

## Analysing Qualitative Interviews

The piece of data I am looking at is an extract from an observational report on a match between West Ham United and Millwall. The extract explores the way the crowd are dealt with, and how they respond to the police presence.

The way to analyse this sort of data is by using qualitative analysis. “Qualitative analysis of data involves the non-numerical organisation of data in order to discover patterns, themes, forms and qualities found in interviews”(Adri Labuschagne, *the Qualitative report* 2003). To analyse the data you must create a table of common themes that occur during the extract.

Themes	Evidence in Observation
Q.1-Theme 1	Chanting
Theme 2	Crowds Surging
Theme 3	Groups of hooligans gathered together

The above were the results recorded for the question, ‘Which actions of football supporters might result in fear of crime at a football match’. The important factor with qualitative research is that “categories are added to reflect as many of the nuances in the data as possible, rather than reducing them to a few numerical codes” (Pope, Ziebland, and Mays; *Qualitative research* 2000). Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data uses all the answers given. This results in more detailed answers rather than a list of cold figures. As Miles writes “Words are fatter than numbers and usually have multiple meanings” (Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M 1994)

In the above table the results show the three main fears of football supporters. However, the results show what one person’s fears are. The extract couldn’t be used as conclusive data as it is only one persons view. This is where quantitative research can be considered a better form of analysis. When using quantitative approaches its easier to obtain lots of peoples views. Questions are short and answers tend to be one word. It becomes easy to make a results table and conclude the results.

The extract that I’m viewing does suffer from one hugely important issue; the extract suffers from being subjective. The extract is one person’s account that may well have an ulterior motive. His views will not be impartial and will sufferer from issues such as class, race and background. As the extract is subjective it is virtually impossible to accept it as the definitive view on football hooligans. Therefore the extract can easily be dismissed as inconclusive.

Another problem with the observational data extract is that it is taken from ten years ago. Immediately this becomes irrelevant when looking at current ‘fear of crime problems’ However this data does become relevant when evaluating changes over time at football matches. If a similar piece of observational data was carried out now, then by comparing that with the one from ten years ago, we would be able to find out if the fear of crime is growing at football matches, or whether the problem is getting worse.

One of the weaknesses with qualitative research is that it doesn’t have the sample size of results. Therefore it can be considered to lack the weight of argument behind its

results, then the size laden quantitative research. But, qualitative research is less difficult to do than most perceive. Locating themes can now be done easily on the computer by searching for specific words. It becomes less time consuming and means the mass of results can be of a similar size to quantitative research.

Further problems encountered with qualitative analysis of the text, is that it solely relies on the researcher to come up with correct results. As Miles writes, "Within that mass of data you may not – or may not have tagged – the pieces that matter the most to the purposes of the study." (Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M 1994). Good qualitative analysis relies on the "skill, vision and integrity of the researcher doing that analysis" (Pope, Ziebland, and Mays; *Qualitative research* 2000). The results are only effective, if the researcher is to with their work.

Due to the fact that qualitative analysis is about understanding people's attitudes and feelings, it tends to be used in relation with hospitals and work places. The analysis provides vital information on attitudes and satisfactions and so can help improve patient care. Likewise in the workplace it is used for similar reasons, and so can improve employee's environments.

When qualitative research is used in the before mentioned places, it tends to be followed up with quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis establishes problems, and then quantitative analysis adds greater evidence of the problem. This means that Qualitative is not believed by many to be very scientific; people need further research carried out before they accept the results.

In conclusion the observational extract highlights one person's view on the troubles at a football match. This view has been analyzed using qualitative methods and reveals the fears at a football match. Qualitative analysis highlights the true thoughts and attitudes felt at a football match. A better understanding of people's opinions and problems is obtained through qualitative analysis. As Adri Labuschagne writes "qualitative analysis seeks to capture the richness of people's experience in their own terms" (Adri Labuschagne, *the Qualitative report* 2003).