Qualitative research culture in the Social Science and Humanities programmes at Norbuling Rigter College: A baseline study

Author	Abstract
Kuenzang Dorji, Associate Lecturer, Norbuling Rigter College, Royal University of Bhutan.[1] **Key words** Qualitative research methods, Baseline, content analysis, challenges, sensitization, and faculty development programmes.	Qualitative research allows researchers to study the ideas and beliefs that people cherish, the values they adhere to, and the challenges they face. Further, qualitative research can be used as an effective tool to identify solutions to address developmental and social challenges. Thus, this study explores the current state of qualitative research culture in the social science and humanities programmes at Norbuling Rigter College (NRC). Data is generated from twenty-one staff members involved in research, including management, faculty, and support staff of NRC. This study employed content analysis to identify the opportunities and challenges of undertaking qualitative research. Based on the study findings, this paper proposes recommendation for sensitisation and faculty development programmes to be initiated by NRC to advance qualitative research culture.

Introduction

The challenges people face in their daily life, the beliefs that they cherish, and the values that they adhere to are unraveled through qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods also allow exploration of social notions, social institutions and social issues in detail. Qualitative research is thus important to understand the everyday realities of social phenomenon and human experience that cannot be quantified. Academicians, especially social scientist, have a pivotal role in addressing and strategising solutions to social issues through qualitative research. addressing and Strong qualitative research culture is essential to ensure moral development, and cultural and social understanding.

Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) was launched on 2nd June, 2003 to provide tertiary education in Bhutan and to disseminate 'knowledge and the advancement of learning through a balanced, well regulated and sound tertiary education system for the economic and cultural development of the Kingdom of Bhutan and to promote the cultural enrichment, personal development and well being of our people' (Uninet, 2019). As of 2012, RUB has nine constituent colleges and two affiliate colleges which include NRC.

On the vision of advancing relevant education and inspire research that is rooted in the fundamentals of Bhutanese values to flourish competent, innovative and responsible global citizens, Norbuling Rigter College (NRC) was established in 2017, becoming the second private college and affiliated to RUB. Recognising the importance of educational institutions in making significant contribution to the economy, societal innovation and value creation, NRC vision has strong emphasis on research. It strives to advance and inspire research that is rooted in the fundamentals of Bhutanese values so that students will flourish as competent, innovative and responsible global citizens.

NRC offers six programmes which include Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology, Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies, Bachelors of Arts in Dzongkha and English, Bachelor of Arts in English, Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Commerce. All the six programmes offered at NRC targets to impart theoretical, statistical, and methodological research frameworks and tools. Specifically, the modules offered in social science and humanities programmes place strong emphasis on the qualitative research. There are six research modules in the social science and humanities programmes but there is no specific module that covers the qualitative research methodologies component.

For its transversal skills and ability to address the social and developmental issues, research is a dominant feature for the overall growth of any institutions or organisations. The organisational culture in the areas of research includes the importance of indentifying opportunities and challenges in undertaking research. This paper examines the baseline of qualitative research culture in NRC by identifying opportunities, and challenges in undertaking qualitative research for Social Sciences and Humanities faculty.

1.1 Significance of the study

The study findings will highlight the challenges and opportunities that the faculty of Social Science and Humanities in NRC faces when undertaking qualitative research. The study will also conduct a gap analysis grounded in opportunities and challenges which will facilitate college management to plan intervention strategies to advance qualitative research.

1.2 Research Question

1. What are the enabling factors that the faculty of Social Science and Humanities at Norbuling Rigter College should be aware of when conducting qualitative research?
2. What challenges do the faculty of Social Science and Humanities at Norbuling Rigter College face when conducting qualitative research that necessitates intervention from college management?

1.3 Objective

The objective of this study is to identify the challenges for the faculty of Social Science and Humanities of NRC when undertaking qualitative research. Further, the paper is aimed at sensitising the staff about the opportunities in undertaking research, thereby increasing the research output.

Literature review

Qualitative research is a valuable approach that explores and understands people's attitudes, experiences, beliefs, behaviours, and feelings through non-numerical data. It provides insights into the complexities of human behaviours and social phenomena, allowing researchers to uncover meanings and gain a deeper understanding of a given situation. Strauss and Corbin (2008) emphasise that qualitative research explores meanings and insights in a given situation, providing valuable insights into human behaviors and social phenomena. Creswell (2009) highlights effectiveness of qualitative research in uncovering topics in a natural setting, enabling researchers to gather depth and details through high-level involvement in the actual experience, thus enabling the visibility of paramount reality. Punch (2013) notes that qualitative research enables the exploration and analysis of knowledge, helping in understanding people's experiences, relations, and meaning in the local context. Strickland (2015) underscores the importance of qualitative research in discovering culturally relevant information and successful interventions for various problems.

