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Examining the Connection between Quality Education and Employability: Insights from Educators and Individuals**Kabi Adhikari Thapaliya^{1*} & Nathu Ram Chaudhary PhD²**

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Abstract

The widespread notion, among both the public and scholars, is that developing countries like Nepal experience disparities in educational quality. Issues are regularly flagged in this regard at the policy level, academia, media, and public forums. Nevertheless, there is no research-based discourse about what “quality” means and how it is designed and implemented in different domains. In the case of Nepal, which this article focuses on, it is often presumed that education in public schools is outmoded, impractical, limited in hands-on training, and lower in standards compared to that in private schools. Therefore, the core objective of this study is to examine the nexus between quality education and occupational skills, drawing insights from educators and individuals. This article reviews a literature review and analysis of data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to develop a framework for describing and discussing quality education in the context of Kathmandu, Nepal. Anchored in the interpretivist paradigm, this study employs an interpretative phenomenological methodology to explore and elucidate the lived experiences of the participants. The findings depict that good teaching, a supportive learning environment, and active involvement in extracurricular activities play a significant role in providing quality education, which helps students become professionally competent.

Keywords: Outcome-based education, Graduate Employability, Institutional collaborations, career pathways

Introduction

Quality education is one of the global requirements for Sustainable Development and a main aim of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4). The general talk, which is also supported by the scientific community, claims that countries in the process of development, such as Nepal, are still struggling to provide educational quality. The notion of quality education has been conceptualised in various international policy frameworks, characterizing different aspects of it, such as access, inclusion, and relevance through learner-centred pedagogy and measurable learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2015). The idea of quality education, in this case, is fair, inclusive, and effective learning that would prepare all learners with the necessary skills for the fast-changing world.

Nepal's education system is so intricately involved and debated that the discourse on educational quality is quite complex (Khaniya, 2007; World Bank, 2020). According to public opinion, government schools are usually described as old-fashioned, overly theoretical, and lacking in the practical or skill-based aspects of education (MOE, 2019; UNESCO, 2022). These establishments are often thought to be less competitive than their private counterparts, both nationally and internationally (Bhatta, 2011). Such comparisons are mostly based on the education levels of the most developed countries, which are considered as models for the less developed ones. However, these models are mostly dependent on policy speeches or assumptions that have not been tested, rather than on measurable learning outcomes or locally relevant indicators of success.

The reality is quite the opposite and even challenges the dominant perception of public schools in Nepal as underperforming. As a matter of fact, public school graduates have been able to make their mark in higher education, public administration, diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and political leadership, in spite of the harsh criticisms. Therefore, it can be said that public institutions, despite their modest performance on standardized academic metrics, are the main agents of social mobility and civic participation. Mathema and Bista (2006) stated that students coming from private schools generally perform better than those from public schools when it comes to standardized examinations; however, public schools should not be overlooked as they are more inclusive and accessible, particularly to students coming from rural areas and those who are economically or socially disadvantaged.

Carney and Bista (2009) also argue that the societal role of public education in Nepal goes beyond academic performance, thus helping to raise civic awareness, resilience, and

adaptability qualities in students coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Public education produced Nepal's political and bureaucratic leaders, which is an example that educational quality cannot be summed up by numerical measures only. On the other hand, private schools, which are usually seen as providers of better education, may in fact limit students' exposure to social diversity, thus limiting their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

According to Dhungana (2020), quality education is the “implementation of elite standards for curriculum (what learners learn), environment (quality of school facilities and necessary support for learners), pedagogy (learning process), and learning outcomes (application of learning in life and for a better life)”. A growing number of studies have dissected the facets of educational quality, stressing both input factors, such as infrastructure, curriculum design, and teacher qualifications and output factors like learning achievement, employability, and lifelong learning (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2015). Nonetheless, the number of articles that have sufficiently elaborated on the perceptibility of educational quality in relation to employability, especially in Nepal, is still small.

