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Harmonizing Confucianism in Nepali Higher Education System: A Thematic Review

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Abstract

The integration of Confucian progressive educational principles into the Nepali educational landscape in general, and higher education system in particular, is a topic of growing interest lately. This thematic review critically explores the necessity and effectiveness of integrating Confucian educational values to harmonize the Nepali education system. I utilized Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as a research method for collecting relevant papers available on the Google Scholar for the study. Scholarly papers (n=11) on Confucian philosophy and education were systematically selected, using the certain key words like “Confucianism”, “Confucius education principles” & “Nepali education system”. I reviewed and synthesized n=11 articles against the research questions. The study focused on how Confucianism can be effectively integrated in Nepali education system and what could be the potential benefits of adopting this philosophy in Nepali higher education system. The findings of the study revealed that incorporation of Confucian progressive value-based educational principles along with Western centric academic knowledge would harmonize Nepali educational landscape. The dynamic interplay between moral education and academic knowledge would enable for holistic development of the individuals. Additionally, adaptation of Confucian curriculum, pedagogy and cross-cultural understanding would be crucial strategies for harmonizing Confucianism in Nepali higher education system. This study is significant because it encourages the educators, curriculum designers and policy makers to consider in adopting Confucian progressive value-based philosophy in Nepali education system which would ultimately enhance ethical values and promote social responsibility among

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Nepali Students.

Keywords: Confucianism, education system, perfect gentleman, moral development & cultural adaptation

Introduction

Confucianism, an ancient Chinese philosophical thought propounded by Confucius (contemporary to Gautama Buddha) around 500 BCE, became highly influential during a turbulent period of Chinese history. At that time, Chinese society was experiencing significant political and social disorder, particularly during the later stages of the Zhou dynasty (745-221 BCE) (Muyunda & Yue, 2022). Confucius' philosophical teachings on moral virtues, social order, and harmony, along with his progressive educational principles, played a transformative role in shaping the society of China during that time. Yao (2021) states that Confucius' philosophy had a profound impact in the pre-modern Chinese society. His value system were the core of the civil service examinations which had been mandatory for entering the bureaucracy. In this way, his philosophy served as the ladder for social mobility. Confucius believed that good governance could be achieved only through moral leadership and strict adherence to ethical principles where along with academic knowledge moral education would be the key to overall academic as well as bureaucratic success. This profound belief system that shaped not only the educational system but also the political, legal, and administrative systems across East Asia, including China (Tan, 2022). Confucius principles on moral values, social harmony and respect for hierarchy had had a lasting impact on these countries and these principles have been extending to beyond East Asian countries.

Confucianism's focus on moral values and social harmony offers valuable insight in Nepal's political, administrative, and education system. Much like in Confucian era, Nepal is currently experiencing a turbulent phase characterized by social disorder, political instability and administrative irregularities. The Confucian education can play a crucial role in shaping social harmony, political stability and transparent administration by emphasizing character development and moral virtues.

Core of Confucian Philosophy

Confucianism consists of four core values. The first core value lies in the 'respect for education' which states that education is the fundamental tool to self-improvement, social harmony and moral development. According to this value, therefore, the purpose of education is to prepare a perfect moral gentle man with moral virtues. Education is not merely a means to gain knowledge but a process of cultivation moral character, wisdom and social responsibility (Tan, 2022). Schools including other educational institutions

of Nepal, however, are competing for mere academic excellence. Confucianism's focus on education as a vehicle for personal and social development could help strengthen the versatile role of schools and other educational institutions as places for character building, not just academic achievement in Nepal. Then, 'filial piety' comes under the second core value of Confucian value which stresses the respect and reverence to one's parents, elders and ancestors (Yao, 2021). It is to be noted that respect for elders is already a central part of the cultural fabric in Nepal. Confucianism's focus on this can reinforce the importance of family values. The value of filial piety may also contribute to creating stronger bonds between generations, encouraging respect for cultural traditions and wisdom passed down through the ages.

