



University Faculty Perspectives on Shifting Workforce Demands

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Abstract

The faculty of education at Tribhuvan University in Nepal has witnessed a significant shift in its graduates' perspectives due to globalization, technological advancements, and shifts in economic priorities. This evolving landscape has called for bringing about reform in changing workforce demands and to meet the expectations of academic institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the existing conceptualizations of university faculties on the changing workforce demands under the faculty of education in reference to the university and the job market. This study employed an interpretive research paradigm for interpreting data collected from a narrative inquiry approach with five participants. It has revealed that the traditional mode of teaching and learning, a theory-heavy curriculum, limited exposure for the graduates, weak coordination between the university and employing institutions, a lengthy process of reforming and reengineering curricula, and the production of an inadequately prepared human workforce are the major issues of the workforce in Nepal. The findings of this study highlighted that there is an urgent need for collaboration between universities and employing institutions, practice-oriented curricula, and impromptu response reform mechanisms. The study contributes to forming policies and the academic landscape by implanting critical gaps that must be addressed to better align changing workforce demands with higher education.

Keywords: Curriculum, graduates, teaching and learning, university, workforce

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Introduction

Universities are expected to produce quality human resources that would serve the purpose of the digitally savvy era of the 21st century. The quality of higher education is measured in reference to the global context, and is best replicated by the competence and adaptability of the human resources it produces. The practical knowledge and skills of a graduate have a greater space in quality education. Rationalizing the changing workforce demands under the faculty of education, we reconsider academic credentials, and knowledge, cognition, and behavioral skills of a graduate in the job market. Moreover, maintaining quality education is a holistic approach that improves pedagogical content knowledge, increases methodological understanding, improves technological skills, and develops practical values and skills. Teachers are perceived as

primary agents in implementing educational policies and, therefore, play a pivotal role in promoting the concept of quality education (MoEST, 2019). Different documents relating to educational reform, including the NEP (2019); the Fifteenth Plan, (2019); and SDG-NNE, (2019) stressed much on developing prospective teachers who would serve the changing workforce demands at Faculty of Education (as cited in Niure et al., 2025).

There is no doubt that the emerging characteristics of the global workforce is to invite entrepreneurial education, which encompasses the learning process inculcating soft skills, professional skills, and academic knowledge that prepares the graduates in a better way. Entrepreneurial education has received global recognition and attention as it helps foster innovation, adaptability, and self-sufficiency amongst the graduates (Kuckertz, 2021; Kuckertz, 2013). In this context, it can be noted that education and training

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are defined as systematic processes whereby a graduate is enabled to gain knowledge and skills that would help increase employability, career opportunities, and professional development (OECD, 2019). On the other hand, governments should take steps to facilitate the development of robust employment information systems that provide accurate and comparable job market opportunities (Woods & O'Leary, 2006). Higher education institutions across the globe need to address the changes in the knowledge-based economy, technological advancement, and workforce mobility.

Nevertheless, it still raises questions about how efficiently the Faculty of Education (FoE) plan and projects the changing demand of employing institutions to ensure quality service in the workforce. It is equally important to relate the interface between the educational institution and the workforce to examine whether the produced human resources are motivated for the workforce. Thus, the FoE at Tribhuvan University (TU) aims to prepare skilled human resources to institutionalize teacher education in Nepal. This contributes to the overall goal of preparing the Nepalese workforce to meet the requirements of the modern-day global world. The FoE has been providing pre-service teacher education programs since 1956 A.D. and is recognized as the biggest government institution in Nepal that prepares teachers. Although it has played an instrumental role in providing teachers to Nepal, the FoE still faces problems relating to curriculum relevance and organizational change. Therefore, there is a critical need to evaluate the current policies and programs to ensure the production of skilled human resources and to explore self-employment and diverse career options. (Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University [FoE, TU], 2082).

The university is therefore required to deliver high academic performance by incorporating entrepreneurial skills, professional flexibility, and technological proficiency among graduates. This requirement is especially critical in Nepal, where globalization, emigration, and low job creation have transformed the way graduate work. Moreover, the incorporation of digital technology, innovative teaching strategies, and hands-on learning has become crucial in developing resilience, innovation, and employability of graduates in the post-pandemic era (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). There exists an intricate relationship among universities as job creators, educational institutions as employers, and graduates as job seekers. It is therefore imperative for universities to produce competent graduates capable of meeting the workforce market demands. However, a coordinated effort among all stakeholders is essential to make appropriate decisions on curriculum development and foster collaboration between the education and employment sectors (OECD, 2020). Ideally, it should foster a linear relationship between graduates looking for jobs and institutions recruiting skilled professionals.

