Research culture and ethics of faculty researchers at the university level

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	A strong ethical foundation safeguards the rights and welfare of research participants, fosters public trust, and aligns research practices with both global standards and local values. This paper will address university faculty researchers' research culture and ethical practices. The paper will examine the shared challenges, incentives, and advantages of research at the individual, professional, and institutional levels. This paper facilitated purposive sampling to select the four participants who will undergo key informant interviews as the data collection process and used reflexive thematic analysis for data analysis. based on the extracted data, the global theme "research uplifts human potential that goes beyond the community" was created to summarize the study. the analysis is organized into three main themes, illustrating how research influences and extends beyond academic and community boundaries. The analysis indicates that research driven by institutional and personal motivations can significantly uplift human potential and extend its benefits beyond academic settings into the broader community. This multi-faceted approach to understanding research culture and ethics illustrates the complex interplay between individual aspirations, institutional frameworks, and societal contributions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The research culture and ethics in the Philippines have strong foundations in the country's social and cultural circumstances. The scientific community has been trying to strengthen and reinforce ethical standards in research to safeguard the rights and welfare of human participants while maintaining the scientific investigation's credibility. Ethical review boards, commonly established within academic institutions and research organizations, supervise research proposals to guarantee compliance with moral norms and safeguard the rights and welfare of participants (R. Sabio & C. Sabio, 2013). Ideally, research culture is characterized by a collaborative spirit, often involving community participation and engagement. This participatory approach enhances the relevance and impact of research findings and fosters trust and mutual respect between researchers and their study communities (Khodyakov et al., 2013)

Nevertheless, there are still educational issues to overcome, such as securing adequate money, allocating resources effectively, and maintaining unwavering adherence to ethical norms in various research environments (Lasco et al., 2021). The research issues confronting the Philippine education system extend beyond universities and colleges. These problems include education quality, budget, affordability, lack of facilities, increased drop-out rate, shortage of qualified teachers, and the focus of this research, the subject mismatch among the faculty members. The problem in the teachers-subjects mismatch is very evident, especially in the research subjects of the Senior High School, namely Practical Research 1 (Qualitative Research), Practical Research 2 (Quantitative Research), and Inquiries, Investigation, and Immersion. These are new subjects to the eyes of high school faculty members in the Philippines. Research subjects from pre-K to 12 are not considered a field or a subject matter, especially in high school (Caraig, 2023). However, the

Senior High School program brought a new perspective to the research subjects, aiming to develop Filipino learners' critical and research skills.

This paper will address the research culture and ethical practices of institutional researchers. The paper will examine the shared challenges, incentives, and advantages of research at the individual, professional, and institutional levels..

2.   METHODOLOGY
2.1. Design

This research used phenomenology qualitative research design, and used the framework of Quitoras and Abuso (2021) which explores the best research practices of higher education institutions which was supported by Salazar-Clemeña & Almonte-Acosta (2007) study, moreover this paper will also use the Braun and Clarke (2006) reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) and its six phases.

Reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), as described by Braun and Clarke, is an approach to thematic analysis that emphasizes the active role of the researcher in identifying and interpreting themes within qualitative data. Unlike more structured methods, RTA is characterized by its flexibility and its embrace of researcher subjectivity as a valuable asset rather than a bias to be eliminated. In RTA, researchers are encouraged to engage deeply with their data, reflect on their influence on the analysis, and be transparent about their decisions and perspectives. The process involves familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for and reviewing themes, and refining and naming these themes to produce a coherent narrative. This approach is not bound to any specific theoretical framework, allowing it to be adapted to various research contexts and questions. Braun and Clarke highlight that RTA values the richness and complexity of qualitative data, advocating for a reflective and iterative process where themes are developed through a thoughtful and nuanced engagement with the data. This method underscores the importance of reflexivity, creativity, and the interpretative nature of qualitative research.

2.2. Quitoras and Abuso's Codes for Best Research Practices of HEI

The article of Quitoras and Abuso (2021) explores the effective strategies employed by Philippine higher education institutions to foster a strong research culture. It highlights various practices that contribute to developing and enhancing research capabilities among faculty and students. These practices include providing institutional support and infrastructure, such as adequate funding and facilities; offering capacity-building programs like training and mentorship; and implementing research incentives and recognition schemes to motivate researchers. The study also underscores the importance of fostering collaborative research and networking opportunities, both locally and internationally, and the role of effective policies and governance in creating a conducive research environment. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of community engagement and conducting relevant, impactful research. The article concludes that a multifaceted approach, integrating strong support systems, capacity-building initiatives, incentives, collaborations, effective governance, and community engagement, is crucial for cultivating a dynamic and sustainable research culture in Philippine higher education institutions.

