

ABSTRACT

The aim of this rigorous thesis is to achieve the best possible understanding of the unique and individual experience of adult women with eating disorders and the identification of key themes associated with this phenomenon. A qualitative approach was chosen for this work. The specific method selected was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which aims to understand the lived experience of individuals. The research sample consists of five women who are currently in middle adulthood. Each of them has experience with a long-standing eating disorder. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, and their subsequent analysis took place in two steps. Firstly, the experience of each woman and their basic schemas were examined, emphasizing essential characteristics and features of the respondents. Secondly, common themes and categories of the participants were identified. Specifically, these include dysfunctional family environment and trauma, meeting basic needs in a substitute way, objectification, isolation, and self-destruction. The main findings were then anchored in theoretical concepts and existing research.

Keywords: eating disorders, middle adulthood, interpretative phenomenological analysis, life story, experience