



Assignment 1: Blog Posts 1-3

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Blog 1:

My future research interest may focus on the influence of ‘grayness’ philosophy in culture system of Huawei company upon the loyalty of younger generation employees, trying to exploring relationship of trust matters and employee loyalty.

The younger group of employees refer to the generation of the 90s or the 95s. Huawei has more than 190,000 employees, including 50,000 younger generation employees (accounting approximately for 26.3%), most of whom are graduates from top universities at home and abroad (Tian, 2020). In recent years, Huawei set up a project called the "top minds program", planning to hunt 20 to 30 young people with top brains around the world (Li, 2019) and this figure will increase tenfold in one or two years (Tian, 2020, p.143).

The advertisement is a three-panel layout. The left panel features three young people (two boys and one girl) in historical-style clothing, standing in front of a whiteboard filled with mathematical diagrams and formulas. Below them, text reads: "Huawei is inviting top minds from all countries and all backgrounds to help us move the world forward:" followed by two bullet points: "Your educational background and major are not important – we're interested in YOU." and "We are looking for people who have made extraordinary achievements in mathematics, computer science, physics, materials science, chips, smart manufacturing, or chemistry – and who are hungry to become leaders in their field." The middle panel has a dark blue background with a glowing globe and a silhouette of a person standing on a tall structure. It includes the Huawei logo at the top, the headline "Join Us and Move the World Forward", and the subtext "We are looking for top minds". Below this, it says: "In a world where everything changes, only our dreams and ambitions hold true. If you're the best of the best and you want to push the boundaries of science: We want you. If you want to explore the unknown and build a brighter future for everyone:" The right panel is light blue and lists benefits under the heading "We will provide you with:": "World-class, challenging projects", "Mentorship by renowned experts; global vision, platforms, and resources", and "A salary at least 5 times higher than your peers". At the bottom, it says "Join us and move the world forward" and "Introduce yourself, or refer someone else by sending an email to topminds@huawei.com".

Figure 1: The recruitment advertisement of “top minds” (Source: Huawei official website)

High job satisfaction is a precondition and a strong determinant of employee loyalty and organizational commitment (Martensen and Gronholdt, 2001; Mak and Sockel, 2001), while to

make knowledge workers being satisfied, namely, to bundle a huge number of intellectuals together is far from being easy for any managers. On the one hand, employees of Huawei are from 165 countries and areas with different culture background, and the knowledge workers are a group of “thinking animals”, with strong desire for wealth, ambitions and great achievements, their expectation to their career development as well as satisfaction towards the organization is complex and various, which is hard to meet, control and balance. On the other hand, except for wealth and materials, the intellectuals care more about sense of freedom, happiness and independent (Chen, 2021, p.199), which calls for a specific organizational culture to be aligned with. Huawei’s culture is characterized with the so-called consciousness of ‘grayness’ (Tian *et al.* 2016, p.221, p.237), implying being transparent (Chen, 2021, p.196), open, compromise and tolerant (Tian *et al.* 2016, p. 222), behind which it is the matters of trust, the key drivers, that endorse the idea of ‘grayness’.

Therefore, my exploration will be carried out on the web forum, where employees’ voice can be heard, in the house journals, where employees’ stories can be read and through the interviews from top managers, where the cross-checking can be conducted between the voices from both the top and the bottom layers. I can firstly start with deductive thinking, trying to find evidence through content analysis of the various documents to check the data and verify the following themes or assumptions:

H1: According to the model of gift-exchange economy, firm-worker interaction based on the gift exchange rather than pure market exchange can positively influence the norms of workers’ effort (Akerlof, 1982, p.567). Thus, except for tangible well-fare, trust matters are also deemed

as a part of gifts which can promote employees' satisfaction.

H3: According to Z theory, the success of all enterprises is inseparable from the close relationship to trust (Ouchi and Cuchi, 1981). Man is an end, not a means. Hence, the purpose of enterprise should emphasize people rather than blindly pursue performance goals.

H2: The matter of trust is the most important facets of 'grayness' philosophical management idea in the culture system of Huawei.

The above assumptions may be revised or more other themes may emerge with the iterative process proceeds. Nevertheless, the first step of carrying out this research is to decide the research philosophy to be applied for the study because different types of worldviews mold different ways of inquiring into the world (Crotty, 1998, p.41).

