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Career Development and Task Performance of University Teachers: A Workplace Issue of Higher Educational Institutions in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on career development and task performance among faculty members in higher educational institutions in Nepal, primarily examining the factors influencing career development and its effect on the task performance of university teachers. The study aims to investigate the status and impact of career development on the task performance of these educators. To achieve this, a descriptive and explanatory research design was used. Data were collected from permanent faculty members at selected campuses using a stratified sampling technique and a structured Google Form questionnaire. Out of 1,216 distributed questionnaires, 406 valid responses were obtained and analyzed. Empirical analysis was conducted using SPSS, with descriptive statistics calculated through the mean and standard deviation. The impact was assessed using multiple regression analysis tools. The findings revealed that participation in a professional community, effective practice implementation, innovative knowledge sharing, and high performance among colleagues significantly and positively influence task performance. However, feedback from the department did not show a significant impact on task performance. This study is expected to provide valuable insights for academic institutions to identify critical workplace issues, develop strategies to address them, and enhance the quality of task performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Career development, which comprises both individuals' subjective experiences and their objective accounts, is valuable but provides only a partial and contextual explanation. According to Layder (1993), the concept of career extends both the objective and subjective facets of social life and allows for the exploration of the relationship between institutional and explanatory aspects of career movement. Furthermore, Layder discusses how the career perspective can limit the shifts and connections between personal and organizational power as they unfold across dimensions of time and space. Melamed (1995) provides a gendered explanation of careers, recognizing three levels of impact in the structural development of careers: micro-job levels, intermediate organizational levels, and macro-societal levels. Melamed's research indicates that macro-societal opportunity structures are more likely to benefit men than women, and studies on the involvement of Western women demonstrate the significance of the prevailing gender order (Walby, 1997).

Task performance can be exposed as how effectively an employee carries out activities that support the organization's core technical functions, either directly by engaging in its technological processes or indirectly by supplying necessary materials or services (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). For a marine officer, examples of such task behaviors include performing precise navigation, leading contest or rescue missions, commanding a ship, and maintaining safety protocols activities that align with formal job expectations. It is suggested that naval cadets, who experience high levels of daily work pressure, will perform well, especially if they have opportunities to rest between shifts.

Faculty members' career development deals with the changes they experience throughout their careers in the following areas: * job skills, knowledge, and behaviors in areas such as teaching approaches, discipline strategies, curriculum planning, rules, and measures; * attitudes and positions, such as aspirations for teaching, professional assurance and development, willingness to try new teaching methods, pleasures, concerns, values, and views; and * job events, such as changes in grade level, university, or district, participation in extra-professional duties, and age of record and departure (Burden, 1982).

The current educational system, which is undergoing changes, was initially modeled after the mass production techniques used in manufacturing processes (Jain, 2013). This method involves gathering raw materials or resources according to specific standards before they are processed. In the production process, raw materials are moved from one stage to another, where specialists make minor adjustments based on their assigned tasks. After the entire assembly process, the finished products undergo standardized testing to ensure they meet the necessary criteria before moving on to the next complex assembly stage. Similarly, in universities, service delivery follows a comparable pattern, requiring faculty members to engage in ongoing professional development. Given the crucial role of career development (CD) in shaping graduate outcomes, recent research suggests that teaching academics should take a more active role in supporting (CD) alongside the discipline-specific content in the curriculum (Dean et al., 2022). While academics are key to enhancing student employability,

many struggle to incorporate career-focused activities into an already filled curriculum or feel unprepared for the task. Therefore, the study aims to focus on career development status and effect of these factors expose in their task performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In higher education institutions, faculty career development and task performance are key factors that significantly enhance overall faculty effectiveness. Dialoke and Nkechi (2017) revealed a positive and significant relationship between career advancement and the task performance of university non-academic staff. Additionally, career advancement is positively correlated with the motivation of these non-academic staff members. The study concluded that the impact of career growth on task performance and employee motivation in universities is profound. It recommends that university management, in alignment with institutional programs and policies, should invest in the career growth of non-academic staff by offering numerous opportunities for advancement, self-development, structured learning, funding career development programs, and providing incentives for those who pursue career development. These efforts are vital in maintaining and enhancing high-quality organizational performance, which is essential for supporting learning and academic research within the university.