However, despite all the indicators above, there remains a considerable gap between graduates' competencies and the evolving workforce demand in Nepal. The graduates

lack fundamental competencies such as content knowledge, communicative competence, methodological skills, and entrepreneurial skills in their workforce. This disparity may be due to the lack of incorporation of practical experience in the curriculum, as well as insufficient access to the professional world. Therefore, many graduates cannot find appropriate jobs, and at the same time, employers are not satisfied with their readiness for work. All of the mentioned issues become even more relevant due to wider socioeconomic changes, including globalization, technological advancement, and changes in employers' preferences that constantly reshape the evolving workforce demand (Sharma, 2021). In most cases, graduates expect too much from their workplace, and sometimes they are disappointed with their job positions and tend to leave work regularly without making any use of their competencies. Furthermore, poor coordination between employers and educational institutions plays an additional role in worsening the problem.

The modern world of work demands not only the knowledge of technical skills but also the ability to think critically, solve problems, and collaborate with others. The educational system, thus, is supposed to develop an environment that stimulates the engagement of learners and makes the process of learning contextualized and autonomous (Perso et al., 2011). In the era of globalization, the importance of human resources is acknowledged, and higher education is considered a powerful means for the development of both professional and personal skills (Safrankova & Sikyr, 2016). Research indicates that higher education usually leads to better employment chances and earning potential, although graduates need to have appropriate skills and competencies (OECD, 2024). Hence, the performance of the education system can be evaluated not only by graduation rates but also by the degree to which graduates become competent enough to be involved in the job market successfully. Establishing equilibrium between the systems of education and employment is crucial for providing high-quality job positions, professional development, and economic progress (OECD, 2023; Machin, 2007).

Within this context, one can observe that there is still a major gap in knowledge concerning the relationship between the FoE at TU and the evolving demands of the workforce. In addition, a much-needed comprehensive and future-oriented reform is essential for the pre-service teacher education in Nepal. Although awareness of the mismatch between the pre-service teacher education and the ever-changing needs of the profession is increasing every day. There is no empirical research on how the curricular practices of the university program contribute to the development of graduates' competences, and to what extent they are aligned with the existing national frameworks and requirements for the workforce (Niure et al. 2025). Although some general problems have been addressed by previous studies, few attempts have been made to understand faculty perceptions on the issue of workforce and the current mismatch between education and employment expectations. Therefore, this study attempted

to examine the perspectives of university faculties regarding the changing workforce demands.

Problem Statement

In the spring of 2011, I began my teaching career at a private college in Kathmandu. I was a teacher and earned a lot of experience that left a lasting impression on me. Many of these experiences are still fresh in my mind. For example, I still remember one of my former classmates, a graduate in English Education, losing his job at a private institution even though he had already specialized in the subject. His inadequacy in communicative competence and self-confidence in the English language classroom was pointed out as the main cause of the problem. Despite my attempts to find him another job elsewhere, his past performances had already affected how employing institutions marked him. Furthermore, I witnessed the struggles made by my classmates to find decent and well-paying jobs after holding master's degree and some of them quit their job. The classmates quitting jobs reflected broader concerns regarding the alignment between academic preparation and professional expectations.

Education is considered an important means through which one can improve their employability and bring about socio-economic development, especially in the fast-changing environment of the world today. The efficiency of any education system depends greatly on the alignment between the curricula, teaching methodology, and educational practices with workforce needs. While all three factors play an important role, the curriculum is especially critical in preparing human capital and supplying it with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for professional activities. In the context of the Faculty of Education, the changes in workforce needs are happening because of technological progress, globalization, and changes in economic priorities, which means that constant adjustment of the curricula is needed to remain relevant and efficient. At the same time, a considerable difference can be found between what graduates learn in universities and what employers expect them to serve (OECD, 2019; Sharma, 2021). The graduates' knowledge about technology, pedagogy, and professional competence contributes to reforming workforce preparation. Therefore, it is equally significant to make graduates creative, cooperative, and techno-friendly in the workplace (Poudel, 2021); therefore, they are able to face the global workforce.

