

# Broken or Just Bent? Rethinking Tribhuvan University's Examination System

**Ram Nath Neupane, PhD**

*ramnath.tmc@gmail.com*

<http://orcid.org/0009-0009-0708-6752>

Tribhuvan University

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## Abstract

*Teaching and examination are inseparable parts of learning. Examination should evaluate overall learning achievements of students. However, the examination system at Tribhuvan university has been often criticized for not clearly assessing learning achievements of students. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the perspectives of teachers, students, parents, and administrators regarding the current examination system at Tribhuvan University. Data were purposively collected from the stakeholders to get the intended information using questionnaire. The findings reveal that teachers at Tribhuvan University recognized the standardized nature of exams, however, they received limited training in innovative assessment practices. Teachers employ alternative assessment approaches, such as oral presentations, writing projects, and peer assessment in the internal assessment of semester-based programs. Many students recognize that examinations are stressful, because they focus on memorization, and rote learning which can limit the opportunities for critical thinking, skill application, or holistic learning. Challenges, such as academic dishonesty, irregularities, and unfairness in the exams, limit the implementation. Parents emphasize student-centred and continuous assessment practices. Administrators focus on the academic and administrative honesty while conducting examinations despite facing the problems such as limited infrastructure, and digitization that can hinder well assessment delivery. The study suggests to employ alternative and continuous evaluation approaches, improve teacher capacity in assessment and promote fairness and transparency in the examination system.*

**Keywords:** summative assessment, rote learning, equity and fairness, academic stress and well-being

## Introduction

Examinations are a cornerstone of academic evaluation in higher education. They function as formal mechanisms to measure student learning, assess academic progress, and certify qualifications. They are found in various forms, such as written tests, oral assessments, practical demonstrations, and online evaluations, depending on subject matter and institutional context (Brown, 2004). Examinations provide feedback for both learners and educators, highlighting the

areas for improvement, and promoting discipline, responsibility, and time management. They also serve as standardized benchmarks for certification, progression, and career opportunities, reinforcing their status as high-stakes events with significant implications for students' futures (Putwain & Symes, 2012). Examinations are inherent part of learning as they enhance students' learning achievement.

Tribhuvan University (TU) is the oldest and largest university in Nepali higher education. It plays a significant role in framing national academic landscape. TU follows a predominantly centralized and summative examination system, which traditionally focuses on end-of-term written examinations as the primary mode of assessment (Tribhuvan University, 2022). In most annual programs, written exams account for 70–100% of the final grade, while semester-based programs generally follow a 40:60 ratio, assigning 40% to internal assessments and 60% to external examinations (UGC Nepal, 2019). This mixed system aims to provide a holistic assessment of student learning and encourage continuous engagement (Khanal & Timilsena, 2025). However, scholars question about the reliability and transparency of internal assessments, which have inconsistency and limited effectiveness in fostering meaningful learning (Shrestha & Bhattarai, 2020). Master and M.Phil of many faculties have transitioned to semester-based structure, while many bachelor degree programs still rely on annual examinations, leading to inconsistencies in grading and evaluation.

The Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE) is the main body responsible for designing, administering, and managing the examination system for annual programs; however, the respective dean offices conduct their examinations under semester programs. The key responsibilities of the exam-controlling bodies include preparing question papers, overseeing exam administration, appointing qualified examiners, ensuring impartial evaluation, and publishing results in a timely manner (TU Today, 2082). TU faces several challenges, including political interference, delays in result publication, poor security protocols, and a heavy dependence on manual processes while maintaining fairness, transparency, and academic integrity (Adhikary, 2024). There are several problems, such as lack of skilled human resources, traditional mind sets of stakeholders and poor administrations which hinder the trustworthiness of university's examination. It is often criticized that TU examination system promotes rote memorization rather than fostering critical thinking, creativity, and higher-order skills. Such traditional practices may hinder collaborative learning, problem-solving, and practical competence in the fields of teacher education and language learning (Adhikari, 2021; Khanal & Shrestha, 2020). As a result, calls for reform have emphasized the integration of alternative assessment approaches, including project work, portfolios, peer and self-assessment, and continuous classroom-based evaluation (Bhattarai & Ojha, 2022).

