



## Qualitative Research Approach in Higher Education: Application, Challenges and Opportunities

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**Abstract:** Qualitative research has become increasingly significant due to its ability to provide valuable perspectives on the intricate dynamics of educational environments. However, researchers have not fully accepted it. In response, this study reviewed literature about underlying assumptions, practical application, challenges and potential opportunities in qualitative research, using the content analysis technique. The study revealed that qualitative research is a valuable approach in higher education as it allows for a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and provides a rich description of experiences and perspectives. Challenges in qualitative research include poor understanding of its potential and lack of time and sufficient funding. The study recommends that researchers in HEIs be encouraged to adopt qualitative research when exploring complex educational phenomena as this approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of experiences and perspectives. Educational institutions need to provide support to researchers, including funding, training and guidance on ethical considerations.

**Keywords:** Qualitative research; assumptions; application; challenges; opportunities.

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### Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) serve as a medium for the creation and sharing of knowledge

with society through their faculty members and the students they instruct. The role of HEIs in preparing future professionals includes teaching and conducting research that addresses the needs of

society, and engaging with community and other stakeholders to deal with local, national, regional and global challenges (UNICEF, 2022). Accordingly, HEIs are a vanguard in the provision of solutions required to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This mandate underscores the fundamental role of education in creating healthy and inclusive societies as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda (UNICEF, 2022), and driving sustainable development (Shava, 2020). Stakeholders require evidence-based knowledge that would enable them to effectively work towards achieving the education SDGs (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). To meet the growing demands of stakeholders, civil society and governments hold HEIs accountable to these outcomes and require continuous assessment of educational goals to ensure they are being achieved (Jones et al., 2021).

Research output also serves as a framework in university rankings for academic performance, although this has attracted contention among academics (Vernon et al., 2018). Consequently, there is a need to examine the capability of educators and learners to conduct research and the quality of their research outputs. It is therefore critical for HEIs to engage in research not only to give learners the latest developments and novel information relevant to their disciplines, but also to raise the university rankings and additionally to instill a research culture among learners to aid their career growth in this era of globalisation (Gupta, 2017). Through focused research, learners acquire critical thinking as well as analytical and communication skills (Adebisi, 2022). These high order skills are essential for economic and social development of the globalised society. As Clark et al. (2006) maintain, knowledge generated through research is the foundation of sustainable development that requires appropriate dissemination and application for universal benefits.

Appropriate application of research approaches assumed to be one of the crucial factors in the science world, informs generation of evidence-based knowledge (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). The qualitative and quantitative approaches widely used in research have proved to be practical and essential in most studies especially in the social sciences. However, Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019) noted that researchers often face challenges in selecting between qualitative and quantitative investigation strategies. This is especially true if research questions do not fit neatly within the confines of a

single established methodology (Kahlke, 2014). It is therefore essential for researchers to have knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches since they both provide solutions that respond to society's problems if appropriately applied, although they vary in several aspects (Addo & Eboh, 2014; Barroga & Matanguihan, 2022; Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Mohammed, 2021).

## **Review of related literature**

There has however been an on-going debate within academic disciplines on which the best research method is, based on the philosophical assumptions the researchers bring to the study (Adedoyin, 2020; Creswell, 2014). Consequently, the succeeding section compares qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of research approaches in higher education. This background creates a holistic perspective on research methodologies and provides a broader context for understanding the specific focus on qualitative research. Furthermore, the background on both research approaches can also highlight how qualitative research adds value and brings unique insights that the quantitative approach misses.

## **Quantitative Research Basic Concepts**

According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research is a systematic approach that is used to collect, analyse and interpret numerical data in the quest to understand, explain and predict phenomena. The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism, which believes that science is characterized by empirical research and all phenomena can be reduced to empirical indicators which represent the truth (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). The paradigm seeks to describe current situations, establish relationships between variables and explain causal relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Quantitative research uses large sample sizes to ensure generalisability of findings to a wider population (Addo & Eboh, 2014). The nature of the inquiry is objective and relies on different statistical and computational methods to draw generalizable conclusions. This approach is hence useful in testing or confirming theories and assumptions determined at the beginning of the study, although research questions cannot be reviewed and reformulated in response to the deriving data (Barroga & Matanguihan, 2022).

