UNDERSTANDING OF SOFT SKILLS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYABILITY FOR UNDERGRADUATE YOUTH

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for the candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate my work to my late mother Meena Thapa and all the supporters and especially my family who helped me to achieve this milestone.

AN ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of *Ram Keshar Thapa* for the degree of *Master in Sustainable Development* was presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on 2 August, 2022.

Title: *Understanding of Soft Skills and Its Contribution to Employability for Undergraduate Youth*

Abstract Approved: _____

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Soft Skills are the basic traits of humans that help to develop the ways of human interaction and the way we work. Soft skills among youths are not able to develop by education system even our schools and colleges. Schools and colleges focus on hard skills (subjective matter) rather than soft skills. As a result, undergraduates failed to get job offers in the job market. This situation has created a gap between job seekers and job providers. Connecting it, the major goal of my research is to uncover the experience of the undergraduate youths on various ways of learning soft skills. Further, I studied how they relate its contribution to employability. I employed social constructivist theory to learn about the ways of learning soft skills and human capital theory to learn about the contribution of soft skill to develop employability.

To find the ways of learning soft skills and its contribution to employability for the undergraduate youth, I have designed research questions so, that I could explore their experience regarding the ways of learning soft skills and

its contribution to employability. In this research, I have used interpretative research paradigm and narrative inquiry as a research design. For achieving these purposes, I have collected the experiences and stories of five participants who are the undergraduate science students from Tri-Chandra College. I employed in-depth interview to find the experiences of my participants. It was done virtually through zoom, Google meet and phone calls. The interview was recorded, and virtual interview notes were taken. Interesting elements in the interview process was observed and noted. The information was then read and re-read to find out common patterns across the data set. Different themes were generated, and the themes were narrated in the chapters.

From the narration of my participants, I found that youth knows about the basics of soft skills. They know the basic soft skills which are communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. They explained multiple ways of learning of soft skills which included structured and unstructured ways of learning. They stated that there is no specific place to learn soft skills. They stated that individual, family, community and school are the places to learn soft skills. They explained that the soft skills can be developed through trainings, internships and workshops. They also explained the importance of extracurricular activities to boost soft skills. Further, role models, mentors and seniors can also transfer the soft skills to their students. Schools and colleges, help to develop soft skills to their students through project based learning, oral presentations, discussions, reflections etc. Nowadays, the digital literacy has added to uplift soft skills. Using internet and technology like laptops, mobile has created an easy access to vast source of knowledge. From such knowledge, youths are being able to learn soft skills.

The participants were able to connect the soft skills to the job they aspire for. So, they see a close and clear relation of soft skill to the employment. The participants were able to explain basic soft skills life communication, team work, creativity etc. so that they can recommend the people to the job. They are aware that the soft skills enhance the job opportunities and that can create value in the life. They were also able to locate digital skills as a new soft skill necessary for the job market.

Undergraduate youth know the basic soft skill and has general understanding on how it can be learnt and developed. Most of the youths described the general soft skills. However, the nature of soft skills is changing day by day and specific job role demands special kind of soft skills. Therefore, the understanding of soft skills, its importance and its application has to be dealt with much seriousness. It has to be an integral part of curriculum beyond the core curriculum. The findings of this research will be useful for the school's administration, college administration; local as well as federal government, curriculum development center and others related stakeholders who directly or indirectly work in skills with youths.

_____ 2 August, 2022

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Ram Keshar Thapa, Degree candidate

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID	Corona virus Disease
ECA	Extra-Curricular Activity
HC	Human Capital
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
KCTCS	Kentucky Community and Technical College System
NEA	National Education Assessment
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJT	On Job Training
P21	Partnership for 21st Century
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PjBL	Project Based Learning
PSC	Public Service Commission
SCANS	Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My Experience towards Soft Skills and Employability

This Chapter establishes the core reason of doing research on soft skill and employability for undergraduate youth (Kiriling & Varis, 2021). As a student of Sustainable Development (SD), and keeping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) goal number four in the center (i.e. quality education) and goal number eight (i.e. decent work and economic growth) (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2015), I wanted to explore the understanding of soft skills for undergraduate youth. I also understand that to have a good education and a decent work can only be achieved with development of soft skills among the youths.

Mostly the published literature focused the essence and the importance of hard skills (Losekoot et al., 2018) like accounting, computing, programming, coding, fabricating etc. Even in my own personal experience many of my friends including me focused on development of hard skills rather than soft skill when we were in college. Working professionally for the last five years in recruitment team of Teach for Nepal, I have interacted with a lot of youths who have good grades but they struggled with specific soft skills like communication, creativity, collaboration etc.

When I just graduated from my college I felt I had everything to compete in the job market. I passed my core engineering with flying scores. When I applied for many of the jobs I faced a similar question on how I could develop the organization using both my soft skills and hard skills. That was the day I realized the importance of soft skill to have a proper transition from academia to the

industry. Luckily, My College equipped me with a lot of soft skill through the soft skill sessions. The job I am holding today is due to the integration of soft skill along with hard skill. My interest is to develop some knowledge on various ways of learning soft skills and find out its interconnectedness with employability (2022). I focus on how the youths understand about learning the soft skills (Templeman, 2020). Keeping in the mind, I know that the soft skills can be achieved through informal ways and through formal education and through vocational ways. In my research, I am open to learn all the perspectives of ways of learning of soft skills.

Furthermore, I also give importance to the perspectives of youths on interconnectedness of soft skill to the employability. It also helps me to understand the real mindset of youths upon the soft skills. In our context, many students prepare hard on their academics and achieve good grades in the school and universities but failed to receive job offers from different companies and these companies not only focus on hard skills but majorly the soft skills. So, there is always a big gap between the job seekers and the job providers. In this regard, I problematized that there is a misconception of being academically qualified to get a job. I reframed the research question, set purpose and outlined the chapter of the thesis.

Background of the Study

The gap between the academia and industry can be seen through human capital (Becker, 1964). It explains that education and skill level directly influences individual's income. Education is a tool that helps to develop the human's power to change the behavior, attitude and thinking through the right use of Knowledge and skills (Mrunalini, 2010). Furthermore, Mrunalini (2010) stated that this helps

in the overall development of a person through learning and gaining knowledge, skills and mindsets. In this sense, having a good education is much necessary to the people for getting employment and prosperity for the country. In line of employment and prosperity, the essence of education is vital in every country (Bano & Taylor, 2015).The importance of education cannot be limited to one single goal. It teaches us on how to think, how to work, how to make decisions and eventually have a meaningful life (Bano & Taylor, 2015). Many countries in the modern society understood the essence of education after the world war as they could not receive something tangible from the war (Clancy, 2021). After World War II, many countries went in the track of development and most of the countries had understood that the key to development is education. When I say the key to development in education, I mean to say that with education we can develop different knowledge, skills and mindset. With utilization of these knowledge and skills we can progress in life. While talking about the skills, I found out that hard skills and soft skills as two basic skills (Klaus, 2010). The specific skills that are associated with knowledge that develops the expertise to put theory into practice are considered to be hard skills (Smith, 2010). Similarly, soft skills are the human abilities or the individual commitment that is displayed by a person and which makes them different from other person with same academics and experience (Perrault, 2004). Moreover, Potgieter (2012) stated soft skills as psychological construct, behavior and non-cognitive intelligences. As per Robles (2012), the most necessary soft skills that are needed by an individual are teamwork, flexibility, positive attitude and social skills. This demonstrates the importance of soft skill in any form of the organizations. Therefore, the learning of soft skill is something very crucial that has to be incorporated in the education.

Nowadays, many parents are aware about the ways of learning and search the best institution for better learning.

When we talk about ways of learning, we remember education and the academic institutions. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identified majorly three forms of which fall under formal, informal and non-formal education ways (Kasola & Karalis, 2022). The different methods from where one can learn are formal, informal and non-formal ways (Kasola & Karalis, 2022). Whatever the form of learning is, the major idea of education is sharing of learning to develop certain traits and behaviors in life. It is not just about the college degree but the real application of what has been learnt in life. Some of the ways include online learning through the use of audio and video through internet. Many organizations conduct trainings and development course for its employees, interns, and volunteers to develop the soft skills. Further in formal system there are Project Based Learning (PjBL), Problem Based Learning (PBL) which are also integrated to develop the soft skills of students (Johnson, 2019). One of the way by which one can learn is reflection (Gibbs, 1988). By reflecting our own action, behaviors and experience one can develop the learning life decision making, problem solving, presentation etc. Therefore, having certain sets of skill is always going to contribute for the better employment opportunities in the market. Having employment opportunity means generating productivity in terms of money and materials. This helps to fulfill the basic need of a person and a family. When there is employment opportunity for people, they retain in the country and also pay taxes and contribute to the economy of the country. Thus education helps a person to develop skills and generate employment.

Different forms of education help for better employment (Yorke & Knight, 2006). Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) stated that the employability is the capacity and willingness of a person to remain and be available in the job market. It is about how a person places him/herself with certain set of skills in the job market and move independently within the market. Having such abilities, traits and behaviors enables a person to select and secure the jobs. This demonstrates that the education is the key which provides the knowledge and skills. This knowledge and skill can contribute to better work force (Yorke & Knight, 2006). A better work force means converting the human potential to unlock the economy of a country (Quisumbing, 2005). When we see the types of workforce it can be grouped into white-collar jobs (academically sound people on high paying jobs) and blue-collar jobs (Particularly low paying labor jobs). Typically, white-collar jobs need more education and more soft skills than compared to blue collar jobs (Quanl, 1986). Therefore, soft skills are necessary for better jobs.

Quisumbing (2005) also stated that, the key to development is the education from where soft skills can be developed and this soft skill can unlock the way for better job which enables countries growth. When economy is enabled, it can help eradicate the poverty and increase the quality of life. This can also be connected through the Human Capital Theory (HCT) which states that knowledge promotes individual's output that can increase the job performances and it creates job chances in labor market (Becker, 1964). Hence, it is vital that our education system must incorporate soft skills that can help in holistic development of individuals.

When we talk about incorporation of soft skills for the holistic development of individual we must be focused on how the learning of soft skill is

taking place. For different individuals there are different ways of learning (Gardner, 1983). It is also known as Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence. He also stated that every child is unique and has potential to learn new things. According to Piaget, every child has different stages of mental growth where one can generate schema from his own mind. On the contrary, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learning is mediated or shaped and influenced by social interaction and knowledgeable more others. To summarize the ways of learning, the various ways involve visual learning, auditory learning, verbal learning, kinesthetic learning, interpersonal learning and intra personal learning. Based on multiple intelligence, different other ways of learning includes PBL, PjBL, online practice, reflective practice (UC Research Repository, 2022) has been introduced which are also called as new ways of learning. These ways of learning is definitely going to develop individuals with higher capability that has a better opportunity for employability.

Employability is the ability of a person to have the capacity and interest to engage in jobs and be active in the labor market (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). This is possible only when one person acquires skills, understanding, and experiences (Brown et al., 2013)) to move across the job market. Therefore, there lies a strong connection between the ways of learning of soft skills and its impact on employability as it develops the employability skills. Similarly, the relation between soft skills and employability has been researched by Yorke and Knight (2006) where they mentioned that key soft skills like self-awareness, creativity, problem solving and self-confidence has a direct relationship. The graduates having soft skills get job opportunities due to which they can move across the job market (Yorke & Knight 2006). Therefore, I feel that a soft skill has a key role to

ensure the employability. Thus, the education which can enhance the soft skills is the requirement of 21st century which ensures the job (Olojuolawe et al., 2019). This can also be explained by Human Capital Theory of Swanson & Holton (2001) and Social Learning Theory (SLT) of Bandura, proposed in 1971.

SLT is one of the learning theory which majorly explains that the learning happens through observation, imitation and modeling (Bandura, 1971). The social learning theory explains that how a learning behavior is shaped by an individual and the social context. This shows that the way of learning is not just innate but the environmental factors, Individual factors and behavior of person. Similarly, the learning of soft skills is also influenced by the social context. So, I am taking social learning theory as a major theory to learn soft skills. Further, I am linking the way of learning with HCT. HCT explains that the key to promote individual productivity is the education (Becker, 1964). Education gives an individual specific set of skills and abilities to perform better. The more the status of education one gets more probability of job chances will be in the market (Yorke and Knight (2006) and this creates a better space to be successful I term of income (Cai, 2013). Human capital theory states that the human capital can be developed through formal education, Job trainings and other set of vocational trainings (Becker, 1964).

Since, the way of learning is much important to develop the knowledge and skills. I feel it is necessary to be aware of the ways of learning. Also, I feel that our education system in the context of Nepal is not much flexible and only focuses of the development of hard skills, it is necessary to integrate new ways of learning of soft skills in the education. Through Human capital theory, it is clear that it the productivity of humans can only be developed through the better

education that can have impact on self-income. Also, the relationship of soft skills and employability of can be seen as soft skill can complement the job opportunities in the market. Therefore, a better way of learning of soft skill is a must to enhance the job opportunities.

Problem Statement

Every year many students complete their undergraduate studies and come in the market in search of the jobs. There is always a employment gap between a job seeker and a job provider. Prasad (2017) stated that in a fluctuating scenario companies want people who can adapt to it. Further dissatisfactions were expressed by employers for not finding proper skill set in the new recruits (Hesketh, 2000). Furthermore, Hesketh (2000) stated that if such skills are incorporated in the educational system of a country. As I am working in Teach For Nepal's recruitment and selection team, we always struggle to find the base of proper soft skills in the undergraduate students. Further, in interaction with other companies who work in skills (skill lab), they have this complain on students not being well equipped with the soft skill portion. In case of India, Malik and Venkataraman (2017) suggested that recruiters who visited the universities failed to recruit students as they lacked basic soft skills necessary for the required job. This implies that soft skill is necessary for employment opportunities.

