
Pre-Conference Workshop on behalf of the 70th annual convention
of the German Academic Association for Business Research
at the School of Business & Economics, Freie Universität Berlin

Case-study research and discourse analysis: Data analyses on the basis of small sample sizes

With: Prof. Dr. Axel Haunschild and Prof. Nelson Phillips, PhD

May 14, 2008

Organizers: Dr. Jochen Koch and Prof. Dr. Barbara Sieben

Qualitative empirical research seeks to create evidence by argumentative generalization rather than to deliver statistical evidence. In the case of a small sample size or the study of a single case, evidence may more easily be proved the more a case „speaks on his own“. Predictions and conclusions drawn from a small sample size are especially cogent whenever a case has some undeniable extraordinary aspect. Siggelkow (2007) draws on the metaphor of a speaking pig. No reviewer could then comment: “Interesting, but that’s just one pig. Show me a few more and then I might believe you” (ibid.: 20).

However, to take the extraordinariness of a case as the single indicator for the quality of a case study falls too short. The quality of qualitative research depends – just as the quality of quantitative research – primarily on the methods applied and the researchers’ competence to apply them. In order to take up Siggelkow’s image: pigs don’t speak on their own. The question is rather how you get the pig to speak. Yet, the logic of qualitative research and the resulting need of methodical competence differ considerably from those relying on statistical evidence. Qualitative research rests upon understanding, on contextual sense making and on interpretation, always in a systematic, i.e. methodical manner.

Discourse analysis is increasingly attracting interest in this context. The label discourse analysis is used for a broad range of approaches; they vary from hermeneutical to linguistic approaches, to structuralist and deconstructive methods. Discourse analysis is especially useful whenever the deep structures and structuring of organizations are explored.

The workshop does not aim at providing a general survey of the methods applied in qualitative case-study research. Instead their concrete application stands at the fore and is demonstrated and discussed by means of specific research examples. The focus lies on the process of data analysis which presumably is one of the greatest challenges of case-study research including discourse analysis.

With Axel Haunschild and Nelson Phillips will be on hand two skillful experts for the workshop. Both will report on completed research projects with already published results. Both will present and discuss their methodical approach. The focus will lie on the technical aspects of the data analysis; that is, on questions like how data are edited, paraphrased, coded, and summarized to constructs, and how interrelations are iteratively established etc.

The workshop is targeted primarily to all researchers who have already dealt with qualitative data analysis and now want to get deeper into methodical questions and especially into the methods of discourse analysis. As a preparation for the workshop we recommend reading Phillips/Hardy (2002), Yin (2003) and the indicated publications of the empirical work of Axel Haunschild and Nelson Phillips.

The number of participants is limited to 24. Places are assigned in the order of the arrival of registrations. The workshop will be held in English.

Required Readings

- Eikhof, D.R. & Haunschild, A. 2006. Lifestyle meets market: Bohemian entrepreneurs in creative industries. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 15(3): 234-241.
- Hardy, G., Lawrence, T. B., & Phillips, N. 1998. Talking action: Conversations, narrative and action in interorganizational collaboration. In D. Grant, T. Keenoy, & G. Osrick (Eds.). *Discourse and Organization*. London et al.: Sage: 65-83.
- Haunschild, A. 2003. Managing employment relationships in flexible labour markets: The case of German repertory theatres. *Human Relations*, 56(8): 899-929.
- Lawrence, T. B., Hardy, C., & Phillips, N. 2002. Institutional effects of interorganizational collaboration: The emergence of proto-institutions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1): 281-290.
- Phillips, N. & Hardy, C. 2002. *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks et al.: Sage.
- Siggelkow, N. 2007. Persuasion with case studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1): 20-24.
- Yin, R. K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3. ed.). Thousand Oaks et al.: Sage.

Biographical notes

Prof. Dr. Axel Haunschild
Professor of Work, Employment and Organization
Universität Trier

Since April 2007 Axel Haunschild is a Professor of Work, Employment and Organization at Universität Trier. Since then, he also is a Visiting Professor at the School of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London where he has been teaching before as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management. From 2005 to 2007 he was a Guest Professor at the Innsbruck University School of Management, Department of Organization and Learning, where he has been teaching before as a Lecturer in Human Resource Management. In 2005 he earned his postdoctoral lecture qualification with a monography on flexible forms of work and organization, which he completed in the course of his work as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Business and Economics, Universität Hamburg, Institute of Human Resource Management. There he also completed his PhD in 1997 with a doctoral thesis on the topic of personnel controlling.

Axel Haunschild's research interests include also organizational theory, employment relations and human resources management in creative industries (focus: theatre), corporate social responsibility and industrial relations, work-life boundaries and decision theory. He has published inter alia in *Human Relations*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Tamara*, and *International Journal of Human Resource Management*.

Prof. Nelson Phillips, PhD
Chair in Strategy and Organisational Behaviour
Imperial College London, Tanaka Business School

Nelson Phillips is the Head of the Organization and Management Group at Tanaka Business School as well as the Director of Executive Education. From 2002 to 2005, he was the Beckwith Professor of Management Studies at the Judge Institute of Management, University of Cambridge and, from 1993 to 2002, an Associate Professor in the Strategy and Organisation Area at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. While on sabbatical in 2000/2001, he spent six months in the Edward Clarence Dyason Universitas 21 Fellowship at Melbourne University in Melbourne, Australia and six months as a Visiting Professor at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. Professor Phillips completed his PhD in Organisational Analysis from the University of Alberta, Canada in 1995.

His research interests include technology strategy, knowledge management, international management, organizational forgetting, discourse methods, and entrepreneurship and family business. He has published more than 60 academic articles and book chapters including articles in the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Management Science*, *Sloan Management Review*, *Organization Science*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organizational Research Methods* and *Organization Studies*. He has also written a book with Cynthia Hardy (Melbourne) entitled *Discourse Analysis*, which was published in 2002 and has recently completed a second book, *Power in Organisations*, with Stewart Clegg (University of Technology Sydney) and David Courpasson (EM-Lyon) for the Sage *Fundamentals of Organization Science* series.