceptions regarding curriculum studies were explored through interviews. Before conducting the interview, an expert (a professor) opinion was received to prevent data collector bias. Moreover, a summary of the curriculum development in Türkiye which was prepared by the researcher and checked by an expert was provided to the participants. Because of pandemic-related traveling restrictions, the interviews were conducted online through *Zoom* and *Skype*. The curriculum was analyzed through document analysis techniques while the interviews were treated with content analysis. After transcribing the interviews the transcriptions were emailed to participants to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. MAXQDA 20.2.0 was utilized in data analysis for its feasibility. Themes were confirmed and the relationship between the themes was identified. To promote credibility of the study data triangulation (documents and interviews) was utilized. The study is restricted to only the primary education curriculum, further studies could also examine the secondary education curriculum to gather in-depth data related to the changes in the curriculum.

Güneyli (2021) searched EFL instructors' experiences of their roles and responsibilities in higher education concerning their job satisfaction. The study had one question starting with 'what'. A purposeful sampling method was adopted to select participants who were 15 instructors (2 male, 13 female). Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools. Two pilot interviews were conducted to revise the items and make changes if necessary. The

final version of the interview including 8 questions was shared with an expert to eliminate the researcher's assumptions. Because of the pandemic, the interviews were conducted through *Zoom.* The researcher transcribed the recordings. To analyze the data, the researcher adopted the Moustakas' (1994) guidelines for phenomenal analysis. These guidelines include steps such as horizontalization, meaning units, thematic portrayals of the experience, comparing multiple data sources to validate the invariant constituents, individual textural descriptions, Individual structural descriptions, composite structural descriptions, and finally textural descriptions and composite structural descriptions are integrated. During data analysis, the researcher avoided judgments and opinions and enhanced the objectivity of the study which promoted the trustworthiness of the study. Additional further research could be undertaken at state universities to compare the results. Moreover, to gather more detailed data about the issue, other data collection tools such as observation or field notes might be used in further studies.

To have a better understanding of the studies' methodology and *research* designs, the methodological summary of the studies carried out in Türkiye is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Phenomenological studies carried out in Türkiye*

Author	Research Questions	Sampling Method	Data Coll. Tool	Data Analysis	Trustworthiness
Turupcu (2014)	What (3) How (1)	Convenience	Semi-structured Interview Observation	Three C's Technique Lichman (2016)	member-checking introspective meetings second coder. Second observer
Çetin (2014)	How (1)	Criterion Purposeful	Semi-structured Interview	six steps Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009)	Audit trail Limitations Assumptions Thick description triangulation. Member checking, external audits. Participants view
Yiğit (2022)	What (5) How (1)	Criterion	Semi-structured Interview Observation	process Creswell (2007)	expert opinion pilot study member checking. inter-coder agreement second observer
Kürkçü (2021)	What (1) How (2)	Purposeful	Documents Interview	Document Analysis MAXODA 20.2	thick description data triangulation e-mail to participants

| Güneyli (2021) | What (1) | Purposeful | Semi-structured Interview | Guidelines Moustakas (1994) | epoche member checking peer debriefing, transcriptions to the participants. |

Phenomenological Studies Carried Out in the US

Donnelly (2020) explored the perceptions of the teachers, students, and parents during and after the completion of the MindUp mindfulness intervention. Six research questions were addressed in the study three with 'what', two with 'how' and one was a yes/no question. There were eight total participants (including three students, two teachers, and three parents) who completed the semi-structured interviews which were used as the main source of data collection. The other data were collected through the attendance data of the student participants relative to the days (15) that the MindUp program was taught in the classroom. In the study, the data were collected from three different role groups (students, teachers, and parents) to achieve triangulation. The study used purposeful sampling and selected a specific program for review within one particular school. Also, criterion sampling was utilized for the initial selection of potential candidates. Another layer of this study was the experience of the curriculum specifically with ESL students. Based on the top three languages (Spanish, Somali, and Albanian), the school was allocated bilingual instructional assistants to support communication with these specific populations. Students aged 10 and above, and in fourth and fifth grade, who were receiving English as a Second Language services as well as MindUp qualified to be participants in the study. After students received all 15 lessons from the MindUP program, the researcher set up qualitative interviews with the teachers who implemented the program as well as ELL students and parents who opted in for the interview process. Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed to look for themes in the data. The patterns were determined through a coding process. The outline provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis was followed during data analysis. Triangulation of data improved the validity and reliability of the study. Interviewing students in different grades presented an opportunity to explore the experiences of the content taught by different teachers. In addition, interviews by both teachers allowed a perspective of the content as well as the experiences of the ESL students in their classroom. Interviewing parents added a third layer of perspective to see if the experiences of each child were able to be validated in a holistic view. However, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is a delimitation of the study. The researcher is an administrator in the school that was the setting for the study. Therefore, the participants might have been unwilling to share some concerns or negative aspects of the curriculum. Moreover, the language barrier was another limitation of the study.

