Unheard Voices of Customers Toward Services and Practices of Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (Esamelco)

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Abstract: This phenomenological study was the enhancement of a certain scheme related to the CASR Thematic Way for continual improvisation on such experiences in Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (SAMELCO) services, which can be an avenue to sustain great effort and, in some way, or another improve recognized practices. This paper could also require some future related research studies which can involve quantitative or mixed method or research when it comes of the services rendering by the electrical companies.

The Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Approach was used to exhaustively determine the specific approach to phenomenological inquiry chosen for our study is that of transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology. The purpose of descriptive phenomenology was to gain an understanding of the subjective meaning of everyday lived experience of the participants' responses in (ESAMELCO) services. The study uncovers the unheard voices on the services rendered by ESAMELCO like rotational brownouts, assessments of the customers about the effectiveness of employees on how responsive they are in times of trouble on electricity, solutions used by the ESAMELCO in case of emergencies in the company and other work – related problems, and the recommended strategy for enhancing the performance of ESAMELCO like tapping energy firm (s), coordinating with hydro plants in Eastern Samar province and collaborating to

National Grid Power Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP).

The process of Colaizzi was used in the problems currently situated in ESAMELCO as well as their customers just to provide assistance in extracting, organizing, and analyzing such narrative dataset under descriptive lived experiences of the customers. This will ensure that the suggested CASR Thematic Way will soon be implemented by the Local Government Unit officials who regulate the ESAMELCO instituted by the majority of Samarnons.

Introduction

In a highly competitive market, service-based businesses need to capitalize on any opportunity to set themselves apart from their (often very similar) competitors. While implementation, system details, and service management are all important, perhaps the best way to distinguish your business organization is to foster strong customer relationships based on the quality of your service (Mullen, 2017).

In one of the articles in the (Medallia.com) "Improve your customer experience". Happy customers drive growth. They transact more often, spend more, cost less to serve, and promote your organization to others. Contrarywise, dissatisfied customers spend less, cost more to handle complaints, and actively discourage others from doing business with you. Truly understanding your customer, and empowering your teams with this information, allows you to take the actions needed to delight customers, build loyalty, and focus on the things that matter to help your business grow.

The theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behavior as determined by the phenomena of experience, such as the performance of group of professional people who rendering services or product businesses, has been central in phenomenological studies. Even though phenomenologist seemed to have different views on particular issues, there is fairly a general agreement on their core philosophical viewpoints as a belief that the consciousness is central and understanding the subjective consciousness is important. This view posits that consciousness has some specific structures which are gate ways to gain direct knowledge through reflections. Perhaps, these philosophical stand points guide the researchers in understanding the phenomena at conscious level of its appearance that how things appear directly to us rather than through the media of cultural and symbolic structures (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, description of events as they appear as a method of knowing in phenomenology is fundamental because it is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing.

Thus, this is the call to study if there is a remarkable or notable unheard statement of the customers toward the services and practices that were offered by the group of cooperatives in a specific region in the Philippines, the Samar Region. This locale has been widely used as the medium of research phenomenon particularly in the Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative or ESAMELCO. This will ensure that the professionals who are rendering services to the people must be adequately remarkable based on the said stories confessed by the Samarnons. For there were so many times that, these people in Eastern Samar were having or currently in trouble of inevitable electrical power shortages or interruptions. This is the call to descriptively pronounce the phenomenological study with the aid of the well – designed approach in modifying the descriptions of their lived experiences.

Methodology

The method to be used in this research is a qualitative form of research through the philosophical principle that following its rules for certain sample, namely the Eastern Samar customers who are currently enjoying the services of Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative or ESAMELCO.

The roots of phenomenology are related to early history, to Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, as philosophers struggled to understand phenomena (Fochtman, 2008). Phenomenology flourished in the first decade of the twentieth century under the influence of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl aimed to establish a rigorous and unbiased approach that appears to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience (Fochtman, 2008; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Phenomenology as a philosophy provides a theoretical guideline to researchers to understand phenomena at the level of subjective reality. Probably, this philosophical framework or the theory of subjective reality plays a key role in understanding the actor or the subject regarding a particular event or a phenomena relating to his/her life. The researcher can adopt interviews, observations and discussions as data collection strategies within a phenomenological method of inquiry; therefore, phenomenology has both philosophical and methodological stances. To this end, one needs to understand it from a historical and philosophical stand point.