As a researcher, I sought to examine how university faculties collaborate to design and implement transformative and innovative curricula that align with the demands of the workforce, particularly in the FoE. Despite these aspirations, a noticeable gap persists between what is articulated in policy and what is practiced in reality. This disjunction suggests that meaningful curricular reform requires not only structural changes but also a fundamental shift in mindset among stakeholders to reduce the skills gap and empower economic growth. The gap that has been explicitly observed and compared with the conceptualization of Phelps and

Graham (2013) indicates that competent graduates should be aware of internet facilities, digital devices, e-libraries, other technological assets, and methodological skills, including the usage of Smart TVs, PowerPoint, Interactive Boards, Microsoft Word, projectors, etc., to make graduates compete in the global market. The context thus underscores the need for adequate digital infrastructure, informed guidance, technological literacy, and appropriate pedagogical strategies. As noted by Eaton (2010), these elements are essential for enhancing the effectiveness, engagement, and meaningfulness of classroom performance for the graduates. Then, a couple of questions arose in my mind -do our curriculum for graduates under Tribhuvan University at the faculty of education align with the evolving needs of workforce? Do all the university faculties assure that our produced human workforce uses those technological assets at the educational institutions? In order to explore those unanswered questions, this study was focused much on envisaging the perspectives of university faculties regarding the changing workforce demands at the faculty of education.

Literature Review

As an entity within the context of the Nepalese higher education system and specifically within the Faculty of Education (FoE) in Tribhuvan University, the issue of linking curricula with changing workforce demands has become a matter of great importance. Being one of the oldest universities where teaching professionals are trained to meet the needs of national development, FoE plays a pivotal role between national priorities and changing workforce demands. However, issues such as the need for pre-service teacher training and university curricula to be up-to-date with respect to the new challenges faced by teachers remain important questions.

In the global scenario, the discourse on the need for curriculum reform revolves around issues such as responsiveness to changing workforce requirements, employability, and competency. For example, discourses promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020; 2024) emphasize that it is important for the educational system to respond to socio-economic changes in the environment. The same applies to approaches such as those of Henderson (2015), which had an impact on the traditions of curriculum. The approach to employability proposed by Harvey and Knight (as cited in Knight & Yorke, 2004) also stresses the need for integration of competencies and skills. Other examples that show that there is a mismatch between curriculum and changing workforce needs at a global scale include Livingston (2015) and Hofer et al. (2020). The new discourses on entrepreneurship in education (Block et al., 2023) and equity and education vs workforce demands (Safrankova & Sikye, 2016) are also relevant.

Although these international literature reviews offer valuable theoretical perspectives and comparative analysis, they need to be properly contextualized in the Nepalese context.

Moreover, the existing literature is scarce when it comes to empirical investigations on how teacher education curricula accommodate the needs of the changing workforce for the Nepalese job market. Nonetheless, existing literature reviews at the national level, including the work of Niure et al. (2025), demonstrate that although policies might intend to bridge this gap, a significant difference exists between curricular provision and professional requirements. Furthermore, official guidelines like those for Doctor of Philosophy (FoE, 2082 B.S.) illustrate a continuous effort towards policy reforms. Nevertheless, this also highlights the existing challenges in bridging the gap between policies and reality.

The choice of both the global and the local literature for this review is intentional. The global literature provides the theoretical underpinning for the discussion on the relationship between curriculum and workforce, whereas the promising Nepalese literature aids in placing such concepts into context within the Nepalese university. This facilitates an enhanced comprehension of where to look for empirical research in the intersection of the global and local. Even though more emphasis has been laid on curriculum reforms, there exists a glaring research gap, as there is a lack of empirical data about perceptions of universities' faculty members regarding evolving demands of the workforce in Nepal, especially in FoE/TU. Most of the available literature on curriculum reform in Nepal addresses either a review of policies or general observations.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining university faculties' perspectives on changing workforce needs within the Faculty of Education. It aims to establish how far current curricula align with these demands, identify existing mismatches, and contribute contextually grounded insights for developing more responsive, competency-oriented curricular frameworks that bridge the divide between academic preparation and changing workforce realities.