Since the classroom teaching and assessments go side by side, examination is considered a significant aspect of educational process. Examination is a pivotal aspect of education process which serves various roles, such as motivation, certification and bench-marking. However, the current examination system at Tribhuvan University is not satisfactory because it is claimed that it promotes rote learning over creativity and critical thinking. It also neglects alternative assessment

approaches, such as portfolios, oral presentation, and writing projects. Previous studies do not explore the actual problems and their solutions about current examinations system at TU. In this reference, the present study aims to investigate the perspectives of teachers, students, parents and administrators regarding present examination system at Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

## Literature Review

Examination is a pivotal aspect of formal education. It can function various roles, such as motivation, certification, and reference. Examinations enhance memory recall and knowledge retention through test-enhanced learning (Butler & Roediger, 2007). Especially in knowledge-disciplines, repeated retrieval during exams promotes long-term retention (Rawson et al., 2013). Examinations encourage study habits, motivating students to use the strategies such as self-testing and structured review (Hartwig & Dunlosky, 2012). Examinations provide standardized reference point for progress, certification, and comparison among institutions, and build up confidence in stakeholders regarding academic outcomes (Brown, 2004). In some professional fields like medicine, examinations are considered as authentic assessments that motivate real-world pressures requiring rapid recall and decision-making (Durning et al., 2016). The structured nature of exams ensures uniform assessment experiences, which enhances perceived fairness and reliability (Caines et al., 2014). Furthermore, final examinations tend to reduce certain forms of academic misconduct. The provision of supervision, fair invigilation, and checking loose sheets can reduce opportunities for cheating (Crossley, 2022).

The semester system supports examinations by promoting continuous assessment methods through regular feedback and course corrections. Short academic exams also make greater curricular flexibility and correlation with international higher education practices, with the aim of increasing global recognition of degrees. Furthermore, alternative assessment approaches, such as portfolios, projects, and self-assessments enhance inclusivity and increase diverse learning styles (Taras, 2005), while performance tasks promote real-world problem-solving and practical application of knowledge (Lopez et al., 2020).

## Challenges in Examination Practices

Traditional examinations are often criticized for not promoting deep learning, increasing motivation, and ensuring transparency. The Nepalese examination system adopts “one-size-fits-all” model, irrespective of students’ diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Yadav et al., 2024). Question papers are usually set in English, as a result students in EFL context perform poorly in the examinations. Their poor English can cause low performance, grade repetition, and student dropout. Many examinations tend to focus on rote memorization rather than deep understanding and practical application so that students gain short-lived knowledge. Similarly, high stakes examinations can restrict students’ intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, which can promote superficial, grade-oriented learning rather than authentic comprehension (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This leads teachers to limit the focus of the curriculum and test preparation, developing superficial learning habits (Marchant & Paulson, 2005).

Traditional exams emphasize lower-order cognitive skills such as recall and recognition, neglecting higher-order thinking. Birenbaum (2003) reported that exams reward memorization rather than critical understanding, and Gikandi et al. (2011) noted that students understand examinations as focusing memorization over analytical or creative skills. Biggs (2003) also stated that exam-oriented environments encourage surface approaches to learning, with weaker outcomes than deep learning strategies.

Reliability and validity are prominent parts of examinations. Traditional examinations are not considered as formal validation and portrays only limited ability to predict long-term career success (Sternberg, 1997). Reliability is affected by differences in students' circumstances, examiner bias, and inconsistencies in grading (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019). The psychological aspects, such as stress and anxiety associated with exams may result in lowered self-esteem or, in extreme cases, suicidal idea (Fawaz & Lee, 2022). Furthermore, academic dishonesty persists despite monitoring efforts, with cheating, impersonation, and collusion (Bretag et al., 2019a), a biggest challenge in online assessment environments.