Task performance management is a continuous process of measuring, identifying, and improving the performance of individuals and groups while aligning performance with the organization's strategic goals. Åkerlind (2005) identified six different ways of experiencing academic development: becoming more creative and efficient in work output, achieving academic integrity and recognition for one's work, continuously improving the quality and success of one's work, accumulating personal knowledge and skills, deepening and expanding understanding in one's field, and contributing to societal growth or social change.

Academics often experience changes in their interests, values, or task performance depending on their career stage. Mohammadi and Karupiah (2020) argued that there is a significant positive relationship between career development and task performance. When the quality of work life (QWL) components affects task performance, they play a key role in improving it. Employees tend to have higher well-being if they are satisfied with their work and organization and perceive their quality of work life positively. An employee's work experience and quality of work life influence their health and psychology. The ability to engage in personal career planning is a key factor in enhancing organizational task performance.

In the context of Nepal, Gautam (2018) investigated the training culture and employee performance within the Nepali banking industry. The findings indicated that employees' performance can be maintained through training, and employees are satisfied with the skills they gain from such training. According to Pandey (2017), training is a key method in management development programs in contemporary organizations. The research also found that formal training has a more significant impact on performance than informal training. Chapagain et al. (2022) examined the link between training effectiveness and work

performance, revealing a positive correlation between effective training, job performance, and the work environment. Their investigation concluded that the more effective the training, the better the employees' performance.

Nepali organizations should offer practical training and create a supportive work environment to enhance job performance. Sigdel (2016) assessed the impact of training and development on human resource practices, performance, and job satisfaction in Nepali commercial banks. The study highlighted that training is crucial for the smooth and efficient functioning of work, which helps improve employee performance and contributes to organizational development. The study concluded that training and career development activities enhance employees' abilities to perform better and foster strong commitment to the organization. The above discussion shows that empirical evidence on the influence of training and development on employee performance varies widely. Although there is existing empirical evidence from Nepal and other countries, there is a lack of recent data specific to higher educational institutions in Nepal. To address this gap, this study was conducted. The primary objective is to determine the effect of training and development on faculty task performance in higher educational institutions in Nepal, focusing on faculty professionalism development, feedback from departments, innovative knowledge-sharing opportunities, employee development programs, best practices opportunities, and coaching and interaction. Any organization that implements a more widespread, strategic, institution-wide approach to career development (CD) can significantly influence students' employability decisions, career choices, and workforce preparation.

The literature emphasizes the significant role of career development and training in enhancing task performance within organizations, particularly in higher education. Studies reveal that career advancement, motivation, and quality of work life positively influence faculty and non-academic staff performance. Research across various sectors, including Nepali organizations and academic settings, highlights the importance of structured training, professional development, and continuous learning in improving employee effectiveness. Furthermore, it is suggested that a supportive work environment, along with opportunities for career growth and development programs, is essential for promoting high-quality performance and organizational success. However, a gap in recent data specifically related to higher educational institutions in Nepal necessitates further investigation into the impact of training and development on faculty task performance. From these insights, the hypotheses are:

H_1: There is positive significant impact of professional community on task performance of faculty members.
H_2: There is positive significant impact of effective work practices on task performance of faculty members.
H_3: There is positive significant impact of professional team experiences on task performance of faculty members.
H_4: There is positive significant impact of feedback from department on task performance of faculty members.

H_5: There is positive significant impact of innovative knowledge sharing activities on task performance of faculty members.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative analysis approach within a descriptive, explanatory, and cross-sectional research design, utilizing a deductive approach to initiate empirical inquiry by gathering and organizing primary data.

3.2 Population and Sampling of the study

The total population for the study consists of 8,124 teaching faculty members from seven universities in Nepal: Far Western University, Mid-Western University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Pokhara University, Purbanchal University, Kathmandu University, and Tribhuvan University. Of these, 4,962 are lecturers/asst. professors, 2,366 are associate professors, and 796 are professors (UGC Report, 2020/2021). After selecting the study area, the sample size was determined using probability sampling, specifically the stratified sampling method. This method was chosen because it ensures that each subgroup within the population is adequately represented. The subgroups, or strata, were formed based on the current job positions of the faculty members from the selected universities. Stratified random sampling ensures that each subgroup within the overall population is sufficiently represented in the sample.

The strata for this study were based on the current job positions of faculty members (professors, associate professors, and lecturers). The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula.

Formula: $n = N/\ 1 + (N * d^2)$

N= Total population

n= Sample size

d= error term= (5%) level

Using this formula, the minimum sample size was determined to be 382. This sample includes 233 lecturers, 111 associate professors, and 38 professors.

