



Hermeneutic- Phenomenological Research on Young People's Individual Experiences of the COVID- 19 Pandemic and Their Thoughts about Future

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Background study of youth seasonal workers in ski resorts of Lapland

Helve: From higher education to working life: Work values of young Finns (in Helve&Evans, Youth and work transitions in changing landscapes, 2013).

Academy of Finland 2008-2012 **Work-Preca** research project.

18 – 28 year olds as reference data (N=20) data archive of the University of Tampere:

<http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:fsd:T-FSD2788>



- 1) Background questions: - education, age, profession, place of residence, childhood family, parents' education and work, friends, hobbies and work history
- 2) Working life - part-time work - how does it affect life, lifestyle, education - what do you consider important in life - what does work mean to yourself, family and friends - do we talk about work with friends - what are the goals in working life
- 3) The future - can you influence your future - what kind of life do you want to live, is it different from the current one, how - what does well-being mean to you - what kind of life do you think you will live in 5 and 10 years
- 4) The job market – do you have experiences of changes, how do the changes affect your own life, lifestyle, future planning?
- 5) Social support - study grant, student loan, etc...

Youth research in exceptional COVID pandemic circumstances

- Collecting data during the corona virus required
 - 1) resilience in making connections with young people
 - 2) adaptability, stress tolerance and problem-solving ability
 - 3) optimism, identification and development of one's own resources
 - 4) ability to ask for and accept help from other researchers
 - 5) flexibility to see new research perspectives
 - 6) durability for challenging data collection



Research ethical starting points in the Covid era: voluntariness, confidentiality, privacy

For recruiting interviewees:
For advance information:
Describing the purpose of the study.

Risk analysis: The research does not cause significant risks, damages or harm to the people, communities or other research subjects.

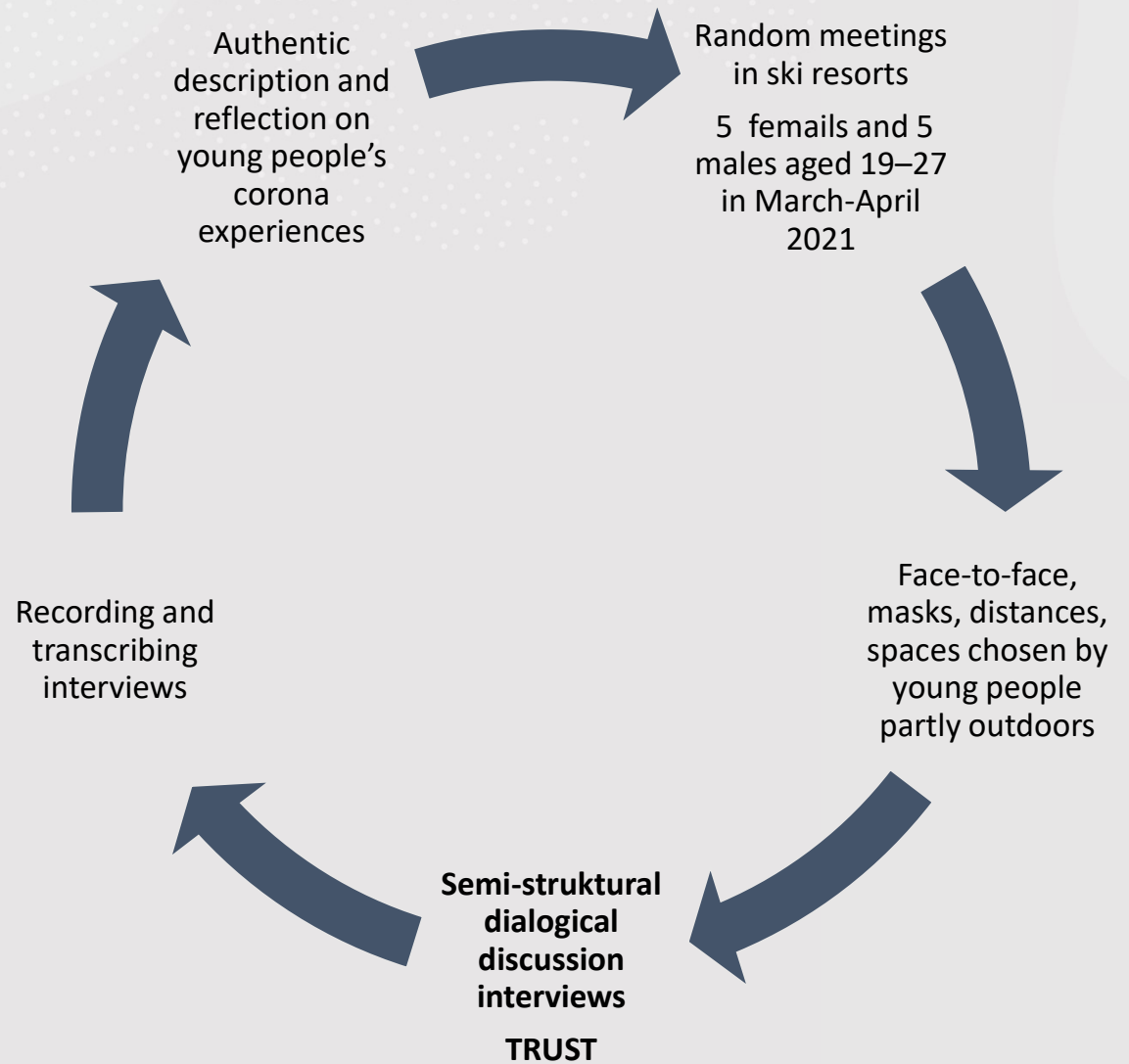
To anonymity – to get the promise to record the interviews
To the subjects' self-determination rights and respect for voluntariness.