Concerns over the quality of education have been raised time and again in policy-making circles in Nepal, academic institutions, media, and public forums. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of conceptual clarity and a consensus informed by research as to what “quality” means in different sociocultural and institutional settings. This theoretical ambiguity leads to fundamental questions about quality education, such as what its essential elements are, how it can be gauged, evaluated, and compared across systems, and to what extent these gauges depend on or are independent of context.

These points emphasize the necessity for a nuanced, contextually based model to delineate, evaluate, and enhance the standard of education. The model should move beyond simply comparing public and private schools and also consider the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of education. Using this broader approach can help policymakers, educators, and researchers gain a fairer and clearer understanding of the quality of education in Nepal and other developing countries.

This study explores the link between educational quality and employability through the perspectives of educators and graduates in Nepal. It examines key aspects of education, including infrastructure (classroom facilities and learning resources), teaching effectiveness, students'

holistic development, social and political factors, language of instruction, and technology integration.”

This study seeks to understand how different aspects of education influence graduates’ employment outcomes. It presents a model to examine the extent to which various factors of educational quality shape individuals’ career paths and societal contributions. The research also explores how graduates connect their personal and professional development to their educational experiences. Positioned within ongoing debates on redefining quality education in developing countries, the study uses an interpretative phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of individuals from diverse educational settings and assess how these experiences affect their views on educational quality and employability. Dahal et.al. (2025) assert that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for equipping individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in the competitive job market and are instrumental in the economic development of the nation by creating a link between academic learning and the workforce needs. There is no doubt that providing high-quality education is a powerful lever of employment as it equips students with the skills and competencies required for success in the labour market.

The research project is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent do the most talked about quality education indicators affect the actual experiences and future opportunities of high school graduates?
2. What connections between quality education and personal/ career development do the graduates draw?
3. How do the experiences of graduates reveal the connection between quality education and life outcomes?

Literature Review

The idea of providing quality education has been a popular subject for research and debate among scholars over time, and different scholars have continually provided varying perspectives which take into account historical, cultural, and educational aspects. For example, Hilliard (1978) considers that the achievement of quality education for all necessitates educators to face up to systemic injustices like racism and domination. He affirms that good teaching and learning are possible if these obstacles are directly confronted. On the other hand, Mortimore and

Stone (1991) see the biggest problem with the term 'quality' being that its meaning is very different depending on which groups of stakeholders you ask. Even though it is a controversial concept, they go so far as to say that some measurable aspects like institutional performance and learner outcomes can be utilized to evaluate the level of educational quality. Moreover, Stark and Lowther (1980) disagree with the idea that quality should be evaluated at only three different levels, suggesting instead that these levels are also interconnected: individuals (students and staff), departments (academic and administrative units), and institutions, and thus being able to cover the entire assessment framework by taking into account all these layers.

Dhungana (2020) relates the discussion of quality education to the South Asian environment and marks it as a vital developmental issue. He remarks that the condition of quality education in South Asia is far below that of wealthy countries because of systemic contradictions and resource disparities. To begin with, he conceptualizes quality education through four interlinked aspects: curriculum, environment, pedagogy, and outcomes, stressing that the deficiency of these factors' harmony leads to the decline of the educational quality. His model is very much in tune with the one that UNICEF

Wani and Mehraj (2014) put forth the point of view that teaching and learning entail several essential criteria, namely the qualifications of teachers, instructional design, school management, technology integration, class size, and institutional climate. They also acknowledge that many schools are inadequately equipped and face challenges in implementing these standards within diverse socio-political contexts. Likewise, Akareem and Hossain (2016) claim that maintaining quality in higher education relies on the existence of robust quality assurance systems that promote academic integrity and ensure institutional accountability.

One of the main points of gender perspectives inclusion in the conversation of education quality has been that, besides Aikman, Halai, and Rubagiza (2011) also believe that quality education should go beyond fair resource distribution and deal with gendered experiences in the classrooms. They insist that the quality of education cannot be fully recognized without understanding how gender stereotypes in society and institutions affect the participation, motivation, and achievements of students.