Equity concerns weaken exam fairness. High-pressure limit students from different socio-economic, cultural, and disability backgrounds (Tai, 2022). For example, women less perform in high-stakes exams despite working hard in coursework (Ballen et al., 2017; Salehi et al., 2019), while international and disabled students face many challenges under Western-centric assessment models (Preston & Claypool, 2021). Moving to semester-based assessments from early based examinations pose extra challenges, such as logistic artefact, need of faculty training, and limit of resource that hinder effective implementation.

### **Current Landscape and Research Gaps**

While traditional examinations provide standardized bench-marking and motivational benefits, they may not enhance higher-order thinking or authentic competencies (Fry, 2004; Gikandi et al., 2011). Stakeholders also agree that assessment systems should shift from an over reliance on rote-based exams to integrative frameworks, focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and practical application.

Research shed-lights several reform strategies, including rethinking examinations to feature open-ended, case-based, or problem-solving tasks (Birenbaum, 2003); leading them with alternative assessments such as portfolios, projects, reflective journals, and performance-based tasks (Lopez et al., 2020); widening assessment activities across the semester system with continuous assessment feedback; and employing technology to promote adaptive testing and continuous evaluation. These approaches stress that examinations should serve as instruments for enhancing students' learning processes rather than simply evaluating final outcomes (Khaniya, 2005).

This demonstrates that very few studies have been carried out regarding the examinations of Tribhuvan University. They have also studied the practical implementation of assessment models, determine how teacher development, curriculum alignment, and student assistance can

increase their effectiveness. Moreover, they highlighted the influence of socio-cultural aspects, students' inclusiveness and psychological well-being on examination performance. Bridging these gaps is important for evidence-based reform so that examinations can promote meaningful learning rather than than surface-level performance.

## Methodology

This study investigated the stakeholders' opinions on the current examination system at Tribhuvan University. A descriptive survey was the primary research design for this study to examine participants' attitudes, experiences, and behaviors in a natural context, focusing on trends, patterns, and conditions (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2013). To ensure the diversity of opinions, the participants were purposively selected from the constituent and affiliated TU campuses of Gandaki and Lumbini provinces and the Office of Controller of Examinations (OCE), Kathmandu. There was a separate a set of questionnaires for each stakeholder, comprising both closed- and open-ended items, and allowing them to provide structured and in-depth information (Dörnyei, 2007). For close-ended information, the questionnaires included "Yes/No items" and "Likert scale," while for in-depth information, they included essay-type questions. The participants were selected based on the ease of access, level of expertise, and time provided. The parents and administrators were provided fewer questions, keeping in the mind that they could have a little time. While collecting data, the researcher visited the selected campuses, explored the purposes of the study, and separately distributed 40 sets of questionnaires to the stakeholders of examinations. However, only 30 students, 20 teachers, 10 parents, and 10 administrators returned them in time. So, the main reason for selecting such uneven number of stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers) was due to not returning the questionnaires from the participants in time. After data collection, they were organized under thematic categories and analyzed using qualitative techniques; however, some quantitative tools, such as numbers and percentages in a table, have also been used for participants' perspectives. Ethical standards have been rigorously followed to maintain academic integrity. To assure participants' confidentiality and anonymity, all identifying information from the text have been removed, and identification codes have been given. These codes included the Teacher (T), Student (S), Parent (P), and Administrator (A) codes, which are used in the results section to identify the source of quotations. The findings were then compared and contrasted with existing literature to identify patterns, similarities, and differences.

## Results

This section is organized on the basis of the key themes outlined in the questionnaire. The closed-ended responses have been analyzed using frequency, percentages, and tables, whereas the open-ended responses have been analyzed, creating appropriate themes.

### Teachers' Perspectives of the Examination System

To determine the views of teachers on current examination system of TU, a set of closed- and open-ended questionnaires were administered, and the responses of closed-ended items have been presented in Tables 1 and 2 and the open-ended items have been thematically analyzed.