Positivist researchers can develop a highly structured research plan, prefer definitive causal models and conduct rigorous statistic strategies to guarantee the reliability and validity of the outcomes at the highest level (Thomson and Walker, 2010, p.44). The quantitative approach encourages the construction of scientific theories, collects objective data and tests hypotheses using a range of different statistical techniques, and thereafter comes to strong conclusions. But it has been challenged because it tends towards a reductionist stance that the propositions of social and human sciences could be studied ultimately down to those of physics (Blaikie, 2007, p.16). Its assertion of the world as atomistic and human as individual atom presupposes the world is unchanging and undifferentiated (Bhaskar, 2009, p.64), As Husserl pointed out (1970), the world perceived through natural science is abstracted from the real world of everyday life experiences. It is traditionally believed to be nomothetic rather than idiographic (Crotty, 1998,

p.42), which nonetheless ignores exceptions that cannot be measured by statistical techniques or unfit for generalization.

Generally, experimental research can deliberate intervene in the research field (Jonker and Pennink, 2010; Bhaskar, 2009), which cannot be feasible in the situation of business practices where researchers can do nothing but observing during or after certain practices (Jonker and Pennink, 2010, p.72). From this perspective, qualitative research seems more practical for my research. It should be noted that observations are "theory-laden" (Halfpenny, 1982, p.108; Lewis-Beck *et al.* 2003, p.838; Outhwaite, 1987, p.23; Guba and Lincoln, 1994), implying that “without some theoretical guide one could not begin to makes systematic observations” (Halfpenny, 1982, p.13). However, qualitative research is quite hesitant and confused to use theories that guide studies and data collection (Collins and Stockton, 2018, p.4) due to its inductive attribute. In recent years, the recognition has been wildly accepted that positivist science's traditional claims to objectivity and certitude cannot be sustained and that the outcomes of positivist research are themselves human interpretations and social constructions (Crotty, 1998, p.43). Besides, a group of generalist qualitative researchers upholds to include a theoretical lens or conceptual frameworks to bolster qualitative approach (Maxwell, 2013; Anfara and Mertz, 2015; Merriam, 2015; Ravitch and Riggan, 2017) and they intend to consolidate their research practices into the quantitative paradigm and specific statistic methods (Jonker and Pennink, 2010, p.72). Thus, I should not hesitate to apply a bundle of theories and thereof create a sophisticated theoretical framework, involving western philosophies, economic theory, management theory, business ethical theory and Chinese ethical ideas, to guide my research assumptions, such as, Aristotle and Kant (teleological ethics), the model of gift-

exchange economy, theory Z, stakeholder theory, and the ethical ideas of Confucius and Mencius. This super framework may seem ambitious, but it can be reduced or adjusted with the proceeding of my reading and thinking.

All in all, my investigation centers on trust matters, inquiring the influence and effect of trust-oriented talent management of Huawei upon the employees of younger generations, through those employees' personal experiences and stories published in the house journals and websites. It will be dominated by interpretative paradigm and prefer to be conducted with qualitative methods but will hardly reject the statistic technique completely since a systematic procedure will be necessary to ensure dependability, producing results with high reliability (Luo, 2019). For example, the content analysis of the interviews or their published stories of the personal career of Huawei employees can be used to make qualitative inferences by analyzing the semantic relationship of words and ideas. In addition, it can be used to quantify the frequency of occurrence of certain phrases or words, concepts, or subjects in a set of historical contexts as well (Luo, 2019). Except for frequency counts of the occurrence of the words, statistical factor analysis or cluster analysis can be adopted (Schneider et al, 1992; Kabanoff et al; Mossholder et al, 1995; Doucet and Jehn, 1997) to identify what sorts of trust matters that have enhanced the loyalty of younger generation of the employee group. This integration of the thematic and statistical techniques, or triangulation of different data sets, is a preferable design for ensuring the trustworthiness or credibility of the findings of my research.

Blog 2

In terms of the positioning of my research, the philosophical underpinning lies in social constructionism. By stressing the intersubjectivity and interaction between the researcher and subjects, my research grounds in the perspective of interpretivism, with phenomenological approach involved. Phenomenology seems to be the proper choice as the research methodology for this study, since the 'Blood Boiling' phenomenon, experienced by more than a hundred thousand employees, especially the younger generations, is observed. This is an exploratory research using both inductive and deductive reasoning. The deductive logic process, as it has been discussed in the first blog, means to check the established assumptions coming from past study practices against the database. The inductive logic process involves working back and forth between data sets and themes exploration until a comprehensive group of themes has been set up (Creswell, 2013, p.45).