Learning of soft skills is very important. Many social researchers worked on different ways of learning of soft skills. Salvin (2008) proposed a model where students were divided into different groups for enhanced learning. Later it was found that the motivation to learn among the group increased due to peer to peer interaction as it developed social cohesion in the group. Similarly, Shaw (2010) was able to deliver the learning of 21st century soft skills through project based

learning. Further, online learning through use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has also helped the students to learn in a better way (Cojocariu et al., 2014. One way of learning of soft skills among the students is the reflection through self-appraisal, self-awareness (Dewey, 1993). All this information demonstrates that the way of learning is one of the major factor to enhance soft skills. Similarly, employability has a direct to the soft skills. Klaus (2010) found that 75% of work success is related to people skill but only 25% is related to technical skills. Such data demonstrates soft skill plays a vital role in jobs (Khojasteh et al., 2020). Also, similar result was obtained by Paadi (2014) concluded 85% of work is successful because of soft skills and only 15% work success is due to technical skills. Agreeing on both the researcher, it shows that the people with higher soft skills are more successful in jobs.

Many researchers have been done from the perspective of an employer where they mentioned about the key soft skills like communication, problem solving, presentation etc. Unfortunately, very few researches have been done to know the ways of learning soft skills even though the contribution of soft skill in generating employability and the success rate is high. My position as a researcher is that the lower the ways of learning there is less chance of soft skill development which hampers the employability success. Gautam (2016) explains that the unemployment rate of youths has increased in recent years as they are not much interested in the course work. Therefore, there is a knowledge gap between way of learning of soft skill among students and how they are being taught. There is only handful of student knows the importance of soft skill for the emerging job market in the context of Nepal. If this problem continues, then it is going to increase unemployment rates by creating more unskilled graduates in the market which can

further lead to brain drain. I hope to interact and understand the perception of soft skill in undergraduate youths. Understanding such gap will be crucial in bringing new innovations and adaptations in developing many ways and integration of soft skill development. Connecting to it, as a researcher, several questions related to ways of learning soft skills and its influences on employment are playing in my mind. Some of the questions were how do undergraduate student learn soft skills? Are they aware that they need soft skills to be employable? How is soft skill being integrated in their education? Can there be other ways of learning soft skills beyond core curriculum?

Among these questions, I wanted to know the overall experience on ways of learning of soft skills. Further, I wanted to explore on how undergraduate student explain the contribution of soft skills to employability.

Purpose of Study

The main focus of my study is to explore experience of (Fischbach, 2020) undergraduate youth on ways of learning soft skills and its contribution to employability. More specifically I will explore the various experiences through which students learn soft skills. Similarly, I will explore on how they relate the contribution of soft skills to employability.

Research Questions

The purposes of my research is regarding the understanding of different ways of learning soft skills and its contribution to the employability for undergraduate students.

a. How do undergraduates experience the ways of learning of soft skills?
b. How do undergraduates explain the contribution of soft skills to employability?

Rationale of Study

Many students in school and colleges are taught to get good grades and focus on cognitive growth than to develop skills (Gautam, 2016). But in 21st century, the demand for hard skill worker is decreasing day by day. In a fast changing world, where everything seems replaceable, can only sustain with human to human interaction. In order to have a better human interaction the key skills set are considered to be communication, creativity, collaborations and critical thinking (Rigden, 2019). Maurer (2018) recorded that the employer fail to get a good employee and many job applicant stated that despite having good grades and technical skills they could not crack the job market. Gautam (2016) further adds that in case of Nepal, youths lack the soft skills.

This research focuses on uncovering the voices of youths on understanding of soft skills and its way of learning. Further, they also explain the contribution of soft skills to the employability. Therefore the study helps to find out different ways of learning of soft skills which is very important as it contributes to employability among the youths. Personally, when I was in my college days, I always felt that I lack soft skills and felt that I was an introverted person. Similarly, I have encountered with a lot of science graduates who feels the same. Even after graduation many of my friends who studied science and technology lacked confidence due to basic soft skills. After graduation, many of my friends struggled to be placed in the right job. Thus this is an attempt to uncover their voices. This research is a part of my academic journey which helped me to learn about the research skill and in doing so it helped me to analyze the gap between academia and job market with reference to soft skills.

Delimitation of the Study

This research was done only among the Science and Technology students of Tri-Chandra College, considering only five participants. I chose social constructivism theory and human capital theory to explain my research question in detail. Social constructivism theory consisted of constructivism and cognitivism. However, this study does not deal with cognitivism. Here, I am just focused to understand the ways of learning from the side of students only through constructivism. In this study, I was able to uncover the voices and the experiences of my five participants in detail where they share about soft skills and employability. However, this study does not generalize the idea of soft skill and employability because this may vary according to the context of people and their understanding. The study does not cover the views and opinion of teachers and professionals of soft skills and employability.

Chapter Summary

This chapter includes the brief introduction on why I chose the topic of the soft skills. On the introduction part, I have mentioned about the essence of education in the development of soft skills. Along with few literature reviews, I have described on how the soft skill can develop the possibility of being employable in the job market. I have also described my research problem in detail with started with a gap in academia and the job market. This chapter also contains the research question for my study, a clear idea with purpose of study (Fischbach, 2020) and at the end delimitation of my study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I studied the literature which mentions soft skill, the ways of learning of soft skills, and its understanding on youths. Later, I also studied in-depth about the employability and its relation to the soft skills. I've also looked over the literature on Nepal's educational system and how has it integrated the soft skill portion in the curriculum. I've also looked at the many policies relating to soft skill integration in the school, colleges and universities. This chapter covers the literature reviews, as well as the associated literatures on soft skills, the ways of learning and employability. Additionally, I also reviewed the policy of soft skills, way of learning and employability. Furthermore, I also conduct theoretical review and empirical review on soft skills and employability.

Skills: Hard Skill and Soft Skill Complement Each Other

Skills are the capacities to do specific work (Research Gate | Share and Discover Research, 2019) in such a way that the desired results are achieved. Essentially, the ability to apply knowledge is the skill. Hard skill and soft skill are the two categories of skill. (Powell & Laker, 2011). A soft skill refers a term used to describe subjective, non-technical skills. Because of their performance-enhancing effect on technical, career, and academic skills, soft skills are offered as enhancers of employability. Soft skills are defined as the building blocks of relationships and emotional competence in order to address organizational issues and drive individual performance, according to academics (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

Soft talents, according to Perrault (2004), are individual characteristics, or the motivation that individuals demonstrate that distinguishes them from others with similar levels of education and experience. Soft skills are also seen as the result of the different human psychological constructs of traits, attitudes, behaviors, non-cognitive intelligences, and meta-competencies 'coming together' (Potgieter, 2012). Smith (2010) stated that hard skills are commonly associated with more of technical and vocational education which provides education and knowledge that come down to specific job related expertise. This has the ability to transform theories into practice in a job related set up. Matteson et al. (2016) states that the soft skill involve action which generates value to the organization when executed properly.

Gautam (2016) stated that today's youths are not much interested in the course work. That is the main reason that they hardly learn to compete in the job market. This problem has been reported in different faculties. It has caused a significant growth of unemployment among the youths. Conley (2008) argues that it is very important to develop a core set of skills and knowledge which will prepare the youths for work. This shows how important the role of skill in receiving a job. The problem with our academic institutions is that they prepare their graduates prioritizing cognitive domain (Knowledge) rather than developing skills (Gautam, 2016). His experience on working on youths explains that the rate of unemployment in Nepal is majorly lack of soft skills. This argument has been supported by the research by Schulz (2008) which emphasis the need of soft skills to be learned in college (UNB Scholar Research Repository | UNB Scholar, n.d.). He added that the soft skill always added value to the hard skill for job openings.

Soft skills, like any other skill, need action, and when implemented, they result in behavior that adds value to the organization, such as service orientation, risk-taking, and people management (Matteson et al. 2016). From the review, I found that the soft skills are personal traits, characteristics and are non-cognitiv in nature whereas the hard skills are the technical and vocational skill. These skills can help youths to acquire the job through the use of theory into practice.

Soft skills, according to Coetzee (2012), are the values, personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors that influence graduate employment. Incorporating the concepts of self-management and interpersonal relations, Lippman et al., (2015) define soft skills in a broad term which consisted of skills, attitudes, personal qualities.

The fact that the definition of "soft skill" is constantly evolving is one of the reasons why this question is difficult to answer. People may encounter situations in which one issue falls under the category of soft skills in one subject but falls under the category of hard skills in another subject. Furthermore, soft skills differ from one location to the next, from one culture to the next, from one area to the next, and from one hierarchy to the next (Pandey & Anand, 2020). Again, Pandey and Anand (2020) stated that in today's high-tech world, building soft skills in students can provide them an advantage, and case work can help them succeed in their careers. Roble (2012) stated that the soft skills are attributes which improve a individual’s interactions, job outputs, and future scope. Soft skills are constantly improved by experimentation (Robles, 2012) in everyday life, social contact, and the workplace. Soft talents are harder to quantify than hard skills. Hard skills (HS) include education, work experience, knowledge, and other abilities such as typing, writing, and computer skills. According to Klaus (2010),

soft skills are extremely important as study suggested that people skills account for 75% of long-term work success, while technical knowledge accounts for only 25% (European Scientific Journal, ESJ, n.d.). Similarly another report of European Scientific Journal suggested that hard skills weigh 15% to success, whereas 85% success is the result of soft skills (European Scientific Journal, ESJ, n.d.) also mentioned by Watts & Watts, 2008, as cited in Paadi, 2014.

Secondly, Nicaise (2001) states that the abilities produced by educational systems are closely tied to labor market success in terms of skills, qualifications, and credentials (The University of Groningen Research Portal, n.d.). A discussion about how best to create educational systems has been sparked by the fundamental function of the educational system to structure people's life (Pure Support, 2020). In context of Nepali education system the design of curriculum is structured but the execution part in the schools seems challenging which directly affects the skills and qualification of the student. Students are placed in specific institutional contexts by the educational system, and particularly by the system of vocational training, which structures the transition from school to work (Ashton, 1997 also cited in Pure Support, 2020). Ashton (1997) further adds that education bestows talents, either in the form of specialized hard or soft skills or in the form of broad skills like reading, writing, and math. However, educational credentials may also suggest 'trainability' (Klub Hrvatskih Humboldtovaca – Naslovnica, 2021) which indicates if a human resource is develop new skills (Pure Support, 2020). According to job competition theory (employers rely on education as they believe it helps in trainability (Pure Support, 2020). If we compare the skills gained in the school to the skilled needed in the job industry it seems completely irrelevant and shows that they need higher set of skills. Looking at this, literate people get good

place in job market (Pure Support, 2020). Job competition theory de-values the value of the job produced through education (Nicaise, 2001). It advocates that, although disputed, On-the-Profession Training (OJT) is the sole way to acquire skills necessary for a particular job (Klub Hrvatskih Humboldtovaca – Naslovnica, 2021).) Kopri (2003) as cited in Allmendinger (1989) explains that there lies greater mobility in student of US, Norway and Germany. This shows the significance of education and skills gained from school to work. She studied the relationship between educational qualifications, skills gained and employability. She further explained that there can be differences in education and skills based on institutional context.

Thirdly, Suneela (2014) argues that the soft skills are the basic employability skills and the most important one is the communication skills. In the job market we need the fusion of both the skills (Ahmad et al., 2017). HS are the skills that you gain from your core studies whereas the soft skills are developed over time and it is not specific of any place and time. These soft skills complement the hard skills and a person is likely to employ. The soft skill develops your personality to show the hard skills. Thus, beyond academics and technical expertise, it is crucial for students to develop soft skills. Suneela (2014) explains communication, critical thinking, collaboration ability, managing self, awareness of culture, general knowledge, responsibility, integrity, negotiation, and social graces are examples of soft skills that are considered employability skills (IOSR, 2022). Suneela (2014) also expresses that teachers and lecturers can help student to learn communication skills. This can be done through student centered approach where goup discussion, oral presentations, brain storming, writing on notice boards, flipcharts. Therefore, soft skills compliment the hard skills and

through teaching and learning, these soft skills can be acquired in a variety of methods (Johannes Schleutker, 2021).

Ways of Learning Soft Skills

There are a lot of ways of learning. Specific people have different learning styles (Reid, 1995). All the humans learn based on their ability and skill. Some people learn skills through visuals, some by doing actions, some through listening as well (Gardner, 1983). When I was a teacher, I found out that my students had different ways of learning. Some of my students were active listener whereas some of them were visual and some of them liked to play and learn which we call kinesthetic. This is also known as (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) VAK model of learning. Reid (1995) stated that individuals have different learning styles and this differs due to natural, habitual or preferred way of processing and retaining the information.

