

The following handout will encourage you to think about the differences between quantitative and qualitative data by looking at a sample of the findings from two sociological research studies.

The following researchers, Cobbina (2008) and Jackson (2010), conducted research into the 'fear of crime'. Study the information in the table below.

(A qualitative approach)	(A quantitative approach)
Cobbina, <i>Gender and neighbourhood danger</i>, 2008	Jackson, <i>Public insecurities about crime</i>, 2010
Overview Small-scale study to look at how the fear of crime is different for males and females and the different ways they try to prevent becoming victims of crime.	Overview Large-scale London-based survey to investigate whether fearing crime can encourage people adopting behavior to prevent becoming victims of crime behaviour.
Sample 72 boys and girls aged between 12 and 19. Purposive sampling (chose an at-risk group).	Sample 2844 respondents from seven London districts. Random sample of household addresses.
Method In-depth (unstructured) interviews to allow for the respondents to speak in their own words.	Method Gain representative data using a questionnaire.
Types of questions The questions were open to encourage in-depth and descriptive answers. For example: 'Can you describe whether you feel safe in your neighbourhood?' 'Can you tell me what your neighbourhood is like?'	Types of questions The questions were closed and scaled to produce data which could be statistically measured. For example, 'Is the quality of your life affected by worries about crime?' Response options included 'not at all', 'moderately', 'quite a bit', 'very much'.

Summary of findings

- Men and women are vulnerable to different kinds of crime.
- Men and women negotiate neighbourhood dangers differently.
- Women's fears points to physical weaknesses that limit their ability to defend themselves and to their socialisation into more dependent roles.
- Men are expected to engage in risk-seeking behaviour to demonstrate masculinity.
- Strategies by men included trying to achieve status and respect. They would travel in groups to insulate themselves from risk.
- They tried to 'keep a low profile' whilst not appearing to be soft, projecting too much aggression could lead to conflict.
- Men also carried weapons but this was counterproductive in that it could compromise their personal safety.
- Women on the other hand remained less involved in street activity and avoided public spaces, especially at night.

Summary of findings

- One-quarter of respondents said they were worried about crime.
- They took precautions as a way to make them feel safer.
- Fearing crime can be functional and not harmful, and it did not reduce their quality of life.
- Those that had fallen victim to crime were more likely to be worried about crime.
- People had a higher fear of crime in neighbourhoods which were run down.
- People had a higher fear of crime in areas where there was less social cohesion (shared values).

Extracts of findings from their original research

Likewise, Maurice explained:
 [There's] a lot of gangs, lot of drugs, dirt. Dirty, like the streets are polluted. A lot of abandoned houses, lot of burned up houses. 'Cause of the drugs and the gangs I guess. . . . They get into a lot of fights, bring property value down, you know, people don't take care of they houses. And you know, don't nobody really wanna live there no more so everybody starts to move. That's why a lot of abandoned houses. Then, when it's a lot of abandoned houses that means the block cold, that mean not that many police around. So that's when the dope people move in on that block, you know what I'm saying, go open they shop there. And whenever they go do that, then, you know what I'm saying, lots of crackheads start moving in, lot of gangs, you know what I'm saying, lot of shoot-outs.

Over there, you have to watch. Especially when you walking or something, 'cause you never know who might be behind you. When I walk, I look around and sometimes when I'm walking I forget to look around. Next minute somebody's behind me. Like, where'd this person come from? I just start walking faster. That's scary. Especially if it's nighttime too.

Another strategy young men employed was to travel in groups. Wayne explained:

Gangs is out there so I don't really too much leave out of my neighborhood unless I'm with somebody. But if I'm walking with my clique, you know what I'm saying, that's what I do. I don't walk in cliques one deep, I walk in like eight . . . fifteen, twenty deep, you know what I'm saying. I don't never walk by myself.

**Cobbina
(2008)**



Dr. Cobbina, Michigan State University <http://bit.ly/2xyKjWe>

**Jackson
(2010)**



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Activities

- Using the table of information, identify five key differences between quantitative data and qualitative data.

- Using the extracts of the findings, describe the difference between quantitative and qualitative data.

TABLE *Worry about crime, precautionary activity and the quality of life*

	n	Total %
Not worried	2,019	73
Functionally worried	222	8
Dysfunctionally worried	543	20

Source: Unweighted data from the 2007 London Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods Survey. Total n = 2,784

TABLE *Precautionary activity and impact on quality of life amongst those who are worried about falling victim of crime*

	Combined effect of worry about crime and precautions against crime on quality of life [†]		
	None or little effect	Some or strong effect	Total (column %)
Took precautions and felt safer as a result	222 ^{††}	318 ^{†††}	540 (71)
Did not take precautions or took precautions and did not feel safer as a result	151 ^{†††}	74 ^{†††}	225 (29)
Total (row %)	373 (49)	392 (51)	765 (100)

3. Organise the following words into the appropriate column.

small-scale, statistical, representative, random sample, in-depth, open questions, large scale, valid, questionnaire, descriptive, closed questions, unstructured interview

Qualitative data	Quantitative data

4. Which statements are true or false? Discuss and correct false answers with a partner.

Qualitative data is associated with large-scale research.	T	F
Closed questions generate quantitative data.	T	F
Unstructured interviews are a qualitative method.	T	F
Quantitative data is descriptive and detailed in nature.	T	F
Open questions generate qualitative data.	T	F

5. Identify and explain one weakness of qualitative data and one weakness of quantitative data.