DeArmas (2015) explored elementary school principals' experiences with professional development in the area of instructional leadership. Both research questions addressed in the

study started with 'what'. The researcher used purposeful sampling. The participants of the study were eight principals. The data was gathered through structured interviews. The interview questions had twenty open-ended and follow-up questions. The expert committee gave feedback on the overall flow of the interview. Field tests were conducted with two principles to determine whether the interview schedule was serving the aims of the study. The interviews were conducted with six elementary school principals. The participants' ages were between 40 and 60. They had four to twelve years of experience. They were all female. All of them had Masters degrees and four had doctoral degrees. Face-to-face interview sessions were audiotaped for transcription. The researcher was then able to review the data multiple times to identify meaningful patterns and themes during the coding process. Notes were taken and recurring words and phrases were highlighted. Categories were created to identify common themes. The researcher and an expert panel in the field coded the data separately to ensure that the analysis was precise and that the actual results were reported correctly. Thereby, inter-rater reliability of the study was ensured. Following specific steps also enhanced the reliability of the study. Additionally, the experts reviewed the interview questions and offered suggestions to promote content validity and reliability. Also, the field test provided information on the validity of the interview schedule. Moreover, during the participant selection the expert committee, chairperson, and researcher reviewed each participant and decided appropriateness for the study. Thereby, another threat (researcher bias) to validity was hindered. Additionally, the validity of this study was also supported by the triangulation of data (multiple interviews).

Thomasian (2020) explored the perceptions of the administrators regarding the interpretation and implementation of federal and state policies concerning the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom and identified additional factors high school administrators think to affect implementation. Three of the research questions of the study started with 'what' and one of them with 'how'. The sample population was chosen criteria-based and considered purposeful. The researcher conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with participants. Before the interviews were conducted the questions were sent to an expert panel who were knowledgeable and experienced in the research topic. This ensured the validity of the data collection tool. Moreover, according to the "review by inquiry participants," providing interviewees with the transcripts of their interviews allowed them to revisit their responses and ensure that their responses were accurately captured and represented in the analysis. This process strengthened the quality and validity of the study. Moreover, before conducting the interviews, a field test was conducted and it was observed by colleagues familiar with the study who were experts in qualitative research. The observing researchers and the pilot test participant provided feedback to increase the reliability of the researcher as an interviewer not to influence participants. Moreover, questions were revised based on the feedback. A recording device was utilized during the interviews, which provided more accurate records than a written account or researcher's memory. The researcher had an outside transcription company. NVivo Qualitative Software was used to code the transcriptions. Codes were classified and sorted to look for patterns and themes in the data. To

increase reliability, an intercoder technique was employed by the researcher. An additional researcher separately coded and analyzed 10% of the data which is a significant step in validating the accuracy of the research results. The coders discussed the discrepancies until a consensus was reached.

Jennifer Lyn (2010) explored the older adults' experiences and reflected on their understanding of writing and the workshop in general. Three questions were addressed in the study, two with 'how' and one with 'what'. The participants of the study were ten older adults, ages 62 to 83 with different degrees of experience in writing. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants about their experiences both as a writer and as a member of a writing workshop. Themes of meaning were identified through phenomenological analysis methods. Transcription was done by the researcher. All noises and interruptions, lowered voices or laughter were transcribed. Participants were then given the chance to approve the transcripts before they were finalized. This process ensured that the transcripts were accurate and that the participants were comfortable with their content. To determine the "unit of meaning," most related and relevant to the research study data were determined. Once units of meaning or significant statements were identified, the researcher employed the process of horizontalization by giving the same initial weight, what Husserl called the "Horizons" (Moustakas, 1994). These "Horizons" are a list of nonrepetitive, non-overlapping statements. The researcher then practiced reduction and themes were then determined. Themes were discovered and clustered into groups according to the research questions. A textural description of the phenomenon that was experienced was created.