The data collection will be discussed in details later, and this blog is trying to distinguish the two qualitative research methodologies and to display my tangled decision-making process.

Epistemology	Theoretical perspective	Methodology	Methods
Objectivism Constructionism Subjectivism (and their variants)	Positivism (and post-positivism) Interpretivism • Symbolic interactionism • Phenomenology • Hermeneutics Critical inquiry Feminism Postmodernism etc.	Experimental research Survey research Ethnography Phenomenological research Grounded theory Heuristic inquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint research etc.	Sampling Measurement and scaling Questionnaire Observation • participant • non-participant Interview Focus group Case study Life history Narrative Visual ethnographic methods Statistical analysis Data reduction Theme identification Comparative analysis Cognitive mapping Interpretative methods Document analysis Content analysis Conversation analysis etc.

Figure 2: Crotty's categories of epistemology, theoretical lens, and methodology
(Source: Crotty, 1998)

Traditionally, there are two types of phenomenological methodologies: Husserl's descriptive phenomenology and Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology (Connelly, 2010). The former is also named transcendental phenomenology (Spinelli, 2005) and the latter is known as hermeneutic phenomenology (Laverty 2003; Langdridge 2007).

The origin of the name 'transcendental phenomenology' comes from "transcend meaning and phenomena with essences discovered" (Sloan and Bowe, 2013, p.1294). Phenomenological data analysis mainly focuses on uncovering the essentiality of a phenomenon through a process called "phenomenological reduction" that is at the center of the phenomenological method (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2018, p.322; Creely, 2018, p.108). It begins with 'bracketing' or

‘epoche’, where the researcher’s past knowledge constructs won’t engage in determining experiences (Giorgi, 2009) or to be suspended for its “preventing us from making primitive or original contact with the primal concreteness of lived reality” (Manen, 2016, p.41). Thus, modern descriptive phenomenology excludes reflexivity, in which researchers' personal relevant experiences exert influences upon the process of data analysis (Sloan and Bowe, 2013, p.1297). The second step is called "horizontalization", trying to list statements relevant to the experiences (Moustakas, 1994, p.102). Next, those constituents with "invariant qualities" are clustered into themes, and this process is called "clusters of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p.146; Creswell, 2013, p.82). Phenomenological reduction, in Husserl’s epistemology, stresses picking out the core universal structures of the experience of an object, event, or process, then understanding and interpreting such structures (Landgrebe, 1973; Vandavelde and Luft, 2010; Creely, 2018, p.109)