Measuring Instruments

A six-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree, was used to assess all constructs of the variables related to career development and task performance of faculty members for the quantitative analysis.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The Google Form was sent to 1,216 respondents, and responses were received. After excluding incomplete and invalid responses (20 in total), only 406 valid responses were selected for analysis.

Statistical Tools for Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The study employed several statistical tools to ensure precise findings. Descriptive analysis was conducted using the mean and standard deviation to assess the status of career development and task performance. The correlation coefficient was applied to test the relationship between career development and task performance, and the impact was examined through multivariate regression analysis.

Reliability of the Constructs

Cronbach alpha is the instrument for analysis the consistency of data. The construct and content were approved by using the rating measure of (Swamy, Nanjundeswaraswamy & Rashmi, 2015). Cronbach alpha is used for testing the reliability of constructs. Overall Alpha value of career development is 0.72 and task performance is 0.76.

Table 1

Reliability Coefficient of the Dependent and Independent Variables

Career Development	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Task Performance	Cronbach Alpha
CD_1	0.67	TP_1	0.720
CD_2	0.71	TP_2	0.700
CD_3	0.77	TP_3	0.693
CD_4	0.94	TP_4	0.694
CD_5	0.93	TP_5	0.757

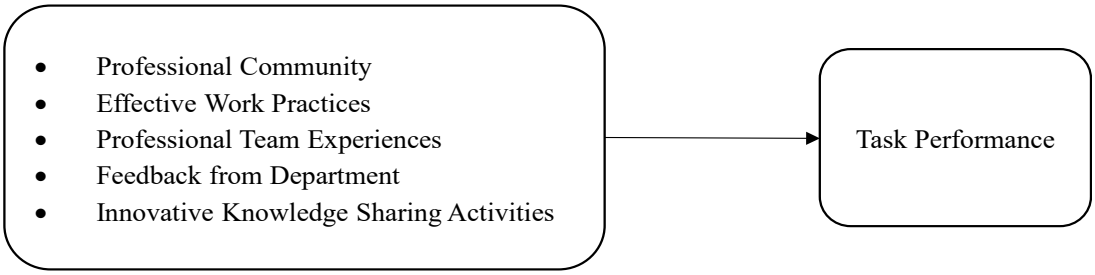
Source: Field Survey.2024

From Table 1, it is realized that the consistency value was assessed to be overall Alpha (α) is 0.700 and item-wise Cronbach Alpha (α) =0.67 to 0.94 if we compare the reliability value of the scale used in the present study with the standard value alpha of 0.6 applied by Cronbach (1951), it is observed that the scale of the present study is highly reliable for data analysis.

Research Framework

The study focuses on the career development components of professional community, effective work practices, professional team experiences, departmental feedback, and innovative knowledge-sharing activities, and their impact on the task performance of faculty members in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nepal. Therefore, the combined research framework for this relationship is:

Figure 1
Research Framework



4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

In this study, the demographic nature is characterized based on the respondent's age, gender, educational qualification, and job position. The demographic characteristics of higher education institutions are divided into four categories. For analyzing the different raw data, the demographic variables are applied as basic components.

Table 2 reveals that respondents in the study were 87.60 percent male and 12.30 percent female. The majority of the respondents were aged above 50 years, representing 47.00 percent, while those under 30 years were the least represented at 1.20 percent. In terms of educational qualifications, 56.40 percent of respondents held master's degrees, 18.20 percent held M. Phil degrees, and 25.40 percent held Ph.D.

Table 2
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Age(years)		
Below 30	5.00	1.20
31-40	70.00	17.20
41-50	140	34.50
50 above	191	47.00
Gender		
Female	50	12.30
Male	356	87.60
Education Qualification		
Master Degree	229	56.50
Mphil	74	18.20
Ph.D.	103	25.40
Job Position		
Lecturer	247	60.80
Associate professor	117	28.80
Professor	42	10.30

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Regarding job positions, 60.80 percent of the respondents were Lecturers, 28.80 percent were Associate Professors, and 10.30 percent were Professors. The data shows that the majority of respondents were Lecturers.

The profile of the respondents reveals that most of the responses were from males. The research indicates that the largest age group was those above 50years, followed by the age group of 41-50. From an educational qualification perspective, the majority held master's degrees, and in terms of job positions, most were Lecturers. The study was conducted on a diverse demographic profile.