The third core value is 'moral development', which emphasizes the development of virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, and integrity (Muyunda & Yue, 2022). Moral development is seen as crucial not only for individual character but also for contributing orderly society. In Nepal, where there are diverse ethnic groups and religions, Confucianism's focus on moral character could serve as a unifying educational framework. It could encourage students to develop ethical principles that transcend cultural boundaries, promoting peace and social cohesion.

The fourth and the last value of Confucian philosophy is 'hierarchical social structure' which is based on the respect for authority and maintaining hierarchical relationship in families, schools and society (Yao, 2021). This value is closely linked to the acceptance and obedience of external authority. Incorporating Confucianism could encourage respect for teachers and elders, fostering discipline in schools.

The core of Confucian philosophy is that all the humans are inherently good. Every person possesses the feeling of pity, shame and moral goodness. Confucius further argued that humanity, justice and wisdom are innately endowed. However, he believed that one is led to do evil as a result of external influence. So, education should be directed overcome these evils. Every person has the beginning of goodness within himself, all people are therefore born equal. It is through education that virtues are developed and integrated into one's personality (Chan, 2023)

The ultimate goal of Confucian philosophy as argued by Liu (2024) is the realization junzi, or the perfect gentleman or superior person. 'Junzi' embodies a combination of 'jen' and 'yi'. In broader sense, 'jen' is the internal quality of humanity which encompasses the moral qualities such as love for others, compassion and benevolence. This feature truly distinguishes human beings from other animals; that is not the body but the heart and mind. The heart and mind are characterized by empathy. Empathy the ability to feel the suffering of others. It is crucial to cultivate moral virtues with in one's heart and mind. This cultivation of moral virtues must extend to others. A morally superior person extends virtues to others, however, morally deficient person is

devoted to satisfying to his own interests (Liu, 2024). Similarly, ‘Yi’ can be described as righteousness and justice. Righteousness is essence of ‘true gentleman or superior person’, a person with complete and considerable virtues. A superman sets the character, other men strive to imitate (Muyunda & Yue, 2022). A superman does not set his mind against anything or anybody. The superior man understands righteousness; the petty man is driven by self-interest and profit.

Confucian Education

The theoretical underpinnings of Confucianism shape the nature of education. Confucius teaching was centered on moral education. He opined that virtues were not innately acquired but they are developed through teaching and training (Muyunda & Yue, 2022). In similar vein, Chan (2023) in defining Confucius education principles, argues that people are born equal, and the purpose of education is to cultivate the virtues in the individuals. Through education, virtues are developed and integrated into ones personality.

Secondly, the aim of education is to prepare ‘a perfect gentleman’ who cultivates perfect moral virtues (Liu, 2024). Confucius education’s main goal was to cultivate highly qualified and virtuous gentlemen who would pursue “truth” and “moral integrity” throughout their lives which was beneficial for individual development and the development of society and the nation (Muyunda & Yue, 2022). Another important dimension of Confucian education is the transfer and extension of moral virtues to others with the aim of creating an ideal society. Furthermore, Confucian argued that the education should help to serve the people and the state. For him, serving people and the state is moral obligation of the true gentleman. In addition, Confucius advocated for holistic approach to education rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge. Education, in his views, should foster the personal growth, ethical conduct, and social responsibility (Zhang, 2022). As Confucius famous saying goes, “Education breeds confidence; confidence breeds hope and hope breeds peace.” Education is not only about learning facts but also nurturing individuals’ character and capacity. Thus, education is not just about learning facts, but also about nurturing an individual’s character and capacity for moral action.

Relevance of the Study

Our traditional Nepali society shares several commonalities with Confucius’ philosophy. Like Chinese society, Nepali society values social harmony and respect for elders and reverence for ancestors, however, we have different cultural identities (Bhattarai, 2018). It is important to note that these two countries differ significantly in terms of cultural identities. One key difference is the role of religion. Nepali cultural identity is mainly shaped by Hindu philosophy which emphasized the existence and

supernatural power of gods while Chinese culture as stated by Tan (2022) is mostly influenced by Confucian philosophy which does not talk about the existence of supernatural deities, rather it emphasizes the moral virtues and social order.