The subjects' trust in the researcher and science.

Ethical principles of human research and ethical pre-assessment of the humanities in Finland (TENK, 2019).



Interpretative paradigm:
Hermeneutics emphasizes how young people in their spoken language interpret the Covid phenomenon and the meanings. Phenomenology emphasizes the young people's Corona experience and the formation of the understanding of it.
(Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Marcel, Sartre, Merley-Ponty jne.)



Intepretation of findings in the Hermeneutic Circle

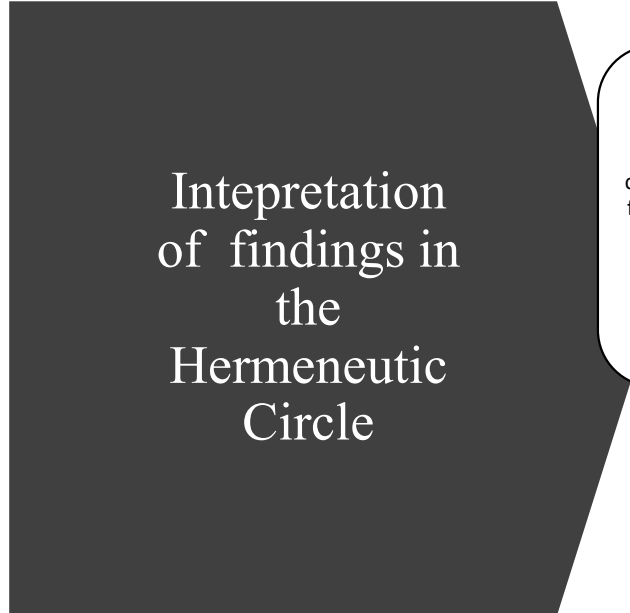
1.
• Carefully reading each private interview and listening to the recordings (media player program)
- Understanding the data
Preliminary intepretation of young people's horizons

2
• My own notes on transcriptions and recordings, my own observations
• Coding of the material - what kind of answers the material gives to the research questions
Understanding and abstraction: synthesis, integration and theme development
Researcher's horizon

3
The findings:
• Searching for common and separate meaning connections in the entire material
- always returning to individual interviews
Grouping sub-themes into main themes and illustration of phenomena

4
• Searching for meaningful connections and creating themes from private interviews:
Illumination and illustration; linking the literature to the themes
Horizons' fusion

5
• Mastering meanings and creating shared sub-meanings
The final intepretation of the research findings
Integration and critique





Research findings:
Covid-19 experiences
Horizons of young people

Well, here last year in the spring, I **lost a work** position in a café due to the situation, but I was **lucky to find another job in** a store. ... **Social life has been cracking...** I haven't seen friends as much...