Kraft (2022) perceives quality education as a construct that depends on subjectivity and varies from one context to another. He argues that quality perceptions differ between individuals and cultures and thus more insightful measuring instruments need to be developed in order to

educational quality measurement to remain respectful towards both global standards and local realities. In his point of view, quality education is better understood when looked at from the perspective of the learner and the community, and it should be focused on the knowledge, skills, and soft competencies that lead to meaningful and productive lives.

Another important theme that emerges is the connection between educational quality and employability. Although numerous studies have examined education quality at national and global levels, relatively few have explored how it directly influences access to employment opportunities. Dhungana (2020) thinks that the acquisition of formal qualifications is only part of the way towards career prospects; apart from that, people have to be equipped with relevant skills and the capability to transfer theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Hence, quality education goes beyond just providing learners with academic competence and grants them critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are indispensable to professional competence.

Viewing education from a philosophical perspective, Buttrick (1925) sees it as a continuous life journey through which one develops observation, thinking, and reflection skills. Therefore, education becomes an ongoing process of both intellectual and moral growth. Galtung (1990) takes it further by pointing out that education includes not only formal but also informal and non-formal learning which are influenced by the culture and environment. According to him, educational systems are not only shaped by the cultural and social aspects of the world but also by the ideological ones; thus religion, language, history, and nationalism are among the factors that have an influence on educational systems.

Pant (2016) also points out that formal education is only one side of the learning process, especially in rural areas, where informal and non-formal education can complement each other, with the role of one being more dominant than the other. Informal education, which is based on everyday experiences and local traditions, can support adult learning, attract local resources, and promote the participation of different groups. Non-formal education, on the other hand, is more concerned with sending messages through an experience which is outside the framework of the conventional schooling system. Both forms of education, according to Pant, are extensions of formal education as they pioneer the ideas of lifelong learning and the acquisition of practical knowledge.

The literature shows that quality education is a complex, evolving concept encompassing academic, social, cultural, and economic dimensions. It addresses what and how students learn, as

well as inclusiveness, relevance, and contextual adaptability. Despite global consensus, disparities persist in regions like South Asia due to systemic inequities. Nevertheless, quality education remains a crucial driver of individual empowerment, societal change, and sustainable development

Research Methodology

This study is grounded in an interpretive paradigm to explore how individuals derive meaning from their experiences. It examines the subjective and context-specific ways in which graduates perceive the relationship between their education and career outcomes. Furthermore, this research uses Human Capital Theory (HCT) as one of the sources, which was initially presented by Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961). It serves as a conceptual lens to examine the participants' experiences. Their accounts reveal that educational quality encompasses academic knowledge, STEM skills, soft skills, and digital literacy (OECD, 2018). The researchers adopted an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) to understand how people make sense of their lived educational and professional experiences (Creswell, 2013). This method is particularly useful for uncovering the nuanced perspectives and underlying meanings of education, employability, and success that may not be immediately apparent

The study was carried out in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, selected for its diverse socio-educational context. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling to represent a range of educational and professional backgrounds. The sample included professionals from various fields: four academicians providing insights into educational perspectives and pedagogical practices; two social science researchers offering analytical and research-oriented viewpoints; two entrepreneurs sharing experiences related to business and employment generation; two NGO professionals describing community-level and social development experiences; and two government officials highlighting policy and regulatory perspectives.

Graduates from both public and private schools were included to explore how educational background influences their success narratives. Six graduates participated in focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing for shared reflections on commonalities and differences in their educational experiences. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with individuals possessing expertise on the link between education and employability. The FGDs offered collective insights into shared experiences, perspectives, and meanings. This interpretative approach illuminated how participants perceive education, employability, and success,

emphasizing the impact of their educational experiences on career trajectories and societal contributions.

The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, following principles of autonomy, informed consent, and confidentiality to safeguard the rights and well-being of participants (Resnik, 2020).