Several works (Addo & Eboh, 2014; Creswell, 2014) have described the most common quantitative research designs as the experimental designs that include randomised controlled trials, pre and post-test studies and quasi-experiment observations and surveys, which could be comparative, correlational, longitudinal, cohort or descriptive. Arguably, the quantitative design methods all produce tangible evidence that is concrete and measurable, which gives it a high ranking in the hierarchy of evidence due to its observable robustness (Mohammed, 2021).

### **Qualitative Research Basic Concepts**

The qualitative research paradigm is based on interpretivism, which seeks to explore and understand social or human problem in order to understand reasons entrenched in those experiences (Addo & Eboh, 2014). Furthermore, Shava and Nkengbeza (2019) view qualitative research as an inquiry that aims at gaining in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Unlike quantitative research, where numerical data is collected and analysed for statistical analysis, qualitative research collects and analyses non-numerical data such as text and video or audio recordings to understand concepts, opinions or experiences (Creswell, 2014). The nature of the inquiry is thus subjective and explorative and generative, rather than testing hypotheses (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). Accordingly, qualitative research does not rely on pre-identified assumptions or models, but rather collects data relating to the phenomenon under study and develops theory from that data (Addo & Eboh, 2014). The investigation occurs in natural settings, where participants experience the issue or problem under study, unlike in quantitative research, where some experiments may be conducted in non-natural settings like laboratories (Khankeh et al., 2015; Polit & Beck, 2017; Shava & Nkengbeza, 2019).

Whereas quantitative research responds to questions regarding the “what” and the “to what extent” a phenomena exists, qualitative research provides understanding on “why” phenomena exist, and “how” they work, including why and how they change or are resistant to change (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). This knowledge is critical in education for appropriately restructuring the teaching and learning processes to yield positive outcomes towards advancing the SDGs. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through

analyses of documents, observation of behaviors or interviewing participants (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the researcher is the main data collection instrument (Teherani et al., 2015) and uses various data collection methods that provide thick descriptions of phenomenon within the context in which it occurs, instead of relying on a single source of data.

The multiple forms of data collection methods include interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations (Creswell, 2014). Open-ended questions used and probes applied, allow participants to respond more elaborately and in detail in their own words, instead of restricting them to choose from fixed responses as in quantitative methods (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). Correspondingly, there is an establishment of a holistic picture about the phenomenon, thus increasing confidence in the findings through triangulation of the different data sources. Notable, the small sample used and gradually selected with the primary goal of collecting exact cases that can clarify and enable deep understanding of a phenomenon is among the key characteristics of qualitative research (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). Data is collected only to the point of saturation, the level to which new data repeats what has already been expressed in previous data (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020).

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Limitations**

The use of mixed methods has been suggested by several scholars to address the weaknesses of using either qualitative or quantitative social research as stand-alone methodological approaches (Knoblauch, 2013; Creswell, 2014; McBride et al., 2019). Mixed methods attend to specificities of the research problem, which neither quantitative nor qualitative data can provide by itself. Shava and Nkengbeza (2019) further concede that integrating quantitative and qualitative data in a single study does not mean combining the two methodologies. The principles and philosophy that inform the research are what identifies a methodology.

Devoid of underplaying the importance of quantitative research, the authors concur with Wilhelmy and Köhler (2022) that qualitative research methods are a powerful set of tools that play an important role in the scientific knowledge generation cycle.

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

This study utilized a critical review of literature to establish the assumptions, application, challenges, and opportunities associated with the qualitative research approach in higher education. Through the analysis of existing scholarly works, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations, practical implications and emerging trends related to qualitative research in higher education.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The researchers conducted a systematic and comprehensive search of academic databases, research articles, books and selected websites. Keywords such as 'qualitative research', 'higher education', 'assumptions', 'application', 'challenges', and 'opportunities' were used to ensure relevant literature was identified. The literature selection based on the inclusion criteria, which entailed relevance to the research objectives and the quality of the research.