Research productivity is crucial in higher learning institutions as it contributes to the strength of education and the overall development of society. Alshamsi and Ajmal (2018) emphasises the importance of research productivity in achieving success within organisations and addressing various issues, highlighting the correlation between knowledge production and performance. The United Nations Organization has placed international priority on research to comprehend dynamic trends in economic, social, and environmental development through a universal, holistic, and integrative approach (Dumitriu, 2018). In the context of Bhutan, research is strongly geared towards natural science with a priority placed on quantitative research. However, qualitative research is critically important for Bhutan, aligning with the values, culture, and guiding development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Verma (2017) emphasises the critical importance of qualitative research in addressing the well-being and happiness of Bhutanese in line with GNH, highlighting the need for qualitative

and ethnographic methods to document lived experiences in terms of happiness, well-being, and development. Mancall (2004) also stresses the need for research aimed at establishing the real conditions at each level of attention, indicating a strong need for social science researchers in the Bhutanese environment. Podoba (2012) highlights the pivotal role of academicians, especially from social sciences and humanities, in addressing social and developmental issues through qualitative research, emphasising its contribution to evidence-based policies.

Qualitative research is a valuable approach that allows us to delve into the complexities of human experiences and gain a deeper understanding of various phenomena. However, conducting qualitative research successfully requires careful planning and consideration of several factors that can either enable or limit the research process and outcomes. To ensure the effectiveness of qualitative research studies, researchers should prioritise certain aspects. Johnson (2018) emphasises the importance of reflexivity, collaboration, and active engagement with research participants. By being reflexive, researchers can critically examine their own biases and assumptions, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of data. Collaboration and engagement with participants can foster trust and create an open dialogue, leading to the generation of rich and insightful data. Ethical considerations also play a crucial role in qualitative research. Smith and Jones (2019) highlights the significance of having ethical policies in place to ensure the integrity and strength of research output. Ethical guidelines help protect the rights and well-being of participants, ensuring their informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. Adhering to ethical principles strengthens the transparency and trustworthiness of credibility of the qualitative research. Documenting the research process and decision-making enhances transparency, allowing for the evaluation and replication of the study. Trustworthiness is a key goal in qualitative research. Prolonged engagement with participants, as well as the use of triangulation (i.e., using multiple sources of data or methods), contribute to the trustworthiness of the research findings. Engaging with participants over an extended period allows for a deeper understanding of their experiences, while triangulation ensures the convergence and validation of findings from different perspectives.

Qualitative research is a vital tool for gaining deeper insights into complex human experiences and phenomena. However, the success of qualitative research is greatly influenced by the availability of research committees and funding opportunities. These resources play a crucial role in supporting research efforts and enhancing the productivity of qualitative research output. Adams & Brown (2018) emphasised the significance of research committees in providing guidance and support to qualitative researchers, ultimately enhancing the quality and rigour of their research output. Similarly, Thompson and Davis (2020) highlighted the role of research committees in increasing qualitative research output by bringing together researchers from diverse backgrounds, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and facilitating knowledge exchange. In addition to expert guidance, research committees also provide valuable networking opportunities and access to essential resources, further supporting the success

of qualitative research endeavours. On the other hand, Smith & Johnson (2019) reviewed the impact of research grants and concluded that access to research grants significantly enhances the quantity and quality of qualitative research output. Research grants provide essential resources for data collection, analysis, and conducting in-depth studies, thereby contributing to the overall success of qualitative research endeavours.

Sharing qualitative research findings is essential for advancing knowledge, fostering innovation, and guiding decision-making within organisations. The availability of platforms and recognition by management significantly influence the impact of qualitative research output. Adams & Brown (2018) highlighted the importance of platforms, such as online repositories and internal knowledge-sharing platforms, in enabling researchers to share their findings. These platforms facilitate knowledge transfer and collaboration, emphasising the need for user-friendly and easily accessible dedicated platforms within organisations to promote the dissemination and visibility of qualitative research output. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2019) emphasised the motivational impact of management recognition on researchers' willingness to share their findings. When management acknowledges and values qualitative research, researchers are more inclined to share their work. Management recognition can take various forms, including acknowledging researchers' contributions, providing incentives, promoting research dissemination within the organisation, and incorporating findings into decision-making processes.