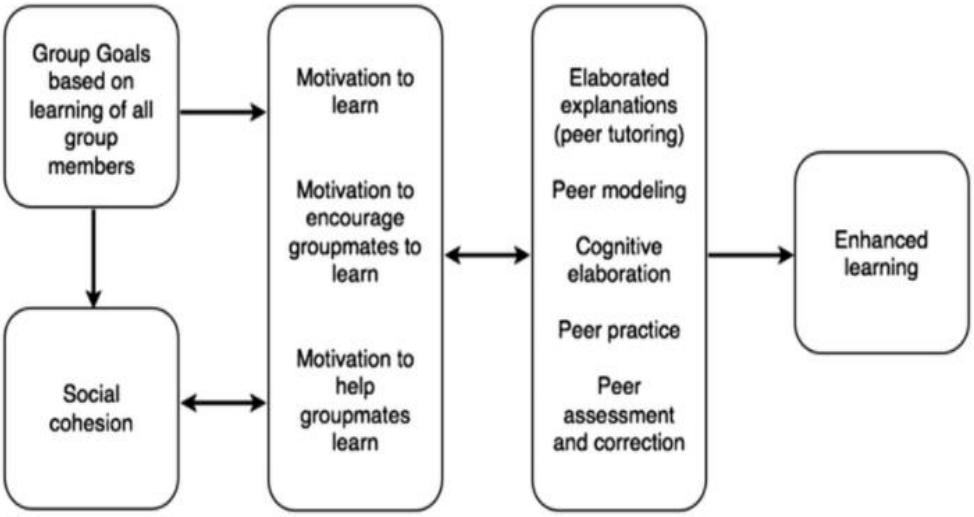
Many people perceive teaching as learning the skills but teaching generally does not ensures the leaning of skills. People also learn skills through training, experience and from stories of peoples. Based upon different ways of learning of soft skills, some of the ways that has been used to develop soft skills are Cooperative learning model (Ibrahim & Alias, 2018), Project based learning, Blended learning and reflection (Gardner, 1983).

In cooperative learning, students are taught soft skills such as respect for friends' opinions, the ability to come out and talk, the ability to accept friends' opinions, the ability to cooperate, and the ability to help others. As stated in, one of the goals of cooperative learning is to build social skills (Ibrahim & Alias, 2018).It's a teaching method in which a group of pupils collaborates to attain a common goal (Eggen & Kauchak, 1996, p. 279) as cited in (Nugraha et al., 2016).

It's a teaching method that involves students working together in small groups where they enhance theirs and peers learning (CSCanada, n.d.). It promotes face-to-face communication, teamwork, and accountability (Johnson, 2019). It also boosts self-confidence and social acceptance. As a result, this approach is more focused for students to boost self-confidence, teamwork and accountability.

Figure 1

Model of Cooperative Learning



(Adopted from Salvin, 2008, p. 15)

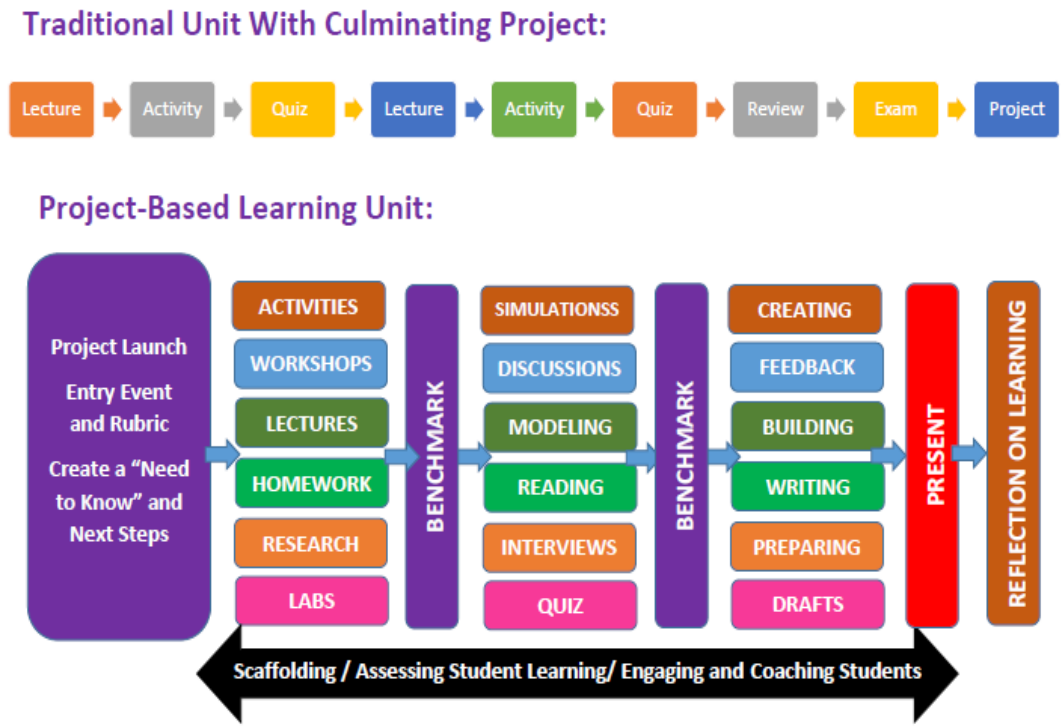
Similarly, Project based learning (PjBL) started from Europe in 16thcentury.It is also found in John Dewey's education theory. It was acknowledged and known pedagogical method in twentieth century (Home, n.d.). According to John Dewey, learners participate in the construction of knowledge. They complete significant projects and learn practical skills. PjBL is distinguished from other organizations by the formation of tangible materials (St. Louis et al., 2021). During the production the participants collaborate to develop final product and create solution (Home, n.d.) to any kind of problem that they face. The facilitator coaches and provides feedback (Home, n.d.). Further it states that, in

this process student are the leading end by getting knowledge. Students develop hard skills through PjBL (Home, n.d.). Further, they develop soft skills and this knowledge is used in social settings. Guo et al (2020) stated that this process helps to develop life skills like collaboration, critical thinking, communication, problem solving. Guo et al (2020) further added that application of PBL in secondary, higher secondary education helped to ensure that the growth of student continue in cognitive, affective and behavior domain. The outcome showed that the soft skills are the outcomes of affective and behavior domain.

Gultekin (2005) demonstrates how soft skills enable students to build a real life opportunities which makes them resilient to problems and develop thinking level (Home, n.d.). Connecting it, Doppelt (2003) observes improvement in participation and self-esteem development. PjBL's potential to promote soft skill was investigated by Shaw (2018). Doppelt (2003) further evaluated that PjBL helped teachers and students to develop soft skills like teamwork, communication etc (Home, n.d.). Doppelt (2003) stated that college professors used qualitative interviews to discover growth of above entioned soft skills (Home, n.d.).

Figure 2

Project Based Learning



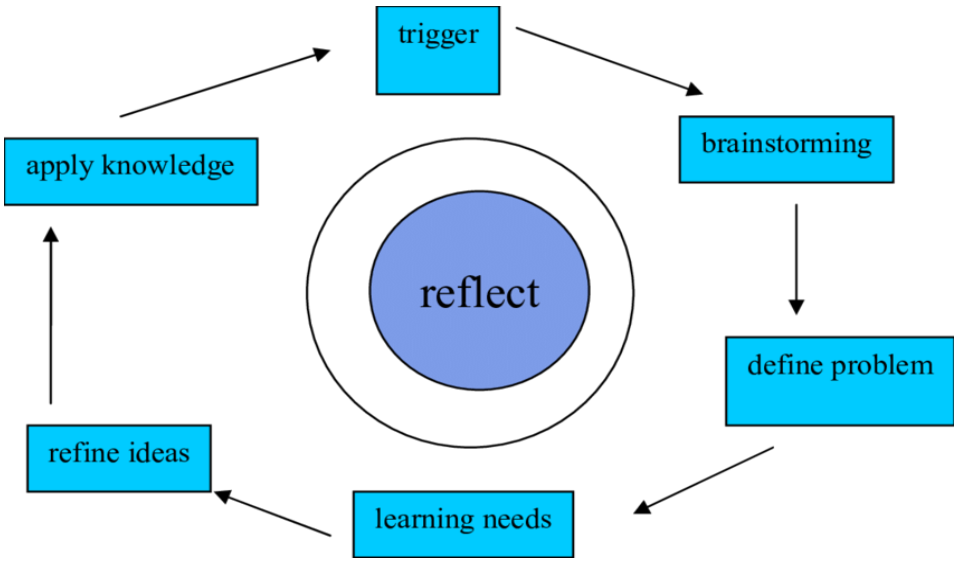
(Idea adopted from Laker& Powell, 2011, p. 17)

Through the use of challenging real-world situations rather than by simply providing facts and ideas, a teaching strategy known as "problem-based learning" teaches students concepts and principles (Silen, 2001). Besides course material, it can help students improve their communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Home, 2022). It can also encourage group collaboration, resource appraisal, and lifelong learning (Duch et al., 2001). It has been used in diverse fields and educational purpose to enhance the critical thinking and problem solving in learning situation. This tools has been adopted in different schools to problem solve in a collaborative setting from which students develop a habit of self- directed learning. It majorly helps in active group learning as effective learning takes place through social interactions and self-directed learning.Further,

Nilson (2010), suggested that there are a lot of learning outcomes that can be achieved from PBL.

Figure 3

Problem Based Learning (PBL)



(Idea adopted from Silen, 2001, p. 121)

Distance learning has become more widely available than ever before (IJICC - Home, n.d.), thanks to rapidly changing technology (McBrien et al., 2009). The ability to use a computer connected to a network, which provides the possibility of learning from anywhere, anytime, in any rhythm, with any means, is widely shared of the terms (for example, internet learning, distributed learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning) (Cojocariu et al., 2014).According to new research (National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), 2019 the teaching-learning process can be made more student-centered, innovative, and adaptable by using a tool like online learning.The use of smart mobile phones, laptops and computer has increased significantly across the globe. Further, the use of internet is easily accessible in

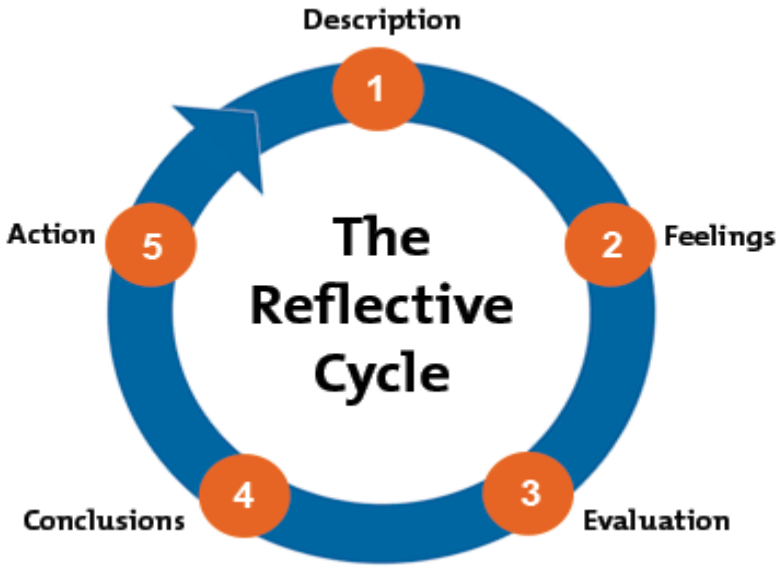
cities. However, in the rural parts internet-based telecommunication provides the internet. This has made the access to internet to most of the people.

With the increase of mobile phones and laptops and the access of internet now students, teachers can learn through digital means. For example, the use of YouTube, Google, and Wikipedia etc has made the learning process easier. We can now stay in a room and connect with people all around the world. The e-leaning materials are easily available in the websites, YouTube which has simplified the way of learning.

Blended learning is a pedagogical model that connects peers in in-person mode, also uses the e-platform (RMS – Research Management System, n.d.). The role of reflection is to engage the students to enhance the behavioral, emotional and cognitive process. Dewey (1933) claimed that reflection entails a readiness to engage in ongoing self-evaluation and improvement. Furthermore, it requires adaptability, in-depth study, and social awareness (Free Essay Examples and Research Papers | StudyMode, n.d.). The process of learning involves reflective teaching which is a cyclic process and it is monitored, evaluated and revised by the teacher continuously. Therefore, blended learning and reflection is a way of learning in which the learning continues through in-person or virtual ways through reflection.

Figure 4

Gibb's Reflection Cycle



(Idea adopted from Gibb, 1988, p. 1)

Learning also includes training and development (Black, 1961). Black (1961) defined training as providing personnel with the abilities necessary to follow instructions efficiently, effectively, and cooperatively. In 1962, Becker defined training in terms of boosting human output for improved economics. These definitions, however, are solely applicable to the fields of knowledge and economics. Training is deliberate learning that results in a long-term change in a person's knowledge, ability, and mindset, according to Campbell (1971) ("Open Access Publications | Best Scientific Journals Online," 2022Therefore, training and development can aid in enhancing people's skills. To help its pupils or employees develop their abilities, many organizations and schools create their own training modules. Additionally, it is thought that the main purpose of training is to support learners in increasing their capabilities, abilities, and performances. Investment in trainings is thus one of the best ways to cater to soft skills. As a

result, once students have earned their degrees, many educational institutions have started offering on-the-job training (OJT), which is also similar to internships.

Undergraduate Youth and Employability

A youth is someone between the age of 15 and 24 (UN, 2013). However, the word "youth" differs in different societies all over the world. An undergraduate degree is a term for an academic degree which is provided by institutions of higher education, such as university. Globally, this degree is awarded after a student finishes 15 to 16 years of education. A person who completes the undergraduate course is called as undergraduate youths. It is also referred as bachelors' degree. Therefore, a student who completed his/her bachelors' degree is called as undergraduate youth.

