The Documentation of Qualitative Interviews in Organizational Research
Problems and Solutions

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Qualitative and Atypical Data: Expanding and Facilitating Usage
Tobias Gebel
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1. Background

The Data Service Center Business and Organizational Data (DSC-BO)

Study Catalogue

Data Producer

Data Users

Support and Training

Research on Methods
2. Reasons for Documentation

- Data Sharing
  - requires to estimate trends and applications, documented extensively as possible
  - evaluation analysis potential
  - offer context for better understanding of data

- Long-Term Archiving
  - transparency and traceability of own and other data
  - avoiding loss of information in long-term research projects with frequent staff changes
  - promotes critical exchange about the research process and the data
3. Problems

- qualitative organizational research often takes place in small projects
  - lack of a tradition of documentation compared to large data sets
- high complexity of data in organizational research
- missing incentives
- no part of German academic curriculum
- structure of documentation
  - heterogenenity in construction and content
  - lack of information of context
4. The Documentation Design of the DSC-BO

- focused on interviews
- the documentation design is determined by
  - demands of the qualitative research process
  - demands of organizational research
  - own experiences and experiences from qualitative research projects of the SFB 882 “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities”
  - requirements of the documentation standard DDI
- distinguishing between three types of data
  - Micro Data, Para Data and Meta Data
4. The Documentation of the DSC-B0

Micro Data

- **Communicative Context** (Medjedović/ Witzel 2010)
  - transcriptes
  - rules of the translation transcription
  - rules of the anonymization

- **Extra-Situational Context** (Medjedović/ Witzel 2010)
  - collects data outside of the immediate setting, often from administrative sources
  - background information on the institutional, cultural, socio-political and historical context of the organization
4. The Documentation Design of the DSG-BO

Para Data

- describe data collection process (Kreuter/ Casas-Cordero 2010)
- **Situative Context** (Medjedović/ Witzel 2010)
  - illustration of the immediate setting, interview report „Postskript“ (Witzel 1982/2000b)
- **Context of Organizational Culture**
  - organizational/technical terminology, specific organizational practises
  - provide a better understanding of data and help to prevent misunderstandings
4. The Documentation Design of the DSC-BO

Meta Data

• provide the **Project Context** (Bishop 2006), the design of the research project
• necessary in order to assess the methodological quality of a study
• necessary to represent and find data in data catalogs
• is not focused on final decisions
  • offer information and description to the whole genesis and developments in the research process
  • describes all changes in the course of research
5. The Meta Data Standard DDI

**Basic idea:** Standardized Documentation of the Research Process

**Innovation:** Documentation of the whole data collection process and the reusing of the data

**Data Life Cycle:**

![Data Life Cycle Diagram]
6. Using DDI on DSC-BO

• for a large part of the information (full title, time method, funding agency, distributor, abstract etc.) DDI modules can be directly applied

• for the specific requirements of qualitative research process - circularity and temporal parallelism, heterogeneity and complexity of the data, methods, adaptations of existing modules are required

• sampling procedure, mode of data collection, type of research instrument, kind of data, cleaning operations and data analysis – definition of own controlled vocabulary or use as text

• para data information, data collection instruments, data reports and other documents are a separated files as related material
7. Outlook

- Funding Organizations
  - supply of necessary resources
- Archivs
  - education and qualifications of researchers to scientific knowledge and established standards
- Researcher
  - readiness to documentation beyond the direct project requirements
  - readiness to learn for professional documentation
- University Education
  - research documentation have to get part of the curriculums
8. Summary

- qualitative data get in addition to the publication an independent scientific product
- Documentation
  - requirements for Data Sharing and Long-Term Archiving
  - facilitate the comparability of qualitative research
  - improves the transparency and comprehensibility of qualitative research
  - makes easier cooperation
THANK YOU

http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/dsz-bo/

Contact:
Tobias Gebel
+49 (0) 521/106-4624
tobias.gebel@uni-bielefeld.de