QDA: USING SOFTWARE FOR ANALYSIS

Advantages and concerns

Although research can be possible without using a computer, it has several advantages. The most prominent advantage is that it eases the burden. The writer cuts and pastes by hand. He could do a comparatively more powerful analysis. He can create and insert codes in the text files. The writer can index, hyperlink and retrieve the data. It would lead to various shortcuts for a quick and effective study. It will save him from impeding the process or distancing from the text.

Traditional qualitative data analysis: a labor-intensive process

Traditionally, qualitative data analysis used to be labor intensive. Researchers were used to record the source material with a word processor. They used to make multiple photocopies of the text, painstakingly read through and assign codes to the material, cut the pages up in to coded passages and manually sort the coded text in order to analyze the patterns they find. Hence, it was a much difficult process without the existence of computers.

Using computer software

After the arrival of computer software, the work flow became easy, researchers got capability for data storage; they got the facilities of automated searching and display. Researchers were able to insert text, picture, audio and video source files directly, assign codes manually (autocode) to any section, be easy with the report feature, select a subset of cases and codes to work with and find data to use and sort in reports.

Use of computer software in qualitative studies

By using computer software in qualitative studies one can have following advantages:

- Transcribing data
- Writing/editing the data
- Easy storage of data
- Coding data (keywords or tags)
- Search and retrieval of data
- Data linking of related text
- Writing/editing memos about the data
- Display of selected reduced data
- Graphic mapping
- Preparing reports

Choosing software for qualitative studies

Choosing software: the key steps:

Keep in mind the following things while choosing the computer software for your study:
- Type and amount of data
- Theoretical approaches to analysis
- Time to learn vs time to analyze
- Level of analysis (simple or detailed)
- Desired "closeness" to the data
- Any desired quantification of results
- Individual or working as a team
- Peer software support available
- Any cost constraints

Basic steps involved:

- Install the program (note the requirements)
- Learn the operation using the help menu
- Prepare a source document (in text format)
- Open a project/study unit/Hermeneutic unit
- Import text, audio, video, picture source files
- Read the imported text documents
- Select the segment of the text
- Insert codes, categories, memos, quotations etc.
- Search, sort, manage categories, manage quotations etc.
- Mapping of concepts, layering, linking etc.
- Producing reports, matrices, exporting data, print

Common software for qualitative data analysis – links to access

- Atlas ti 6.0 (www.atlasti.com)
- HyperRESEARCH 2.8 (www.researchware.com)
- Max QDA (www.maxqda.com)
- The Ethnograph 6.0 (https://ethnograph.software.informer.com/6.0/)
- QSR N6 (www.qsrinternational.com)
- QSR Nvivo (www.qsrinternational.com)
- Weft QDA (www.pressure.to/qda)
- Open code 3.4 (https://opencode.software.informer.com/3.6/)