According to Quitoras and Abuso's (2021) paradigm, it is imperative to incorporate all-encompassing support systems that provide sufficient financing, infrastructure, and administrative support. To improve research skills, they stress the significance of capacity-building programs like training courses, seminars, and mentorship. The study also clarifies how much of a motivator rewards and recognition can be for researchers. Enhancing research production and quality also requires cultivating worldwide and local collaboration networks and partnerships.

This aligns with Salazar-Clemeña & Almonte-Acosta's study, it identifies challenges such as limited funding and resources, heavy teaching loads, and a lack of institutional support and recognition for research activities (Salazar-Clemeña & Almonte-Acosta, 2007). These challenges often hinder faculty members from participating in research and publishing their work. However, the study also identifies factors that can foster a vibrant research culture, including mentorship and collaboration opportunities, supportive leadership, and access to research grants and facilities. Additionally, the paper discusses the importance of creating an organizational climate that values and prioritizes research, as well as promoting a research-oriented mindset among faculty members.

2.3. Partcipants

To achieve the objectives of this study, I employed purposive sampling to select four (4) participants who served as interviewees. I ensured that each participant met the predetermined criteria prior to their inclusion in the research. The inclusion criteria required that participants be published researchers or writers, have taught courses related to research or writing, possess at least three years of research experience, and have produced research output in the field of qualitative research. On the other hand, individuals were

excluded if they were undergraduate students, had no publication record, or were published researchers without experience in teaching research. As part of the anonymity of all my four (4) participants, here are their pseudonyms.

- Kenny, male, 26, social science researcher
- Janny, female, 36, educational researcher
- Rhandy, male, 39, informational technology researcher
- Kristy, female, 27, educational researcher

Setting criteria for research participants is essential to ensure that we hit the target data of the study. Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria help researchers identify and select individuals best suited to answer the research questions and meet the study's objectives. This process enhances the quality and relevance of the data collected, as it ensures that participants possess the characteristics necessary to provide meaningful insights. Additionally, establishing criteria promotes fairness and transparency in participant selection, reducing potential biases that could affect the study's outcomes. It also safeguards the welfare of participants by excluding those who might be at risk of harm from participating. Well-defined criteria are fundamental to maintaining the scientific integrity of the research and ensuring ethical standards are upheld.

2.2. Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection tool used in this research is key informant interview. The chosen participants were politely asked to be part of this study by sending them an invitation letter including the purpose of the research and further details that are essential to know. When the participants agreed to be interviewed, I asked them about their preferred platforms (Zoom, MS Teams, Messenger, or Google Classroom). Following that process, I also informed them about the ethical considerations and discussed their rights as participants, as well as the expected duration of the interview.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

I emphasize confidentiality by assuring participants that the information they share will not be disclosed outside the research context and will solely be used for academic and research purposes. Moreover, the study guarantees anonymity, indicating that all identifying details—such as names and institutional affiliations—will be altered or removed to safeguard the privacy of participants. The data collection also underscores the principle of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw, stating that participants may discontinue their involvement at any time, with a commitment to either return or destroying their data. The participants are also asked on their preferred data collection platform for their convience. The set of ethical considerations were explained prior to the conduct of the data collection.

2.4. Data Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke, Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) involves six key stages that guide researchers through a flexible and reflective process of identifying and interpreting themes within qualitative data [Table 1].