Descriptive Analysis of career development

Descriptive analysis focused on conniving the positional value of career development of respective constructs professional community, work practice, feedback, professional experiences, and innovative knowledge sharing activities**.**

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Constructs of Career Development

Constructs of Career Development	Mean value	Standard Deviation
I endeavor to participate actively in the larger professionals' community (CD_1).	5.03	0.67
I take proactive step to adjust my work in order to develop the most effective practice (CD_2).	5.04	0.71
Feedback from my department head is provided on regular basis to aid the development of the best practice (CD_3).	4.34	0.77
I engaged frequently with experienced professionals within the same field (CD_4).	4.60	0.94
My university creates innovative and knowledge sharing environment at my workplace (CD_5).	4.26	0.93

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In the second and first statements, the mean scores are 5.04 and 5.03, respectively. This indicates that the majority of respondents approved of my efforts to actively participate in the broader professional community and to implement effective job practices in the workplace.

In contrast, the mean scores for the fourth, third and fifth statements are 4.60, 4.34, and 4.26, respectively. This suggests that these statements, which relate to career development, are perceived as being in a moderate position. However, respondents place greater emphasis on the professional community at their university, as evidenced by the higher score of 5.40 with a standard deviation of 0.67. This indicates a lower priority for an innovative and knowledge-sharing environment.

The study suggests that faculty members place high importance on the professional community within their workplace and implement appropriate practices accordingly. They desire an academic environment that presents suitable challenges and promotes improved practices. However, they often prioritize traditional approaches over innovative and dynamic work experiences, tending to follow conventional thinking.

Descriptive Analysis of Task Performance

Descriptive analysis of task performance contains standard job attainment, passion of job, work with university's goals and objectives, timely completion of assigned task, and good performer position in campus.

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Task Performance

Constructs of Task performance	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Constantly uphold higher standard of work within my university (TP_1).	4.70	0.91
My enthusiasm on my work is profound; I am very passionate about my work (TP_2).	5.09	0.82
I am adept my numerous assignments to fulfill the objective of the university (TP_3).	4.88	0.80
I utilize my full competency to ensure timely completion of my assigned task (TP_4).	5.15	0.73
My colleagues regarded me as a higher performer on campus (TP_5).	4.76	0.86

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The mean scores for the TP_4 and TP_2 statements are 5.15 and 5.09, with standard deviations of 0.73 and 0.82, respectively. This indicates that most respondents agree with the statements "I utilize full competency to complete assigned tasks on time" and "I am passionate about my work." On the other hand, the mean scores for the TP_3, TP_5, and TP_1 statements are 4.88, 4.76, and 4.70, respectively. This suggests that these statements related to task performance are perceived as moderate. However, respondents place a higher emphasis on the competency utilized at their university, as shown by the higher score of 5.15 with a standard deviation of 0.73, indicating a lower priority for achieving higher standards in task performance.

This analysis shows that faculty members prioritize utilizing their competency in their workplace and apply appropriate passion accordingly. They seek an academic environment that offers suitable challenges and demonstrate passion for their work. However, they tend to manage the importance of utilizing competency that incorporates passion and achievement.

Relationship between Career Development and Task Performance

The relationship exposes the linkage and connection between dependent and independent variables. This mainly focuses on significant relationship of variables of CD and task performance.

Table 5

Relationship between Career Development and Task Performance

Constructs	Correlation Coff. (r)	P-value (Significance value)
CD_1	0.329	0.000
CD_2	0.313	0.000
CD_3	0.148	0.000
CD_4	0.296	0.000
CD_5	0.237	0.000

Notes: **. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

The correlation between CD_1 and task performance is (r=0.531), between CD_2 and task performance is (r=0.313), between CD_3 and task performance is (r=0.148), between CD_4 and task performance is (r=0.296), and between CD_5 and task performance is (r=0.237). All these relationships are positive and significantly correlated with task performance. The calculated p-value for all constructs is less than 0.01.

From Table 5, it is exposed that all aspects of career development have a positive and significant relationship with task performance. This indicates that when the university focuses on career development activities, it enhances the task performance of faculty members.

Impact of Career Development on Task Performance

Regression analysis is a quantitative research method which is used when the study involves modeling and analyzing several variables, where the impact includes a dependent variable and one or more independent variable. This research uses multiple regression analysis which is most commonly used to predict values of a measure variable.