Results and Discussions

To examine the relationship between educational quality, its assessment, and employment outcomes, the study emphasized the roles of various stakeholders. Data were collected through 12 key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with multiple participants. This approach facilitated the exploration of three primary themes: teaching methods, school environment, and extracurricular activities. The ideas of the respondents reveal the interconnection of quality education and employment opportunities. Therefore, the outcomes derived from a thorough thematic analysis are recognized as different from the point of view of these three themes.

Methods of teaching

One of the main features of quality education is that it involves both teachers and students in finding out the truth, instead of allowing the falsification of the truth to help the continuation of the existing systems of power, privilege, or inequality. It creates an authentic and close relationship between a student's past and current experiences and the aims and practices of the educational system. Such education contributes to the growth of the student's strong personal, social, and cultural identity as it motivates them to consider themselves as original thinkers, not just followers.

The scientists put the question to the interviewees: Are the indicators of quality education interlinked with your institution? And were these skills taught in your institution? According to the statement of Informant A, the precise subthemes can be efficiently combined into two overall interpretive themes related to teaching methods and quality education. These two themes reflect the gist of their opinion while acknowledging the wealth of the original narrative:

Holistic and Pedagogical Practices Beyond Grades

Informant A (academician) disputed the conventional, grade-oriented views of quality education, pointing out that grades alone are not enough to serve as indicators. The informant, while conceding that academic performance can be a signal of intelligence, insisted on the necessity of going beyond the theoretical sphere to practical application, critical thinking, and life skills.

“Measures of quality education itself was a vague issue. However, there were definitely some components to be considered to maintain quality education. Professional development, economic development, socialization, life skills, critical thinking, the capacity to solve problems, and to explore new things were some major factors of quality education. Quality education enabled a person to sell in the market. In some cases, some had achieved success in their life even if they had not participated in the teaching learning process. In that sense, grade alone could not be the indicator of quality education. Definitely the class grade made one academically sound, and one became complete with the combination of quality education along with skills, development, practical education, and many others.”

This account reflects a perspective of holistic pedagogy, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational dimensions of learner development. From this standpoint, effective teaching should cultivate learners who are adaptable, socially competent, and prepared to navigate real-world challenges. The informant differentiates memorisation learners from visionary thinkers and implies that significant teaching practices should facilitate the development of students into the latter through applied learning, entrepreneurship, and self-exploration.

Furthermore, Informant C (Academician) expressed his ideas in this manner:

“The absence of a quality academic background does not preclude one from being economically sound. A well-educated entrepreneur, for example, could extend his vision and be future-oriented with a long-term vision and in a multidimensional way, but a businessman without an academic background might encounter difficulties in critical thinking.”

This short story indicates the need for learner-centered, experiential teaching methods that include problem-solving tasks, project-based learning, entrepreneurial education, and reflective practices leading to personal and professional graduates' competencies. In this teaching approach, teachers are less involved in content delivery and more in facilitating students' transformation.

Quality Education as a Systemic and Contextual Process

Besides learner development, Informant A pointed out that quality education is not attributable to a single factor such as a teacher or a curriculum. It is rather a systemic process that depends on the support of the infrastructure, the institution, and the environment of education. It cannot be just one component of a particular organisation that is the determining factor of the education provision process, which is also equally important. He also emphasized the significance of physical conditions, such as school infrastructure and classroom furniture, as integral components of the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, he noted that physical infrastructure, along with the overall school environment and adequate classroom resources, plays a crucial role and should not be overlooked.

These observations suggest that effective teaching methods are context-dependent and constitute a complex interplay among educational philosophy, learning environments, teacher preparation, and institutional policies. Quality education is a coordinated, cooperative effort that not only focuses on the delivery process but also takes into consideration the structural conditions in which it happens. To ensure quality education, it is not possible for only one component of the particular organization to be the determining factor. The process of providing education is equally important as well. Physical infrastructure, including the school environment, suitable furniture for the class, and many other factors, plays an important role.