Table 1. 6 phases of reflexive thematic analysis *(Braun and Clarke, 2006).*

Phase	Procedure for each step
1. Familiarizing oneself with the data	Transcribing data; reading and re-reading; noting down initial codes.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the dataset, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Involved reviewing the themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset; generate a thematic 'map'.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme; generation of clear names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	Final opportunity for analysis selecting appropriate extracts; discussion of the analysis; relate back to research questions to literature; produce report

The first stage, familiarization with the data, requires researchers to immerse themselves in it by reading and re-reading it, taking initial notes, and becoming deeply acquainted with the content. The second stage, generating initial codes, involves systematically coding interesting features across the entire data set and organizing these codes into meaningful groups. In the third stage, generating initial themes, researchers review the coded data to identify broader patterns and potential themes, collating all relevant data extracts under these themes. The fourth stage, reviewing themes, entails refining them by checking their coherence with the coded data and the entire data set, often leading to merging, splitting, or discarding themes. The fifth stage, defining and naming themes, involves a deeper analysis to clearly define each theme, articulate what it captures, and develop a detailed analysis of each theme, ensuring each tells a distinct part of the overall story. Finally, the sixth stage, producing the report, requires researchers to weave together the narrative and data extracts to construct a compelling and coherent account of the data, situating their analysis within the broader context of existing literature and research questions. This stage emphasizes the importance of producing a detailed and nuanced narrative that conveys the richness and complexity of the data.

3.   RESULTS

Table 2 presents an overview of the codes and themes extracted from the data. The global theme "*research uplifts human potential that goes beyond the community*" was created to summarize the analysis. The analysis is organized into three main themes, illustrating how research influences and extends beyond academic and community boundaries [Table 2].

Table 2. Overview of codes and themes.

Global theme	"Research uplifts human potential that goes beyond the community"			
Organizing themes	research culture and ethics is influenced on the researchers' eagerness of tenureship and personal satisfaction		authenticity on research motivation	research go beyond outside the institution
Basic themes	university tenureship	satisfaction and appreciation on personal growth	personalized research output	community extension
Codes	• institution • accreditation • faculty ranking • consultancy	• self improvement • incentive • passion	• instrinsic motivation • academic integrity	• academic contribution • obligation

3.1. Research Culture and Ethics are Influenced by the Researchers' Eagerness of Tenureship and Personal Satisfaction

The first organizing theme, "*research culture and ethics is influenced by the researcher's eagerness for tenureship and personal satisfaction*," emphasizes the impact of institutional frameworks and personal aspirations on research ethics and culture. It highlights how institutional accreditation, faculty ranking, and consultancy opportunities drive researchers to engage ethically and productively. The codes associated with this theme emphasize the structured, career-oriented motivations that underpin research activities. Moreover, it reflects on how self-improvement, incentives, and passion fuel a genuine commitment to research. This theme suggests that when researchers are passionate and satisfied with their growth, their output is more truthful and impactful.

Below is the significant data that enables me to draw the first organizing theme. I created the basic themes "*university tenureship*" and *"satisfaction and appreciation on personal growth"*.

"If you don't have anything to contribute to the institution, how can you elevate your status in the institution? How can you improve teaching and learning? At least publish one research per year" -Janny, F, 36, Researcher

"It should be like a collaboration. It is tough to push people to do research individually, and you have to make sure the faculty work together and think of something like research where you can identify the new work-related problem." -Kristy, F, 27, Researcher

"The university provides support by requiring regular progress reports and sharing information about conferences and journals. This structure ensures there is no excessive pressure and encourages continuous research updates." -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"Institutionally, here at [institute name was omitted], one thing that I like is that one of the job descriptions of lecturer-researcher is that you must produce one research article monthly and

prepare for a research topic, like a small seminar meeting. They will choose a foreign lecturer to present a specific topic each month. It strengthens the culture of research. -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"They give like big incentives I received from the University Research Center. It's a big amount but it doesn't cover everything to travel. But it's enough for me to present my paper in in in Thailand. So, okay na rin, di ba? So they are supporting me. I mean, the researchers, they have supported me in terms of the conference fee and some of the allowance assuring that I have to publish." -Janny, F, 36, Researcher

"It's interesting for me to listen to researchers because we have different fields. Somehow, we speak the same language, the language of research, curiosity, inquiry, and the hunger for knowledge. So, understanding what many people might think is fun in our institution." -Rhandy, M, 39, Researcher

"When I first joined [Institution name was omitted], I was surprised by their strong emphasis on research. Unlike my experience at a college in the Philippines, where research was not a part of our job description, here at [Institution name was omitted], it is ingrained in the culture. They have a dedicated research team focused on improving faculty research, and we have our own Scopus journal." -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"I also get paid to do research in Thailand. I earn from freelance work, proofreading and formatting" -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"I got my scholarship because of my research proposal to [Institution name was omitted], and my scholarship is a fully funded one, you know, for me to be a fully funded scholar because of my research." -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

3.2. Authenticity on Research Motivation

The second organizing theme, *"authenticity on research motivation,"* delves into the intrinsic motivations and personal fulfillment derived from research. It also emphasizes intrinsic motivation and academic integrity as key drivers of research that is academically sound and personally meaningful to the researcher. Below is the significant data that enables me to draw the second organizing theme. I created the *"personalized research output"* as a basic theme.

