**Qualitative Research Designs**

**Ethnography**

* As indicated by the name ‘ethno’ and ‘graphy’, the main objective in this research is to describe the cultures of groups of people. Ethnographers are mostly interested in reporting, as insiders, on the behaviours of a group of people.
* Ethnography employs mainly, participant observation and interviews as data collection procedures. Prolonged observations in the field allow the ethnographers to gather fieldnotes to make detailed and rich descriptions of naturally occurring behaviours.
* The milieus where ethnography may take place can include cultural communities, linguistic communities, organizations, and so on. One can immerse in a workplace, for example, and observe people in their workplace. Eventually, a narrative is provided to serve a cultural portrait of the observed community. This narrative incorporates not only behaviours of the observed community, but also, the meanings those individuals give their behaviours.
* Non-participant observation, discourse analysis and diary techniques can, however, be other processes opted for by ethnographers to collect data.
* Data interpretation is a crucial step in ethnography research. It characterises it and differentiates it from other qualitative research.

**Grounded theory**

* Contrary to hypothesis testing research, where preconceived theories are proposed at the beginning of research than they are verified along the process, grounded theory uses empirical investigation to generate a theory grounded in data.
* this design is characterised by the data analysis procedure it follows. Data collection and data analysis are conducted simultaneously in a cyclical manner.
* Using an inductive approach, a researcher describes phenomena by collecting qualitative data, then a theory relevant to the investigated issue is suggested. More qualitative data is collected and analysed for the purpose of revising and developing the theory. This iterative process is followed continuously, and it does not stop until theoretical saturation. That is to say, when the collected data does not help anymore in the refinement of the theory or in the emergence of new categories, the researcher can then decide to discontinue the simultaneous process of data collection and data analysis.
* Grounded theory is thus a design where both the process and the product of research are equally important.
* Observation and interviews are the main tools used in grounded theory.

**Document analysis**

* As the name indicates, this research refers to the analysis of data gathered in the form of documents.
* Documents are not limited to written ones like books, textbooks, letters, newspaper articles, reports, diaries, autobiographies, but they can include films, videos, audios or photographs. Any type of content can, therefore, be a subject of study; hence, the name of ‘content analysis’ can be found to be interchangeably used.
* Document analysis is useful when the research purpose to study the human behaviour and how communication occurs among certain communities without being obliged to immerse in the target community.

**Case study**

* This study design is commonly conducted qualitatively, yet it can be conducted quantitatively. The researcher investigates the particularities of a target case. Predominantly ‘a case’ refers to an individual or a group of people. However, it could be an event, a program, a class, a school, or an organization.
* To maximise the understanding of the selected case, its complexities and its idiosyncratic features, it is common that case studies combine two or more qualitative data collection procedures.