This study is rooted on the cultural adaptation theory developed by Edward Tylor, a pioneering English anthropologist who deserved to be the father of cultural anthropology. This theory is also known as cultural diffusion theory which emphasizes how cultural elements on society are adopted and adapted by another society. Tylor (1871) suggests that religion and other cultural elements are part of this evolutionary process which can be transmitted or diffused through cross-cultural interaction, adaptation and acculturation. Upon this theoretical underpinnings, it can be argued that transmission of cultural is evolutionary as well as natural. The advancement of technology has further accelerated the transmission of cultural practice. In this sense, the Confucian values can be transferred even to Nepal's education through inter cultural communication, acculturation and selective adaptation. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that just as Nepal has adopted the English language and culture, it is also possible to adopt and adapt Chinese culture grounded on Confucian philosophical principles for the purpose of fostering cross-cultural understanding.

However, Nepalese traditional cultural values are under the threat due to the widespread adaptation of western influences in the name of globalization. The western colonial influence still exists in Nepal particularly through the imposition of English language and culture which ultimately has forced Nepali society to adopt the western language and culture. Furthermore, rapid globalization has further contributed to erase the core traditional Nepali values.

Therefore, it is necessary shift focus on to the revitalization our existing education system. In revitalizing the unique traditional Nepali values, the incorporation of Confucianism in Nepali education system is inevitable. The argument is further supported by Shrestha (2023) who states that the Nepali education has focused on preparing students as global citizen rather than making them responsible and benevolent towards their nation. As a result, there is a noticeable decline in moral values among students. This situation can be attributed to the blind imitation of Western systems.

In addition, the state is responsible for respecting and promoting the original moral identities of its citizens. Only ensuring moral education is essential for developing responsible and benevolent citizens for the future (Koirala, 2020). However, our education system hasn't adequately addressed the issues of moral virtues and ethics. More worrying fact is that, the state had deliberately erased Sanskrit and moral education form the curriculum at one point of time especially during Maoist insurgency in Nepal for ten years, which widened the gap between the moral practice and the individual's sense of responsibility towards their nation. However, the government has acknowledged its

importance and has begun giving priority to moral education in school level curriculum. For this, a separate moral education course has been introduced in grade eight and lessons on civic responsibility has been embedded into the secondary level social studies curriculum. This marks the beginning of adapting Confucian in philosophy in Nepali education system. This is obviously a praiseworthy step but remains insufficient. In addition to the school- level education system, the integration of Confucian principles in Nepalese bureaucracy is equally significant. Making the Confucian curriculum mandatory for selection into the bureaucracy could help address the ethical challenges within the system because it has been realized that the unethical practices among bureaucratic personnel are severely corrupting the atmosphere of bureaucracy in Nepal.

On the other hand, East Asian courtiers such as China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam are making a significant progress in all aspects of their social life such as political, administration, law and education sectors and are emerging as the global economic superpowers because of the strict adherence of Confucius' influential philosophy (Le & Zhang, 2021). In this situation, adaptation and incorporation of Confucianism to harmonize Nepali society particularly in the education system could serve as an effective bridge. Adapting Confucian principles is crucial for strengthening social values of Nepali society.

With this interpretation, it is, therefore, crucial to create a momentum in harmonizing Confucianism in Nepali educational settings. This study provides a strong evidence-based reasoning to initiate Confucius model of education of Nepal. Incorporation of Confucius education principles may help to foster the good governance, strengthening the capacity of politicians, administrators, lawyers and educators (Huang & Li, 2022). Unlike Confucian education, It can play a critical role in reshaping and transforming their current practices.

Although Confucianism is crucial in our educational land scape, there has been very little researches on how these principles can be adapted to Nepal's unique cultural, social and educational landscape. It is, therefore, necessary to create a pressure on the policymakers to adapt Confucius' model of curriculum and pedagogy in our education system. Additionally, my review of literature indicated that Confucianism was widely studied in China, Korea and Japan, however, there is limited researches on how Confucius' educational principle's be harmonized with modern, progressive educational framework in the context of Nepali education.