"So meaning if you are teaching or if you are a faculty then you can identify [school-based problems] then why not write something about it. Kaya, if you cannot identify problems, It means that if you cannot write or cannot produce any research that can help in elevating your pedagogy, meaning parang wala kang ginawa diba? You're just teaching you don't have anything to contribute diba?" -Janny, F, 36, Researcher

"What you should do is review everything what are ethical and what are not because some of the faculty members are not aware. I am not sure if they are just making excuses, but why are you gonna publish a paper that is not yours [referring to the news about a teacher who published work which is not hers] I think it's still intentional." -Rhandy, M, 39, Researcher

"I was curious about how children learn unfamiliar words in their mother tongue, mainly terms we don't commonly use in daily conversation, such as those related to human anatomy. I conducted informal interviews with parents and teachers involved in teaching their mother tongue. This experience sparked my research interest, especially when I discovered the positive impact of using the mother tongue in education, particularly in building students' confidence. -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

My research interest grew, and I completed a research project independently. My professor, who was already an experienced researcher, focused on dictionary research and even worked on translating research terminology into Filipino. I was thrilled to read her work, and this experience began my research journey." -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"Working independently has taught me how to be a good researcher. I needed to do everything myself - lots of reading and hard work. I aspired to be the best researcher in my class. My

goal was to graduate with the best thesis award. I was determined not to let anyone take that away from me. I believed that all the previous award winners had worked alone, so I had the mindset that I would do it all by myself." -Kristy, F, 27, Researcher

3.3. Research Go Beyond the Institution

The third organizing theme, *"research extends beyond the institution,"* focuses on the broader impacts of research extending into the community. It further extends this idea by highlighting the role of academic contribution and a sense of obligation to the community, underscoring the societal impact of research endeavors. Below is the significant data that enables me to draw the third organizing theme. I draw the "community extension" as my basic theme for the third organizing theme.

"Started to become an assistant researcher, and then eventually, I became a researcher myself. I also assisted my then-boyfriend and now-husband in this research and research about inclusion and cultural preservation." -Janny, F, 36, Researcher

"… you can do research out of what you think is like a good research topic. Good research title that would fit in the society." -Kenny, M, 26, Researcher

"There should be like an ethics committee, di ba? Inside the institution, there is one I think there is in the institution where am working there is an executive committee, they are the ones who review whether the researcher has followed the ethical considerations also to make sure that when we extend our research outside our institution, we will not violate their culture…" -Kristy, F, 27, Researcher

The analysis indicates that research driven by institutional and personal motivations can significantly uplift human potential and extend its benefits beyond academic settings into the broader community. This multi-faceted approach to understanding research culture and ethics illustrates the complex interplay between individual aspirations, institutional frameworks, and societal contributions.

4. DISCUSSION

The first organizing theme, *"research culture and ethics are influenced by the researchers' eagerness of tenureship and personal satisfaction,"* emphasize the importance of actively contributing to the institution through research endeavors. Elevating one's status within the institution and improving teaching and learning can be achieved by consistently publishing research. This viewpoint underscores the notion that research output not only enhances individual credibility but also contributes to the overall academic environment. It advocates for a collaborative research approach, highlighting the challenges of pushing individuals to engage in research independently. It emphasizes the need for faculty members to work together to identify and address pertinent research problems. This collaborative ethos fosters an environment where collective efforts drive innovation and knowledge creation. Also, it provides insights into the institutional support structures that facilitate research productivity. He mentions the importance of regular progress reports and the dissemination of information about conferences and journals. These mechanisms not only alleviate excessive pressure but also promote continuous research updates, ensuring that faculty members remain engaged and informed.

The narratives offer valuable insights into the various forms of support and incentives researchers receive within their academic institutions, which leads to job satisfaction and appreciation of their personal growth.

It highlights the support the participants receive from their respective institutions, which provides substantial incentives. These accounts highlight the multifaceted support systems and incentives available to researchers within academic institutions. From financial assistance for conference participation to the cultivation of a collaborative research culture and the recognition of scholarly achievements through scholarships, these mechanisms play a crucial role in fostering a vibrant and thriving research community.