Schuemann (2014) explored students' experiences and perceptions about the university presidency. Both of the research questions of the study were with 'how'. 10 college students participated in the study. Criterion sampling was used and two small-sized, public, four-year, and primarily undergraduate teaching universities were selected. First purposeful sampling was utilized to select organizationally involved students. Next, a modified snowball sampling was chosen to reach more potential participants. Semi-structured interviews for approximately 45-60 minutes were conducted. The interviews were field tested with five students to ensure clarity with the selected questions. The data reduction process began with open coding and interpretive memoing. The researcher continued to refine the coding system throughout the research process until categorical saturation was achieved. Once saturation was achieved, the researcher conducted a final analysis to synthesize the data and draw conclusions from the research.

To have a better understanding of the studies' methodology and research designs, the methodological summary of the studies carried out in the US is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Phenomenological studies carried out in the USA*

Author	Research Questions	Sampling Method	Data Coll. Tool	Data Analysis	Trustworthiness

Donnelly (2020)	What (3) How (2)	Purposeful	Semi-structured Interview Attendance	Coding thematic analysis Braun and Clarke (2006)	Triangulation description
DeArmas (2015)	What (2)	Purposeful	structured Interview	Coding, Categorization, Themes	triangulation expert committee, second coder field test
Thomasian (2020)	What (3) How (1)	Criteria based purposeful	Semi-structured Interview	Coding, NVivo Patterns, Themes	"review by inquiry participants,"
Lynn (2020)	What (1) How (2)		Semi-structured Interview	Horizontalization Moustakas (1994)	pilot test Fellow observer mechanical recording device review by inquiry
Schumann (2014)	How (2)	Criterion Purposeful Snowball	Semi-structured Interview	Coding, memoing, thematic units	Peer review Member checking thick-rich descriptions.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to compare phenomenological studies carried out in Türkiye and the US. To align with the purpose of the study five national and five international studies utilizing phenomenological research design were analyzed. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The current review revealed that the theses and dissertations conducted in Türkiye and the US had similarities in terms of research questions asking "what" and "how". Moreover, both national and international studies used either purposeful or criterion sampling methods while selecting the participants of the study. Yet, one national study (Turupcu,2014) used convenience sampling, and one international study (Schumann, 2014) used a snowball sampling method. Furthermore, based on the studies, it is apparent that both studies conducted in Türkiye and the studies conducted in the US utilized semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool. If needed to mention a single difference two of the national studies (Turupcu (2014) and Yiğit (2022) used observation and Kürkçü (2021) used curriculum documents in addition to interviews. However, apart from Donnelly (2020) who also used attendance as a data collection tool, all the studies conducted in the US used semi-structured interviews to gather data. As for data analysis, it is seen that all the studies started analyzing the data by coding the transcriptions provided by the interviews. The coding process was followed by identifying the patterns to categorize them and finally to reach thematic units or themes. However, the studies adopted different steps or guidelines suggested by different researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Lichman, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) in the field.

Recommendations

This study has primarily focused on analyzing 10 theses and dissertations conducted in Turkey and the United States. However, to enrich our understanding of the phenomenological studies conducted in regions beyond Turkey and the United States. Investigating how different cultural backgrounds influence individuals' experiences and perceptions can offer valuable insights into the universality or cultural specificity of the phenomenon. Researchers may consider examining phenomenological research conducted in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and other regions to capture a broader spectrum of human experiences.

Moreover, while phenomenological research design has been the primary focus of this study, there is merit in exploring other qualitative research methodologies. Grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, and other qualitative approaches provide unique lenses through which to examine phenomena. Future researchers are encouraged to diversify their methodological approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Overall, it is hoped that future research endeavors will transcend geographical and cultural boundaries to foster a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. By embracing diverse perspectives and methodologies, scholars can enrich the body of knowledge in this field and offer valuable insights applicable across different contexts. This expanded approach will not only benefit graduate students and novice researchers but also contribute to the advancement of scholarship on a global scale.

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