Methods

The site of my study was both Kathmandu and outside the Kathmandu valley. The five university teachers were the participants, having more than ten years of teaching experience at the Tribhuvan University and having a prior engagement in producing a trained workforce in the evolving era of the 21st century. I chose three participants from three constituent campuses in Kathmandu and two from outside Kathmandu valley because my data saturated when I collected from the five participants. I stopped with the fifth participant because I did not find any new and innovative information with the sixth participant. The study was carried out based on a narrative inquiry approach in which interview guidelines (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) were prepared for five purposively selected participants. Narrative inquiry was chosen because it enabled an in-depth exploration of faculty members' lived experiences and meaning-making processes, which is essential for

understanding how they perceive and interpret the changing workforce demands within the Faculty of Education.

I conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews with participants lasting about two hours each, repeated three times over the course of the study; those were audio-recorded, supplemented with notes, and later transcribed and translated while preserving participants' original expressions. I started collecting data from 25th August 2025 to March 3rd 2026. Transcripts were made available to participants for validation purposes by means of hard copy delivery to be done on their terms. Frequent interviews made data more meaningful by providing a rich and deep analysis. This study was situated within an interpretive paradigm, which sought to understand teachers' perceptions through their lived experiences, narratives, and practices, particularly within the faculty of education. From their perspective, the researcher assumed the role of a participant-observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), engaging closely with the field and constructing meaning from data generated through interviews.

For data analysis, the study drew on the analytical framework proposed by Stake (1995), in which I first cleaned all the important information, and then I transcribed/ translated the data. In the next stage, I categorized them, and finally, I divided them into different themes. In order to assure the quality standards, I maintained the criteria of credibility, transferability, and dependability based on the sharing of my research participants. In doing so, I also took informed consent, used pseudonyms for the person and institution, and maintained confidentiality throughout my research process. This study did not harm any principles or cultural sensitivity; rather, it was rigorously maintained (Liguori & Winkler, 2020) to ensure trustworthiness.

Sagar, a participant from a Brahmin background, was born in Kathmandu, Nepal. He experienced the loss of his mother at birth and was subsequently raised by his father, who, despite belonging to a modest middle-class family, provided sustained care, guidance, and educational support. Since he was an only child, Sagar proved himself to be a good learner who earned a master's degree in language education. Currently, he works as a university faculty member with twelve years of teaching experience.

Shikshya is a participant among the Brahmins and the female gender. Shikshya originates from the Sindhuli district. Shikshya graduated with a bachelor's degree in English Literature. Being the oldest among her siblings, she took charge of their upbringing and welfare. In spite of facing various obstacles, both personal and academic, she remained steadfast in pursuing her career. She is now working as a university faculty member.

Akash, another research participant, represented the indigenous community. He was born in Sunsari district and belonged to the Limbu community. The cultural values inherent in the Limbu Mundhum influenced Akash during his formative years. He started off his career with a bachelor's

degree and steadily graduated to higher levels of academic success until he obtained an MPhil degree. Currently, Akash works as a faculty member in universities and is known for his dedication to teaching and academic proficiency.

Laxmi, one of the participants from the Tamang community, was born in Parsa district. Being the youngest among the siblings, Laxmi was motivated by her older brother, who had already obtained his PhD degree and was a faculty member of Tribhuvan University. Laxmi also chose the academic path and completed her master's degree program. At present, she is employed as a faculty member of a university and has gained more than fifteen years of experience in teaching.

Samay, who belongs to the Terai community, was born in the district of Siraha. He belonged to a socio-economically disadvantaged family, wherein his father was a carpenter, and his mother worked as a homemaker. However, despite his background, Samay stayed true to his education and managed to obtain a bachelor's degree in English and Math. Being the second-oldest brother among his five sisters, Samay was also involved in many familial duties. Presently, Samay works as a teacher at a university level.

Results and Discussion

In this section, I explored the perspectives of participants about their lives and careers and envisioned how university faculties earned their professional dignity and experiences, and how they perceived evolving workforce needs in Nepal. This study has presented six interrelated thematic headings under this section: theory-loaded curricula, limited access to technology, lack of coordination between workforce hiring institutions and the university, production of incompetent human resources, lengthy process of reforming, reengineering, and amending curricula, and liberal evaluation process. Each thematic heading presents participants' voices through verbatim evidence, followed by analytical interpretation and discussion in relation to their stories.