The Four C's: Reimagining Global Competence

Informant B, a social science researcher, stated that

“The Four C Framework stands for Collaboration, Creativity, Communication (online, internet), and Critical Analysis, and these are the four main components of quality education. The Four C Approach is undoubtedly the best way to create a perfect global citizen in the market. We are still facing challenges in transferring theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge. If that were not the case, the Nepal government would have

implemented the best curriculum at the school level. Hence, practice-oriented teaching is essential for ensuring quality education."

The informant's observation regarding the 'gap between theoretical and practical knowledge' highlights the persistent divide between the two in many educational systems, including Nepal, despite claims of a strong curriculum. Their emphasis on 'practice-based teaching' reflects a pedagogical approach that values real-world experience, experimentation, and hands-on learning as essential components of meaningful education. From an interpretative standpoint, the participant views education not merely as a vehicle for knowledge transmission but as a transformative process that develops learners into agile and reflective agents capable of navigating today's complex world. Quality education not only ensures that every student has an opportunity to enjoy the expression of their individuality and collective identity but also confirms each student's self-esteem and develops their ability to critically analyze the social, political, and environmental realities around them. And, it exposes each student to a broad variety of alternative cultural experiences in order to gain a sense of self which is accurate and non-oppressive (Hilliard, 1978).

Contextualizing Education in Societal Structures

One of the researchers asked a respondent how teaching learning activities and a favorable environment play an essential role in achieving quality education. Informant D from a non-governmental organization responded that

"We require education that is based on the societal structure. Previously, society was of a traditional type and was not technologically friendly. This is the way the education system was working and adjusting. But today's society has to be technically very strong, and this is the way the quality of education is gauged. If someone considers the link between quality education and physical strength, he/she can still do the work to which he/she belongs with only physical strength and without quality education. While, quality education is an extra resource to the people, and it not only extends the thinking area but also becomes one of the motivational factors to achieve the goal."

Effective teaching strategies can graduate students not only with academic knowledge but also with practical skills, critical thinking, and adaptability, which are very important for success in the labour market. According to UNESCO (2017), learner-centered pedagogies like collaborative learning, problem-solving, and experiential learning improve students' capacity to

grasp and apply concepts in the real world, which is a key feature of quality education. This informant understood that societal structures determine the delivery and reception of education. Their view is a phenomenological one that individuals are always historically, culturally, and technologically contextualized, which influences their access to and benefit from education.

Beyond Grades: Education as Social and Emotional Literacy

The Informant C from the Academia (government school) stated that

"It is commonly understood that better grading is indicative of quality education. However, the truth is that quality education can only be recognized when theoretical knowledge can be applied practically. This means that education should be social as well as practical. The good behavior of people is also a reflection of the education they have obtained. Quality education is also about understanding sympathy and empathy in life. If a person can understand others, and at the same time, make others understand his/her feelings, then that is quality education. A student gets quality education when he/she is able to ask questions and solve their problem on their own."

The emphasis on students being able to “ask questions and solve their problems on their own” indicates a student-centred, inquiry-based pedagogical philosophy. This aligns closely with UNESCO’s (2017) advocacy for learner-centred approaches that foster autonomy, agency, and adaptability. The informant highlights the role of emotional intelligence—such as empathy, compassion, and understanding others—in framing education as an ethical and moral endeavour. In this perspective, educational quality is assessed not only by academic or economic outcomes but also by the cultivation of socially conscious and compassionate individuals.

School Environment

The school environment is the main factor in determining quality education and influencing employment opportunities by shaping students’ learning experiences, developing essential skills, and fostering socio-emotional growth. According to OECD (2018) schools with qualified and motivated teachers who create engaging and effective learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning can perform better. Informant E (non-governmental officials) responded that

"Only when teachers are able to perceive the students' interests can quality education be realized, as the school plays a vital role in the skill and knowledge enhancement of the particular students. Normally, the grade obtained in the examination is the factor that elevates the level of study, but a grade is far from enough to compete in the free market. They should acquire the extra capacity to handle the situation, which they can get through extra activities. Therefore, different schools have different ways of delivering practical education depending on how they were taught beyond academic studies. Experience and education are two major components that make a student capable of various opportunities."