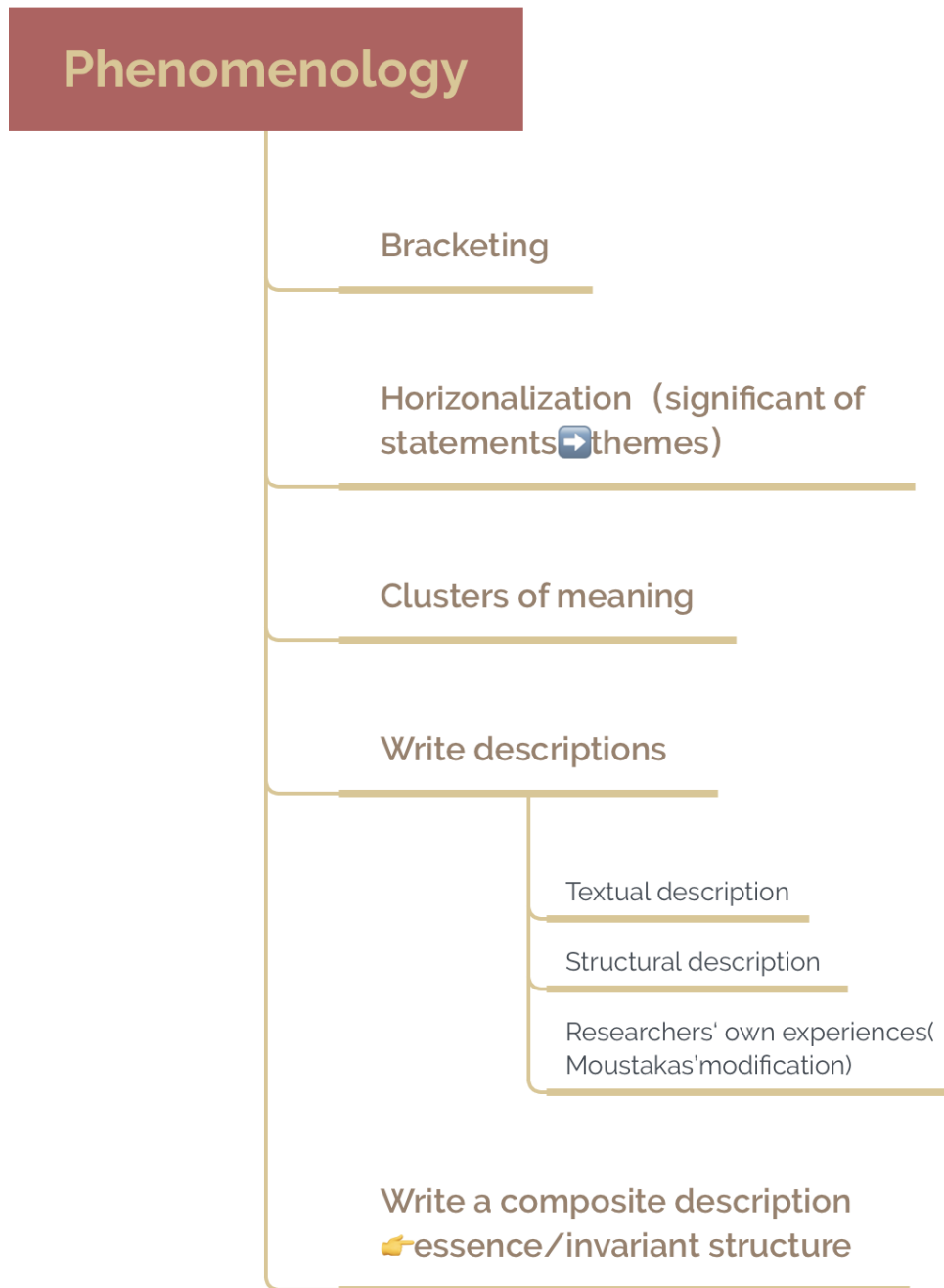


Figure 2: the flow chart of phenomenological approach
(being created by the blogger, based on Moustakas, 1994 and Creswell, 2013)

The advantage of transcendental phenomenology upheld by Moustakas is systematic and structured, easily followed by less experienced researchers (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004, p.23; Creswell, 2013, p.83). Moreover, the concept of 'intentionality' helps overcome the Cartesian dualism (Giorgi, 1997, p.237), and this refusal to the reductionism of subject-object

perspective makes the approach sit in the continuum of quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2013, p.78), which benefits for my research if I try to triangulate the study with various data sets. Besides, since my study is grounded in the content of house organ and social websites, the research method should have to be aligned with the data sources and phenomenology is the right choice of method that could be adopted to carry out a textual analysis (Giorgi, 1997).

However, many phenomenological philosophers that followed Husserl, began to query the descriptive phenomenology that seeks essences with isolated analysis of certain texts. They claimed the difficulty of bracketing researchers' personal experience and past knowledge when involved in studies (Gioirg, 1997, p.256; Manen, 2016, p.163), and even Moustakas (1994) modified Husserl's transcendental phenomenology by embracing a further step, adding reflexivity of researchers to the procedure (Creswell,2013 p.82). Notably, writing a phenomenological research report has to be started with an elaborated discussion about philosophical assumptions of phenomenology before moving to the method, including abstract ideas and concepts, which are much challenged for novice researchers (Creswell, 2013, p.78; Creswell, 2018, p.105). But I am a follower of European philosophy and then would like to try to take this challenge even though the task seems to be bitter and arduous.

Even though I am strongly driven by Husserl regarding my theorizing, I am hardly not to be aware of those convincing arguments from hermeneutic phenomenologists. Husserl's 'reduction' is about back to 'things as itself', identifying the essence through the transformative sense from the ego. Nevertheless, the concept of reduction of hermeneutics is quite different from that of

Husserl. It is not intentionality directing to the essence of a phenomenon (Nigar, 2020, p.11), but “Being is always the being of beings...the accession to Being only possible through some beings” (Kakkori, 2009, p. 22). In recent times, the educational phenomenologist Max van Manen has integrated the elements of hermeneutics and phenomenology (Nigar, 2020, p.12), which rejects the idea that there is a static and isolated set of structures in consciousness for the ego is constructed through intersubjectivity and a meaning relationship with the objects in the world (Durfee and Rodier, 1989).