Theory-loaded Curricula

The faculty of education under Tribhuvan University in Nepal still follows traditional curricula in higher education. The curriculum is theory-loaded, and it cannot connect knowledge and skills with entrepreneurship. A theory-loaded curriculum does not enhance students' performance in the 21st century; rather, we mitigate a shortage of skill-based content in our curricula. Knight and Yorke (2004) advocate that the curriculum should be employability-friendly, which guarantees employment in the specific sector. They further pinpointed that curriculum is the key to bring social transformation. Being closer to Kuckertz, (2013) one of my participants Sagar shared thus,

We teach the textbook, not the curriculum. We still have traditional content, lecture-friendly materials and teach imbalanced western philosophies in our undergraduate and graduate courses rather than skills-oriented content. Our curriculum does not connect the knowledge and skills

required in the educational institution.

The idea shared by Sagar indicates that we, university faculties, should promote a digitalized platform of learning, offer plenty of exposure to replace the lecture-based module of the classroom, and train faculties for instilling market-driven opportunity-based curricula.

Similarly, another participant, Shikshya, insisted thus, The curriculum at the university level is almost outdated. It does not suffice to have plenty of exposure, and it does not entail entrepreneurship. The fact is that the curriculum in the 21st century should pave the way or provide the right track to the graduates towards their quality services after completing their degree program. Moreover, we need to fuse global content and local context.

In reference to Shikshya's conceptualization, one of the major drawbacks of the curriculum is not to visualize a vivid picture of our education at the faculty of education. We still instill a knowledge base of our content rather than skills. Therefore, we should reframe our outdated curricula.

There are several courses, subjects, and programs in the faculty of education, but we have not thought from the vantage of entrepreneurship in education. Akash, another participant, shared;

A curriculum is neither inherently good nor bad; rather, its value lies in the parameters through which it is designed, interpreted, and justified. It should be envisioned as a dynamic framework that promotes lifelong learning, enabling learners to continuously adapt to changing contexts.

Furthermore, any successful curriculum needs to ensure that it helps nurture, expand, and enhance the learners' abilities, such that they are sufficiently equipped with all the necessary know-how to inspire an entrepreneurial spirit within them, which can then be put into practice. According to Akash, it is the responsibility of the faculty of education at Tribhuvan University to ensure that a top-notch workforce of well-trained individuals emerges from the various schools and universities. It is important to take note that curricula ought to embrace diversity and its ontological basis.

As evidenced by the views of the three research participants, there is a need for curriculum reform in order to ensure entrepreneurial competency among the learners. As one of the participants mentioned, "the current curriculum does not equip students with knowledge on how to create their own businesses," while another participant argued that graduates are not skilled enough to compete in today's job market. This means that the curricular content offered does not meet the requirements of the modern workforce. This finding demonstrates that the curriculum has remained more of a theory-oriented rather than being focused on the development of skills like innovation and problem-solving.

As mentioned earlier, this issue can be addressed through curricular changes. Block et al. (2023) assert that a good curriculum has to include innovation and design thinking as well as social and environmental awareness. The issue highlighted above is especially relevant for Nepal,

whose economy is characterized by increased demand for graduates who have the ability to adapt quickly, are innovative, and socially responsible. From a critical perspective, the continuation of the old-fashioned curricular approach is a clear sign of institutional rigidity and lack of flexibility in relation to changing workforce demands.

Lack of Coordination between Workforce Hiring Institution and University

Knowledge, skills, and expertise of the faculty member celebrate a remarkable milestone in every respect of quality education. Quality education involves quality curriculum and quality curriculum with the emerging needs of the workforce to create a direct correlation between education and employment (Bengston, 1993). This ensures that the graduates are ready for the industry while providing the industry with the right human resources.

Employers need mutual understanding, interaction, and awareness of competencies and requirements. Yet, in many cases, particularly in the faculty of education, there is no coordination, leading to a gap between graduate competencies and employment requirements. Universities usually work without receiving any input from employers, whereas employers do not have any knowledge about the academic process and competencies of graduates (Lin & Zheng, 2021). In other words, there is no “collective cognition” among organizations when it comes to graduates’ competencies (Zimmer & Bajwa, 2023). Additionally, the absence of collective belief in their competencies, just like team efficacy, is another issue. Strengthening collaboration, information exchange, and confidence between these stakeholders is therefore essential to bridge the gap and enhance workforce readiness and employability outcomes. Rationalizing the ideas of Zimmer & Bajwa (2023), one of my research participants, Laxmi, shared thus,

I believe our university does not cooperate and coordinate between schools and colleges. Neither the Department of Education nor the Minister of Education obliges universities to survey for the required number of workforces every year before their graduation.