Also, the phenomenological approach can be seen descriptively as per Collaizi's Method. There are 7 steps – method that was formulated by Colaizzi as shown below:

1. **Familiarization** – the researchers familiarize themselves with the data by reading through all the participant accounts several times. Each familiarization transcript was read several times to gain a sense of the whole

content. During this stage, any thoughts, feelings, and ideas that arose from the researchers helped to explore the phenomenon as experienced by participants themselves.

2. **Identifying Significant Statements** – the researchers identified all statements in the accounts that directly relate to the phenomenon under investigation. In this stage of analysis, significant statements and phrases pertaining to body image changes and coping strategies were extracted from each transcript. These statements were written in separate sheets and coded based on their "transcript, page, and line numbers". After extracting the significant statements form transcripts, the two researchers compared their work and reached consensus.

3. **Formulating Meanings** - the researchers identified meanings relevant to the phenomenon that arise from carefully considering the significant statements. The researcher must reflexively "bracket" their pre-suppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon as experienced (though Colaizzi recognizes that complete bracketing is never possible). Meanings were formulated from the significant statements. Each underlying meaning was coded in one category as they reflect an exhaustive description. Similarly, both researchers compared the formulated meanings with the original meanings maintaining the consistency of descriptions. However, minimal differences were found between the two researchers.

4. **Clustering Themes** - the researchers clustered the identified meanings into themes that are common across all accounts. Again, bracketing of pre-suppositions is crucial, especially to avoid any potential influence of existing theory. After having an agreement toward all formulated meanings, the process of grouping all these formulated meanings into categories that reflect a unique structure of clusters of themes was initiated. Each cluster of theme was coded to include all formulated meanings related to that group of meanings. After that, groups of clusters of themes that reflect a particular vision issue were incorporated together to form a distinctive construct of theme. Indeed, all these themes are internally convergent and externally divergent; meaning that each "formulated meaning" falls only in one theme cluster that is distinguished in meaning from other structures (Mason, 2002). Later, both researchers compared their clusters of themes and checked the accuracy of the overall thematic map along with having assistance from the expert researcher in qualitative research.

5. **Developing Exhaustive Description** - the researchers wrote a full and inclusive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all the themes

produced at Step 4. At this stage of analysis, all emergent themes were defined into an exhaustive description. After merging all study themes, the whole structure of the phenomenon "perceptions of body image changes associated with chemotherapy and coping strategies" has been extracted. Thereafter, the researchers sought an expert researcher who reviewed the findings in terms of richness and completeness to provide sufficient description and to confirm that the exhaustive description reflects the perceptions of Jordanian adolescents of their body image changes and the coping strategies. Finally, a validation to this exhaustive description was confirmed.

6. **Producing the Fundamental Structure -** the researchers condensed the detailed description down to a short, dense statement that captures just those aspects deemed essential to the phenomenon's structure. This step is a bit similar to the previous step, but no exhaustive meanings were sought. In this step a reduction of findings was done in which redundant, misused or overestimated descriptions were eradicated from the overall structure. It seems that such attempt was made to emphasize on the fundamental structure. Some amendments were applied to generate clear relationships between clusters of theme and their extracted themes, which included also eliminating some ambiguous structures that weaken the whole description.

7. **Seeking Verification of the Fundamental Structure -** the researchers returned the fundamental structure statement to all participants (or sometimes a sub-sample in more extensive studies) to ask whether it captures their experiences. They may go back and modify earlier steps in the analysis considering this feedback. This step aimed to validate study findings using "member checking" technique. It was undertaken through returning the research findings to the participants and discussing the results with them. Participants' views on the study results were obtained directly via phone calls. This step was done by the main researcher as she took the approval from the participants in advance during the first interviewing. Eventually, all participants showed their satisfaction toward these results which entirely reflect their feelings and experiences.

Phenomenology is part of constructive/interpretive paradigm that is both philology and methodology. From both philosophical and methodological stand point, phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1969) is greatly influenced by the Vancouver school of thought, which is basically rooted in descriptive phenomenology of Husserl, interpretive / hermeneutic phenomenology, constructivism (Schwandt, 1994) and Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology. The Vancouver School of doing phenomenology from methodological dimension involves seven step cyclic

processes: silence, reflection, identification, selection, interpretation, construction and verification to seek meaning from different parts of phenomena to its whole (Halldorsdottir, 2000).

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s). Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasized the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom.