Similarly, the term employability is defined as the ability of a person (myUnisa, n.d.) to be attracted in job market by the employers (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Paadi (2014) defines employability as a kowledge, ailities and personal traits which activates an individual to select and sure the job (QDOC.TIPS, n.d.).It's about being able to find, create, and keep satisfying employment, as well as having the knowledge, abilities, and personal characteristics necessary (European Scientific Journal, ESJ, n.d.) to move independently across the labor market. Employability skills, according to Yorke and Knight (2006), are a graduate's capacity where they secure and gain success in graduate school (Lopez, 2017). It is not restricted, although it can expand as graduate progresses through the job search process. These abilities provided a means for students to transition into the workforce. Many higher education institutions have recently placed a greater emphasis on students' employability. These abilities served as a means for students to transition to the workforce. Many

higher education institutions have recently placed a greater emphasis on students' employability (CSCanada, n.d.).In Nepal, integration of soft skill in the curriculum has been limited (Norrag, n.d) in the school level.

In the secondary school of Nepal, the national curriculum has focused in personal trait development, production of citizens who are productive, skilled, and able to work at the local, national, and international levels (ODA Open Digital Archive, 2021) as needed as well as create and prepare human resources to help modernize society and grow the nation (STEPS Nepal, 2012). Even though the curriculum is well explained, our education system fails to integrate the action plans in the classroom. High-order, transferrable competencies known as generic abilities are required for nearly all complicated tasks (Jackson, 2013). They include transferable abilities including communicating, problem-solving, curiosity, flexibility, purpose, perseverance, and resilience as well as courage and creative abilities (Jackson, 2013). Further Jackson (2013) states that teamwork, communication, self-management, analysis, and critical thinking are employability skills that are frequently valued in industrialized countries (European Scientific Journal, ESJ, n.d.).Therefore, I see a great potential that the undergraduate youths with different skill sets and abilities can explore the possibilities of employment across the job markets.

Relationship between Skills and Employability

There is a close relationship between skills and employability (Olojuolawe et al., 2019). This also stated that soft skills are crucial for positive (Browse Journals by Subject, n.d.). Similarly, many educational institution offers many career management skills like career building, self-management, self-appearance, generic skills to the students (Peterson, 2008). They are educated about career and

employment prospects, and they are educated to have confidence in themselves (CORE, 2017).This paper researched among the employability skills which are communication, problem solving, willingness to learn, self-management, work ethics, team work and technology.

Peterson (2008) investigated the incorporation of soft skills into the industry education program and how educators see the significance of particular soft talents for success in the twenty-first century industry (CSCanada, n.d.). It is always believed by the employers that soft skills help to secure the job opportunities. The argument focused on the value of soft skills and their integration into courses since it demonstrated statistical significance in the classrooms, despite the fact that educators have supported soft skills extremely frequently. Additionally, Al-Alawneh (2009) investigated how educators and employers viewed the employability capacity of learners from career and technical schools institutions. The findings demonstrate that both employers and educators concur that students require certain employability skills: cooperation, communication, and work ethics (CSCanada, n.d.). However the priority order may change according to the position one is applying for.Orner (2009) describes how training has shaped the skills by comparing among the cooperative education student. Two groups who participated in a job training program and one's student who could not were compared (CSCanada, n.d.). The result showed that those students who participated in the training were more positive. They were more confident about the skills they have gained.

According to CScanada (n.d), *"Participants in a study by Baneck (2012) constructed a theory to explain their beliefs and behaviors in order to close the employability skills gap. The development of a shared vision for bridging the*

employability skills gap was identified as a method that was anticipated to promote knowledge, significance, and collaboration." Another study conducted by Zinser (2003) look into and evaluate the possibilities for developing and learning employability skills in a postsecondary setting. It has been determined that developing employable skills benefits students, educational institutions, and the corporate world.

A research at Yarmouk University measured students' employability skills (Alawneh, 2014). Furthermore Alawneh (2014) examined the differences in perception on employability skills. He examined the differences in perception on employability skills among different discipline of students. The statistical test resulted that there were significant differences among the students who joined the life skill course compared to those who did not join the life skill course. Result showed that the students who joined the life skill course have developed the ability to cope with stress, empathy and interpersonal relationship. Berkitt (1996) as cited in Alawneh (2014) classified individual traits using cognitive and behavioral abilities. Cognitive abilities include those that are technical, analytical/constructive, and appreciative (CScanada, n.d). Behavioral skills include things like interpersonal, social, and organizational abilities. This article also suggested integrating employability skills into the curriculum to boost academic performance and get pupils ready for the workforce (CScanada, n.d).

Employers' use of skills through time is tracked by Beaudry et al. (2013). They show that a demand for highly qualified individuals who could adopt and use new technologies in the workplace arose in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the development of new technologies, particularly ICT (Beaudry et al., 2013).This shows that to produce a high skilled worker he/she must be very aware of both

technical skills and soft skills. People with graduate-level diplomas are therefore highly sought after and earn a lot of money. The authors assert that the IT revolution reached maturity around the year 2000, which explains why the demand for "cognitive task employees" has slowed down (Beaudry et al., 2013).But now the IT sector reached the top it could not replace the essence of human factor to it. There lies a lot of problem in this sector and we need highly diverse ad skilled people in order to solve the problems. Thus, whatever the service be this world needs persons with higher skills.

Human Capital Theory (HCT): A Theoretical review

We still believe that the key to the development is education. In the past, the higher educational system was linked closely to the economic growth but the 21stcentury paradigm is changing towards knowledge enhancement. Economic growth is said to be aided by increased educational options and access. Education is an economic good since it is difficult to attain and hence must be distributed. Given that it gives consumers utility (joy) and contributes to the development of the human resources needed for economic and social transformation, it is seen as both a commodity and an investment good (European Scientific Journal, ESJ, n.d.).

According to European Scientific Journal (n.d.), “Education encourages individual productivity, which enhances job performance, as per the human resource hypothesis (Schultz 1961; Becker 1964). Because of this, education provides marketable skills and talents crucial to job performance, and persons who have more education will be more successful in terms of both income and job opportunities on the labor market (Cai, 2013). This concept places greater emphasis on the educational knowledge acquired via higher education for

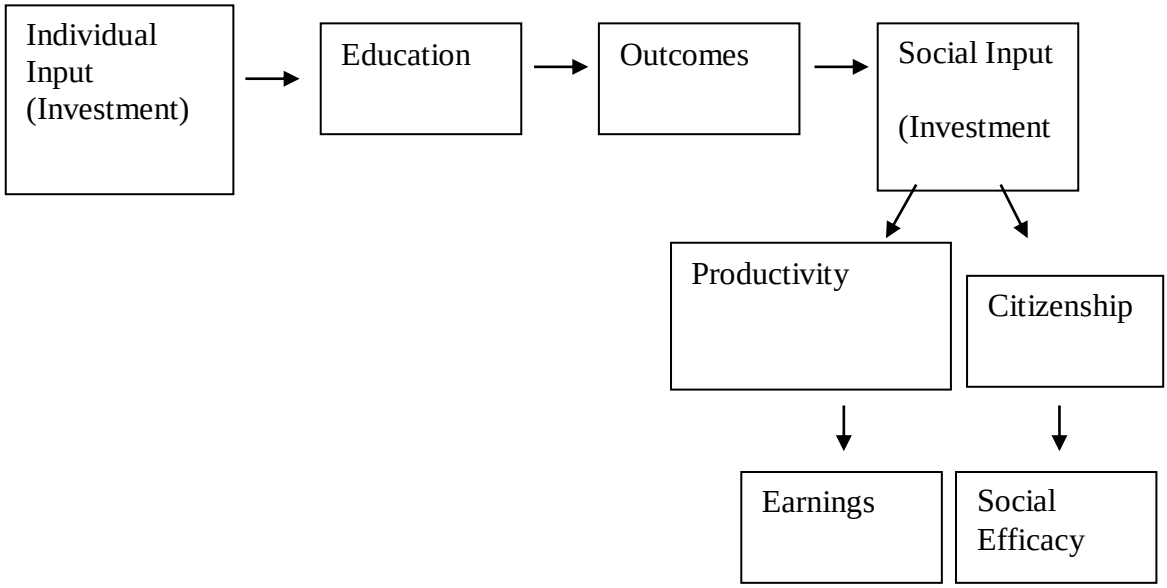
workplace success than it does on the acquisition of general abilities for job success.

Bowles-Gintis defines "human capital" as the capacity to function in hierarchical/capitalist societies, follow rules, and adapt to daily life. This point of view contends that teaching students the "correct" attitude and approach on life is the main purpose of education (IGI Global: International Academic Publisher, n.d.). The human capital can be traced after the world war (DODERLEIN, 2021). The term human capital can trace its roots to the early 1960s. According to Schultz (1961), human capital consists of people's knowledge, skills, and capacities (The Open University Of Tanzania, 2022). Human capital was described by Becker in 1993 as the "information, data, ideas, abilities, and health of persons" in 1993 also cited in (Zimmerman et al., 2020). The only difference between this two definitions is the human health. It shows that the definition of human capital is emerging and is evolving. Thomas et al. (2013) provided one of the most recent definitions of HC, defining it as the "human, their effectiveness, and their capacity in the business (Aldulaimi & Kharabsheh, 2020)."

The human capital theory explains that formal education is required to boost a population's productive capability. Human capital theorists suggest that a productive population is one that is educated. According to the human capital concept, education increases workers' quality and performance by increasing their mental pool of productive human ability, and that's a result of their innate skills and investments in them (CISD, n.d.).

Figure 5

Human Capital Theory (HCT)



(Idea adapted from Swanson & Holton, 2001)

The above figure shows that the individual investment in education has significant impact on the outcome of an individual by working on his/her knowledge and skills which can positively influence the productivity and confidence in a person.

HCT demonstrates that the intangible asset of human capital can be generated from formal education, On-the-job trainings and other vocational trainings (Becker, 1964). The only limitation of HCT is, that forces the complicated transition between varied education and labor along a linear track. Given the disparities in pay and status of educated people, it is impossible to explain how education increases productivity.

Social Constructivism Theory

Constructivism defines that individual creates knowledge through human activity and individual create meaning through their interaction with the world (Clark, 2018). Clark (2018) also explains that to a same event and circumstance, different people develop different reactions and have a different understanding which is due to the factors like identity, family, community, culture etc. Therefore, in social constructivism the community is in the center.

Vygotsky (1962) was more interested in the role of individual in construction of knowledge of students. According to Vygotsky (1962), a classroom is a place for discussion, dialogue and discourse. This lets student to generalize and transfer the knowledge in classroom. It also builds strong foundation for communication skills. This discussion enables students to develop and synthesis ideas, views which help them to become creative thinkers. Further, such process enables collaboration skills, reasoning skills etc. Therefore social constructivism has been one of the teaching learning theories. In short, this method has helped students to develop their soft skill portion.

Vygotsky (1962) stated that the culture being the primary determinant of knowledge creation. He argued that the learning of culture is by engaging with community people and following the norms (Marrianesanchez, 2015) . There are several approaches to achieve learning in a classroom, including creating community of learners, using a group of participant's classroom, collaboration, group projects, debate learning (Marrianesanchez, 2015). Vygotsky (1978) stated that language is crucial to promote the basic skills like thinking, reasoning, reading and writing. Further, the learning also depends upon the class leadership of coach, teacher or a facilitator. For a better learning to be achieved he stated a

zone called as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Pape, 2019). He stated that a learner acquire new skills and knowledge within the ZPD (cited by Flair, 2019).

Connecting this, we can say that social constructivism can help build different soft skills which then can be linked with employability. It has been found that pupils having higher soft skills are more employable (Springer - International Publisher Science, Technology, Medicine, n.d.) than person with less soft skills.Thus, social constructivism theory helps build soft skills and develop employability in the job market.

Policy Review

In the policy review section, the major policies related to soft skills, employability, soft skill integration in education policy of Nepal and necessary national and international policies, practices has been reviewed. It was quite hard for me to find the policies, rules and regulations regarding the soft skills. However, I tried my best to understand and analyze the essence of soft skills through the policy lenses.

Review of International and National Policy on Soft Skill and Employability

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is initiated with an objective that it serve the needs of working women and men by bringing government, workers to a set labor standard, develop policies and programs (ILO website). ILO was the first organization to formally state that there is a high need of employees with specific skill. However, it mentioned that skills are not tied up to a specific organization. In a research conducted by Wang (2012), he stated that ILO with a concept called ‘Portability of skills’ must be there. It means the skills should be transferable between jobs and easily recognized by employer (Wang, 2012).

International Labor Organisation (ILO) states that a person is unemployed in three cases. For instance, if the person is not working or when the person is searching for work opportunities or the person is not available to work (ILO, 2013) also cited in According to ILO report (2013), now many countries are developing new strategies to develop the employment aspect of young people. It believes that the development of employment aspect in term of humans develops the human capital which can increase the productivity. ILO states that the cores are the skills that affect the employability. Further, better education, trainings, motivations can help develop soft skills. Early on, soft skills are considered to be important however, not many rules, regulations and policies has been made in developing counties (Ahmad et al., 2017). ILO has also initiated the development of soft skills through various trainings.

The ILO started a program on soft skill training called business soft skill training under "The ILO's Workforce Readiness and Development Program." It helps to develop and enhance enterprise and individual through peer-learning network. The ILO regional office in Asia in Bangkok started trainings of 14 soft skills module. Therefore, it suggests the importance of soft skills in the global arena. It suggested that the key skill include strong communication skills, building positive relationship, Leadership etc. It focused the skill worker in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Home, n.d.).