### **Data Analysis**

The researchers conducted a critical analysis of literature to identify themes, patterns and controversies related to qualitative research in education. They synthesized the findings from the literature review to offer a comprehensive understanding of the assumptions, application, challenges and opportunities of qualitative research in higher education.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As this study involved a critical review of literature, ethical considerations mainly revolved around proper citation and acknowledgement of original authors' work.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Assumptions can be broadly defined as beliefs that researchers bring into studies, which influence the way research is conducted. Researchers apply these assumptions research paradigms, defined as a cluster of beliefs and dictates that influence what should be studied in a particular discipline, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted. Furthermore, each paradigm has a set of known and understood guiding principles and philosophical assumptions, approaches to research, methods used to conduct research and research quality criteria (Al Ahmadi, 2019).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), assumptions of the discipline shape the way a research problem and research questions are formulated, and the methods used to gather information to answer questions.

## **Philosophical Assumptions**

Creswell and Poth (2018) present four philosophical assumptions made by researchers in qualitative research: ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology.

### **Ontology**

Ontology refers to the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality, which they view as relative, intangible, changeable and a product of human experience (Al Ahmadi, 2019). The assumption is that multiple realities exist in any study (The California State University, 2023). Hence when studying individuals, the intention is to report multiple realities through the use of multiple evidence in themes, including verbatim quotes that reflect different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, the researchers capture multiple perspectives including voices of informants.

### **Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified. The assumption is that researchers should be close to the participants they are conducting research on to facilitate gathering subjective evidence based on their individual views. Knowledge gets to be known through people's subjective experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Accordingly, it is essential to conduct qualitative studies in the participants' contexts to obtain an understanding of their responses. Researchers interact with those under study and actively work to minimize the distance between them and those being researched (The California State University, 2023).

### **Axiology**

Axiology is the role of values in research with the assumption that researchers explicitly recognize and acknowledge the value-laden nature of the research (The California State University, 2023). While all researchers bring their values to a research study, qualitative researchers actively make their values and biases known since these may play a role in the way the study is conducted and findings interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher thus positions themselves through declaring their demographic profile, professional role and personal

experiences, all of which could have a bearing on the research process requiring continuous reflexivity.

### **Methodology**

Methodology focuses on the research process. The underlying assumptions are that qualitative research is context-bound and based on inductive forms of logic that build up from the data. It is not entirely informed by an already existing theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018; The California State University, 2023). The procedures are shaped by the researcher's data collection and analysis experience which may determine a change in the research questions during the process, and modification of the data collection strategy in response to that change (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The California State University (2023) alludes to the categories of interest that may emerge internally from the participants and that may be used externally to frame the understanding of the phenomenon. The goal is to uncover patterns or theories that could help explain a phenomenon of interest. Accuracy is determined through information verification with participants and triangulation from different data sources.

Therefore, qualitative research assumes that meaning and context are important in understanding complex phenomena in HEIs (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Moreover, the subjective experiences of individual stakeholders within HEIs provide valuable insights applicable to further the education agenda for sustainable development.

### **Application of qualitative Research Curriculum Design and Review**

The need to choose qualitative research methodology in educational research has been argued for by Shava and Nkengbeza (2019), considering that the quantitative research design does not take full account of the interaction effects that take place in a social setting. In concurrence, Yin (2018) advocates for considering qualitative case study research as an integral method for program evaluators, given its ability to capture the complexity of a case including temporal changes, as well as exploring the contextual conditions of a case. Furthermore, Dzogovic and Bajrami (2023) allude that a systematic and in-depth study of qualitative methodological issues is still needed to contribute to literature and increase its value in scientific and educational research practices. Moreover, qualitative analysis not only deepens researchers'

knowledge of the studied phenomenon, but completely sheds new light on it, which is relevant for curriculum design and review as facilitator of improvement in educational processes (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023).