In the hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, every experience demands to be interpreted under the influence of backgrounds and knowledge constructs (Polkinghorne, 1983). Those interpretations are the abundant textual descriptions of experiences of designated phenomena of individuals' lives, connecting to researchers' experiences as a whole (Smith, 1997). This is a revolution towards the concept of ‘bracketing’ of transcendental phenomenology. In that phenomenological hermeneutic circle, the pursuit of understanding moves in a spiral back and forth from part to whole, and across micro and macro experiences, enabling researchers to deepen comprehension and therefore decode texts (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.227-237).

This is truly applicable for my analysis no matter on the content of the website and house journal of Huawei company or the interviews (probably semi-structure) on the employees inside the organization. The phrase 'researcher-as-instrument' highlights the societal attribute of qualitative interview (Pezalla, A.E., et al., 2012, p.166), emphasizing the researcher's involvement of prejudgment and preconception in the semi-structured interviews which put forward probing questions and want to obtain independent thoughts of the participants in the

group (Adams, 2015, p. 494). This means the findings of the inquiry is the co-construction of researcher and participants, and this double hermeneutic synthesizes both interviewees' sense of their lived experiences and the researcher's intention on interpreting how the participant understand and probe the meaning of their personal and social world (Creswell, 2018, p.105-106). But that doesn't mean the bias will rise from those researcher's personal beliefs and previous professional experiences and thereof hamper and dampen the research, so long as those personal issues have been mentioned through a thorough discussion of the researcher's reflexivity (Malterud, 2001, p.484). In fact, objectivity, in the qualitative context, would fail to be obtained only when the appraisal of the effect of the researcher was ignored (Haraway, 2003).

Overall, regarding my present study of Huawei's employees, the above discussion preliminarily determines, although my preference is hermeneutical phenomenology, that transcendental phenomenology is an appropriate methodological approach owing to its priority of rigorous research procedures, easy to follow, as well as due to the disadvantage of my position as an outsider of this organization. Specially, first of all, systematic and structural data collection and analysis is friendly to me, a novice researcher; secondly, epoch as the first step of transcendental phenomenological process may partially benefit for converting my disadvantage as an outsider of the organization to an edge in this case. For a long time, I was wondering what my stance and qualification was as an outsider to investigate such an amazing company. Transcendental reduction tells me that excluding researcher's experiences is essential to reach the essence of the phenomena. Even though I have my beliefs and knowledge construct which may influence the process of analysis, it can be solved by researcher's reflexivity process according to Moustakas's modification version.

Blog 3

Epistemologically, it is beneficial to suspend the battle of subjective vs. objective since the complexity of the world determines various attributes of questions that are often mixed up (Greiffenhagen and Sharrock, W. 2008, p.72; Munro and Hardie, 2019, p.424). In Rawls' view, it is recommended to design a social system according to the concept of 'pure procedural justice'¹, advocating there are not criteria for the correct outcome except for an ideal (or actual) set of procedures (Solum, 2004, p.52).

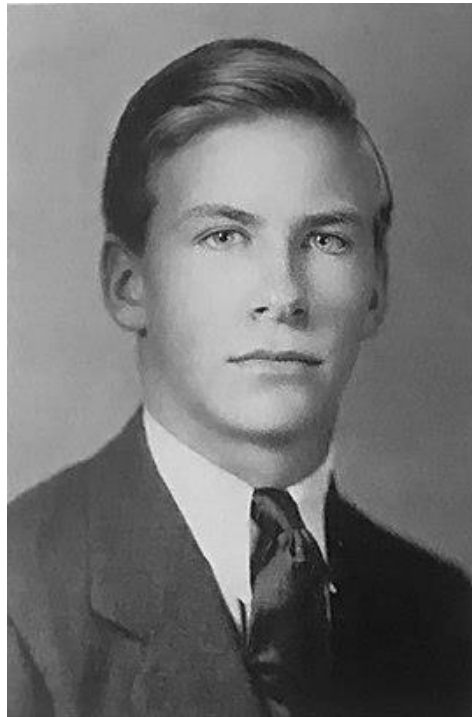


Figure 3: John Rawls, 1937 (Source: Wikipedia)