According to USAID, the basic drivers of a country's journey to self-reliance are achieving sustained, high-quality learning and increasing educational results. Numerous studies show that children and adolescents with strong social and emotional skills, often known as soft skills, perform better in school, in life, and at work because they develop the abilities needed to live productive lives and

contribute constructively to society (*The Role of Social Emotional Learning and Soft Skills in USAID Policy*, 2019)). On September 14, 2018, the US Government unveiled its International Basic Education Strategy for Fiscal Years 2019-2023 (the Strategy). The Strategy's purpose is to create a future in which education systems in partner nations enable all people to gain the information and abilities they require to be fruitful members of society. The USAID Education Policy, which was announced in November 2018, lays out the agency's vision and strategy for assisting partner nations in improving capacity to provide better learning for children and youth (Welcome, n.d.). The main goal of USAID's educational programs is to achieve long-term, demonstrable improvements in learning outcomes and skill development which is connected with the growth of children and youth (USAID, 2019).

According to U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), people in US are looking to post-secondary education so that the students get the necessary soft skills for the future. It also states that the college degree is not enough to secure the job in the market. Therefore, the necessity of soft skill is very high to among students who can be a better work force (UM Students' Repository, n.d.). As per conference board of Canada as mentioned by University of Manitoba, (1877), “Employability skills are defined as the foundational academic, personal and teamwork skills that employers expect of workers and which they expect to be developed by the education”. Oral and written communications are the basis of simple and general employability skills. The core competencies for employability abilities in academic and professional success include the capacity for teamwork and critical thinking by (University of Manitoba, 1877). These are not just mere skills which are used to industries but these are the basic skills a healthy and

social human builds (University of Manitoba, 1877). They are abilities that are valuable in almost every social setting, including daily life, play, and the business (University of Manitoba, 1877). Additionally, employability skills serve as a bridge between the education and employment communities to “ensure that Canada is competitive and successful in the global economy” (McLaughlin, 1992).

This shows that the generating opportunities for the youths and preparing the youths is the core responsibility of the country. Since the type of work and the need for future jobs is not defined properly, Human Resource Development Canada, 1996 with its provincial agencies started thinking of the future need. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) research in the United States and the Canadian strategy of developing employable skills are similar (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). For instance, the SCANS report contained both the abilities needed for entry-level positions as well as those needed to succeed in the workplace (University of Manitoba, 1877). According to the research, it's critical for workers to possess a number of foundational skills (including written and spoken communication, decision-making, self-management, and integrity) as well as competencies (including time management, interpersonal skills, leadership, and negotiation abilities). Employability abilities as mentioned in (University of Manitoba, 1877) were characterized by Buck and Barrick (1987) to include reading, basic math, and other foundational skills; higher-order cognitive skills like problem solving and decision making; dependability; and affective skills like a positive attitude and cooperation (University of Manitoba, 1877).

In Kentucky, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and its Campuses University of Kentucky Community College System University of Louisville's Institutional Repository, n.d.) in 1960s, focused on workforce training. The education development policy of 1997 demonstrated that need of students and employers in Kentucky. This initiation was developed to improve the soft skills among workers in secondary, post-secondary and university level education.

A research conducted by KCTS in 2016 among students, faculty, leaders of community elaborated the importance of education with skills in all the levels. It focused on economic development and job growth along with 21st century workforce which can bring prosperity of Kentucky citizens.

In the context of Nepal, government of Nepal implements its plans and policies through its respective ministries. The constitution of Nepal (2015) has guaranteed few fundamental rights to the citizen in which it stated that the basic education till class eight is free and compulsory (Aticle 39). This article states that every child has the right to education, health care, appropriate upbringing, sports and overall personality development from the state and family. In order to meet the national curriculum goals, it has also introduced few specific books like Moral science, books for vocational trainings in its primary education. Further, the technical subjects (e.g.diploma in engineering, agriculture etc) are implemented after class 10. These technical subjects mainly focuses on hard skills rather than soft skills. Further, prioritization of hard skills can be seen in Technical and Vocational trainings conducted by CTEVT. In the contrary, the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) has clearly stated that the goals of education must connect education and life. This is possible only through the development of soft skills.

The implementation of extracurricular activities in the schools and colleges merely fulfill its objective of development of soft skills but it is taken as means of recreation in academic institutions in school level. However, in CTEVT program the technical skills are heavy that compared to soft skills.

The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) of 2009 had great plans. One of the plan was improve the quality of education. When we talk about improving the quality of education, our first priority is infrastructures. On the other hand, students in a class and the school opening days are also crucial for better education (Researchr epository. rmit.edu.au. n.d.). As a researcher, I believe that these are the hardware of an education system but the major software is the knowledge transfer and the skill transfer to the student. Even though, Nepal government tried to implement the SSRP (2009), it failed to cover the development of soft skills part inside and outside the classroom. Few, strategic moves for integrating soft skills in secondary education has been mentioned which is not sufficient as major priority was in infrastructure development.

A program called School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) was introduced and implemented from 2016. This plan has majorly three objectives. The basic education aimed to develop the physical, cognitive, social and emotional strength of children of age 4 to 12. It is in line with the constitution of Nepal 2015, that the basic education shall be free and compulsory. This advocated to access to quality education and promoting the life skills and value based education. Further, the secondary level education aimed to develop better human resources by providing the technical and secondary education. However, the importance of soft skill and its integrations in such level is least discussed.

Finally, SSDP (2016-2023) discussed about the lifelong learning and development of literacy to enhance learning habits among youths and adults.

The various ways that the government is playing to connect education, youths and employability seems better. However, if we see the policy in depth then the government has announced that the education is compulsory and free till class eight. It has not any specific plans on to engage the students after those classes. Since, many of the students are economically challenged, there is high possibility of drop outs and eventually these youths move to low paid labor jobs than high paying better jobs.

Research Gap

Development of soft skill is one of the challenges in developing countries like Nepal. The education system majorly focused in the development of hard skills like engineering, pharmacy, accounting etc. Even in India, it is no more different. However, there are few institutions which emphasize equally in hard skill development and soft skill development. Working in recruitment and selection team for more than five years, I have realized that the primary focus of the students is to achieve good grades in the school, colleges and universities. Similar data was also presented by Gautam (2016) which states that youths lack soft skills as college prioritize cognitive growth. I have found that a student with good grades could not articulate about his achievements in a proper way. While we talk a lot about education in Norway, Finland, US, UK, many youths are attracted to higher education as they have the sense that education in west is better one. On reviewing the policy regarding education in US, I found that there is a lot of policy that helps to integrate the soft skill with the hard skill. In Europe, many students learn in class in teams, in peers, do project based learning, actively

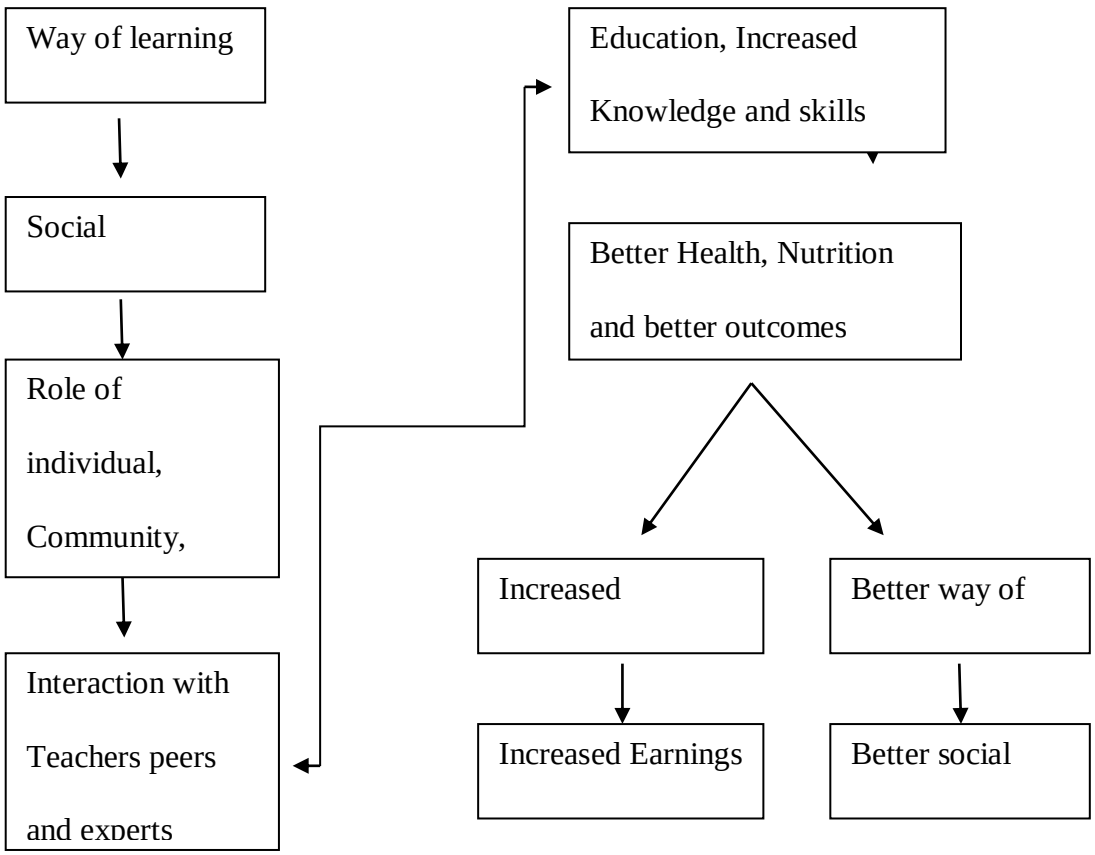
participate in presentations, group discussions etc. to develop the soft skills. Nepal tried to implement different program to introduce soft skills in primary, secondary and higher secondary education through policy interventions but it failed to understand the perspectives of how student learn soft skills in their surroundings and its contribution to generate employability particularly in context of Nepal.

Theoretical Framework

This framework pictures the process of this dissertation. Two major phases of the study is shown in this framework. The conceptual framework clearly articulates two major theories for socio economic development of human. This visualizes how the way of learning helps to develop the knowledge and skill particularly the soft skills. Once we develop learning, one individual can contribute to better skills and increase the productivity for better jobs and better employment opportunity to enhance the socio-economic condition of human.

Figure 6

Theoretical Framework



(Idea modified from Vygotsky, 1962; Becker, 1964)

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews literature of the focus area for my study. Particularly, I reviewed the literatures around soft skills and employability. I reviewed the literature related to soft skills, learning, way of learning, youths, employability as part of thematic review. It helped me to understand and analyze the basic concepts. I consulted the journals and articles of various scholars as a part of empirical review. It helped me understand what all the studies that are already done under the headings of my research. It guided me to what were the findings of the research on soft skills and where could be the potential research gap. In the theoretical review section, I studied a theory and found out how human capital is the key to connect productivity and how human capital can be maximized with integration of soft skills. Lastly, the policy review was done where I studied about the different national and international policies related to soft skills, its growth and employability.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research is completely qualitative in nature. The purpose of qualitative research is to investigate and comprehend the significance that individuals or groups attribute to a social (CORE, 2017) or human situation (Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2003) added that qualitative research serves the purpose of locating, examining, and comprehending the significance of individuals or groups in relation to a social or human problem (Zerwas, 2019). My study is also based on a qualitative research method where I followed interpretive paradigm. In this chapter, I discuss how I applied narrative inquiry and the tools and the technique during the narrative inquiry. I discuss the research process, data generation strategy, data analysis and ethical considerations of my research. The objective of my study was to find out the stories of students on how they understand the soft skills and how soft skill contributes to the employability. I wanted to diagnose and explore their ideas of soft skill development and its integration in the job that they are aspiring.

Research Paradigm: Interpretive Research Paradigm

I had chosen Interpretive Research Paradigm as I believe that knowledge can be created. As an interpretive researcher, I tried to understand the research participants at their cultural context by learning to stand on their shoes (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The prolonged interaction helped me as a researcher to know the belief system, world view of the participant. Interpretive research paradigm helped me to engage with my research participants in the natural setting which explored on what they do, say and believe. Once the exportation was done, it opened a way to construct the knowledge regarding the understanding of contribution of soft

skills and employability. The meaning was then constructed by engaging in the world they are interpreting (Creswell, 2003). I engaged with my participants in a natural setting to develop the subjective realities. Looking at the ontological perspective, I believe in multiple realities and meaning making is socially constructed (Saunders et al., 2015). Further, I focus on stories, interpretations and perception of people for the data source. Therefore the methodology is narrative in nature. Lastly looking at the axiological values I believe the research is subjective in nature and the researcher is part of what is researched (Saunders et al., 2015). In a similar fashion, I explored the view-points of my research participants. I talked with the participants about their own understanding of soft skills and how they obtained the soft skills for the job they aspire in near future. Interpretive research method had basically five methods of inquiry. I had chosen "Narrative inquiry" as a methodology for the study.

Research Design: Narrative Inquiry

As stated above, I have used narrative inquiry in my research (Lessard et al., 2014). It is a multidisciplinary subject that has evolved and used in different fields like economics, anthropology, sociology and so on which (Riessman, 2008) called the ' narrative turn' as cited in Wells (2011). I am using narrative inquiry as it can uncover unique and deep understanding of a culture, context and situations. One of the major strength of the methodology is it gives the voice to the voiceless people whose perspectives is not often considered. Narrative inquiry has helped me to study the stories and experiences of my participants (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Furthermore, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) stated that this method was very helpful in understanding and inquiring the experiences in collaboration with researcher in a place over certain period of time. I listened, observed, took notes

and interpreted texts regarding the soft skills and its contribution to employability. In narrative inquiry, having or developing strong relationship or bond was very important while collecting the stories. It helped me to bring out the authentic stories and experiences of the participants.