### **Evaluation of Teaching and Learning**

Application of qualitative methods in HEIs can be utilized as means of evaluation since educators are enabled to get precise data on the extent to which students are satisfied with particular courses, implementation of the educational process and similar parameters. Researchers can achieve this by using focus group discussions, which are suitable for situations where certain knowledge cannot be obtained through the classic way. Attitudes of learners and educators on specific teaching and learning areas, and discovery of much more complex behaviors and motivations can be evaluated through focus groups (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023).

### **Formulation of Educational Policies**

Complementary to focus group discussions, in-depth interviews are appropriate for sensitive and private research topics that require extensive analysis (Coric, 2021). These constitute a conversation with one participant whose purpose is to ascertain their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, experiences and motivations. Researchers can appropriately use in-depth interviews on key informants like educators, administrative personnel and policy makers. Qualitative methods are thus applicable in the scientific educational process to describe events, processes and situations of theoretical importance (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). Based on the research results, policies can be developed or modified to improve the quality of education and approaches of acquiring knowledge. Relating research to the formulation of educational policies makes up another alternative to improve education (Ponce et al., 2022).

In summary, qualitative research can explore the lived experiences, motivations, challenges and learning outcomes within HEIs, and hence aids in understanding learning experiences. Secondly, qualitative research plays a role in enriching institutional policies and practices since it can provide in-depth insights into the effectiveness of particular policies or practices, thus enabling administrators to make informed decisions. Finally, qualitative research can help investigate educators' experiences and teaching methods and approaches

to curriculum design, which can lead to improvements in the teaching and learning processes. As has been demonstrated, qualitative research is a methodology with the robustness, flexibility and scope to capture the complexity and dynamism of education (Ponce et al., 2022).

## **Challenges and Complexities**

There are a number of challenges and complexities associated with qualitative research in higher education institutions as follows:

### **Underrating Qualitative Research**

Quantitative research has for long been sheltered in the positivist social research philosophy, which focuses on causal relationships and universal laws that explain learning in schools (Ponce et al., 2022). Alongside, qualitative research suffered relegation to the background evidenced by the dominance of quantitative articles in scientific publications (Ponce et al., 2022). This could imply publication bias of scientifically sound articles of a qualitative nature. However, although qualitative methods have been marginalized in contemporary research, they are increasingly being accepted and integrated particularly in the social sciences (Jones et al., 2021; Knoblauch, 2013).

### **Perceived Complexity**

Due to the design's philosophical foundations, challenges in conducting qualitative research related to identifying the problem, formulating research questions and objectives, and selecting an appropriate methodology have been observed (Khankeh et al., 2015; Ponce et al., 2022; Silverman, 2020). These may affect the quality of research design (Kanduri & Suripeddi, 2018). What makes it more complex is that there is no single definition of qualitative methodology, just as there are no studies that do not require the dimensions of different approaches (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). It is fundamental that HEIs be skilled in negotiating the complexities of qualitative research since they play a critical role in preparing students as researchers (Jones et al., 2021).

### **Limited Understanding**

The underrepresentation of qualitative research in HEIs could be associated with lack of understanding of its potential in education (Umeokafor & Windapo, 2018). Attributed to this are information constraints where researchers demonstrate partiality towards research methods dominant in their own disciplines (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). In addition, serious

implications for adopting inappropriate research strategies and methods in research influence senior academics in non-social sciences disciplines to display negative attitudes towards qualitative research. This is because qualitative research may be considered different from what some of the educators know or have been taught, and this enhances resistance to change (Umeokafor & Windapo, 2018).