**Table 1:***Teachers' Perspectives of Standardization, Training, and Assessment Practices*

S.N	Items	Yes %	No %
1	I am satisfied with the standardization of TU exams.	50	50
2	I have received adequate training on innovative assessment practices.	5	95
3	I frequently use alternative assessment in my teaching.	75	25

Table 1 shows teachers' perceptions of the examination systems at Tribhuvan University. Half of the teachers (50%) expressed their satisfaction with the standard of examinations, while the other half did not. Huge number of teachers (95%) reported that they had not received sufficient training on alternative or innovative assessment practices, showing a significant gap in professional development. However, despite this lack of training, 75% of teachers reported that they frequently use alternative assessment methods in their teaching, whereas 25% do not. It reveals that majority of teachers were using alternative assessment tools although they did not receive any formal training on examination practices.

**Table 2:***Evaluating Fairness and Alignment of Examinations*

Statements	SA%	A%	N%	DA%	SD%
1. The current examination system fairly assesses student learning.	-	50	25	20	5
2. Final exams accurately reflect the course learning outcomes.	-	50	20	20	10
3. The current exam-based assessment system at Tribhuvan University is fair and transparent.	5	40	25	25	5
4. The current exam of T.U. emphasizes more on validity rather than reliability.	10	60	10	15	5

Table 2 reveals the teachers' perspectives of fairness and alignment of examination system at Tribhuvan University. Half of the teachers (50%) agreed that the system fairly assesses student learning, while (25%) remain neutral, and 20% disagree, 5% strongly disagree. Similarly, 50% agreed that final exams reflect course learning outcomes, while others were divided between neutrality (20%) and disagreement (30%). Regarding fairness and transparency, teachers' opinions were more divided: 45% agreed or strongly agreed, but another 30% disagreed, and 25% neutral. Similarly, many teachers (70%) felt that TU exams prioritize validity over reliability, though a minority (20%) disagreed and 10% remained neutral. This shows that majority of teachers find the validity and reliability of the present examinations while half of the teachers believe that the current examination system fairly assess the classroom learning.

**Strengths and weaknesses of the Evaluation System.** The existing evaluation system at Tribhuvan University has many strengths and weaknesses. One of the strongest points is that it incorporates all students and syllabus within a limited time and setting. This system aims to ensure uniformity and consistency in assessment. It also follows a standardized examination process, maintaining fairness and credibility across diverse academic programs as T12 state,

*It has the provision of both internal and external assessments, it aims to balance formative evaluation with summative one. It also offers a more comprehensive measure of student performance.*

Managing examinations for all students at the same time and maintaining a one door system develops transparency and reduces discrepancies. There is a provision of not assigning home centers that reduces the risk of bias, favoritism, academic dishonesty. The evaluation process is cost-effective, making it practical for a large institution like Tribhuvan University to manage efficiently. On the other hand, the evaluation system has many weaknesses that limit its effectiveness as T5 opines:

*The existing examination system of TU cannot fully measure students' overall knowledge and skills, because it primarily highlights on recalling of information rather than application of concepts in practical field.*

The current examination system is largely dependent on rote learning and theoretical knowledge, limiting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Many teachers like T5 criticize that TU examinations are not conducted in time and results are published late, which affects students' academic progress. This system neglects formative or alternative assessment tools, focusing on traditional paper pencil tests. Many human errors in registration, results and certification are found due to lack of skilled or technology-friendly human resources. Due to the lack of transparency in evaluation, there is a question of fairness and reliability. Similarly, students cannot identify their strengths and weaknesses for improvement as there is no immediate feedback system. Question standards also vary from annual to semester system, which affects the validity of assessment outcomes.

**Standards for an Ideal Examination.** Examinations and result publication at TU should be held on time in accordance with the academic calendar, reducing unnecessary delays and ensuring smooth academic progress. The Office of the Controller of Examinations and Dean offices should increase supervision to ensure fairness, and transparency. Similarly, it is essential to uphold the norms and values of examinations to strengthen credibility. Unethical activities like cheating and copying should be strictly discouraged in the exam halls as T7 suggested:

*Illegal and malpractice activities such as cheating, copying and pasting must be strictly prohibited. There should be regular monitoring from the authority. Similarly, there should be uniformity among the centers while conducting examinations.*

The evaluation system should promote students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The use of ICT in examination can enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Similarly, the use of alternative assessment methods such as project work, presentations, portfolios, and continuous assessment provide a more comprehensive measure of learning. Fairness and reliability of examinations is determined by standard evaluation practices. Internal and external examinations should be better integrated, and assessment should place greater focus on practical aspects of learning alongside theory. Tribhuvan University can develop a more reliable, fair, and student-centred evaluation framework aligning with global academic standard.