Following the two research questions, *a) How Confucian values be integrated in the Nepali education system, and b) What are the benefits of the integration of Confucian values in Nepali Education system?*, this study aimed at exploring the relevance of Confucianism and its potential benefits of these philosophical principles with in the Nepali context. This present study utilized an extensive systematic literature review

method in exploring the existing literature on Confucianism. From the reviews, four themes emerged to answer the research questions- two/two themes for each research question. The themes were: i) *adapting curriculum pedagogical practices and assessment system*, ii) *integrating Chinese culture and Confucian values*, iii) *holistic development of the individuals*, and iv) *promoting social responsibility*. These themes provided a foundation for discussing how Confucius' educational principles could be harmonized in the Nepali education system for enhancing virtues in the individuals and maintaining the social order in the society.

Research Methodology

This study employs the qualitative interpretive research design to explore and synthesize the potential influence and benefits of Confucian educational principles in Nepali education system. This study is based on secondary resources available on online databases. Following systematic literature review (SLR), the recent scholarly articles were systematically collected, reviewed, and synthesized and five themes were developed based on the research questions. A systematic literature review involves systematically collecting, evaluating and synthesizing all relevant studies on a specific topic using pre-defined criteria (Damayanti et al., 2022). For this study, I set the criteria for inclusion and exclusion and followed the successive steps of the SLR process, which included *identification, screening, eligibility*, and *final selection* of relevant studies. Since this research emphasizes on harmonizing Confucianism in Nepali education system, an extensive review was made focusing on the Confucius' philosophical principles, the theoretical underpinnings about education, the nature of education, and method of teaching.

Literature Search Process

I used Google Scholar, the most popular and trusted online database in education for finding the recent relevant articles for my study. I used Google Scholar database for my study mainly because it conventional data base which indexes a broad range of scholarly materials including peer reviewed articles, books, conferences papers, and patents form various disciplines in a systematic order. Moreover, it is user-friendly and easy to use in comparison to other databases such as PubMed, Scopus or Web of Science. To find the resources, I used the key words like; "Chinese education system, "Confucianism", "Confucius education principles" & "Nepali education system".

Screening Process and Eligibility Criteria

I identified n=1050 results in less than 0.03 seconds form Google Scholar database. However, nearly 990 articles were eliminated through first round of screening process because they were published before 2020. I set this inclusion or exclusion criteria due to the reason that I could be able to incorporate the latest knowledge on Confucianism

into my study on one hand, and on the other hand, I could systematically include the relevant research articles in an unbiased manner excluding irreverent ones. The remaining 60 articles were assessed against eligibility criteria. Out of these, only 11 articles met the criteria in the review. The other 49 articles were excluded due to various reasons such as the lack of full text, being languages other than English and not being scholarly articles. Ultimately, I concluded that 11 articles would be sufficient to answer my research questions.

I used the following inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting relevant articles. The inclusion criteria included: a) scholarly articles only (excluding theses and books), b) Confucius' moral virtues c) articles discussing Confucius' education principle d) articles on the adaptation of Confucianism in Nepali settings. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were: a) articles written before 2020, b) articles with unavailable full text, c) non-English articles on Confucius' education d) theses and books instead of articles on Confucianism. Surprisingly, of all n=1050 retrieved articles, none were written by Nepali writers focusing on integrating Confucianism in Nepali Education system. This means to say that Nepali scholarly articles didn't directly address to my research questions. This indicated that the progressive teaching principles of Confucius is not the significant interest of Nepali researchers.

Results and Discussion

The robust discussion is focused on the main four themes which emerged for the synthesis of the literature on Confucianism and educational principles.