We should be highly aware of everything going on in the environment when constructing narrative inquiry study design. Designing narrative inquiry requires imagination, which means we must conceive the life space in which we will conduct our study, the location where our participants reside, and the location where those lived experiences exist. He further adds that there are basically four ways to narrate the experience which are living, telling, retelling and reliving. During the interview process I was listening to their inner stories and trying to live their experience. This helped me to generate the data on soft skills and employability. Further, there lies the three dimension of narrative inquiry which are temporality, sociality and palace. Temporality discusses about past, present and future. The sociality deals with the thoughts and feelings of both researcher and participant. Finally, palace is about the impact of setting or the environment. The narrative inquiry helps to explore the experiences of the participants (Haydon et al, 2016). Therefore this methodology has helped me to explore the experiences of the undergraduate students. They were able to discuss, define soft skills, the ways of learning soft skills and their personal experiences on how they feel about the contribution of soft skills to jobs (Walden University Research, n.d.). In the flow, I encouraged my participant to be open and share their thoughts in an authentic way regarding their understanding and contribution of soft skills and employability. As a researcher, I was able to gather the stories from five participants.

Study Site and Participants Selection

The study site I have chosen was Trichandra Campus which is a constituent campus under Tribhuwan University. It is in Ghantaghar, Kathmandu. It is the first and pioneer college established by King Tribhuwan and Prime Minister Chandra Sumsher. The main reason for selecting this site is due to my interest of working with the young graduates of Science. I am working in this college for few years to recruit potential youths for the Fellowship program of Teach for Nepal (TFN). Therefore, I am very comfortable with the surrounding. Similarly, I have been supporting Youth Red cross circle and the youths through different workshops. Therefore, I am very much comfortable with the undergraduates of this college. Further, I am also a student of science and technology which made me easy to build the rapport with the undergraduate students. This way I was able to best leverage my position to seek my answer for the research questions.

In qualitative research, participants are purposefully chosen as subjects; those who can best answer the research questions and deepen understanding of the topic being studied are chosen (Creswell, 2009) also mentioned in (Creative Commons, 2022). Therefore, I made a deliberate choice to select the five participants. These five participants were those whom I have worked earlier when they were working as volunteer. I have chosen the graduates from science faculty. The reason to choose graduates from science was because of my academic alignment. I had worked with a lot of science graduates during the recruitment and selection process of Teach For Nepal (TFN). The students are those who are the fresh graduate of the college. I chose only five participants as I believed that these five students has the potential to share their thoughts on my research question. In

order to make the research more qualitative, I was very mindful in maintaining the balance on gender, ethnicity and other demographic measures. I have given the Pseudo name as Sushmita, Ashish, Anu, Yogendra and Nikesh.

Table 1

Demographic information of Participants

Pseudo Names	**Subject of Study**	**Gender**	**Ethnicity**
Sushmita	Geology	Female	Khas,Arya
Ashish	Microbiology	Male	Khas Arya
Anu	Microbiology	Female	Madheshi
Yogendra	Physics	Male	Dalit
Nikesh	Environment Science	Male	Janajati

A Short Introduction of Participants

Sushmita: Sushmita is an undergraduate student from Tri- Chandra Campus. She finished her bachelor's degree in Geology. She is from western hill of Nepal. She was also a member of Youth Red-Cross member and worked for 1 year as a member. Later she developed an aspiration to lead the team. She was elected as a secretary of the Youth Red Cross in Tri- Chandra College and led the team for 1 more year. She was thinking about joining the Masters program or to search for the job.

Ashish: Ashish is an ungergraduate student from Tri-Chandra Campus and completed his bachelor's degree in Microbiology. He also taught in a private school as a lower secondary teacher. He wanted to something remarkable to contribute to the nation. He is also an executive member of Youth Red Cross and is a volunteer for Leo club of Jawalakhel. His permanent residence is a hill in the

west of Nepal and now stays inside Kathmandu. He recently joined a publication as an employee. Further, he wants to pursue higher education.

Anu: She is originally from eastern city. Now, she is staying with her parents in Kathmandu. She is pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Microbiology and she was waiting for her final year result (at the time of my interview). She is a member at Microbiology Association of Nepal. She wanted to engage in laboratory of hospital and also do Masters in few years. She generally reads articles, and books related to science and technology.

Yogendra: Yogendra is an undergraduate student in physics from Tri – Chandra campus. Yogendra is from Lumbini which is the western part of Nepal. He completed his schooling and migrated to Kathmandu to do his further studies. He aspires to complete his Masters and do PhD in physics. He represents marginalized community of the western part. Recently, he has been teaching in a public school in Dang.

Nikesh: Nikesh is an undergraduate in environment science from Tri- Chandra campus. He is originally from far west and now staying in outskirt of Kathmandu. He is working as a part time science teacher in one of the private school and supports class 6-10. He is also preparing for Public Service Commission (PSC) also known as Lok Sewa aayog from which interested people apply for job in ureaucracy. He wanted to serve the country and is trying to compete in PSC.

Engaging my participants

Initially, I was planning to meet my participants in in-person and employ formal ways to take interviews. However, due to the COVID crisis I had to shift all my plans into virtual ways. Working virtually in such a crisis where access to internet was limited in different parts of the country made my work more

challenging. Once the plan for selection of the participants was ready, I divided my timeline into basic three categories. Once I finalized my participants, I called them through phone to explain the objective of the interview. Once they agreed, I set a meeting of 1 hour with each of my participants. The time was set according to the feasibility of the participants.

The second part was to engage the candidates through interview process. Even in the interview, I build the rapport and discussed on the objective of the meeting. Once they were ready the interview was conducted. I had already prepared the interview guideline questions but I was not limited to it. During the interview, I let the natural flow of the interview and listened and interacted with the participants. Once the interview was done and I analyzed my data, few missing data were collected through phone calls.

Data Generation Strategies

As mentioned above in research paradigm, I employed interpretive method of qualitative research. Further, I chose to use narrative inquiry and employed in-depth interview to understand the context. For this purpose, I took online field notes and also a voice recorder that helped me to record the oral stories and experiences. I conducted the in-depth interview through zoom and also recorded the entire conversation. I also used telephone calls and Google meet to clarify on certain points.

It was really hard for me to find the right participants because most of my research participants were scattered and were in different geographical location. This made the in-depth interview little hard because some of my research participants were not in easy access of internet and mobile networks. Through the telephone conversation, I elaborated the objective of the interview. Once they

were convinced, the date and the time for the virtual interview were set. Shifting in-person interviews to virtual in-person interviews were one of the strategies that I followed as the preventive measures. I used unstructured (open-ended) and semi structured interviews, conducted informal conversation and did phone calls during the narrative inquiry. I also prepared interview guideline which was again based on my research question. It was done under direct supervision of my thesis supervisor and used it while conducting the in-depth interviews.

In-depth Interview

According to Boyce and Neale (2006) extensive one-on-one interview with a small number of respondents is used as part of the in-depth interview technique to investigate their understanding or viewpoints on a particular subject or scenario (KovsieScholar Home, 2022).The plan of the in-depth interview initiated after I fix the participants. After that I made in-depth interview guidelines and later I jumped in to take the interviews. Working in recruitment and selection, I personally believe that taking interview is one of the best ways to collect the information (Creswell, 2009). I used in-depth interview to know about the experiences, views, stories and their belief from my participants. In-depth interview was useful to get detailed information about individual's thoughts and behaviors. My participants were able to freely use the space to discuss on the questions relating to soft skill. They were very elaborative and presented their views regarding soft skills. Later I switched my questions to the contribution of soft skills to employability and they responded to my questions and shared their feelings regarding the contribution of soft skills to employability. I was able to give a better relaxed place for the respondent to freely communicate with me (Guest, n.d.).

Before conducting the interviews I had this conversation over phone to set up a meeting time and talked briefly over the phone. I prepared an interview guideline including the interview questions which helped me to catch a flow for the interview. However, I was aware to keep open ended questions and open to include their experiences. I collected the ideas, views and experiences of my participants on soft skill, their ways of learning which contributes to the employability. Each interview lasted for nearly 60 minutes. However, the pace of the participant for each interview was different. The in-depth interview was conducted with the participants virtually and on their own choice of time. I prioritized the interview through zoom platform.

Field Notes

Field notes are frequently advised in qualitative research as a way to record necessary contextual information, according to Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018). Field notes ensured rich context endures past the initial research. It provides rich background for the analysis of data. I took in-depth interview with five of the participants and recorded the stories and experiences of my participants in my cell phone as audio and in laptop through zoom recording. At the same time, I took the notes in my laptop using the Microsoft word to ensure richer information.

According to Flick (2009), a field note was a way to document the information and answer while doing the interview. Therefore it helped me to collect the written information from the participants. It helped a lot to record the information and also write the facial expression, body language and other emotions during the interview. I believed that this would help me to get more appropriate data.

Data Analysis

Fowler (2009) suggests that once the data is gathered, we have to analyze it EUDL (n.d.). The process by which researchers convert the data to a story or in form of number to deliver the insights is called as data analysis. I had mentioned about the data collection method and approach in the above paragraphs. I collected the experiences, beliefs, emotions and stories of my participants. I took the video and audio and also kept a field notes to keep all the track of my participants. Later, my job was to transcribe the field notes, audio and video to generate the stories. In the next chapter, I have interpreted the stories and experiences and generated the meanings. To generate the meaning, the data was coded. It helped me to fine tune the data. The data was read and re-read to find the similarities and unique points. The coding was done through a manual process. The meanings are generated in accordance with my research question about the different ways of learning of soft skill and its contribution to employability. I believed that the narrative analysis to understand the stories and experiences has helped me a lot.

While making the meaning, it was necessary for me to review the experiences and stories multiple times. It took huge effort to go through the entire video of the interview and to read, understand and analyze the statements from my participants. My approach was then to group the similarities and differences from where I was able to generate the themes. Some of the themes are Extra-curricular Activities (ECA) based learning in school and colleges, technology enhanced learning, developing value to life, measuring soft skills- a new system of evaluation etc. The themes were later narrated in chapters. The human emotion and behavior in the interview process was also taken into consideration when they

were sharing their experiences. This played a vital role in authentic narration in the research.

Quality Standards

According to Research Repository. (n.d.), the prerequisites for qualitative research's trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability also explained by Linclon and Guba (1985). It is very important that we must have a good research. Since, my research is qualitative in nature; I have employed four quality standards which are credibility, transferability, trustworthiness and transferability.

Trustworthiness

Sandelowski (1993) noted that trustworthiness is a question of persuasion because the scientist is thought to have made those methods apparent and hence auditable (ResearchGate, 2019). I have used trustworthiness as internal and external validity of my research. In qualitative research, maintaining the quality standard is very crucial. I have described the research process, the methodology and necessary evidence of my research in more detailed way. I believed that this will help me demonstrate the process in a much detailed way. Further, I have discussed credibility and transferability to maintain the trustworthiness of my research.

Credibility

Credibility is also known as believability (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Believability or credibility is the combination of trustworthiness and expertise. Credibility helps to represent the actual voice of the participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). I have included the actual voice of participants on their ways of learning of soft skills. My participant was also able to put the voice clearly on the

contribution of soft skill to employability. I took the interview and mentioned their voices with utmost integrity. I was also aware about the biasness in me. Shenton (2004) states that credibility helps to maintain the internal validity that helps ensure what the study wanted to find out. The credibility of the research can be maintained through prolonged engagement, triangulations and member checks. For a long time, I have been in a close contact with them even before the interview process as part of my work which ensured prolonged engagement. Further, I sat virtually with my participants to cross check the analysis and the findings which is also known as cross checking. This helped me to ensure the analysis and findings portion.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research can be achieved through thick description of the phenomenon under the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore I made a deliberate attempt to provide all the process in a detailed way so as to make the description thick. Further, I gave a detailed description of my participants and also mentioned their detailed story. Furthermore, I have described the context, site of my research in a proper way. Having an in depth understanding will help other researcher to transfer the result in other settings as well. Shenton (2004) explains that some of the research can easily be replicable in other setting as well whereas some of the research may not be applicable at all. It is about research in different context and different time.

Research Ethics

Guidelines for the ethical conduct of research were offered by research ethics. In order to establish a high ethical standard, it also taught and oversaw experts performing research (Babcock University, n.d.). It is about duty, rights,

harm and benefits (Alderson and Morrow, 2004) Ethical considerations are important issues that every researcher adopts while carrying out the research. Ethical considerations are important issues that every researcher needs to adopt while carrying out a research. During this research, I have used ethical guidelines of my college like informed consent, maintained privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

I informed my participants about the necessary consent, and explained the aims, objective of the interview and assured them about confidentiality. I explained that the participation was voluntary and they had the right to refuse to answer any question or leave interview at their will (World Health Organization, n.d.). I also ensured participants that the information will not be exposed, and no harm will come to them. The informed consent gave the participant freedom to make decision to participate voluntarily and enabled them to evaluate any options.

To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, I have not mentioned their real name and used pseudonyms instead in the report and information was not shared with any other participants or other people. I requested interview in their convenience and asked for their consent for recording the audio and the video.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is about the research paradigm, research methodology, research method, research approach, data collection tools and analysis (UPSpace Home, n.d.). I have used interpretive research paradigm where I used qualitative research methods and narrative inquiry to explore the ways of learning of soft skills and its contribution to the employability. I employed in-depth interview as a tool to collect the data in form of experiences and stories. During the semi structured interview, I took fields notes and recorded the interview in both audio and video format. I also explained the research site and research ethics in this section. I also mentioned the shift of in person interview to virtual interview due to COVID 19. I was able to follow the plan of my research proposal and performed five virtual semi structured interview. Later I also mentioned about generating the stories from the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have mentioned experiences, beliefs of my participants in form of stories. They are sharing on different ways of learning of soft skills throughout their life. In this chapter, I have included the stories of my five participants on ways of learning.