## **Students' Perspectives of TU Exams**

To understand the views of students about TU examination, a set of closed-ended and open-ended items were asked, and the responses of closed ended items have been presented in Table 3 and open-ended questions have been thematically analyzed.

**Table 3:***Students' Perspectives of Stress, Fairness, and Learning*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA %</b>	<b>A %</b>	<b>N%</b>	<b>DA%</b>	<b>SD%</b>
1. I find the present examination system stressful.	26.6	13.3	50	10	
2. I feel our exam system test more on memorization than understanding or application.	13.3	63.3	13.3	10	
3. The present evaluation system helps me develop practical skills.	3.3	36.6	40	20	
4. Exams conducted at the university are fair and unbiased.	6.6	40	50	3.3	
5. We should not involve in unfair practices like cheating.	53.3	20	20	6.6	

Table 3 reveals students' opinions on the current examination system at Tribhuvan University. About one-fourth (26.6%) students strongly agreed and 13.3% agreed that the current examination system is stressful, while half (50%) remained neutral and 10% disagreed. A large number of respondents (76.6%) believed that the current examination system emphasize memorization over understanding and application. About practical skill development, students expressed doubtful opinions: only 40% agreed, while 40% were neutral and 20% disagreed, indicating little effectiveness in fostering real-world skills. Similarly, regarding unfair practices, less than half (46.6%) agreed or strongly agreed, while half remained neutral. Lastly, on academic integrity, more than two-third majority (73.3%) strongly opposed unfair practices like cheating, while 20% were neutral and 6.6% disagreed. It is found that TU examination system focuses on memorization rather than application of skills. Many students do not also accept the unethical activities in the exam halls.

**Strategies Employed for Exam Preparation.** Students tend to prepare for their exams by making notes, revising all the chapters, and solving old questions to reinforce their understanding of concepts and theories. They also make a study schedule for each subject and prepare subject-wise notes, supporting final examinations. Students provide more time for difficult and lengthy subjects and lesser time for easier ones. Many students report that they engage in active learning and self-assessment to evaluate themselves as claimed by S3:

*I usually prepare for my examination, collecting necessary materials, taking notes, revising all the chapters, solving old questions, consulting peers and teachers and focusing on concepts and theories.*

Additionally, students also join study groups to discuss challenging topics with peers, which helps them clarify doubts and share ideas. Students also depend on resources such as books, dictionaries, online platforms like Google, and digital tools like Chat GPT. The successful integration of these resources enable them to prepare the exam more effectively.

**Most Stressful-aspects of TU Exams.** One of the most stressful aspects of examinations at Tribhuvan University is the problem of not completing all the questions within a limited time. They need to remember and write a large volume of information within a short period. Students complain that the present nature of syllabus is very vast and lengthy that adds further pressure,

since exams tend to focus on memorization and reproduction of knowledge rather than its application. Moreover, frequent change of exam schedule can cause problems to many students as T3 reported:

*There are many sources of students' stress during examinations. The most stressful aspect is irregular schedule of exam. Sometimes, TU conducts exam without completing courses and sometimes after a long time of course completion. Many times exam schedule tend to postpone without very serious cause.*

Such types of irregularity in the exam schedule promotes anxiety and uncertainty. In TU, invigilators of exams are not provided any training. So, they behave differently in the exam halls. In many exam halls, only single invigilator is appointed who is unable to invigilate the exams of a large classroom which causes the disturbances and noise during the exam. Besides, students also face the heavy burden of parental and societal expectations, as well as the fear of failure and pressure to get high marks, which together make the examination period particularly stressful.