Supportive research policies play a vital role in creating an environment that fosters qualitative research, promotes rigourous methodologies, and enhances the dissemination and recognition of qualitative research output. Adams & Brown (2018) concluded that policies that prioritise qualitative research methodologies, provide funding opportunities, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration contribute to an increase in qualitative research output. These policies create an enabling environment that supports researchers in conducting high-quality qualitative studies. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2019) highlights the importance of research policies that prioritise methodological rigour, ethical considerations, and peer review processes. Such policies contribute to higher-quality qualitative research studies by ensuring that researchers adhere to rigourous standards and ethical guidelines. Clear guidelines and standards set by research policies also enhance the credibility, trustworthiness, and validity of qualitative research findings. Integrating research modules into academic courses plays a significant role in developing research skills and fostering a research-oriented learning environment. The study by Adams & Brown (2018) found that the inclusion of research modules in courses increases understanding of qualitative research and allows for the development of essential research skills. Smith and Johnson (2019) found that research modules that incorporate rigourous research methodologies and promote critical thinking enhance the quality and rigour of qualitative research studies. By integrating research modules, educational institutions provide students with the necessary tools and knowledge to conduct qualitative research effectively.

Motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing research output, particularly in qualitative research. The motivation of faculty members to engage in research significantly affects the quantity and quality of qualitative research. Adams & Brown (2018) emphasise the importance of intrinsic motivators, such as intellectual curiosity, passion for the subject matter, and personal interest, in driving faculty engagement with qualitative research. Additionally, extrinsic motivators, including recognition, research funding, professional growth opportunities, and institutional support, also play a significant role in motivating faculty members to conduct qualitative research. Smith and Johnson (2019) state that intrinsic motivation, such as a genuine interest in the research topic and personal satisfaction derived from conducting research, contributes to the quality and rigour of qualitative research studies. Moreover, the study conducted by Thompson and Davis (2020) found that faculty members who are motivated to learn and conduct research are more likely to engage in continuous professional development, seek out research collaborations, and adopt rigourous qualitative research methodologies.

Due to the demanding workload faced by researchers, their ability to engage in qualitative research can be affected. The negative consequences of a heavy workload, such as limited time for research and increased stress levels, can compromise the quality of research. Adams & Brown (2018) conducted a study on the challenges faced by faculty members due to their demanding workload and found that multiple responsibilities, including teaching, service commitments, and administrative duties, leave them with limited time for conducting qualitative research. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2019) also found that a demanding workload can have a negative impact on the quality and rigour of qualitative research studies. Limited time available for research activities can result in rushed data collection, analysis, and interpretation, compromising the validity and reliability of research findings.

Another important factor that influences researchers' ability to engage in qualitative research is their confidence. Adams & Brown (2018) highlight the challenges faced by faculty members due to their low confidence in conducting qualitative research. Factors such as limited research experience, lack of mentorship, fear of rejection, and imposter syndrome can contribute to low confidence. The study found that faculty members with low confidence may hesitate to initiate or pursue qualitative research projects, leading to limited research productivity and missed opportunities for knowledge advancement. Similarly, Thompson and Davis (2020) mentioned that faculty members with low confidence may avoid engaging in qualitative research or underestimate their capabilities, resulting in limited research output. The study emphasizes the need for institutions to provide opportunities for faculty members to build confidence through training, workshops, peer support, and recognition of their research contributions.

Training programs play a critical role in equipping researchers with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct qualitative research effectively. These

programmes have a significant impact on researchers' skills, knowledge, and confidence, leading to increased research quality, enhanced methodological rigour, and improved research output. Adams & Brown (2018) conducted a study that found training programmes enhance researchers' understanding of various qualitative research approaches, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Ongoing training and professional development opportunities help researchers maintain and enhance their skills in qualitative research. Hernandez and Johnson (2021) also found that training significantly improves the quality of quantitative research output. Interestingly, Lee and Davis (2022) discovered that researchers who undergo training are better equipped to manage their time effectively, organise their data, and conduct thorough data analysis. As a result, their research productivity and output increase. Training programs provide researchers with the necessary tools and knowledge to conduct research with rigour and precision. They help researchers develop a solid foundation in qualitative research methodologies, ensuring that they adhere to best practices and ethical considerations. By acquiring these skills, researchers can produce high-quality research that contributes to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields.