Laxmi, without hesitation, advocated that there must be coordination between workforce hiring institutions and universities. No matter how strong our curriculum is, no matter how dedicated our faculties are but what matters is how produced workforce serves in different institution.

Similarly, Sagar shared that our university adopts a curriculum exported from different universities in the west, which has less priority to connect the local context; therefore, our workforce does not serve the purpose of our community. He further noted;

I think our university, in general, and the faculty of education in particular, must analyze the job market needs and should prepare human resources accordingly. Our stakeholders of the university, employers, hiring agencies, Curriculum Development Centre, and education institutions must sit together in a round table discussion to rationalize the

demands of our market.

The discussion suggests that our concerned stakeholders lack negotiation and coordination in order to establish a good demand and supply gap, which has created a chaotic situation in our context. Moreover, addressing market needs is crucial for every stakeholder in our education system. Another participant, Samay, put forward his view in a different manner. As he shared;

I think we should revisit, rediscover, and redefine our curriculum, faculty development program, workforce needs, market demand, and graduates’ mindset. The graduates have shifted their triggering point since they prioritize financial aspects in their lives and careers.

So, I totally agree with Samay’s ideas because graduates and undergraduates both have changed their mindset about studying abroad. They dream of going abroad not because they got a scholarship for their higher studies but because they want strong financial backup for their life, career paths, and family support.

Drawing on the perspectives of three participants, this study suggests that the FoU is required to do need analysis to mitigate the lack of coordination between workforce hiring institutions and the faculty of education. One participant emphasized that “there is no prior coordination between schools or colleges and university regarding the numbers of required employees” while another noted that “the FoU lacks need analyses. These responses suggest a gap between the faculty of education and the demands of the current job market. This finding indicates that there must be strong coordination between different stakeholders to enhance our social milieu with entrepreneurial cognition. The lack of coordination between workforce hiring institutions and universities in the context of the faculty of education points out that there is a misalignment between universities and educational institutions.

Following this notion, Bengston (1993) states that there should be an interconnection between education and jobs. The connection is especially crucial in the case of Nepal, where the labor force seeks for cooperative, competent, and skilled human resources. Critically, the Faculty of Education needs to coordinate well with the employing institutions to meet the demands of the changing workforce. This is essential for planning the required workforce and ensuring employment opportunities for graduates. It is equally important that stakeholders maintain effective communication, collaboration, and coordination to enhance the relevance of universities and strengthen graduates’ position in the workforce.

Lengthy Process of Reforming, Reengineering, and Amending Curricula

University curricula are the key asset at every level and degree. The Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University has its own curricula, along with its specific resources and materials. Our curriculum is fundamentally shaped by a particular orientation and vision that reflects our identity,

historical context, and aspirations for the future. Crucially, the selection of a specific vision holds profound significance, as the act of choosing a vision ultimately guides and transforms us into its embodiment (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987). Curriculum is an amendable document that crucially paves the way forward for shaping the workforce in the context of Nepal. However, our curriculum has to be reformed on time, addressing the contemporary issues. The university, having a prior discussion with concerned stakeholders, should timely reengineer and amend the curricula.

Each and every curriculum has to ensure critical thinking and creativity that help every individual to achieve practical knowledge and skills. One of my participants, Sagar, shared that,

Our university has several bodies, and each and every body has its own formal protocol to review and revisit curricula. The formal process of reformation and amendment of curricula in our context is very tough and tedious.

I agree that the curriculum has to be regenerated, reformed, and reengineered, timely analyzing the market need. Curricula determine planning, projection, instruction, and evaluation procedures. Another participant, Samay, shared thus;

I suppose that the university has to bring tacit, explicit, and inherent provisions for reforming and reengineering curricula. Curricula in developed countries are formed and amended based on the evolving needs of the workforce who can compete in this global market.

Promoting workforce needs requires prior planning, underlying principles, and some contemporary practices that would eliminate the crisis created by the lengthy process of curricula reformation. Being closer to Samay, Laxmi, another participant, advocated thus,

I conceptualize that curriculum is a progressive document that adapts emancipatory pedagogy to build highly skilled human resources. It has to replicate worldviews of an individual that strongly updates the socio-culturally responsive workforce fit into the 21st century classroom.