**Reflections of Classroom Learning in Exams.** Regular class attendance plays a pivotal role in exam preparation as TU examinations are largely based on recalling of information what students have learned in the classroom. So, writing in exam is clearly aligned with classroom study as reported by S4.

*In most cases, there is a strong connection between classroom study and exam writing as teachers' notes and ideas are the inputs for exams. Question patterns are practiced as the models of examination. Furthermore, specific curriculum, textbooks and practice books are also practiced as supporting documents for the exams.*

This shows that students who take classes regularly perform better in examinations than those who do not. However, students feel difficulty when questions are asked beyond the syllabus. Furthermore, the limited time provided for the students in exams makes it difficult to perform better in the exam. So, regular classroom engagement in learning supports students in exam writing.

**Academic Dishonesty in Examinations.** Unfair practices during examinations remain a major concern for students at Tribhuvan University as T3 reported.

*In my observation, some students engage in unethical activities during exams. They try to copy and paste from various sources which creates frustration among genuine students who solely rely on their own strengths. In some cases, invigilators behave differently; they become soft for the students of their own campus and strict for the students of other campuses. Some invigilators also collect answer sheets before the official end of the exam for their easiness.*

Some students want to use unauthorized materials such as smart watch, cell phones, and other hidden notes, which can cause a problem during examination. Many students have reported that those who copy from those materials get better marks than those write in their own. So, cheating and pasting not only discourages fairness but also the credibility of the examination system.

## Parents' Perspectives of TU Exams

To examine the views of parents about TU examination, a set of closed-and open-ended items were asked, and the responses of close-ended items have been presented in Tables 4 and 5, and responses of open-ended items have been analyzed thematically.

**Table 4:**

*Parental Perspectives of Exam Stress and Assessment Practices*

S.N.	Items	Yes %	No %
1	I am concerned about the stress exams place on students.	60	40
2	I am aware of how my child is assessed at the university.	70	30
3	I support the use of alternative assessment methods.	50	50

Table 4 reveals parents' opinions on university assessment practices. A majority of parents (60%) are concerned about the stress that exams place on students. More than two-third (70%) parents are aware of how their child is assessed at the university, while few (30%) parents are not. Regarding the use of alternative assessment methods, half (50%) parents use, while other half do not use them.

**Table 5:**

*Parents' Attitudes Toward Fairness, Transparency, and Skill Development in Exams*

Statements	SA %	A%	N%	DA%	SD%
1. I believe the current exams reflect my child's true academic abilities.	10	50	30	10	-
2. The university's exam system is transparent and reliable.	-	40	50	10	-
3. The current university level exam fairly tests my child's knowledge and skills.	20	50	30	-	-
4. The current examination system can assess the 21 <sup>st</sup> century's skills of my child.	20	60	20	-	-

Table 5 shows parents' opinions on the current examination system of TU. Regarding whether the current examinations reflect their child's true academic abilities, majority of parents (60%) agree or strongly agree, while minority 30% remain neutral, indicating some uncertainty. About transparency and reliability of the university's exam system, half of the parents (50%) remain neutral, while 40% agree, showing a moderate confidence in the system. When asked whether exams fairly test their child's knowledge and skills, majority of parents (70%) agree or strongly agree, demonstrating general satisfaction with fairness. Finally, 80% of parents agree or strongly agree that the current system can assess 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills.

**University Exams and Student Well-being.** University's examinations are significant facets of child's well-being and academic progress as P5 reported:

*Many parents give over pressure during examination, which cause to stress, anxiety and lack of confidence in their children. Examinations occasionally affect student sleep patterns, physical health, and overall happiness.*

Parents express their anxiety that the current examination system focus mainly on memorization, limiting creativity and practical learning. It can hamper their child's true academic growth. They also recognize the positive side of examinations when they are conducted fairly and meaningfully. They claim that exams can keep them discipline, provide time management skills, and stimulate students to study regularly, supporting long-term academic progress. They also believe that the impact of university exams ultimately depends on whether the system supports their child's overall development or adds unnecessary psychological burden.