### **Time and Financial Constraints**

Some educators have highlighted that qualitative research does not fit into their duties and responsibilities due to lack of resources (Umeokafor & Windapo, 2018). This is in view of the time expended since the researcher is the main research instrument, and high volumes of data that are generated, requiring extensive analysis. Besides, it is usually costlier to conduct qualitative than quantitative research since participants are met at times and venues convenient to them. DeJaeghere et al. (2020) further concedes that the education sector has suffered lack of resources for academic capacity building in low-income countries and this has resulted in the scarcity of experts with contextual knowledge. The need for investing substantial time and resources for data collection, transcription, analysis and reporting thus pose a substantial challenge to HEIs who often are constrained in time and resources.

### **Lack of Skills**

Another challenge that has been raised about qualitative research is the methodological quality of manuscripts submitted to journals (Jones et al., 2021). Lack of rigor has been noted where researchers choose to draw on a single established methodology, but deviate from its intent, rules, or guidelines in a way that they see as beneficial to the study. The aspect of methodology is often poorly thought out and articulated, which results in loss of congruence characterized by contradictions in the description. The subsequent absence of explicit discussion and lack of reflections and deep engagement with philosophical assumptions that differentiate knowledge regimes weaken the presented argument (Khankeh et al., 2015). Such complexities cause researchers to shun qualitative research to avoid such pitfalls.

Qualitative research produces large amounts of data in the form of narratives, quotes, discussion notes, and detailed ethnographic accounts of the life and behaviors of individuals or community groups

(DeJaeghere et al., 2020). Such data can be complicated to manipulate and analyze, and hence require careful planning on how the researchers reduce large amounts of data to more meaningful parts that are conceptually theoretically important. As Shava and Nkengbeza (2019) noted, data analysis is arguably the most complex phase of qualitative research and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in research literature. It is unsurprising then that most qualitative researchers often fail to apply proper procedures to the analysis process. Rather, they just present a theoretical description of the data analysis plan, which frequently does not portray the procedure.

Although several computer-aided data analysis packages such as MAXQDA, NVIVO and ATLAS.ti exist, these are just to help researchers organize and extract qualitative data. The packages do not automatically analyse the data for the researcher, who still needs to decide on data coding and analysis protocols to explain patterns, comparisons and relationships, and disconfirm evidence among the themes to answer research questions (DeJaeghere et al., 2020). These steps need to be informed by the methodological and related analysis approach taken, which some qualitative researchers in HEIs may be lacking in.

### **Subjectivity and Limited Generalizability**

Subjectivity and bias is prevalent in qualitative research with potential for the researcher's own biases and perspectives to influence data collection, analysis and interpretation (Silverman, 2020). Since the data is often subjective and open for interpretation, the researcher's own biases can lead to poorly conducted research, which affects the utility of research findings (Galdas, 2017). Bias is therefore a critical aspect to manage during the conducting and reporting of qualitative data.

Moreover, qualitative research focuses on small samples, which may limit generalizability of findings to the broader population (Creswell, 2014). This is because the research focuses on a particular set of population that has its own unique demographic, psychological and cultural characteristics. Challenges may thus differ in HEIs.

### **Opportunities for Qualitative Research**

Based on the academic criticism of the quality and reliability of qualitative research (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023) and the foregoing discussion, this section proffers opportunities for harnessing the

potential of qualitative methods for scientific and educational processes which have been untapped hitherto (Wilhelmy & Köhler, 2022).

### **Exploration of Novel Research Areas**

We argue that qualitative research methods constitute a powerful set of tools to explore novel research topics and phenomena that are not well understood. Special reference is made to Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 approach, which is built around teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialization as key elements of transformative education in HEIs (Zimbabwe Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, 2019). Qualitative research has the potential to derive in-depth insights into how best the five higher learning elements, particularly the latest introduced of innovating and industrializing higher education, can be contextually applied for sustainable development. The effective and efficient use of novel approaches for sustainable development in higher education, although not so new, can be further explored, and strategies crafted for improving teaching and learning outcomes in less resourced settings using qualitative research. Higher education approaches that can employ qualitative research in their investigation could also include implementing and improving virtual learning environments made more essential during the COVID-19 era (Keche, 2022).