To be true, it is natural that the challenges of continuing cultural progress, educational procedures, amendment of progressive curricula, and learner-friendly atmosphere are some of the assets of today's curriculum.

The data obtained from three participants call attention to the need for reducing the lengthy process of amending curricula. One of the participants insisted, "the process of curriculum reform and amendment in our context is often complex and time-consuming," while another participant shared, "lack of timely amendment of our curricula limits responsiveness to emerging academic and market needs". These responses suggest a gap between curricular provisions and the requirements of our educational institutions. This finding indicates that the existing practice of curriculum reform needs to be revisited. In this line, Niure et al. (2025)

advocate that the pre-service teacher education system calls for thorough and forward-thinking reform. This alignment is influential in the Nepalese context to address entrepreneurial mindsets and experiential learning opportunities. Moreover, the faculty of education has to reform the lengthy process of reengineering curricula; therefore, curricula pave the way forward to build a market-driven and skilled workforce in the Nepalese context.

Production of Incompetent Human Resource

Our university, and particularly the faculty of education, had a blame that we produce incompetent human resources. It is not completely true, but it has some truth because our graduates and undergraduates have not been able to perform well in their respective academic institutions. A capable workforce can serve the purpose in the real field. Our graduates experienced a different learning process; they came across the same traditional examination system and followed rote memorization. The examination system is still the same, which is administration-centric, not student-centric. Therefore, we are tired of hearing about reengineering our overall education system in general and examinations in particular.

We need a rigid but student-friendly evaluation system to produce competent human resources that focus strongly on formative evaluation rather than summative evaluation. Thus, teachers' motivation to teach and teachers' motivation to motivate students are crucial aspects (Dornyei, 2001). Moreover, there are some other factors such as teachers' well-being, professional ethics, and commitment towards the profession that affect in producing competent human workforce. One of the participants, Samay, shared thus,

I believe teachers' knowledge, skills, and expertise cover students' behaviour and motivation. The more motivation teachers have, the more motivated students become because competence is the ability to deal effectively with the world around us.

Moreover, Samay highlighted that university faculties are obliged to choose updated knowledge and practical skills to support the balance between institutional demands and market needs. Another participant, Akash, shared,

I consider quality as a trademark of the education sector. It is highly imperative to examine one's competence to determine whether they fit into the global market. Therefore, our curriculum has to envisage the contemporary ontological premises that would ensure pedagogical well-being of a teacher, overall development of students, and growth and stability of a nation.

Akash insisted that the workforce in the educational instruction should perform well. Therefore, trained and competent human resources would be able to make well-informed decisions about their courses and career paths (Morel & Griffiths, 2018), ultimately enhancing job satisfaction and ensuring long-term professional success.

Similarly, Laxmi, another research participant, who had

several experiences shared that the university graduates are not performing well due to their hesitation and incomplete understanding of the content. Thus, he shared,

I believe that the university has been contributing to empowering quality education and producing human resource must be competent to compete in the global era. Unfortunately, our graduates are blamed for being incompetent during their presentation and performance, but I do not agree with it.

Therefore, it has been one of the prime concerns whether there are problems in our curriculum, or whether with the produced human resource, or with our job market. However, it is imperative to examine whether our process of delivery needs frequent reform to address the evolving needs of the workforce in Nepal.

Reflections from three participants point toward the urgency of revisiting the curriculum to incorporate entrepreneurial incompetence among the workforce. One of the participants emphasized that “quality as a benchmark for curriculum alignment with global competence and holistic development” where another participant stated, “university graduates are not all incompetent, but some of them lack presentation skills”. These responses suggest that university graduates should have focused on quality, motivational aspects, and problem-solving skills. As Dornyei (2001) emphasizes, both teachers’ motivation to teach and their ability to motivate students are crucial dimensions of successful pedagogy. From a critical standpoint, however, these pedagogical elements are often implemented in fragmented and exam-driven ways, limiting their potential to foster meaningful learning. This means that it becomes necessary to take a holistic approach to assessment, which takes into account the motivational aspects of learning as well.