(A 21-year-old female student, is applying for art education, interview in Lapland, April 2021)



I came for the first time last season. I ...wanted to go downhill skiing, I was in Helsinki...decided to come this season. Now I have been here since November. ... I got **COVID** here last year. *(Maija, 21-year old in Sport Shop.)*



... when we closed... we all had COVID... One day I had a very high fever and felt sick, but the next day I went to the arctic hills to cross-country ski. I didn't have anything more than that. ... I have been in quarantine already once this season... it has ... changed how we do things normally ...I think about older people, and for them it's a bit scary for sure. *(Lauri, 26-year-old in Ski Rental Company.)*



...the near future, I have decided to spend the summer in Helsinki, where all my friends and family are... again in the further future, this has made me think about my future career more realistically...if you have an important hobby that you couldn't do because of COVID, you have noticed its effect on mental health already... *(Aino, 20-year-old student in Pizza Restaurant.)*

FUTURE

... I don't think ahead very much; now the plan is **to work** the next half a year ...in the upcoming five years I **want to do as much downhill skiing as I can** and go to the big mountains ...I would **like to challenge myself** on that too...I also go ahead in my career, so that I don't completely stop one thing or another...**It's hard to imagine that someone would offer interesting and good careers**, that I would jump into an office after this. So, here I have been very satisfied. .
.(Pekka, 27-year-old in Nature Center.)

Loneliness

different things, that for example even though **I have spent much more time alone** and my number of **close friends has degraded** a lot, **I know who the important people in my life are** and who I really want to spend time with, and those are people I want to find time for daily... just like **being able to concretely think about the things you value in life**, but

... ..

(Aino, 20-year-old student in Pizza Restaurant.)



... Well, I have always been that type of person... **being introvert...** I am too **used to living like this...**

Quarantine, the time, went with **no problems...** I played games and watched movies and went outside a bit too.

(Aatu, 20-year old in Ski Rental Shop,)