### **Development of Effective Frameworks**

Jakovljevic (2018) maintains that although extensive research and awareness about the role of innovation generally exists in higher education, there is no model that provides a holistic approach to innovation in academic institutions. This gap requires obtaining insights of individual educators and learners on how to make education respond to the SDG 4 which talks to inclusive and equitable quality education that contributes to a progressive healthy society (Zimbabwe Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, 2019), as opposed to implementing a top-down approach in a highly dynamic business environment. Collectively, the stakeholders' perspectives could inform HEIs on the frameworks and nature of innovations that could be adopted within higher education through conducting qualitative research. Jakovljevic (2018) further maintains that an inward-looking profession that learns from encounters within an active and self-regulated system is more sustainable than one that is both external and imposed, a gap that qualitative research could address. The aggressive

nature of the implementation of Education 5.0 in HEIs tends to force educators into passively receiving the prescription without any commitment to seize opportunities for developing curricula that are responsive to society's needs. Effective adoption of qualitative research could consequently secure the buy-in of educators for the implementation of curriculum reforms.

## **Addressing Challenges**

Several scholars (Addo & Eboh, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Patton, 2014) have established that qualitative research allows for a comprehensive understanding of complex issues while considering the various perspectives and contexts of various stakeholders. The holistic approach that the paradigm offers is appropriate to apply in HEIs research considering the various complex issues that need response. Moreover, the approach allows for flexibility in adjusting research questions, methods and analysis as new insights emerge (Creswell, 2014). Most importantly, qualitative research can involve various HEI stakeholders, thus fostering collaborative relationships between researchers, administrators, faculties and students. This collaborative engagement can change the research landscape in support of policies that are responsive to the achievement of sustainable development, contrary to those formulated in offices uninformed by societal and industry educational needs.

The lack of competence in conducting qualitative research demonstrated in several studies (Jones et al., 2021; Khankeh et al., 2015; Ponce et al., 2022; Umeokafor & Windapo, 2018) and also observed among HEIs necessitates the need for a more deliberate effort to ensure that educators are adequately trained on qualitative research. This could enhance competence and skills for the preparation of students in identifying inherent qualitative research challenges and how to overcome them (Khankeh et al., 2015), given that complex education issues cannot be solved just by numbers.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

This study assessed the underlying assumptions, practical application, challenges and potential opportunities for qualitative research in higher education, employing a critical review of literature. The study revealed that qualitative research is a valuable approach in higher education as it allows

for a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and provides a rich description of participants' experiences and perspectives. The application of qualitative research in higher education can lead to insights that inform pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and institutional policies. Several assumptions underpin qualitative research including the belief that knowledge researchers construct socially. Challenges in conducting qualitative research in higher education include issues related to poor understanding of the potential of qualitative research, lack of time and funding to conduct qualitative research, lack of methodological skills, management of data, and addressing potential bias. Opportunities exist in employing qualitative research, to explore under-researched areas, develop effective frameworks for innovation and foster a more inclusive and equitable teaching and learning environment while enhancing continuous professional development.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that researchers in HEIs should be encouraged to adopt qualitative research methodologies when exploring complex educational phenomena, as this can provide a more comprehensive understanding of experiences and perspectives of students, educators, and other stakeholders. Secondly, educational institutions need to provide support to researchers interested in conducting qualitative research, including funding opportunities, access to training workshops and guidance on ethical considerations. Thirdly, researchers should strive for rigour and transparency in their qualitative research by clearly articulating their research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Next, educational institutions need to foster collaboration between researchers, educators and students to ensure integration of qualitative research findings into practical applications, such as curriculum development and review, and pedagogical approaches. Finally, higher education practitioners should be open to engaging in reflective practices when conducting qualitative research, and critically examining their own biases to ensure the research is inclusive. By implementing these recommendations, the field of higher education can benefit from the robust insights provided by qualitative research and use them to drive positive change in teaching, learning, and institutional practices in the quest to achieve the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development.



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