Phenomenological studies make detailed comments about individual situations which do not lend themselves to direct generalization in the same way which is sometimes claimed for survey research. The development of general theories (i.e. which apply to situations beyond the participants or cases which have been studied) from phenomenological findings needs to be done transparently if it is to have validity; in particular, the reader should be able to work through from the findings to the theories and see how the researcher has arrived at his or her interpretations. This may or may not involve the researcher appearing 'in person' in the research (while this is beginning to happen in theses, academic papers and sometimes in organizational research, it is still rare in public-domain reports).

Essentially, the qualitative research has to demonstrate trustworthiness in providing rigor and strength to the study validity and reliability in all stages including data collection, data analysis and descriptions (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007; Vivar, McQueen, Whyte, & Armayor, 2007). Trustworthiness approaches; credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were undertaken throughout the study process. A number of strategies were employed to add rigor to the study such as "member checking" which was achieved by getting agreement from the participants on the emerged results (Creswell, 2003; Creswell 2009; Marshall & Rossman 2006; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). In addition, the researcher reflected her own presuppositions about the perceptions of altered body image and coping strategies using bracketing. As explained earlier, bracketing eradicates any bias inherent in researcher believes and attitudes (Creswell 2009; Marshall & Rossman

2006). Peer review of the emerging ideas through discussions with the study supervisor and the independent researcher was also done. Regarding the process of translation, all transcripts were double checked by a bilingual translator who is competent in both Arabic and English. According to Creswell (2009), using of an external auditor who reviewed the whole process of the study and performed an additional checking for coding process and analysis was also applied. Finally, cross checking of the whole analysis process was done by the research supervisor.

The eventual outcome sought from applying Colaizzi's strategy in descriptive phenomenology was to elicit an exhaustive description about the phenomenon regarding lived experience of the customers of ESAMELCO and their coping mechanisms being used to accommodate with physical changes occurred during the recommendation stages of transforming the ESAMELCO services during power interruptions. A number of significant statements and theme clusters were integrated to formulate the overall themes which describe the phenomenon thoroughly.
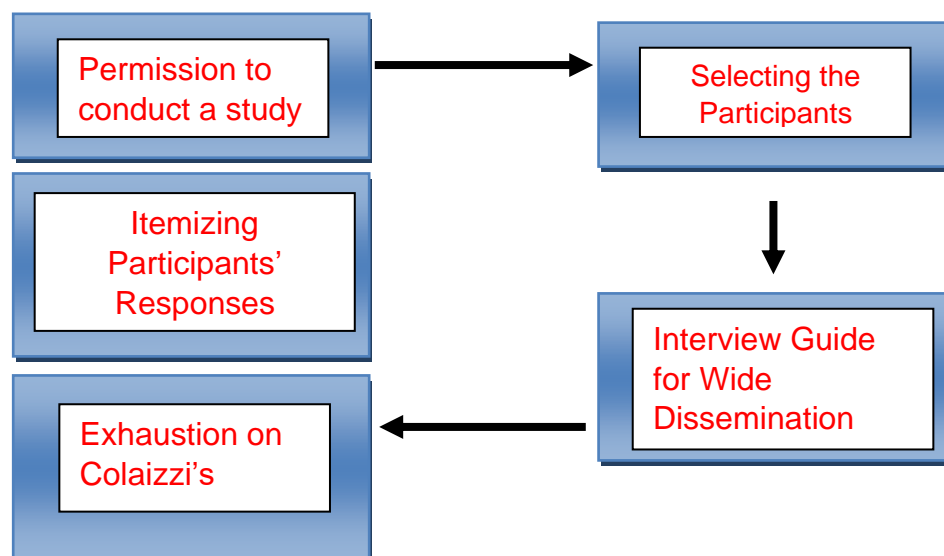
Flowchart for Methodological Procedure

Before the actual data gathering procedure, the researchers secured permission from the concerned authorities in the ESAMELCO. Upon approval, the researchers selected participants composed of customers which are purposively choose as the sampling procedure used.

For ethical consideration, the researchers made sure that the study is beneficial for the participants and will cause them no harm in any manner or form. They will

not be coerced to participate and will be given the liberty to choose not to participate in the study or decide to drop out any time they desire. Also, these participants could decide to partake without any pressure and would be free to ask questions or clarifications at any time regarding all the aspects of this study.

After every interview, the researchers started transcribing the file and seclude all the answers in different columns to itemize the participants' responses; hence transcribing is more straightforward, and the data gathered were easily explained.

Results and Discussion Section

Below are the seven step summarized stories of the purposive participants in forming the Colaizzi's Approach of descriptive phenomenological approach. This is a kind of exhaustive thematic analysis through proper documentations of the participants' responses under the confidentiality wise methods.