Rawls' theory of justice underpins the ideal design of the judicial system and social structure, but this idea can be transferred to instruct the evaluation of good qualitative research practices. Namely, a qualitative study can be said good or objective as long as it follows the right

¹ Pure procedural justice obtains when there is no independent criterion for the right result: instead, there is a correct or fair procedure such that the outcome is likewise correct or fair, whatever it is, provided that the procedure has been properly followed.

procedures, considering research appropriateness, such as proper research design, the correct choice of methodology and data collection and analysis, as well as essential ethical assessment (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017, p.44).

Regarding the research design, Mark Easterby-Smith et al claim it can be clarified by research philosophy (2012). Since my theorizing is instructed by constructionism, which has been elaborated in the first blog, phenomenology will take a priority in my research practices. Besides, this research will involve a large amount of textual investigation, which can be categorized as archival research, thus, content analysis and thematic analysis are to be unavoidable.



Figure 4: The Honeycomb of Research Methodology (Wilson, 2014)
(The red circles are added by the blogger, indicating the blogger's research choices)

First of all, the strategy of content analysis is fit for the sources of data collection. The data sources of my research derive from interviews, the social website, house journals, and various visual representations of communication, such as documentary programs produced by BBC or by individual doc directors, like Takeuchi Ryo².

² Takeuchi Ryo, a Japanese director, launched a documentary project with three episodes in December 2020. He explored Huawei's Shenzhen headquarters, visited Shanghai Research Institute, and talked with Huawei employees from different departments and posts. In March 2021, this documentary was issued on YouTube and had been viewed 1,254,456 times as of yesterday.



Figure 5: BBC doc program about Huawei, 2019 (Source: BBC StoryWorks)

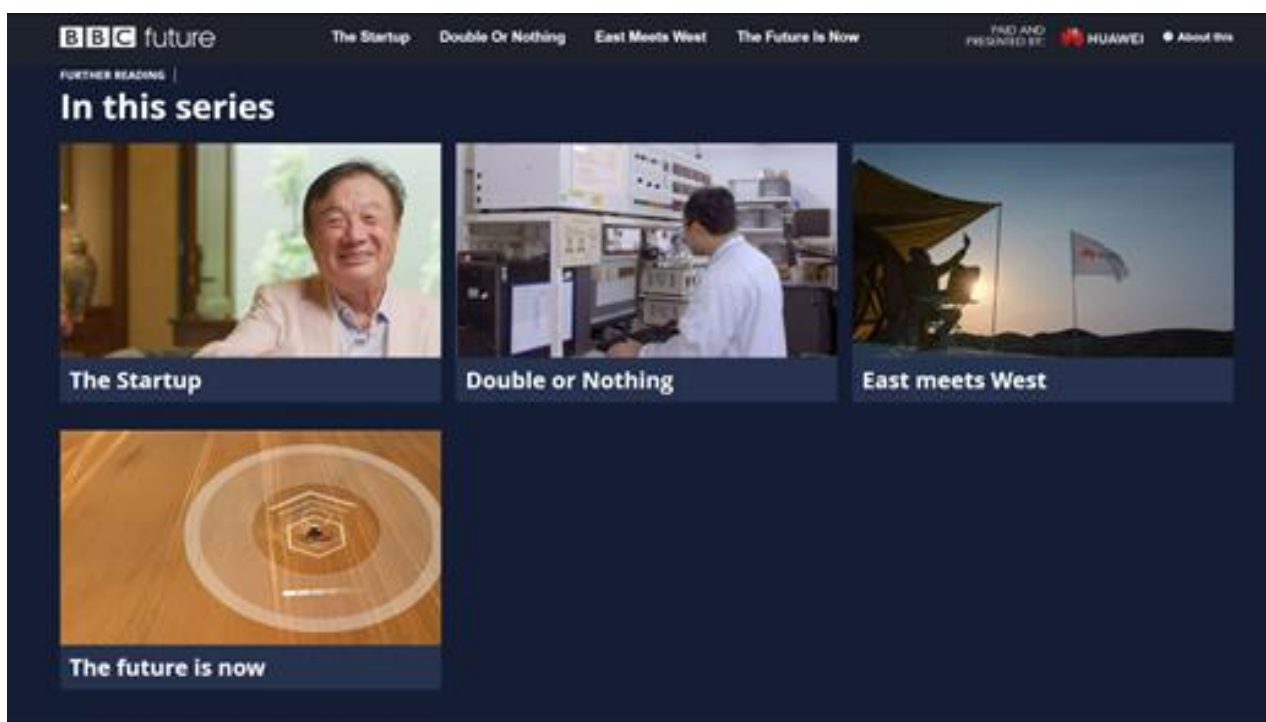


Figure 6: BBC documentary program about Huawei, 2019 (Source: BBC StoryWorks)