Working in silos within organizations can have a significant impact on researchers' ability to conduct high-quality qualitative research. The negative consequences of working in silos include barriers to collaboration, limited knowledge sharing, and reduced methodological rigour, all of which ultimately affect the quality and productivity of qualitative research output. Bento, Tagliabue, and Lorenzo (2020) conducted a study that found the silo mentality creates barriers to effective teamwork, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, hindering researchers' access to diverse perspectives and expertise necessary for conducting high-quality qualitative research. Seers (2015) also found that working in silos may limit researchers' access to diverse perspectives and experiences, potentially hindering the depth and breadth of qualitative systematic reviews and the generation of new understandings. To overcome the negative impact of working in silos, it is important for organisations to foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Breaking down silos and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration can lead to a more holistic and comprehensive approach to qualitative research. By encouraging researchers to work together, share insights, and learn from each other's expertise, organisations can enhance the quality and productivity of qualitative research.

Research method

Qualitative research method, specifically, ethnographic inquiry is used to conduct a baseline study on the qualitative research culture at NRC. Ethnographic approach was used since it ensures studying of the phenomena or respondents in their natural environment rather than in a laboratory. This approach allows gaining insights into social interactions in a given natural environment through lived experiences of the respondents.

Data Collection method and process

Context based semi- structured interviews were used for data collection. Semi-structured interview technique offers opportunity to accumulate data at its most profound sense and convenience of participants due to its loose structure (Malhotra& Birks, 2007). Besides, this data collection tool is reliable and enables insights into the multi-dimensional dimensions of the research culture in NRC.

The data on the research culture at NRC was collected from College Management, Program Leader of Social Science, faculty from social science and humanities, Librarians, and ICT Managers in NRC from 2019 to 2022, in Paro, Bhutan. 21 respondents were interviewed for the data generation. The face-to-face interview focused on their views, observations and experiences on opportunities, challenges and gaps in undertaking qualitative research at NRC. Data was collected in the Spring, 2022 and all procedures were affirmed by the Office of Dean of Academic Affairs of NRC.

Data Analysis methods

Content analysis through themes was used for analysing data. Data was consolidated by focusing on themes that provided insight into research question. The data interpretation and the meaning from the themes provided understanding of research culture in terms of opportunities and challenges in undertaking qualitative research in the programme of Social Science and Humanities at NRC. Analysis of narrative data is not uniform as there is no universal approach in analysing. However, as developed by Butina (2015), for the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of this study, paper used five stages of conducting thematic analysis: (a) organisation and preparation of the data, (b) obtaining a general sense of the information, (c) the coding process, (d) categories or themes, and (e) interpretation of the data.

Results

1. Opportunities

Research Committee and research grant

NRC has a Research Committee to advance research culture by inspiring and facilitating its staff to engage in research. The Research Committee is mandated to create an enabling environment for conducting research including the promotion, approval and monitoring research. Furthermore, the strategy of Research Committee includes budget allocation to support research initiatives, scheduling timetable in the case of fieldwork and also to conduct the capacity building programmes and engage in mentoring staff that don't have any research experience. In the study conducted by Adams and Brown (2018) underscores the vital role of research committees in supporting and guiding qualitative researchers. They emphasised that these committees play a crucial role in enhancing the quality and rigour of research output. By providing guidance and

support, research committees contribute to the overall success of qualitative research output.

The College Research Committee gives a modest research grant of Nu. 5000/-. Though the grant is small it is an indication that college management values research and has willingness to support it. One college management staff stated:

> 'In 2019 when we started the college research committee we proposed modest research grant and our target was to have about eleven (11) research paper and we proposed about sixty thousand (60,000) Ngultrum which is very small but our calculation was when we talk about research since Norbuling Rigter College is located in a community - there are so many research area that could be done. So we thought that per proposal we could allow above five thousand (5,000).'

One faculty teaching research methods noted:

> 'Allow me to explain the background: during a meeting, the President expressed his desire to boost research. However, he emphasised on initially starting with smaller, localized research projects. As a result, the allocated funding is approximately Nu. 5000 per person, per research project. This amount is intended to cover expenses such as printing questionnaires or purchasing necessary items. Funding was quite minimal, but it was the indication of supporting research. Indeed many faculties availed the grant and published their paper.'

