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' The expression "life" denotes what is to everyone the most familiar and intimate, but at the same time the darkest and even most imponderable . . . One can describe it. One can elucidate its peculiar and characteristic traits. One can, as it were, inquire after its tone, rhythm and melody. But one cannot analyse it totally into all its factors, for it is not totally resolvable in this manner. What it is cannot be expressed in a simple formula or explanation. Thought cannot fully go behind life, for it is the expression of life.'

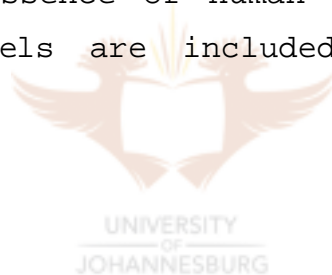
(Wilhelm Dilthey, in Polkinghorne, 1983, p 25.)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of phenomenology firstly by tracing its historical roots and locating it within its philosophical framework. This aim is achieved by highlighting the need for the major shift in the human sciences methodology from positivist thinking to post-positivist thinking; where phenomenology belongs to the latter. Emphasis is placed on phenomenology as a research method with reference to its methodological assumptions and usefulness in investigating the essence of human experience. Examples of applicatory models are included and its value is highlighted



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