Figure 7: the documentary “100 faces of Huawei” on YouTube

One of the edges of content analysis is that it can be combined with other methods to achieve the purpose of triangulation (Jauch et al, 1980; Erdener and Dunn, 1990; Smith et al, 1992; Kabanoff, 1996). Another edge is its attribute of unobtrusive research, which can keep away from the 'Hawthorne effect' (Sheppard, p.319). Therefore, on the one hand, the researcher does not have to interact with the subjects under investigation so that the research will not be possible to be affected or interfered with (Sheppard, p.316-319). Accordingly, the process of data collection will not be possibly hampered by researcher demand bias³ (Woodrum, 1984). More

³ Corruption of market research when the respondents assume to know or actually know the research agenda. This can occur when the research sponsor is revealed to the respondents during, for example a focus group. Predetermined ideas and prejudice cannot be discounted if bias is associated with this

importantly, since access to top managers is a serious issue for me, being unobtrusive is quite suitable for management study when connecting to senior executives is troublesome (Morris, 1994). This can be said a double advantage for me as to turn the disadvantage of an outsider of the organization, lacking field observation to a chance of reducing the bias to the minimal level.

In terms of databases, the house journal (2004-2021) is a collection of ‘blood boiling’ personal stories and legends of employees, especially ordinary employees; the company's social website, regarded as its “Rome Square” or “transparent coat”, is a major innovation and experiment of Huawei’s democratic management mechanism; the leader interview series include worldwide media interviews toward Ren Zhengfei, the founder of Huawei, from 2019 to 2020; a latest book, Huawei interviews, written by the most famous senior consultant of this company, is engaged with both top managers and ordinary workers, across 6 years from 2013 to 2019.

Huawei People, the house journal, began from July 31st 2001 to today, which cannot be downloaded till issue 152, on August 31st 2004. This research will start with involvement of 174 issues (up to this month) of house journals with more than one thousand articles to be coded from 2004 to 2021. The categories may be decided based on the research assumptions or may be adjusted and reset with new themes emerge in the iterate process.

market research and rarely is deemed authentic (Available at:
http://www.pmlive.com/intelligence/healthcare_glossary/Terms/d/demand_bias).



NEWS

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	2001 ▼	Year
	2020 ▲	
• Issue 119 (2019)	2019	1)
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• Issue 117 (2015)	2015	1)
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Figure 8: the first electronic house journal, *Huawei People*
(Source: 'The Voice With', the social website of Huawei)

