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Introduction

From 2011 – 2012, the authors were engaged by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to conduct a high-stakes, high-profile evaluation of the transparency and overall quality of evaluation at the SNSF. The SNSF is the premier funding agency for science research in Switzerland, and is responsible for grants worth approximately \$800,000,000 to over 8,000 researchers throughout the world.

Evaluation Approach

- Utilization-focused approach
- Primary users at SNSF included the Foundation Council, the National Research Council, and the Secretariat
- Intended uses were both formative and summative, and included instrumental, conceptual, and symbolic use

Stakeholders & Context

- Participation and feedback from SNSF stakeholders was sought at various points throughout the evaluation process
- SNSF participation helped ensure buy-in from informants across the Swiss scientific community
- Stakeholder feedback also helped ensure the evaluation remained culturally competent

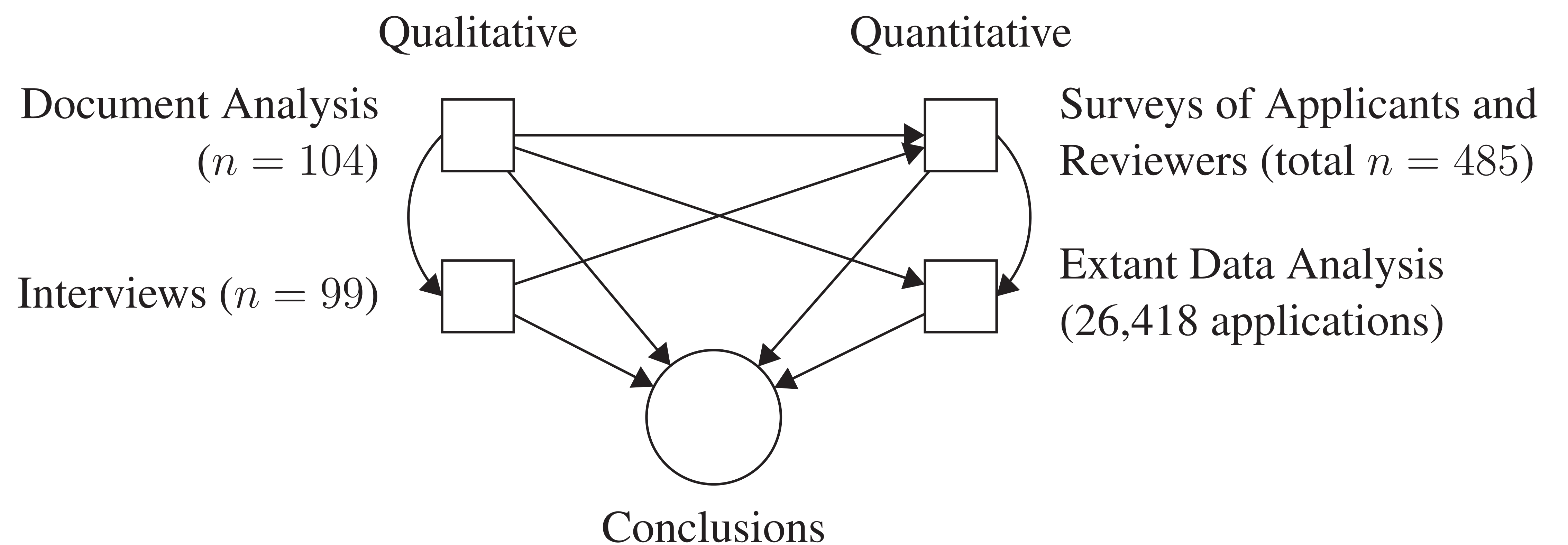
Guiding Evaluation Questions

- Do the SNSF's evaluation procedures:
- ... promote excellent research in all disciplines?
 - ... support research that is both scientifically relevant and original?
 - ... increase the competitiveness of Swiss research and researchers in Switzerland?
 - ... encourage the work of junior researchers?
 - ... ensure that evaluation procedures are fair and unbiased?
 - ... ensure that evaluation decisions are transparent and comprehensible to applicants?

Overview of Conclusions

- Overall, applications are reviewed fairly in the vast majority of cases
- Swiss research and Swiss researchers are regarded as internationally competitive
- Junior researchers appear to be well-supported in the Swiss system
- Some systemic bias exists with respect to gender, type of institution, and academic discipline
- Dissatisfied applicants are very likely to list transparency as a weakness
- The pace of applications is increasing at a rate which is unsustainable given current structures

Design & Methods



Notes

The evaluation was led by PI Dr. Chris L.S. Coryn, Co-PIs Dr. E. Brooks Applegate & Dr. Daniela Schröter, and Project Manager Krystin Martens; their assistance and feedback in preparing this poster is gratefully acknowledged.