**Parental Role in Evaluation.** Parents can play an important role in improving evaluation system at TU, working as supportive partners in the teaching-learning process. First, they can provide constructive feedback to institutions about how examinations and evaluation methods affect their children's well-being and learning outcomes, ensuring that students' voices are amplified. Second, parents can advocate for fair, transparent, and student-friendly assessment policies that move beyond rote memorization and emphasize creativity, critical thinking, and practical application. Third, parents can help bridge the gap between home and university, providing insights into their child's needs, strengths, and challenges. In addition, they can encourage healthy study habits, stress management, and balanced routines at home, influencing the effectiveness of assessment.

Parents want to identify about their child's academic assessment through several formal and informal channels as reported by P2.

*I learn my child's academic progress through internal and external results, report cards or progress reports that provide grades or marks as indicator of performance. Moreover, I learn about my child's academic progress by talking with them about their exams, assignments, or classroom experiences.*

Sometimes we find their academic progress through teacher-parent meeting organized by campus. Parents also observe their child's study habits, stress levels, and confidence, which indirectly reflect how assessments impact learning and well-being. In some cases, digital platforms provide parents access to regular updates on assignments, attendance, and performance.

### Administrators' Perspectives of TU Exams

To determine the opinions of administrators about TU examination, a set of closed-and open-ended items were asked, and the responses of close-ended items have been presented in Table 6 and 7, and responses of open-ended items have been analyzed thematically.

**Table 6:**

*Administrators' Perspectives of Academic Integrity, Reform, and Digital Readiness*

S.N.	Items	Yes %	No %
1	There is a mechanism to address issues related to academic dishonesty.	60	40
2	There is adequate institutional support for reforming the examination system.	70	30
3	Technological resources are available for digital exams.	60	40

Table 6 reveals administrators' opinions on the current examination system at Tribhuvan University. 60 % administrators reported that there is a mechanism to address issues related to academic dishonesty, while 40% reported otherwise. Likewise, regarding the adequate institutional support for reforming the examination system, 70% of administrators reported 'Yes' whereas 30% did not share this view. 60% of administrators indicated that technological resources for conducting digital examinations are available, while 40% disagreed, highlighting a gap in digital infrastructure.

**Table 7:**

*Administrators' Views on Efficiency and Technological Support in Exams*

Statements	SA %	A %	N%	DA %	SD %
1. Managing the current examination system is efficient and effective.	10	60	20	10	-
2. The examination system aligns with the university's academic goals.	-	40	40	20	-
3. Technological resources are adequately available for digital exams.	20	40	20	-	-

Table 7 shows administrators' responses on the efficiency and technological support in the current examination system. On managing effective and efficient examination system, the majority of administrators (70%) agreed, while 20% remained neutral, and 10% disagreed. Similarly, 40% administrators agreed and another 40% remained neutral on whether the examination system aligns with the university's academic goals, indicating mixed opinions. On the availability of technological resources for digital exams, 60% agreed, while 20% remained neutral, suggesting that many administrators recognized technological readiness.

**Role of Administrators in the Exams.** To conduct fair, transparent, and smooth examination at TU, university should engage in meticulous planning and execution. Administrators at TU has many roles as reported by A2:

*There are various roles of administrators at Tribhuvan University. The most important role is to maintain academic standards in preparing question papers, scheduling exams as per academic calendar, assigning exam centers, appointing superintendents, and observers, conducting examinations, appointing examiners, collecting answer sheets and making results.*

Administrators also emphasize the value of standardizing evaluation procedures, monitoring grading practices, and publishing error-free results on time to uphold institutional credibility. They also focus on preventing malpractice through strict regulations and surveillance, coordinating closely with faculty, exam staff, and external examiners. They also perceive technology as a key tool for improving efficiency, reducing errors, and managing large volumes of data.

However, managing examinations and publishing results of the thousands of students simultaneously is very challenging job. They also face many challenges, such as political pressure,

student movement, delay examination and results, errors in question papers, transcripts and other important documents. Sometimes, they face various unexpected challenges, such as student cheating, and violence. Lack of competent human resource is another important administrative problem of TU. Majority of administrators are not technology friendly, as a result many technical errors are frequently occurred in the important documents of students.