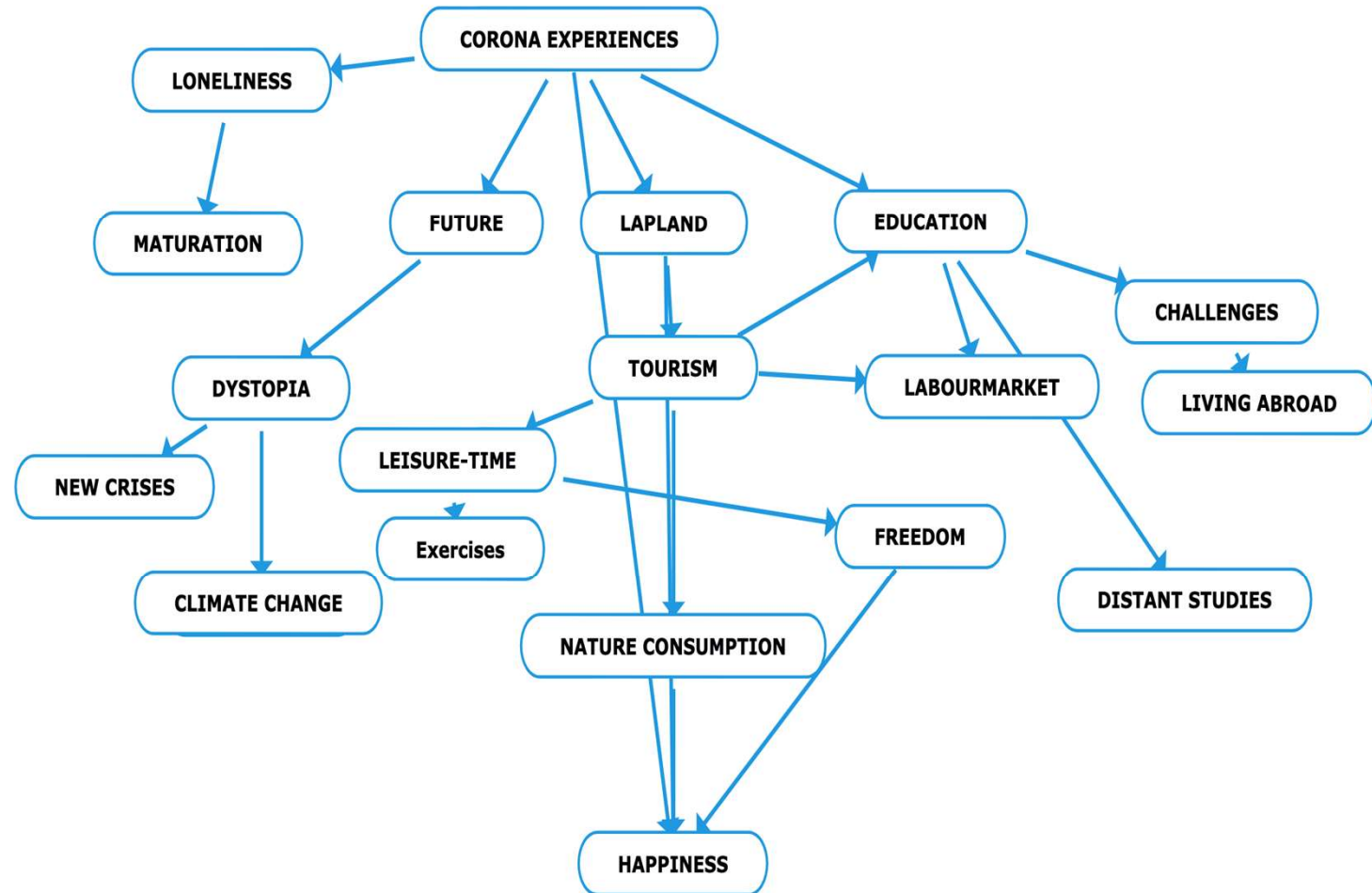
Young people's interpretations of survival and meanings given to corona

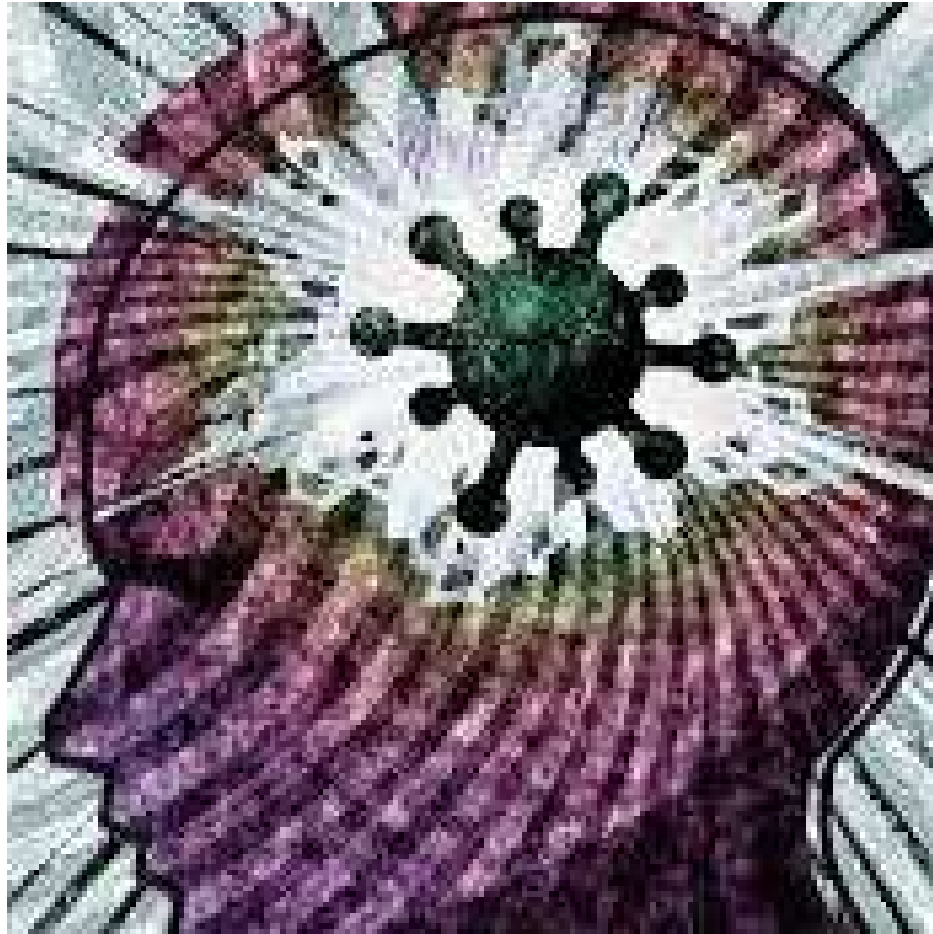
Social Media:... sometimes something, **checking in on others and updating own things**...related to outdoors ...what I do here... this is a **cool picture**, I should post this there... **making a producing a music video** ...you just got to go your own path and know your thing...there **should be work**... all arts are followed very much there... the influencers have encouraged people in this situation. *(Erkki, 21-year-old in Sport Corner.)*