Public schools in Nepal are characterized by poor facilities and teacher absenteeism resulting in low student performance and hence, limited employability opportunities. On the other hand, community-managed schools have shown better performance due to local involvement (MOEST & UNESCO 2016). Informant F (one of the entrepreneurs) argued that

"Quality education is a major factor to an individual's professional growth, a source of economic improvement, a means of teaching good interpersonal relationship skills, a way of developing life skills, an aid for thinking and problem-solving skills, and a tool for new discovery. Besides, it also makes a person fit to succeed in the job market. Quality education was not only about memorizing facts but also about giving individuals the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for their personal and societal success. It became instrumental in poverty reduction, health promotion, equality enhancement, and the building of resilient communities, thus making it a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic prosperity."

The statement portrays quality education as having a profound and far-reaching impact on both individuals and society. It underscores that education goes beyond rote learning, representing a comprehensive process that equips learners with essential skills and knowledge to succeed across various aspects of life. In essence, it frames quality education as a transformative force that empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and drives progress at multiple levels. Moreover, it is a prerequisite for creating a better, more equitable, and prosperous world.

The Informant J and L from academia argued that the ability to convert learning into practice and the ability to critically analyze subject matter are main factors of quality education besides other factors such as quality in teaching, well-cultured, effectiveness, relevancy, and

many more. In addition, the point was also made that the key function of education was to produce knowledgeable and skilled citizens who could be competent global members and leverage the opportunities of globalization. However, the benchmark of a great score in the school leaving certificate as the main yardstick of quality education still exists in Nepali society, and practical and productive education is not a priority.

The Informant H (one of the government officials) also shared the view that quality might not be the same for all entities.

"It can be looked at from various angles. It could differ from one person to another, and it was determined by geography, places, and a lot of other factors and should be checked by the actual condition of the people living in the particular area. For instance, quality education in Humla and Jumla may not be similar to that of the capital city. Their main necessities for quality education may not even be the preferences of the people of Kathmandu."

The point made by the statement is that quality education cannot be conceived as a single model that fits all. The idea and the necessities of quality education depend on perspectives, individual requirements and are influenced by factors such as location and geography. What is considered quality education in one place might be different in another because people's situations, priorities, and challenges vary. Likewise, informant I (social researcher) states that a good institution is the outcome of the collaboration of the team. Academic institutions can be instrumental in the skill and knowledge development of the students. Quality education is not achievable if schools fail to recognize the students' interests. By facilitating their skills and knowledge in accordance with their interests, schools can offer quality education. At the very least, schools can play an important role in making them recognize their interests and abilities to achieve their goals. The reason is, students are sometimes unable to recognize their abilities beyond academic knowledge. Moreover, quality education is another element to raise their capacity in their interests. Their interest then, becomes directly linked to career opportunities.

Extra Curricular Activities

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are instrumental in improving not only the quality of education but also the future employment prospects of the students. Though most of the time they are considered as secondary to academics, ECAs have a great impact on the allround development of the students as they help them to acquire those skills which are necessary for both

academic and professional fields. NACE 2021 mentions that extracurricular activities (ECAs) support students in developing skills such as teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, and project management, which are highly valued in the job market. In this context, Informant K (one of the entrepreneurs) stated that "we aim to provide international-level quality education in Nepal to keep students from going abroad to study."

One of the ways to guarantee quality education is to create an educational culture where students take part in holistic, meaningful, and innovative learning experiences with the support of a caring and collaborative learning community. Quality education is made up of different aspects such as a learning environment free of pressure, learning through play and with the use of open spaces, having proper school facilities, being surrounded by nature, providing children with a variety of extra-curricular activities for their overall development, recognizing their interests and creating a conducive environment by the teachers to make them innovative, the commitments of faculty members towards the entire development of the students, which easily attract parents and students to join such academic institutions.