## Discussion

The present study focuses on a complex landscape of existing examination system at Tribhuvan University, focusing both strengths and weaknesses as reported by teachers, students, parents and administrators. Teachers expressed dubious satisfaction with exam standardization, with half indicating satisfaction and half dissatisfaction, indicating a mixed confidence in the current system's ability to fairly and accurately assess learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Although a large majority of teachers reported that there is insufficient training in innovative practices, more than two-third (75%) majority used alternative assessment methods, indicating a creative engagement with pedagogical innovation despite structural and institutional constraints (Bhattarai & Ojha, 2022). These findings focuses on the tension between traditional (i.e. Summative) practices and modern (i.e. formative) evaluation.

Students at TU perceive examination as highly stressful matter, largely driven by time constraints, lengthy syllabus, and memorization based learning, limiting higher-order thinking or application-oriented learning (Birenbaum, 2003; Gikandi et al., 2011). Teachers also reported that regular classroom engagement supports better performance in the exam, while students explored that assessments do not reflect conceptual understanding or practical competence, focusing a gap classroom teaching and evaluation practices. The limited provision of feedback mechanisms further restrict opportunities for reflective learning, skill development, and academic self-regulation (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Academic misconduct such as cheating and early collection of answer sheets affect the fairness, reliability, and credibility of exam (McCabe, 2005; Bretag et al., 2019).

Parents validated these observations, recognizing both benefits and drawbacks of TU examination system. Examinations can reflect student capacity and support assessment of 21st-century competencies. However, they raised the concern about the stress imposed by high-stakes, memorization-heavy assessments (Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2014). Although parents focused on the value of engaging with teachers, fostering balanced study routines, and advocating for assessment practices that cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and real-world skills (Lopez et al., 2020), teachers highly practiced traditional high-stake examinations.

These findings focuses on the benefits of examinations in increasing memory retention, promoting study habits, and providing standard benchmarks for progress and certification (Rawson & Dunlosky, 2013). However, traditional examinations enhances superficial learning strategies, rigid curricula, and increased stress, neglecting critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative competencies (Fry, 2004). Equity disparities such as socio-economic, gendered, and disability further limit the fairness and inclusivity of high-stakes assessment (Ballen et al., 2017;

Tai et al., 2022). Alternative assessments, such as portfolios, projects, performance tasks, and continuous evaluation, are acknowledged for developing engagement, employing diversified learning styles, and enhancing authentic, real-world skill development.

## Conclusion

The present study examined the opinions of teachers, students, parents, and administrators regarding the examination system of Tribhuvan University, collecting data from TU constituent and affiliated campuses in the Gandaki and Lumbini provinces of Nepal. The findings reveal that teachers at Tribhuvan University recognize the existing examination system as standard, however, they have limited training in innovative assessment practices. Many teachers employ alternative assessment approaches moving beyond traditional evaluation practices. Teachers express their dissatisfaction with the practicality, transparency, and credibility of traditional examinations. Students believe that the existing examination system does not fully capture the multiple domains of student learning. They perceive examinations as stressful matter because such types of examinations focus on rote learning rather than enhancing critical thinking and skill development. Students express their dissatisfaction with the frequent change of exam schedule, unfairness and academic dishonesty in exam halls. Parents convince with the fairness and reliability of the TU examination system. They suggest adopting alternative assessment methods which can implement holistic learner centred assessment practices. Likewise, administrators report that their primary role is to maintain academic standards, and ensure fair and smooth exam operation despite facing many logistical, resource-based and procedural challenges in the various stages of examinations.

This study implies that effective training is essential for teachers, integrating innovative alternative assessment methods and practices, developing creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills. Care should be taken by the authority and institutions in promoting fairness and transparency in the examination. Stress reduction strategies and holistic assessment approaches should be prioritized in academic institutions. Enhancing digital infrastructure and institutional support is essential to improve efficiency, credibility and alignment with global academic standards.

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