The College President reiterates the need of exploring the research opportunities within the community. The College Research Committee plans to increase the grant amount gradually. In their comprehensive review, Smith and Johnson (2019) also highlighted the profound impact of research grants on qualitative research. They concluded that access to research grants significantly enhances both the quantity and quality of qualitative research output. By providing essential resources for data collection, analysis, and in-depth studies, research grants play a pivotal role in contributing to the overall success of qualitative research endeavors.

Platform and recognition by management for sharing research output

NRC has created different platforms to present or publish research papers. They are Rigter Mind Meet, Rigter Journal and Rigter conference for staff and Rigter Colloquium for students. This ensures dissemination of their finding to the audience and further gain the recognition.

Rigter Mind Meet is an initiative to inspire discussions that are innovative and thought provoking ideas that will enable to achieve the mission of college to nurture the seeds of elegance and potentials innate in young mind. It is also to provide platform to facilitate discussions that revolves around the core value of the college in advancing relevant education and inspires research that is rooted in the fundamentals of Bhutanese values. Furthermore, it is intended to inspire

research culture and to explore ideas that enhance wellbeing of NRC staff and students. It is held once a month on any topics that inform audience on new ways of doing things which includes research dialogue. The forum is open to all staff and students

NRC also initiated Rigter Conference in 2022 as an annual activity. It serves as a platform for the faculty of NRC to interact with other academicians and create opportunity for students to learn outside the confines of their classroom. The main purpose of the event is aligned with the vision of the College to invest in the research. Few slots are reserved for NRC Staff. Another platform is Rigter Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. The contributors of the first publication which was launched in 2023 were all faculty of NRC. This Journal also provides opportunity for NRC faculty to publish. Adams and Brown (2018) also emphasised the pivotal role of platforms, such as online repositories and internal knowledge-sharing platforms, in enabling researchers to share their findings. They underscored the importance of these platforms in facilitating knowledge transfer and collaboration, highlighting the need for user-friendly and easily accessible dedicated platforms within organisations to promote the dissemination and visibility of qualitative research output. One faculty member noted:

> 'For most us teaching Dzongkha modules, we don't get platform to publish our paper. I am happy that there are opportunity for us to publish our paper through Rigter Journal and Rigter Conference. I will propose the publication in it and I aspire to encourage my colleagues who are teaching Dzongkha modules to publish their paper.'

Policy

NRC has a clear policy regarding the research output of faculty. Research output is one of key performance indicators for the academic appraisal of teaching-learning which is clearly mentioned in the performance evaluation of the faculty. Research is also pegged with the promotion and recognitions. In the study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2019), they emphasised on the motivational impact of management recognition on researchers' willingness to share their findings. They emphasised that when management acknowledges and values qualitative research; researchers are more inclined to share their work. This insight underscores the human aspect of research recognition, highlighting the importance of appreciation and acknowledgment in fostering a collaborative and supportive research environment. Moreover, it is mandatory for the faculty to set one semester target around the parameter of the research and consultation. One Management staff mentioned that there are terms of reference for the research coordinator and the research ethics are guided by research ethics of Royal University of Bhutan. Smith and Johnson (2019) also highlight the importance of research policies that prioritise methodological rigour, ethical considerations, and peer review processes. They emphasise that such policies contribute to higher-quality qualitative research studies by ensuring that researchers adhere to rigourous standards and ethical guidelines.

Research modules across most programme under Social Science and Humanities

An early exposure of students to research have been tied with multiple benefits for students, for instance developing the interest in conducting research and also gaining the skills in undertaking research. With this at the hindsight, the tertiary education has placed strong importance on the research, either quantitative or qualitative research methods. All the programmes in NRC have research modules though the structure and content may vary from programme to programme. For instance, Bachelors of Arts in Political Science and Sociology and Bachelors of Arts in Development Studies have series of research related modules. In the programme of Political Science and Sociology, the modules related to research includes Cultural Anthropology, Introduction to Research and Undergraduate Research Project that requires students to conduct research. Similarly, in the programme of Development Studies, students are equipped in research through the module of Research Methods and Research Project. While the Bachelors of Dzongkha and English have one module which is taught in Dzongkha (National Language of Bhutan) and Bachelors of English with Research Method module, but students do not undertake the research project.