THE 7 STEP COLLAIZI'S METHOD FOR DESCRITPIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY	RESEARCHERS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Familiarization	The researchers knew already the problems when it comes to the performances of the ESAMELCO employees as well as their services to their customers. Majority of these customers said that there are some challenges in the electric services like sudden brown outs, lights seem to be Christmas lights because of its power interruptions yet the employees of ESAMELCO were doing their best to solve the problem on electricity.
Identifying Significant Statements	The researchers noted to the statements of the customers such as comments as to the services and practices of ESAMELCO like on the rotational brownouts, assessments of the customers about the effectiveness of employees on how responsive they are in times of trouble on electricity, solutions used by the ESAMELCO in case of emergencies in the company and other work – related problems, and the recommended innovations

	for enhancing the performance of ESAMELCO like tapping energy firm (s), coordinating with hydro plants in Eastern Samar province and collaborating to National Grid Power Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP).
Formulating Meanings	Customers' Comments – these are the unheard voices of the customers when it comes to the ESAMELCO employees' performances and their services. Customers' Assessments – these are their individualized based assessments and evaluations of their lived experiences during the services of ESAMELCO. Customers' Suggested Solutions – these are the solutions made by the customers about to be suggested to the employees of ESAMELCO, which lead to recommendations Customers' Recommendations – these are the recommendations based on the formulated unison solutions of the customers for the employees in ESAMELCO.
Clustering Themes	Comments Assessments Solutions Recommendations (also known as CASR Thematic Way)
Developing Exhaustive Description	CASR Thematic Way is a developed exhaustive description on a particular method of qualitative solutions to phenomenological problems such as the event during the lived experiences of the Eastern Samar people of ESAMELCO's services.
Producing the Fundamental Structure	The researchers had finally formulated a suggested project for the ESAMELCO such as the CASR Thematic Way is included in their

	Local Government Unit's propositions.
Seeking Verification of the Fundamental Structure	The researchers have agreed that the way to invoke conclusion and recommendation in this phenomenological approach will be the enhancement of a certain project related to the CASR Thematic Way for continual improvisation on such experiences in ESAMELCO services.

The process of descriptive phenomenology which was used in this study to explore the unheard voices of the customers in Eastern Samar during their lived experiences in services of employees from the ESAMELCO work forces, this had been gained through the exhaustive descriptions that had been enable the researchers to create another acrostic terminology, this might be used in the future research or even in any kind of project proposal. Colaizzi's process of phenomenological data analysis showed an active strategy to achieve the description of living experience for those people. It includes understanding the data and identifying significant statements which in turn were converted into formulated meanings. Thereafter, groups of theme clusters were developed to establish the final thematic construct. Trustworthiness of the study findings was undertaken using different approaches and strategies to achieve each approach affectively. The accurate application of Colaizzi's process of descriptive phenomenology would provide and exhaustive description to the body of knowledge about human experience and therefore would be an effective strategy to establish the basis for future research.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The way to invoke conclusion and recommendation in this phenomenological approach will be the enhancement of a certain project related to the CASR Thematic Way for continual improvisation on such experiences in ESAMELCO services, which can be said to create more jobs whether under product or services. This paper could also require some future related research studies which can involve quantitative or mixed method or research when it comes of the services rendering by the electrical companies.

The Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Approach was used to exhaustively determine the specific approach to phenomenological inquiry chosen for my study is that of transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology. The purpose of descriptive phenomenology is to gain an understanding of the subjective meaning of

everyday lived experience in the participant's responses in ESAMELCO's services. Descriptive phenomenological studies are concerned with the life-world of actual people who have undergone a specific experience such as this kind of uncontrollable and inevitable electrical service interruptions.

The process of Colaizzi was used in the problems currently situated in ESAMELCO as well as their customers just to provide assistance in extracting, organizing, and analyzing such narrative dataset under descriptive lived experiences of the customers. This will ensure that the suggested CASR Thematic Way will soon be implemented by the Local Government Unit officials who regulate the ESAMELCO instituted by the majority of Samarnons.

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Appendices
Interview Guides:

1. What are your comments as to the services and practices of ESAMELCO?
2. In your assessment, can you cite instances that the services are effective?
3. What are the solutions used by the ESAMELCO in case of emergencies in the company and other work – related problems?
4. As a consumer, what are the recommended innovations for enhancing the performance of ESAMELCO?

Photo Documentation