Ashish: Less Learning Through Formal Education

Ashish is one of my participant. He is an undergraduate student from Tri-Chandra Campus and completed his bachelor's degree in Microbiology. I knew him when he was in his third year of his bachelor. He was little shy and was not open to sharing his thoughts and emotion at that time. He belongs from western hills of Nepal. He completed his schooling from government school and came to Kathmandu for his higher education. He completed his plus two from one of the private college in Kathmandu. Later he joined his bachelor's in 2016 where he wanted to pursue his higher degree in Microbiology. While studying bachelor degree, he was also enrolled as a private teacher in a private school as a lower secondary teacher. He wanted to do something remarkable to contribute to the nation. Therefore, he was also active in different clubs like Leo club, Red Cross Circle etc. He is also an executive member of Youth Red Cross and is a volunteer for Leo club of Jawalakhel. He recently joined a publication as an employee.

After the quick introduction, I asked about his soft skill knowlegede in school and he started to explain. He said, 'during my school days, I was sent to an average school where I tried to do my best. I always wanted to equip myself in terms of academics and non-academic aspect. I always wanted to work in my soft

skill part particularly in communication, facing audience and team work. But, it did not happen in my school till class 10'. When I started to take his interview, he states that he is little confused on what to tell. Later, I explained him everything and he was ready for it. He states "I don't know much about soft skill as I have not done any research about it". Later I explained him to share what he knows and it is about your feeling, emotion and knowledge. He was comfortable and started to share in detail. He descirbes, "soft skills are the skills like communication, presentation, teamwork that helps to add value to human life." He tries to explain through an example, "we care less about the person who is not a team player and can express well to the friends." Later, I asked him on how he learnt the soft skills. He answers very quickly. "There is not a single place where I learnt soft skills. I learnt soft skills from my family, training institute, seniors." He adds,"one can learn less soft skills from the formal education as our formal institutions are not well equipped with resources."He further states, "I have heard few other friends who are studying abroad have good set of skills as they mention that the teaching learning pedagogy was much different and advanced in countries like Canada, USA and Australia." I asked him if he learnt soft skills in their academics. He starts to share. I studied in a government school from class 1 to class 10 where the priority of school was to finish the curriculum. Most of the times the teachers asked us to repeat the paragraph and memorize which makes the priority to just finish the course book. I understood that he is implying towards rote learning method. Further, I asked him how you developed communication skills, presentation skills, and team work in the school. He could not remember much but he adds, "The soft skill part is less focused in our formal education." He further states, "There was a subject called 'Moral Science' from which I learnt do

and don't. It taught us about the attitude and behavior that a good student must have. He further adds, I could not remember much of the activities that was done in the class". He remembers a incident he explains, "I had a few friends who were studying in class 10 and at one point of time they were sharing about the presentation, group discussion, drawings etc." He says, "I had a teacher who used to divide different topics of science and ask us to prepare for poster presentation in mini groups. He sometimes asked us to make drawings related to books and beyond. This way we learnt to communicate, present, share our ideas and develop creativity." From his sharing, I understood that our schools from basic to secondary level (Class 10) in public school prioritize very less in development of soft skills.

I was much interested in learning soft skills in higher education. So I asked him if he was able to get such a chance in his high school (pus two). He started to explain, 'I come to a private institution that to in Kathmandu was very hard. It was hard for me to find a small room on rent and had to commute every day to the class. Even the class was very rigorous and I had no time for other engagement.' He further adds, 'the primary focus of the college was to finish the subject content in time and to prepare for the board exams. There was not a single activity or action that could help for the development of soft skills.' He adds there used to be practical of physics, chemistry and biology and we had viva-voce of 5 -10 minute each to answer the question of teachers. There used to be groups of 4-5 member to do the presentation.

I asked him whether the status was same or different in Tri-Chandra College. With a long breathe he explains, "Not much in college". He adds, 'It is a government college and it is huge. There are more than 150 teachers and more

than 7000 students in different faculty.' He further explains, 'The infrastructure is too old and other facilities are worse. Even it is hard for us to get pure drinking water and toilets in such a scenario it is very hard to talk about quality education and other skills.' He tells, so there is very less chance of development of soft skill in the college. 'May be college wanted us to learn the skill to work in team which I did not know' he concludes.

I was much interested to learn more so I asked him if they did projects like I did in my college. He explains, "Every year teacher gives the assignment and ask us to do projects and assign groups. Since there is no proper method of monitoring system the project is carried by 1 or 2 friends from a group of 5." He further states, "Most of the friends do not take it seriously and they do not do the delegated work. Later the pressure is back on to few friends who wanted to finish it. Later all other friend come and copy the project and finish it." In my college days, I remember my college asking us to do the thesis as a part of research. I was curious to know about the thesis and projects. He spontaneously answers. "We have to do thesis and projects in final year. There is a proposal defense for 5-7 minute and we work on thesis and present the work. Since there is a lot of student, neither student nor the college takes it seriously. So, we are failing to explore the opportunity to develop the soft skills."

Suneela (2014) argued that the soft skills are the basic skills and one of the most important skills is communication skills. She also mentioned that the other soft skills included critical thinking, team work, and time management and so on. In the context of my participant he was able to define the soft skills but he failed to state other sorts of soft skills. He only presented few but key soft skills like communication, presentation, teamwork etc. Further, Suneela (2014) stated that

teachers and lecturer can help the student to learn the soft skills. My participant agreed on the terms but he was not sure if that applies in the context of Nepal. He reflected one of the subjects back in school days (Naitik Sikshya) and stated that the moral science helped him and his friends to learn most of the soft skills. While the researcher stated that the key ways to develop the soft skills involved the active participation of lecturers and teachers through oral presentation, brain storming, flip charts and so on (Suneela, 2014) my participant reflected that these are the ways by which the soft skills can be developed but he also mentioned that these techniques of learning was not suitable or favorable in the context of public schools and public colleges and there are a lot of students in the class and the number of teachers or lecturers are less to support the students. He also mentioned that according to his friends they were able to work on their skills through the constant support and push from their supervisors and lecturers.

According to Campbell (1971), training is a planned experience which brings a long term transformation in human's knowledge, skill and mindset ("Open Access Publications | Best Scientific Journals Online", 2022). Therefore, training and development can help build the skill of people. Many schools and organization develop their own training module to harness the skills in their students or their employee. Upon discussion with my participant he was also very positive to the idea that soft skills can be learnt from different training institute. He also communicated that many of his friends joined the training institute to learn different soft skills like public speaking, radio jockey, few computer skills etc. This showed that the youth of today believe in training to develop their knowledge, skill and mindset. Campbell (1971) suggested that many school and organization develop their module of harnessing skills. My participant partially

agreed that there are few organizations in Nepal that actually invests their employee. Also, he could not name or remember the schools that use their own module of soft skill development. Gautam (2016) also explained that there are many academic institutions that prioritize student's cognitive domain rather than focusing on developing the skills. The statement also backs the statement from my participants that the academic institution is less focused to developing the soft skills rather it is more inclined to development of hard skills. I have also felt the same but in recent years and as per my experience, I have seen few institutions that actually included and practiced soft skill module in their curriculum. These are just few institutions that cater to very few students.

I agree with the statement that most of the educational institution of Nepal do not focus on soft skill development. According to social constructivism theory, there must be a continuous interaction of people to develop soft skills. From the literature review section it is evident that the educational institutions focus on development of hard skills to soft skills. Limiting the activities like oral presentation, brainstorming, free writing etc. has an impact in students learning. Hence, the growth opportunity of soft skills is limited through formal education. There are also non formal ways like training institute, family and community from where we can learn the basic soft skills. So, a balance of soft skill development through formal ways and informal ways has to be incorporated in the college.

Nikesh: Technology Enhanced Learning

Nikesh is an undergraduate in environment science from Tri- Chandra campus. He is originally from Kalayia and now staying in Kirtipur. He is working as a part time science teacher in one of the private school and supports class 6-10.

He is also preparing for Public Service Commission (PSC) also known as Lok Sewa Aayog. He wanted to serve the country and is trying to compete in PSC.

My experience on use of technology in the class started in 2009 when I joined my undergraduate studies in India. Before that, I never knew that technology can be used in classes. I used to hear audio and visual classes when schools and colleges used to open admission. The real use of laptops, audio books, videos, google classroom was initiated for the first time in my undergraduate. I also used e-learning platforms to learn a lot of things. According to Nitesh, 'soft skills are the skills like speaking, writing qualities. These are skills rather than one's field and are extra to studying. It is also learning achieved from life'. When I asked him where did you learn soft skills from? He adds, "From everywhere". Nikesh explains, 'the only thing is we must know that there are teachings and learning in different step of life.' I was very curious to learn such idea and wanted to learn more. He further adds, 'one can learn from community and its surroundings, school and colleges, from seniors like teachers, politicians'. He says, 'There are different activities in school where one can learn different soft skills.'

He states, "We call this time an era of science and technology where there is fast internet service and millions of ways to get connected to billions of people. We have mobile phones in our hand and that too is smart nowadays. So, we have this opportunity to connect to internet. Further, the use of internet has been popular in Nepali market. So, the use of technology has been a boon to this generation. In such a generation, there can be two options, first is to use it to waste money and time where we as a youths use it to kill the time and such action do not add any value to self." Second option is to use it in a better way. I like this

conversation and I ask how a youth can use technology and internet in a better way.

He further adds, “Internet ma jasto video ni paincha” which means all kind of videos are available in internet. He further adds, “Internet is the key to vast ocean of knowledge. It depends what kind of knowledge you want to get. We can always surf videos that is of our interest.” Quickly, I added- what kind of videos do you see and where? He said that there are numerous platforms nowadays. Initially, Google was the platform from where we used to search things but now we use different websites from where we can learn. He states, “I am a big fan of motivational speech and motivational speaker. Every day I use to listen to the speech of Mr. Sandeep Maheshwari, Mr. Sujit Lalwani from India.” He has been following these speakers from long time. Further, He tells, I use to listen to Steve Jobs, Jack Ma etc. I asked him if he learns from such big people. He says ‘No”. He adds,“ we can learn from small to big people.” He said he has learnt leadership skills and people management skills looking at many people. He says, “I am always fascinated by the way how the conductor of the bus manages the people.” He explains with the increase in use of mobile phones and laptops which are connected to websites like YouTube has helped to learn presentation skills, communication skills, storytelling skills and so on. Therefore, he believes that advanced technology has made such learning possible.

Further, He speaks about storytelling and quotes a person “Saigrace” who is a new name among Nepali youth. He says, “he is the one who can tell stories in a brilliant way. The story is from the experiences and knowledge of the author.”Nitesh told that the experiences in the form of story has helped him to develop listening skills and finding the ways to solve the life problems. So he

believed that the story telling is also a skill and it has motivated him to think of creativity. It also developed the knowledge and taught new things related to life. He adds, “Such learning can also be found in Facebook videos, Tiktok and in form of videos.”

He also reflects the COVID situation. He explains that during the COVID the online or the distant learning was possible due to the access to the technology. During that time many youths were learning different skills in online platform. He further explains, “My digital skills was not good in school and in college so it was a good opportunity to learn the digital skills in the COVID situation”. He shares about his experiences of teaching through use of videos and movies... He remembers, there is a student who was shy and the child did not have any TV in his home so the use of laptop and projector has helped a lot. He remembers a particular movie called ‘Three Idiots” which helped to develop the creativity of students in the schools. Explaining all the experience and his teaching he elaborated how audio and visuals and use of technology can help students learn the different skills that they need in 21st century. Therefore, he believes “one of the ways to learn the soft skill is technology based learning.”

Kirkwood and Price who are the senior lecturer in UK Open University are involved in academia more than 25 years (Browse Journals by Subject, n.d.) where they emphasize the importance of technology in academics. Kirkwood and Price (2014) assessed role of technology (Kirkwood & Price, 2014) in the enhancement of the learning and they found out the having the technology integrated into the curriculum helped the students to enhance the learning and the learning experience. My participant was also implying that the integration of technology in the curriculum helps to develop the learning. According to

UNESCO, the use of internet, communication and technology is increasing very rapidly. Additionally, it states that technology-based education encompasses online education, computer-based education, virtual classrooms, and online collaboration. In my interview, my participant was stating that the internet now has the vast knowledge and skills. The right use of such platform helps the learner to learn new things which can be integrated into existing knowledge. A similar finding has also been developed by the UNESCO. This implies that technology-based learning can be one of the major learning platform for 21st century. Similarly, UNESCO states that platforms like social media, social software, blogs and wikis offers a new opportunity for assessing knowledge, create contents and collaborate online. My participant identified and elaborated the role of social media (Handle Proxy, n.d.), Youtube and Google to promote learning. He was also able to identify key soft skills like leadership skills, management skills, listening skills and problem solving skills. Similarly Dimitrova and Mitrovic (2018) stated about learning from visual and social media. They explained that learning from such platforms enhances the 21st century skills. Further they stated that the videos can help the students to develop reflection which also be beneficial (BusinessBalls.com, n.d.) to develop presentation skills (Dimitrovaan & Mitrovic, 2018).