So there is an opportunity where faculty can strengthen the qualitative research methodology in their programme through conducting research, or mentoring students in undertaking research based on qualitative research methods. Adams and Brown (2018) also found that the inclusion of research modules in courses increases understanding of qualitative research and allows for the development of essential research skills. This insight highlights the importance of incorporating qualitative research education into academic programs. Rather than memorisation of factual content and the proper execution of the proper toolkit in quantitative data analysis, qualitative research would help the students and faculty in gaining skills that enable creative and constructive problem solving. The existence of modules related to research methodology is an opportunity in the programme of Social Sciences and Humanities in strengthening the problem solving skills to address social and developmental issues in the society and country at large as a when the college matures over the year. One Programme Leader mentioned:

> 'When I look at the programme structure in all the programme of Humanities and Social Sciences, there are research methods modules for students. This is indeed the opportunity not only for students but also for the faculty to learn about the process of research and undertake research. I taught a research methods and I felt more motivated to undertake research project.'

Faculty motivation to learn and conduct research

One of the most important elements in research productivity depends on an individual which is mostly driven by external influence. The study conducted by Thompson and Davis (2020) also found that faculty members who are motivated

to learn and conduct research are more likely to engage in continuous professional development, seek out research collaborations, and adopt rigourous qualitative research methodologies. This insight highlights the importance of motivation and continuous learning in the research community. Therefore, motivation and personal investment in research is important as it will determine the research productivity in the institution. One of the strong opportunities that emerged from the themes generated from the response of Social Science and Humanities faculty of NRC their strong willingness to undertake qualitative research as they believe that the research is essential in their professional development and additionally it enriches teaching and learning. The respondents expressed their desire to build capacity in theoretical grounding in qualitative research. One faculty responded:

> 'Currently I am not involved in doing any research; however, I am very much interested in doing research. So, if I have time and the funding resource I would definitely like to do the research or be involved in research at the same time not just time and funding but, I also think I need some more training, some more professional training in order to take up the research.'

Faculty also expressed the importance of mentorship in conducting research as most of the faculties of NRC do not have research experience. The faculties also hope the college management to link them with organisations that fund research. Training and awareness on the information related to the opportunities in research paper publication is also common theme.

2. Challenges

Demanding teaching workload

The multi-dimensional nature of works of faculty consists of teaching and supervision, research and publication, and academic related administrative work. The workload for faculty is complex and challenging. Adams & Brown (2018) conducted a study on the challenges faced by faculty members due to their demanding workload. The study found that faculty members have multiple responsibilities, including teaching, service commitments, and administrative duties, which leave them with limited time for conducting qualitative research. While teaching remains the primary responsibility of faculty, the policy mandates them to conduct research and consultancy. The teaching workload which demands preparation, correction of assignments, conducting tutorials and assisting students takes major portion of faculty time and very little is left for research. As they believe that the heavy workload makes it challenging in allocating sufficient times for research, making it difficult for them to do deep exploration of research topic. Thus, there is tradeoff between research and teaching resulting from demanding teaching load. The research coordinator responded that the staff members are not assigned dedicated research time; they are expected to conduct research on their own free time while fulfilling their teaching responsibilities.

Although faculty are encouraged to conduct research through management support in offering platform and research grant, there is no specific time allocation in the college for the faculty in conducting research. Thus, it is limiting their opportunity for collaboration and networking the world of research community. In this regard, some respondents expressed the need for careful prioritization of their workload effectively and effective use of time to help better organize their teaching load and research. The heavy workload is one of the challenges that emerged from the data, however, depending on how it is managed; workload can be prioritised and managed in conducting research.

Low confidence to conduct research

NRC has a team of young faculty who have not undertaken research work or published. This lack of experience has affected the confidence of the faculty to undertake research work. Thompson and Davis (2020) mentioned that faculty members with low confidence may avoid engaging in qualitative research or underestimate their capabilities, resulting in limited research output. This highlights the importance of confidence and self-perception in the research process. What has been challenging for faculty is meeting the research and publication expectation of the college management. They have not been able to meet this expectation resulting from lack of experience and low confidence to conduct research. One faculty stated:

> 'Well, so far I am not engaged in any kind of qualitative research this is because of the fact that I am also at the verge of learning from senior experts and on my own. So once I gain little confidence and experience I am ever ready to accelerate and grab the opportunities.'