Adapting Curriculum, Pedagogical Practices and Assessment System

Confucian education emphasizes the development of moral virtues. The ultimate goal of Confucian education principle is Junzi (the perfect gentleman with high moral standard) who embodies virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, and propriety (Liu, 2024). The education should prepare 'Junzi', a person with complete and considerable virtues. A 'Junzi' encompasses two dichotomies of virtues. One 'Re' is (benevolence) which is supposed to be supreme internal quality of 'Juzi'. 'Re' is simply the tendency of love and compassion to the family, society and country while 'Ye' (etiquette) is external quality which encompasses proper conduct and behavior. 'Ye' consists of the filial quality at home and respectful to the elders abroad (The Analects of Confucius, Book 12, and chapter 6). According to Confucius there are certain etiquette rules to follow, a superior man understand and follows them sincerely. Therefore, the origin of 'Ye' is Re. They work together to make a superior or gentleman.

It is to note that Confucian curriculum integrates the course contents of moral education and societal responsibility focusing on 'Re' and 'Ye' alongside academic content. Confucian value-based curriculum was very powerful in pre-modern Chinese

society. His value-based education was the ladder of for social success and political power. It was mandatory to pass the Confucian integrated curriculum for civil service examination. This curriculum is expanded to the countries like South Korea and Taiwan which is not just focused on academic learning but also on cultivating virtues such as respect, responsibility, and humility (Lee, 2021). Nepal could integrate moral education more deeply into its school curriculum focusing on the holistic development of the students. For instance, the harmonization of 'Re' and 'Ye' into Nepali higher education system strengthens the civic social responsibility among the students which is often lacking in Nepali education system it is due to the fact that the curriculum on civic responsibility has been given less importance. Nepali higher education curriculum and teaching practice focus more on the intellectual aspect of education, sidelining the education on moral values and societal responsibility. The value of love and compassion is also missing in Nepali education system. It is significant to note that, in addition to intellectual aspect, social etiquette and benevolence are also essential components of complete education. The adaptation of Confucian progressive value-based curriculum is expected to bridge the gap by helping to produce socially responsible individuals.

Similarly, the pedagogical principles of Confucius were so progressive and influential in ancient Chinese society. He himself had been a teacher and sage for a long time who transformed the existing rote learning situation into individualized instruction, illuminating the students' thinking and creativity. Confucius believed that the teaching should encourage students to self-cultivate for the fulfillment of the promises (Chen, 2013 as cited in Muyunda & Yue, 2022). In this sense, Confucian pedagogy was highly student-centered, focusing on the moral development and personal growth. In his teaching method, teacher was seen as the role model and guide and students were expected to engage in reflection and dialogue with their teachers. The teaching was focused on installing ethical values and promoting mutual respect, responsibility and life long learning (Zhang, 2022). Similarly, in addition to academic contents, the assessments were designed to evaluate the moral development, respect for others and social responsibility. The assessments were the ladder for academic success.

Nevertheless, the Nepal education system is totally different from Confucian education. Our education system is highly influenced by traditional Western-centric educational frameworks with less emphasis on moral education and cultivation or moral virtues (Shrestha, 2023). Our curricula often prioritize exam success. Experts design curriculum at apex level with some objectives. Teaching strategies are already fixed to implement the curriculum and it is delivered to classrooms for its implementation. Unlike in Confucius education, teachers' roles are restricted in Nepali education system. Teachers are the initiator, implementer and assessor of the entire learning processes. The effectiveness of the curricula is assessed in relation to exam scores obtained by the

students. Therefore, exam results is seen as the holistic development of the students which makes the notable difference from the Confucian education philosophy. However, in Confucian- influenced countries, assessment is not just about academic performance but also about evaluating a student's effort, diligence, and moral character. South Korea, for instance, places significant emphasis on the effort and perseverance demonstrated by students, even in the face of challenges (Park, 2021). It is to be noted that Nepali assessment system can be harmonized with Confucian education principles through assessing students' effort, preference, moral conduct, team work and behavior along with academic achievement which ultimately leads to the holistic assessment of the individuals.

It is significant to note that progressive educational principles grounded on Confucianism can harmonize and revitalize the traditional Nepali education. The key to harmonizing Confucian education principles is through adapting more flexible curriculum, student centered pedagogical methods and holistic assessment system rather than focusing on exam results.

