

Qualitative Content Analysis Program QCAMap – an open access text analysis software

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Abstract

An open access web based software program is demonstrated which is directly based on techniques of Qualitative Content Analysis (Mayring 2010). Those techniques aim at a systematic, rule-guided and inter-subjective analysis of textual material (interview and group discussion transcripts, open questionnaire material, observation protocols and field notes, documents and files). The software program leads, as an interactive tool, through the several steps of inductive category development and deductive category assignment. It presents pre-structured templates following the several steps of analysis. It is combined with explicit descriptions of the procedures and their theoretical background. The program as well as the handbook is approachable in open access (www.qcamap.org).

Summary

An open access web based software program is demonstrated which is directly based on techniques of Qualitative Content Analysis (Mayring 2010). Those techniques aim at a systematic, rule-guided and inter-subjective analysis of textual material (interview and group discussion transcripts, open questionnaire material, observation protocols and field notes, documents and files). The software program leads, as an interactive tool, through the several steps of inductive category development and deductive category assignment. In inductive category development procedures the aspects of analysis, following the research question, are formulated from the text and stepwise reduced. In deductive category assignment the category system is formulated in advance, following the research question and theoretical considerations. The software program presents pre-structured templates following the several steps of analysis. It is combined with explicit descriptions of the procedures and their

theoretical background. The program as well as the handbook is approachable in open access (www.qiapro.com).

Qualitative Content Analysis became a standard procedure of text analysis in social and behavioral sciences (Titscher, et al., 2000), standing between qualitative and quantitative approaches. This is because there are qualitative steps of analysis (the assignment of categories to text portions) and quantitative step as well (the analysis of frequencies and contingencies of category occurrences). In this respect it can be labeled as mixed methods approach (Mayring et al. 2007). Qualitative Content Analysis had been developed thirty years ago within a project on the psycho-social consequences of unemployment, in which ca. 600 open-ended interviews were conducted. Because of the enormous amount of text material (nearly 20.000 pages of transcripts) we looked for techniques which could categorize the text rule-guided and economically.

The quantitative content analysis was a starting point for us. Qualitative Content analysis is partly based on the logic and procedure of quantitative content analysis (step-by-step procedures, formulation of content analytical units as coding unit, context unit and unit of enumeration, intra- and inter-coder agreement tests). Its basic instruments of analysis are categories or category systems.

But the central process of assignment of the categories to text passages remains a qualitative, interpretive procedure. For that step we have, based on theoretical considerations, formulated clear content analytical rules. Within inductive category development the rules are the formulation of a category definition as selection criterion and a definition of the abstraction level. For deductive category application the rules are fixed within the coding agenda, comprising category definitions, anchor examples and coding rules (Mayring, 2000; 2010).

Available software programs for qualitative oriented analysis (CDA software tools) are traditionally based on the Grounded Theory philosophy. They usually contain a text window, a window for categories or codes, and a window for code commenting memos. For Qualitative Content Analysis procedures within those software programs several problems are rising, e.g. the content analytical rules (e.g. the coding agenda) have to be implemented extensively and administered within the memo window. In our software program the user is guided through the content analytical procedures, he has to follow the specific step models through

an interactive logic. It presents the user the necessary templates and it produces outcomes which can be inserted into the project report and which can be analyzed quantitatively further.

The software program will be demonstrated with concrete textual material; the possibility to discuss research projects and the implementation of QCAMap within those projects of the participants will be given.

References

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