I have a lot of **hobbies** what I can still do...like skiing and downhill skiing and other things like that... it's mostly in **the nature** rather than the hills that are being maintained for it. And in here **the number of friends is small anyway**.
(Ritva, 22-year-old in Ski Shop.)

I have **learned to appreciate different things**... even though I have spent much more time alone and the number of close friends has degraded a lot, **I know who the important people in my life** are and who I really want to spend time with... now you've seen **the impact of that hobby for mental health** and... Yeah, just **like being able to concretely think about the things you value in life**... *(Aino, 20-year-old student in Pizza Restaurant.)*

NVivo 12 in data organization and categorizing themes (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NVivo>).





The basic themes that cut across the entire material :

- Positive and negative experiences
- The small impact of the pandemic on the young person's own life
- The uncertainty of life and uncertain future: life was not normal
- The experienced loneliness
- Identity development

Critical Reflections:

Does the hermeneutic-phenomenological interpretive paradigm fit into youth research?

- **Questions:**

- Is the analysis sensitive to context?
- Is the researcher's interest in the interviewees' personal experiences genuine?
- Does the researcher taken a position of authority over the researched?
- Does the research show commitment to it?
- Is the material deep enough?
- Is the research described transparently and consistently?
- Has overinterpretation been avoided?
- Have the effects and meanings of young people's experiences of covid-19 been reached?

- **Help with interpretation:**

- Knowledge of the socio-cultural environment of ski resorts
- Previous interviews The research subjects were caught up in the culture of the ski centers in relation to work/study
- Knowledge of previous youth research and research literature
- **Youth spoken language:** language is often closely tied to a person's sense of self and identity.
- The ethnic and social identity can have impact of youth culture, that reflects their personality or values.
- The language can be an important part of how a person expresses and identifies themselves
- Youth speakers may use more slang and informal language.
- Men and women may use different vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation,,
- Words and phrases can vary greatly between cultures, and this can lead to misunderstandings when translating spoken language to the other language, regional dialects , tones and to grammatic rules.

Thank you!



- Now is the best time to be here. Many other friends think that now I've got to finish school, then work, and then something else, and that now, I've just got to work. And personally, I find it funny, that life is just amazing all the time. (Lauri, 26-year-old in Ski Rental Company.)



References:

- Alsaigh, R., & Coyne, I. (2021). Doing a Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Underpinned by Gadamer's Philosophy: A Framework to Facilitate Data Analysis. January 2021. *[The International Journal of Qualitative Methods](#)* 20(4):160940692110478 DOI:[10.1177/16094069211047820](https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211047820)
- Appleby J.A., King N., Saunders K.E., et al. (2022). *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experience and mental health of university students studying in Canada and the UK: a cross-sectional study*. *BMJ Open* 2022;12: e050187. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-050187

Helve HM. Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Interpretation of Coronavirus Experiences, Their Meanings, and the Prospects of Young Finns in Education and the Labor Market in Lapland. *Societies*. 2022; 12(4):112. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12040112>