Reviews of recent research literature – 5

Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti
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Assessment ***

Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti has been written by an author with strong practical experience in the use and teaching of ATLAS.ti, and this shows in the depth and practicality of her treatment of this data analysis software. Friese sets out to deliver full guidance on the methodological and technical aspects of qualitative data analysis using ATLAS.ti, ensuring throughout that readers understand such software does not "do" the analysis, but simply supports the process – in her words. By using ATLAS.ti, it becomes much easier to analyse data systematically and to ask questions that you otherwise would not ask because the manual tasks involved would be too time-consuming. Even large volumes of data and those of different media types can be structured and integrated very quickly with the aid of software.

The author takes her readers through the ATLAS.ti data analysis journey in a in a stepwise fashion. The training is well supported with practical exercises and examples, screenshots showing each stage of the analysis, and a companion website containing online tutorials and data sets.

Targeting both undergraduates and postgraduates, Friese has designed the book in a novice-to-expert manner in eight chapters. The first four chapters focus on the descriptive-level data analysis, more suitable for undergraduates; Chapters 5-8 focus on conceptual analysis, perhaps more suitable for postgraduates.

Chapter 1 focuses on the ATLAS.ti interface and the relevant terminology. Chapter 2 discusses issues around data presentation, including data file formats supported by ATLAS.ti, when and for what purpose a particular file format should be selected and how to prepare data transcripts for full utilisation in future steps. In Chapter 3 the reader will begins to experience a specific ATLAS.ti project: After a discussion on the data management issues in

ATLAS.ti, various project scenarios for both single and team users are explained. Chapter 4 focuses on the technical aspects of coding for different types of data file formats, ranging from text to audio and video.

Chapter 5 is on the methodological aspects of coding, the process of assigning labels to data segments that the researcher deems to be relevant. From this chapter onward the book moves away from considering only technical aspects and introduces a method of data analysis, namely computer-assisted analysis. In Chapter 6 the discussion moves on to the idea of second-level conceptual analysis, combining an explanation of the memo function with a description of the analysis tools offered by ATLAS.ti. Chapter 7 then focuses on visualising ideas and findings in the form of network views and hyperlinks as tools enabling researchers to create links within and across data. Chapter 8 summarises all methodological aspects presented throughout the preceding chapters. It also proposes a method for computer-assisted data analysis which the author terms "computer-assisted NCT analysis"; this involves the researcher in the process of Noticing, Collecting, and Thinking throughout the data analysis.

The book also has been supplemented with further information on data and project management (editing documents, merging projects and creating backups), as well as strategies for overcoming troubles when working with the software. Overall this is a thorough, accessible guide to an important qualitative data analysis tool that has become more popular in recent years. It is well suited to an audience of both undergraduate and postgraduate students.