Table 6

Impact of career Development on Task Performance

Constructs	Beta Coefficient(β)	T-value	P-value	VIF
Constant	13.557	10.548	0.000	-
CD_1	0.885	4.003	0.000	1.254
CD_2	0.660	3.108	0.002	1.298
CD_3	-0.014	0.073	0.941	1.252
CD_4	0.425	3.039	0.003	1.333
CD_5	0.318	0.954	0.050	1.319
Predictors	R^2=0.180	Adj. R^2=0.177	F-value=18.368	Sig. value=0.000

The correlation (R) indicates the relationship between the dependent variable (task performance) and the independent variables (CD_1, CD_2, CD_3, CD_4, and CD_5). The R-squared value, which is the square of the correlation, is 0.180. This means that the independent variables can predict 18.00 percent of the variance in task performance. In other words, 18.00 percent of the changes in task performance can be attributed to CD_1, CD_2, CD_3, CD_4, and CD_5, while the remaining 82.00 percent of the variance is explained by other factors.

In Table 6, the coefficient value (β_1) for CD_1 is 0.885, with a p-value less than 0.05, indicating a significant positive impact of a larger professional community (CD_1) on task performance. The coefficient value (β_2) for CD_2 is 0.660, and its significance value is also less than 0.05, suggesting that developing the most effective practices (CD_2) significantly and positively affects task performance. For CD_3, the coefficient value (β_3) is -0.014, but its significance value is greater than 0.05, indicating that feedback from the department (CD_3) does not impact task performance. The coefficient values (β_4 and β_5) for CD_4 (0.425) and CD_5 (0.318), related to an innovative and knowledge-sharing environment and higher performer engagement on campus, are positive, with significance values less than 0.05, indicating that these factors positively influence task performance. Overall, except for CD_3, all career development constructs positively impact the task performance of faculty members. The hypotheses H_1, H_2, H_4, and H_5 are supported, as their p-values are less than 0.05. However, hypothesis H_3 is rejected, as its p-value is > 0.05.

Descriptive analysis indicates that a strong professional community and a conducive practice environment within the workplace promote career development opportunities. In terms of task performance, faculty members prioritize leveraging their competencies and demonstrate a strong passion for their jobs, which significantly influences performance at universities. Mohammadi and Karupiah (2020) found that faculty work experience and the quality of work life affect their health and psychological well-being. Key factors for enhancing organizational task performance include personal career planning, job passion, professional community, and effective job practices. The findings of Mohammadi and Karupiah (2020) align with this study, highlighting the role of these constructs in task performance within the service sectors and universities.

A larger professional community positively impacts task performance by promoting effective practices, innovative knowledge sharing, and strong performer affiliation among colleagues. However, departmental feedback did not significantly influence task performance, as faculty members felt that the university's feedback system was inadequate. Burden (1982) found that job skills, knowledge, and behaviors in areas such as teaching approaches, discipline strategies, curriculum planning, and rules and measures significantly influence service sectors. Additionally, attitudes and positions, including teaching aspirations, professional development, willingness to try new methods, and personal values, play a role. Job events, such as changes in grade level or participation in extracurricular activities, also impact task performance. Dialoke and Nkechi (2017) revealed that career growth impacts task performance and employee motivation in universities. University management should invest

in the career growth of non-academic staff by offering advancement opportunities, structured learning, funding for career development programs, and incentives. Both past studies and the current study show consistent results regarding the impact of professional community, effective practice, innovative knowledge sharing, and high performance in universities, but they present inconsistent findings regarding the influence of departmental feedback.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The study highlights that the professional community is the most influential factor for task performance. To enhance this, universities should promote interactions within the professional community and encourage knowledge-sharing activities. In the evolving teaching and learning environment, innovation and knowledge sharing are key to career development. By adopting effective practices in learning and knowledge transfer, universities can implement global teaching pedagogies, enabling faculty members to achieve innovative task performance.

Feedback from departments is not a significant factor in task performance. Therefore, universities should focus on establishing effective feedback and interaction programs among faculty members to keep them informed about current changes in departmental task culture. The study primarily examines the career development and task performance of faculty members, contributing to career development initiatives for university faculty and informing university policy-making to connect career development with performance.

The study primarily focused on five constructs of career development and five constructs of task performance, utilizing primary data and quantitative analysis. It was conducted using cross-sectional data from seven major universities in Nepal at a specific point in time. As a result, the study did not cover all aspects and perspectives of career development and task performance for university faculty members. Future research could explore local constructs specific to the universities involved and employ a mixed-methods approach with longitudinal data to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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