Liberal Evaluation Process

Formal education begins with the formal notes of a faculty. Learning continues throughout life. We examine our students in every aspect. Our processes differ due to the nature and objectives of the course to be taught. At the university level, we offer practical education where our graduates have to do internships, practicum, practice teaching, peer and team teaching, report writing, thesis writing, error and contrastive analysis, case work, etc., because the university has to be rigorous in the evaluation process. OECD (2024) states that employment prospects are to be guaranteed by the institutions providing many opportunities, including practical and behavioral skills and educational attainment, and performance, but we should equally insist on completing the entire course requirement timely. We train them for the future, but they seem to be out of market demand. As a result, they could not achieve outstanding performance in the educational platform. Analyzing this bitter reality, Shikshya highlighted

Our evaluation process is very traditional since we believe in paper pencil test today too. We should revisit our assessment,

examination pattern, assignment and evaluation protocol. We are lacking in meeting the required criteria due to the liberal evaluation procedure.

University faculties are trained, and they perform justifiable delivery in their classroom, but unfortunately, they become liberal and let students be excused even if they do not meet the criteria. Similarly, OECD (2024) further advocated that educational attainment has been on the rise, with more students than ever completing higher levels of education, but they are counted as incompetent. The employees’ hiring authorities insisted that the graduates were not forced to complete their academic requirements during their university lives.

Similarly, another participant, Sagar, advocated that rigid evaluation procedures increase in educational qualifications when graduates serve in the job market. He further noted;

I feel students’ performance in standardized assessments has shown little improvement and, in some cases, has even declined over recent decades. This shows that if we do not reframe our evaluation process promptly, our university graduates express anxiety, frustration, and worries rather than achieving strong foundational skills because of unemployment in the market.

The faculty of education has tried to change the curriculum, offered professional development opportunities, and made the evaluation process learner-friendly, but graduates are not performing in line with the curriculum. Besides that, Laxmi shared this,

I suppose instruction, assessment, assignment, and evaluation are the key assets in higher education. We do not have a strict evaluation protocol because we have been influenced by nepotism and favoritism.

Based on the perspectives expressed by three participants, this study identifies the need to reform our evaluation system. One of the participants emphasized that “there is a need to revisit assessment, examination patterns and assignments and evaluation protocol” while another shared “traditional system largely affected our exam and it still relies on paper-and-pencil tests”. These responses suggest that the university (FoE) has to modify the assessment and examination patterns. In line with this, OECD (2024) reports that although educational attainment has significantly increased, with more students completing higher levels of education, concerns persist regarding their competence and employability.

With respect to our own institution, misalignment with the curriculum, teaching methodology, and priorities of the policy is clearly visible, mainly because of instability in the agenda of higher education institutions. In this regard, from a critical perspective, it becomes necessary to address issues related to the current practices within academia, which are still outdated and focused on exams. Hence, there is an urgent need to redefine the assessment criteria, review the process of assigning tasks, and redesign the methodological approach to instruction in language classes

for the needs of today's world.

Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring university faculty members' perception of changing workforce demand at the Faculty of Education and the readiness with which universities prepare graduates to meet these requirements. This study revolves around the qualitative approach grounded within the narrative inquiry design to gain insight into the experience of the participants. The findings indicate that the existing higher education system is characterized by theory-heavy curricula, weak alignment with changing workforce demands, slow curriculum reform processes, and lenient evaluation practices, collectively contributing to the production of inadequately prepared graduates. This underscores the urgent need for a more responsive, practice-oriented, and collaboratively developed curriculum framework to enhance graduate competence and employability. A well-structured higher education curriculum systematically prepares graduates for successful lives and careers, enhancing their employability and competitiveness in the changing workforce demands in our context.

From the findings, a mismatch between university curriculum and the needs of the changing workforce demand is significantly noted. The research contributes to theory by highlighting the contradiction between idealism in academia and practical preparation for the workforce. It also makes empirical contributions by shedding light on limitations in curriculum design and the issue of employability from the faculty perspective. The methodological contribution lies in proving the usefulness of narrative research in discovering more complex and experience-based views. Practically, the research emphasizes the need to respond adequately and effectively to social changes and needs by means of developing appropriate curricula.

However, there are also limitations associated with this study. Firstly, its case-based nature confines its applicability. Secondly, this study employs the views of university faculties, which limits the richness of the analysis, since other relevant stakeholders, including graduates, employers, and decision-makers, are excluded from the research process. Similarly, future research can explore the same issue employing different research approaches from different vantage points, involving more stakeholders to have a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the problem, and comparing different cases across multiple universities and disciplines.

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