Integrating Chinese Culture and Confucian Values in Nepali Education

Culture integration provides a fertile ground for the development of education. Therefore, the adoption and integration of Chinese culture is significant for revitalizing Nepal's education landscape. Since both countries share many qualities, including geographical proximity and a long history of economic and cultural exchanges. China has been a popular destination for Nepali students pursuing higher education. Nepal is growing a market for Chinese products (Sharma & Rai, 2024). In addition to economic and trade relationship, it is now time to explore the integration of cultural elements into Nepal's educational practices.

We have seen that China has made a tremendous success and has been emerging as a global economic superpower. It is often attributed to the adaptation and acceptance of ancient Confucian philosophy in politics, economics, law, administration and education (Zhao, 2024). China, Korea and Japan have been benefited for accepting this philosophy which focuses on progressive education, respect for authority and social harmony (Wang, 2024) are making a tremendous success. Now, it is time for Nepal to understand how Chinese cultural elements grounded on Confucianism can be selectively adapted to enhance the educational landscape of Nepal respecting its own cultural identities.

Cultural adaptation theory as proposed by Tylor in 1871 offers insights for adaptation and modification of cultural values. This theoretical lens offer how Chinese cultures can be incorporated into Nepali education system. Theoretically, cultures can be adapted through selective acculturation, social harmony, mutual trust, cross-cultural understanding and cultural diffusion (Liu, 2024). Chinese progressive cultures like moral

development, social harmony acceptance and respect for authority and benevolence to family and society can be selectively adapted in enhancing Nepali education system. The adaptation of these progressive cultures can improve the current situation and pave the way for future generation to develop moral virtues and take responsibility towards the families, societies and the nation.

Holistic Development of Individual

This theme emerged in response to second research question regarding the potential benefits of harmonizing Confucian education principles in Nepal's education system. Confucius advocated for the holistic development of the individuals with the quality of 'Junzi' (a perfect gentleman or superior person). The much articulated and discussed concept in Confucianism, 'Junzi' is umbrella term which encompasses four key virtues: Re (benevolence), Yi (righteousness), Li (propriety) and Zhi (wisdom). In addition to these core virtues, a superior person is characterized by some other additional qualities such as self-discipline, honesty, helpfulness, the ability to enjoy reading, and the cultivation of superior mental abilities. Other qualities include the desire for correction, caution in speech, and the capacity for self-improvement (Muyunda & Yue, 2022).

Confucius argued that holistic development encompasses the moral, ethical, self-cultivation, civic responsibility and development of intellectual faculties of the individuals. He believed that moral education foundation of not only individual development but also the development of society and the nation. However, he had different opinion on intellectual development; he argued that intellectual faculties naturally develop through moral education. Therefore, the ideal of 'Junzi' embodies holistic development because it includes all the development of intellect, character and social conduct. However, these virtues are not innate; they must be cultivated through education, reflection and practice. He strongly believed that education is not only about learning facts but also nurturing individuals' character and capacity. Moreover, he laid equal emphasis on the development of leadership arguing that a good governance can be achieved through moral leadership and strict adherence to ethical principles. It is worth mentioning that Confucius did not place significant emphasis on physical development in his teachings.

It is significant to integrate the holistic development models of Confucian education into Nepali education setting. They are beneficial mainly because incorporating such value-laden principles into our curriculum would promote an individual to cultivate ethically superior individuals who may serve as models of other society. The nature of ethically superior individuals is that they extend and expand their ethical and moral practices to others ultimately enlightening to the family, the society and the nation in whole. Moreover, incorporating Confucianism would promote social harmony and mutual

trust among individuals and community people and strengthen social cohesion. Social cohesion in Nepal is already highly valued, and Confucian principles could reinforce this by encouraging respect for elders, authority figures, and societal norms (Shrestha, 2023).