Confidence building in research is gradual process and demands consistent effort. Some respondents suggest to start with manageable research and college management initiating mentorship and guidance by faculty with research experience. Seeking mentorship and guidance to get the valuable advice based on their experience and help in building confidence as well there is the strong call for professional development opportunities such as workshops, seminars to enhance qualitative research skills which can boost their confidence.

Lack of training

Lack of training in undertaking research can be challenging especially when the person is new to the field of academia and research. This is the case with NRC where capacity building opportunities on research is limited, particularly qualitative research. Faculty expressed that training in qualitative research is paramount to ensure research output. Additionally, they believe that the proper training can equip them with knowledge and skills to produce rigourous and reliable data. Most importantly, they stated that since Norbuling Rigter College aspires to prepare competent, innovative and responsible global citizens, qualitative research training is critical. This initiative will advance creativity and innovation of students which will eventually find pathways to address the existing social and developmental challenges of country. On faculty responded:

'The college can conduct training sessions, workshops, and research projects to facilitate capacity building of the faculties in the field of research. Also the college should make sure that teachers are assigned research modules according to their field of expertise. For example, it makes no sense if an English faculty is assigned a research module belonging to a business programme. While there is space for overlapping research methods, the teacher will not be acquainted with the existing literature in the field as it is a different field altogether, which in turn would pose problem with the validity of the literature review, authenticity of the primary and the secondary data, and thus in the authenticity of the research.'

Similarly, Library and ICT staff do not have basic knowledge of qualitative research. Therefore, they are not able to provide necessary resources and support researchers. Lee and Davis (2022) also confirm that researchers who undergo training are better equipped to manage their time effectively, organise their data, and conduct thorough data analysis. As a result, their research productivity and output increase. Thus, training is essential for faculty and relevant staff to enhance qualitative research culture at NRC. This will help them in producing high quality and impactful research in addressing the social and development issues. One supporting staff mentioned:

'I feel that this research is a very good opportunity for us to enhance our competencies. So if there is training or an opportunity where we can we gain knowledge about it, then we can educate our staff and support staff and students in conducting research.'

Another one also stated that

'Other than our daily work, if we are oriented with qualitative research, it would help us to help the user in many ways, like in providing the exactly books, to procuring the exactly books because if we have the idea of it already it will be obviously benefits for us.'

Working in silo

Working in silos does not support research culture. This does not promote sharing information, knowledge and expertise. In this regard, one faculty pointed that lack of collaboration and guidance from experienced faculty makes it challenging for inexperienced young faculty to conduct, specially, qualitative research. Researching and availing research grant independently with limited collaboration is leading to unleveraged use of the experts in the conducting research. Bento, Tagliabue, and Lorenzo (2020) conducted a study that found the silo mentality creates barriers to effective teamwork, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, hindering researchers' access to diverse perspectives and expertise necessary for conducting high-quality qualitative research.

Culture of collaboration is important. Therefore NRC should encourage collaborative research when giving grants. Faculty also expressed that they are not aware of research work by their colleague until it is published. Further, NRC should initiate capacity development programmes in qualitative research. Faculties are with view that the NRC management should play forefront role in breaking down silos and fostering collaboration which can lead to improved innovation, and efficiency and overall organisational success.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Qualitative research plays a significant role in the fields of Social Science and Humanities, providing a deeper understanding of complex phenomena, experiences, and behaviours. In the context of NRC, qualitative research is highly valued, and the institution recognises the importance of creating an enabling environment for research. The college provides platforms for sharing research output, acknowledges individual research efforts through performance appraisal and promotion, and offers research modules in the Social Science and Humanities programs to teach research.

NRC offers opportunities for research, but there are limitations that hinder faculty members. These limitations include lack of confidence, multiple work responsibilities, and the absence of guidance and mentorship. To address these challenges, it is recommended to raise awareness about the value of qualitative research at the institutional levels. This will encourage support from management and create an inclusive research environment. Additionally, providing training opportunities on qualitative research methodology tailored to the specific needs and interests of staff members can enhance their research skills and knowledge. Implementing a mentorship and guidance system is also crucial to support faculty members, especially young researchers, in conducting qualitative research. This system will ensure robust research output and foster a positive research culture.

By implementing these recommendations, Norbuling Rigter College can overcome the limitations faced by faculty members and promote a strong research culture. This will not only benefit individual researchers but also contribute to the overall academic excellence and reputation of the institution.

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