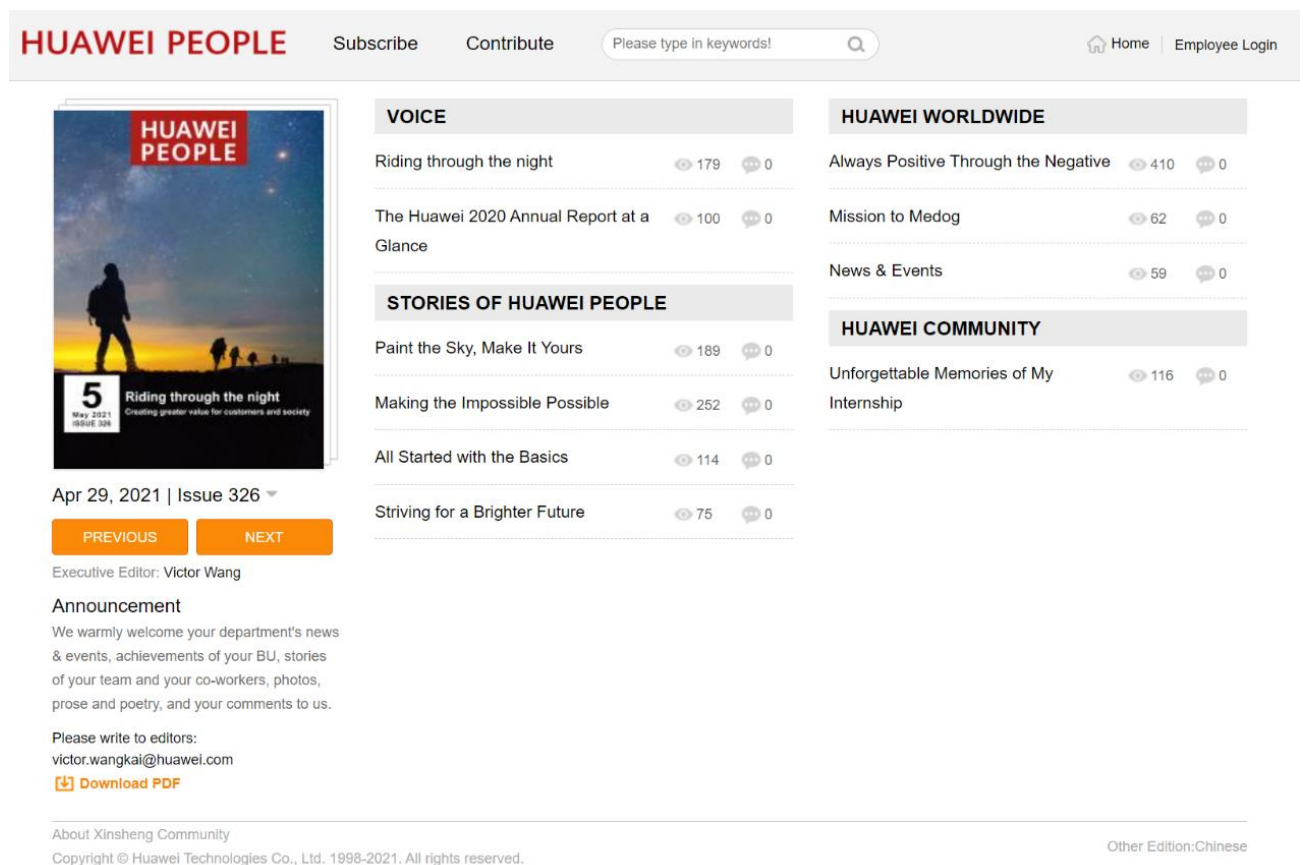


Figure 9: the latest electronic house journal, *Huawei People*
(Source: ‘The Voice Within’, the social website of Huawei)

Supposing my research target would aim at younger employees, the generation of the 90s, and perceive their concerns and interaction between these people and the corporate, then the sample size, the articles to be coded, were to be downsized by filtering against the age and the themes.

In terms of the interview, another essential data source for my research, a book specializing in interviews of Huawei employees, from the ordinary to the top management teams, has been published timely in January of this year. The good news is that this can partially relieve my workload to reach those insiders, and can solve effectively the problem resulting from the unbalanced social status between the interviewer (here referring to me) and the interviewees.



Figure 10: *Interviews of Huawei*, Tian Tao, 2021
(Source: the blogger's newly purchased book)

Even though I have a chance to get in touch with those CEOs, I could hardly collect valid data from these informants. In contrast, the author of this book is one of the senior consultants of the company, enjoying a special priority to have face-to-face conversations anywhere anytime with anybody. In the publishing specification, the author has expressed a similar stance that this book is contributed to the researches of economical and managerial scholars who have strong interesting but rare chances to get close to the organization (Tian, 2021). It is a six-year interview collection, lasting from 2013-2019, covering the directors, experts, and ordinary

employees, who range from the earliest staff to the generations of the "90s" and the "95s", which displays undoubted professionalism and validity of this data set. But the weakness of this strategy lies in the process of translating because the book has been written in Chinese, which implies the justification of a reliable translating process has to be included in the validity report of the research.

In terms of ethical risks, this research is to be under lower risk assessment due to being unobtrusive. All of the data sources, including interviews, website, trade magazine, video recordings, and other online visual materials, are from the public domain and can be accessed freely. As for validity and reliability, all the bias, including researcher demand bias and coding bias, will be controlled by the restricted research procedures. In a word, the endeavor to enable qualitative work to be transparent is to make the readers see the ‘researcher’s decision-making and the analytical approach...’ (Holloway, 2005, p.6; Davies and Hughes, 2014).

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