Additionally, harmonizing Confucianism would benefit for intellectual growth and critical thinking. Liu (2024) argues that Confucius education highly emphasizes on critical thinking, reflection and pursuit of knowledge; limiting to rote memorization and mechanical learning. Incorporating such radical principles in Nepali education system would encourage students to develop a more holistic approach to learning which includes intellectual curiosity, critical inquiry and the application of knowledge to real world issues.

Promoting Social Responsibility

The origin of civilization is the family and home. The culture of family plays significant role in shaping society because a society is essentially an extension form of the family unit. Confucius focused on the philosophy of education stating that a nation should invest in education because investment in education prepares children to become good adults who are respectful to parents and elders. It is the responsibility of parents to take care for the children with love and compassion and emotional support. In return, it is the noble duty of children to respect to their parents and elders (Li & Liu, 2022). This philosophy is significant since it guides all the members in the family and society should perform the designated responsibility duly for the formation of an ideal state. Confucius states:

Let the ruler be a ruler,

The subject, a subject

The father; be father

The son is a son.

(Analects 12:11)

It can be interpreted that the ruler (governor) of the country must be virtuous and guided by ethical principles because the governor shows the Way (path) to his subjects. Just as the trunk of a tree supports and nourishes all its branches, a moral governor sets an example and acts as a role model for others to follow (Tan, 2023). The trunk represents the foundational and core aspect of person's behavior. Confucius believed that the national governor should control and govern his land (state) by his virtues, rather than relying on national force and punishment. A governor who leads by virtues is like the 'North Pole Star' attracting all other stars maintaining its own position (Muyunda & Yue, 2022).

Nepal's education policy, however, is significantly deviated to Euro-American education principles often underestimating its ancient cultural practices in the name

of globalization (Aryal, 2023). There is a lack of civic duty among individuals and deficiency in ethical behavior among rulers and administrators. The value of filial piety (the respect for elders and parents) is increasingly weakening lately (Gurung, 2021). People have slowly forgotten their ancient Nepali values. Moreover, rulers and administrators are losing their credibility and people's trust. Political influence and personal preferences are highly prevalent in Nepali administration. Government employees seek comfort of home and are reluctant to work in remote areas. Corrupt individuals are often protected by rulers and leaders are neither craters to their speech nor have long term vision. Favoritism is widespread everywhere. Intellectually able and ethically sound people are lagging behind from any kind of opportunities.

This situation is largely due to our education system which is dedicated to producing academically competent people while underestimating cultivation of virtues that fosters responsible citizenship. As a result, good governance is frequently questioned in Nepal and this lack of governance has directly impacted the education system (Sharma, 2021). In such critical environment, the adaptation of Confucianism could be beneficial. The selective adaptation of Confucius' education principle can be a critical solution to improve the situation and change the mindset of the rulers, educators and administrators.

Conclusion

Present Nepali higher education has extensively been hegemonised by Western centric educational in the name of modernization and globalization with the due emphasis on mere acquisition of academic knowledge. As a result, our traditional value-based education, particularly the principle of filial piety, has been significantly challenged. Now it is time to revitalize those traditional value based education system along with the academic knowledge for the students' holistic development. For this respect, the proper integration of Confucian value based education and existing Western-centric education can make a fertile foundation for the development of both cognitive abilities and ethical conduct in the individuals. Adaptation of Confucian value-based education, with the goal of cultivating the 'perfect gentleman, can help harmonize and revitalize Nepal's current education system. Integrating Confucian principles into the Nepali curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices could significantly improve the existing challenges within the education system.

As we have seen that following Confucianism East Asian countries like China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam are emerging as global superpowers. Confucian educational thought is said to have played a significant role for these countries overall success on administration, politics and education. Confucian philosophy is extending to other Asian countries like Thailand, Philippines, Laos and Honking and has been transcending beyond Asia. If this is the case, Nepal also must grasp the opportunity of utilizing Confucian

progressive education principles in its education system through selective adaptation and cross-cultural understanding. It is an urgent need for the policy makers and curriculum designers to incorporate Confucianism in education philosophy in Nepali higher education system to harmonize with the need of 21st century education.

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