On the other hand, the second organizing theme, *"authenticity on research motivation"*, it explains that our motivation to engage in research work is personal and a reflection of the layers of our personality and personal motivation. Citing Peshkin (1988), subjectivity for as far as research is concerned is not a bias to be eliminated, but rather, a "virtuous" aspect that can enhance value when constructively utilized. This subjectivity encompasses the choice of research questions and data interpretation. Also, Harding (1991) has defended standpoint epistemologies on the ground that the researcher's social location and interests largely determine the knowledge produced.

Researchers do not merely watch as the action unfolds, they are active participants and their interests construct the reality of their scholarly pursuits. As such, there is a tendency that scholarly work is conducted

when they wish to respond to urgent social problems, changed conditions in certain social arenas, or work in areas of personal interest (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, having stated all the above arguments, it is highly reasonable to claim that the personal character of research is not only inescapable, but fundamental to its trustworthiness and significance.

Research motivation is primarily intrinsic due to its alignment with fundamental aspects of human nature. At the core of intrinsic motivation for research lies human curiosity and a natural inclination to explore. This curiosity serves as a driving force behind research endeavors and compels individuals to pursue unanswered questions and delve into unexplored areas. Research offers intellectual fulfillment by providing a platform for individuals to challenge themselves, expand their knowledge base, and develop new skills. When researchers can explore topics that align with their interests and passions, their motivation becomes deeply rooted in intrinsic factors. The autonomy and self-direction inherent in research further amplify intrinsic motivation, as individuals have the freedom to shape their projects and methodologies according to their preferences. Also, when a researcher has an intrinsic motivation to write research, ethical considerations are handled with a certain level of consideration since the topic is close to the researchers' heart, therefore allowing their participants to be treated ethically. At its core, research ethics are guided by principles such as honesty, integrity, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of knowledge for the betterment of society. These ethical principles are not imposed externally but are ingrained within individuals as intrinsic values that guide their conduct and decision-making throughout the research process. Researchers are driven by an intrinsic commitment to uphold these ethical standards, recognizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of the research process and ensuring the well-being and rights of research participants.

Moreover, the last organizing theme, *"research go beyond the institution,"* emphasizes that extending research to the community and its members' involvement in research fosters collaboration and partnership between researchers and the people who are directly impacted by the research outcomes. By engaging with community members, researchers can gain valuable insights, perspectives, and lived experiences that enrich the research process and ensure its relevance to the community's needs and priorities.

In relation to the study conducted by Quitoras and Abuso (2021), it can be inferred that the participants engaged in best research practices not solely for personal or professional advancement but also to contribute meaningfully to their respective communities. However, the analysis revealed a notable deficiency in both local and international research collaboration among the participants. In light of this finding, it is recommended that future researchers explore the underlying factors, including potential gaps and barriers, that may hinder Filipino scholars from actively participating in collaborative research efforts at both the national and global levels.

5. CONCLUSION

In a country marked by socio-economic diversity and regional disparities, research empowers individuals and institutions to generate context-specific knowledge and solutions that address local challenges while contributing to national and global progress.

As a faculty researcher myself, I picked this topic because I believe research has an extraordinary capacity to elevate human potential, transcending the boundaries of individual communities and contributing to the collective advancement of society. Pushing the frontiers of knowledge and research fosters innovation. It offers solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of our time, such as healthcare crises, environmental degradation, and technological stagnation. The impact of research is not limited to its immediate findings; it creates a ripple effect that enhances educational systems, informs public policies, and drives economic growth. As research extends beyond local and national confines, it encourages global collaboration, enabling the exchange of ideas and methodologies across cultures and disciplines. The exchange of knowledge leads to more comprehensive and inclusive solutions, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered when addressing global issues.

Moreover, research cultivates a culture of curiosity and critical thinking, inspiring individuals to engage in lifelong learning and continuous improvement. It empowers people to question the status quo, seek out new possibilities, and innovate in ways that can transform society. In this way, research does more than solve problems; it ignites a passion for discovery and progress that can uplift humanity as a whole. By transcending community boundaries and fostering a shared commitment to knowledge and innovation, research has the power to drive human potential to new heights, uniting us in the pursuit of a brighter, more equitable future for all.

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