ECAs provide individuals with confidence and social capital, which, in turn, help them to gain access to employment opportunities through the further development of their interpersonal skills as well as professional connections. The Informant G from a non-governmental organization had different experiences, which are as follows:

"Habits turned into nature. Besides problem-solving skills, educational institutions should be able to provide lifelong skills in order to acquire quality education. This experiential knowledge played a major role in making their life a lifelong process. Life skill programs, positive thought-provoking activities, and activities making students more responsible for their daily life are some of the additional measures that should be included in quality education. Activity-based education was quite important to make students fit for all sections of their lives."

Quality education is supposed to help students build habits that will last them a lifetime, and it should equip them with practical skills, especially problem-solving skills, that will support them throughout life. Educational institutions must provide life skills programs and activities that promote positive thinking and responsibility among students. Activity-based learning is very important if the aim is to make students capable of handling all areas of their personal and professional lives.

The FGD experience of the informants reflects that quality education is the basis of social equity. It makes inclusive and equitable quality education and at the same time, it is an enabler of lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. It gives people the opportunity to develop all their qualities and skills and thus, to realise their potential as human beings. The indicators of quality education include a multitude of factors such as pedagogical improvement, the correct skill development, gender parity, well-equipped infrastructure, enough educational materials and resources, scholarships, and other essential elements. Since the indicators differ from one person to another, people also want to enhance school facilities, increase the number of training and vocational opportunities, and the number of trained teachers to create a safe school environment.

The researcher, during the whole study, noticed that most of the respondents were primarily focused on three key themes: teaching methods, school environment, and extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, some of them also talked about different facets of quality education, such as the fluency of the English language, cultural norms, holistic development, and public exposure.

Conclusion

The research embodied by an interpretive phenomenological perspective reveals that providing quality education should not be measured only in terms of academic achievement, as it is a complex, ever-changing, and very sensitive process dependent on the context. The results of this study convey that education with quality has to involve and energise both the teachers and the students by means of relevant, learner-centred pedagogies, thus achieving the development of critical thinking, skills of a practical nature, and the all-round growth of the individual being. It follows from these statements that education is expected not only to produce original thinkers but also to inject into society these thinkers' competencies, where their emotional intelligence, social adaptability, and preparation to face the challenges of the labour market and society of the post-industrial era are particularly highlighted. Innovative teaching methods that focus on applied learning, problem-solving, and experiential activities are the most important to quality education.

By means of these methodologies, the gap between academic theories and the practical world gets covered, thus learners are empowered to become critical thinkers, autonomous, reflective, and capable individuals. Furthermore, the research conveys an additional message that teachers and school syllabi cannot be regarded as the factors that are solely responsible for quality education, since it is a systemic phenomenon which is influenced by the support of institutions,

physical infrastructure, and the provision of a suitable environment for learning. The interrelation of those aspects forms the base where the two activities of effective teaching and learning are feasible.

The study further highlights the essential role of extracurricular programs and life skills curricula in fostering soft skills such as leadership, collaboration, empathy, and responsibility. These skills are crucial for nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of succeeding in both personal and professional domains. The findings indicate that, alongside cognitive development, social and emotional learning forms a key component of quality education, aligning with a broader vision that incorporates moral and cultural growth. The researchers also emphasize the importance of context-specific education, shaped by factors such as location, culture, and societal norms.

Quality education in remote or traditionally rooted areas may differ considerably from that in urban settings. Therefore, the study emphasizes the implementation of educational practices that are adaptable, contextually relevant, and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. This perspective challenges the notion of uniform standards and promotes equity through personalized approaches. Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of collaboration among educators, institutions, policymakers, and local communities in developing inclusive, supportive, and resource-rich educational environments. Quality education is a joint effort that requires, among other things, continuous professional development, adequate infrastructure, and a culture of innovation and care.

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