According to Social Constructivism Theory (SCT), it states that the learning is possible in society and is created through interactions and experiences. It can now be connected to the interaction through the means of communication and internet. According to UNESCO (2006), in last 10 years and particularly in Nepal, the use of internet, communication and technology has increased. Many people now have the access to mobile phones and internet. As the internet is the

vast source of knowledge, it has added ease to learn different skills like presentation, storytelling, creativity etc. Connecting it to the use of technology into the curriculum can help develop innovation in teaching and enrich learning experience. Thus, this statement also supports the theory that the knowledge can be constructed in a through use of technology.

Sushmita: ECA based Learning from School to College

Sushmita is an undergraduate student from Tri- Chandra Campus. She finished her bachelor's degree in Geology. She is from Gulmi, Nepal. She was also a member of Youth Red-Cross member and worked for 1 year as a member. Later she developed an aspiration to lead the team. She was elected as a secretary of the Youth Red Cross in Tri- Chandra College and led the team for 1 more year. After her quick introduction, she was ready to share her experience. I asked her about the soft skills. She understood soft skills like social skills that included communication and ability to convince others. She feels, "a person has no soft skills then a person lags behind." Upon further inquiry, on how she learns the soft skills she explains number of ways from where one can learn the soft skills. Out of nowhere she speaks "Extracurricular activities" So, I was much interested to know on learning the soft skills through extracurricular activities (Johannes Schleutker, 2021).

I experienced a mixed feeling on learning of soft skills in school (Johannes Schleutker, 2021) and colleges through ECA. I went to a school where ECA was a less priority. That hard feeling still exists because I wonder I would have been a different person now if school use of prioritize soft skills. In my college days, there were enough activities that helped promoted my soft skills. So I agree with the narrative that ECA helps to develop soft skills.

"School is the first place after home from where we start to learn a lot through formal education", says Sushmita. She explains that the school where she studied used to conduct a lot of programs in the school. She remembered that there used to be individual activities and team activities so she feels," Jatidherai program, tetidherai exposure". She feels that higher the program, more choices the students get to participate. She remembered that she used to participate in many program in different class. Even teachers also encouraged the students to take part in many activities. Her school used to conduct morning assembly where students had to step up and run the assembly by leading quiz, quotes and news of the day. Seniors used to do it and we used to follow therefore such skills are transferable from seniors to the juniors. There used to be many sports of which volleyball was one of it. She believes, "ECA like volleyball also builds skills." She adds, "I still remember the day when my teacher motivated her to join the volleyball." She learnt a little but this added a hope that at least she could try. This has helped her to be more confident. Even in school she used to be house vice-captain followed by house captain. She says, "This changed my nature and made me more outgoing."

Later she started to explain about her higher school. She adds, high school was annoying because there used to be farewell and welcome events only and "my major focus was to study science which needed more time and commitment". In Bachelors, she decided to step up and lead for herself. She believes, 'Leadership is the key to each and every problem.' She wanted to work in a team and lead the team as she believed "Team work builds the dream work." She says, 'Soon after I join Bachelors, I use to follow seniors and I use to learn from them'. She used to learn from the senior brothers and sisters. She adds that she had to understand

self-skill and ask for support wherever necessary. She says, ‘I learnt the volunteerism spirit from my mentors and seniors.’ In the first year, it was more about exploration and following the seniors. After that she used to be member of youth red cross and volunteer. She explains, ‘during volunteering I learnt many skills and more importantly I learnt to work in team and be confident.’ She also used to seek support from the seniors and senior asked me to be little political and tactful so it has been a platform for her to practice her leadership skills.

Further, she adds “I nominated myself” in the position of Secretary. It was quite challenging for me but I persisted. She said that even to do anything she needed to coordinate to the branch office and to the people of higher post and also pitch the idea on what they wanted to do. Even when the main office wanted to do programs she was called and they asked for the volunteer mobilization. She feels, ‘I was able to develop the communication and the negotiation skills from them.’ She believes it was very important for her to build the public relation with the volunteers in order to leverage their help. She states, ‘This helped me to develop my people management skills.’ Therefore, she believed that the extracurricular activities (ECA) helps to promote lot of skills (Tan et al., 2021) and we must be aware that these things are integrated in schools and in formal education to increase the soft skills of pupils (Syahril et al., 2021).

From interaction with my participant I was able to find that one of the ways to learn the soft skill is to be engaged in extracurricular activities in schools and in colleges. While interacting with teachers, students, colleague one gets an opportunity to talk to them, work closely to them and brainstorm new ideas from where one can learn soft skills. Such interaction can happen inside the school/colleges and outside of it. Such interaction can help develop the learning.

Student who engages in ECA beyond the classroom help to increase their human and social capital (Kuh, 1995). She also stated that there will be growth in interpersonal skills particularly critical thinking and teamwork. Further, Kuh (1995) suggested that students who participate in different clubs and organizations help the students to learn the value of Teamwork, diversity, competition, culture, critical thinking etc. This platform also help student to properly channelize the skills learnt in the classroom and apply skills in the real-world setting (Kuh, 1995). The above finding from different scholar was very much similar to the data that I compiled while interacting with my participant. Therefore, a claim that ECA modulates the soft skill can be generated (Feraco et al., 2021). My participant also claimed that ECA helps a student to develop confidence, negotiation, and communication. Eccles et al. (2003) suggested that the ECA helps student to face the challenges, interact with other people and develop confidence to explore about self.

Connecting all the above knowledge I come to a point to employ the social constructivism theory in this context. As the theory suggests that the learning is possible through the interaction of people with others to develop the understanding of the world and the people, community culture is at the center, I feel that human interaction is crucial in ECA. A student interacts with peers, students, and teachers, family to learn different set of skill. Thus, ECA enhances the learning of soft skills (CORE, 2017).

Anu: Trainings, Workshops and Internships Develop Soft Skills

Anu was born in Biratnagar and brought up in Kathmandu. She is living with her parents in Kathmandu. She just completed her bachelor's degree in Microbiology. Recently, she is doing internship in one of the hospitals in Lalitpur.

She is doing internship because she feels that doing internship helps her to develop her technical skills that are needed to become a good microbiologist. Despite, internship she is also engaged in other organization like Nepal scout, Red-cross society, Microbiology Association of Nepal etc. as a volunteer or as a member. Her future aspiration is to become a good microbiologist by developing the necessary skills and doing higher education and research in the field of microbiology.

I come from a technical academic background where I use to get a lot of opportunity to participate in internships, workshops and training during my college days and even after my college was over. It has created a platform for me to have a skill in hand and furthermore, a better platform to practice my people management skills, problem solving skill and innovation (Campbell, 1971). Knowing her aspiration I asked her what kind of skill did she want to develop? Immediately she replies all those kinds of skills that is needed to become a good microbiologist. Coming from the background of biotechnology, I could feel her that she is just talking about skills in hand which are core technical skills like using the materials in labs, doing research, following the protocol of doing tests etc. I feel I need to push a little more and I asked her if she was talking about just technical skills. She said “Yes” these are the skills that are required for me to be a microbiologist. I reframed my question and asked if she could be better only with technical skills. She paused for 4-5 seconds and she said “not really”. I asked her what the skills that are required for you to complement your own technical skills. She explains, ‘I need politeness, punctuality and interpersonal skills like good communication skills, working in teams, people management, problem solving.’ Upon further inquiry about the essence of these skills in microbiology field, she

reflects that these soft skills include the behavior to achieve the goals in life. She says, “Goal hunu parcha ani tesaanusar plan banayera kam garnu parcha.” It means that setting a goal in life and developing a plan to achieve it as a skill that is required to be successful. This shows that she has learnt some sort of goal setting in her life. In my view, she is clear on her life goal and sets goal so as to achieve it.

She adds her experiences and stories on how she was able to develop the soft skill in her life. She tells,” We can learn from experience of people around them”. She adds, in my school days and college days, I use to be engaged in a lot of trainings and workshops where I used to interact with people and learn different skills. She adds, there used to be a lot of community visits where we had to travel to different communities, health posts, and primary health centers (PHC) and do camps in the village. In doing so, I and my friends used to be in different groups. Sometimes, the task would be simple whereas the task used to be difficult. We used to set the goals, set the objective and do the planning. I fell that the communities used to respond in different ways. I feel, “some communities were very welcoming and some were little rigid.” In easy communities the interaction with the people used to be very fruitful. We were able to know the knowledge and mindset of the people as well. She further adds, “I was really fascinated by the way people talk. They can express their feeling in an empowered tone and they do not hide anything from others. They are genuine and down to earth”. She explains, in a remote village in Lalitpur the whole community was a Tamang community. They were there for a three days residential camp to a health post. She explains, ‘The health assistant was a local person and he assigned different house to a group of three students. We had to stay in their house for 2 night and three days. During

the day, all the team used to meet in the health post to arrange for the camp whereas at the evening and morning we had to interact with the family and the community.' She adds, 'since, I belong from the Madhesh community who was raised in Kathmandu; it was hard for me to understand the culture and language of the people. Even the family used to be shy and they used to talk very less. The first day was very hard to pass. In the evening and during the dinner we hardly talked for 5 minute.' She elaborated, 'the next day they served us a good tea and some roti. During the breakfast, entire family was around us and they were so positive and they wanted to talk. There was a grandmother who was very old and a boy who was studying in class 10.' After a pause she continues, 'I and my friends talked about 2 hours with the grandmother. We were so impressed how she talked and how she managed her family where the economy was not that strong. I was really impressed with her communication and her leadership.' At that time, I wished 'I could have those soft skills.' Looking at the village and listening to the stories of the people I felt it was very hard to live in a hilly reason where weather, geography, economy and many things used to be a challenge. At the end of the community visit I realized that it takes a hard work and a lot of perseverance and commitment to start and have a good living. She states, 'The entire community visit added a lens to my life that despite everything we have to develop the attitude to live a good life and I think these are called the life skills. These life skills are developed from the combination of the soft skills. I loved how community and people can teach the skills with their life experiences.'

Further, she said that there were a lot of activities like workshops and trainings which teachers used to recommend to the students. She told that coming from a good academic background her teachers used to recommend different

trainings, seminars and workshops. During the events, there used to be introductions, team games, energizers as well. While engaging in such events and engagements she used to meet a lot of people. She states, meeting new set of people has been very interesting for me as they share new insights, gives new experience. These new insights and experience helped me to pave my life path." Such, events helped her to develop the networks around her and develop the way to talk to people, listen to people and analyze the perspective of the people. She added I think this is what I like about meeting new peoples and learn from them. Such events and activities helped me to develop humility, confidence and other interpersonal skills. She further adds that interaction with friends, teachers in colleges has also helped to have dialogue and discussion and learn from them as well.

Further, she was able to share her experience of her school where she was engaged in Nepal Scout as a part of her extracurricular activities. She says, "The engagement in the scout helped me to become a leader of today." She was a leader in Nepal scout and she had to manage and lead the group. Even my mother used to recommend me to lead the group of people. She used to say "Don't be afraid, once you try you can lead it" She said now it made all the sense that it was a platform for me to practice my leadership skills. She feels that such an opportunity gave her skills and taught the necessary discipline which is required for life.

According to the participant she feels, "Learning of soft skills is an interactive process." The interaction can be with all types of people and in different forms. The interaction can be in the form of trainings, workshops, internships, seminars or from sharing of life experiences. Campbell (1971) explained training as a planned learning experience that brings a permanent

change in human’s knowledge, skill and mindset. This showed training and development can help build the skill of people.

Training and growth are also parts of learning (Black,1961). Black (1961) defined training as giving employees with the knowledge they need to do their jobs in order to follow instructions easily, quickly, and willingly. In 1964, Becker defined training as increasing human output with the goal of enhancing economics. But only the disciplines of knowledge and economics are covered by these concepts. A person's knowledge, abilities, and viewpoint change throughout time as a result of training, according to "Open Access Publications | Best Scientific Journals Online," published in 2022. Training and development can therefore help people develop their talents. Many businesses and educational institutions design their own training materials to aid in the skill development of their students or staff. Furthermore, it is believed that the major goal of training is to assist students in developing their capacities, aptitudes, and performances. Thus, one of the greatest methods to address soft skills is to invest in training. As a result, several educational institutions have begun providing on-the-job training (OJT), which is comparable to internships, after students have received their degrees.

From the perspective of my participant, it is also found out that the social interaction is also a major way of learning where students engage with people and interact with them to exchange the experience and stories. Vygotsky, 1978 states such an exchange of stories and experience through social exchange has a basic role in the process of mental development (University of Rhode Island Research, n.d.). Therefore, trainings, workshops, seminars and internships provide student with true experience and learning through interactions and students are able to

create learning from those interactions. These platforms act as a social learning environment for student to practice their soft skills. According to Sweitzer and King (2013), Internships are one of the educational approaches to connect student with the job market where student grow their skills and leverage the knowledge in real time (Babcock University, n.d.). Further, the evidence is also backed by Losekoot et al. (2018) where he described the gap between the hard skills and soft skills during industrial placement. He explained that the internships provided valuable opportunities for students to learn and grow. They majorly learn communication skills, team work and professionalism during the internship. Similarly, Rigden (2019) also priorities on development of soft skills like communication skills, public speaking, confidence through internships.

One of the research conducted among 278 students by Washer (2015) suggested that the trainings and workshops has a significant impact in developing soft skills. The training was conducted for 13 weeks and was assessed in terms of soft skill development. After 13 weeks the supervisor suggested that there is growth across all the soft-skill development scales. This shows that the internships, workshops, seminars and trainings act as a learning environment for the students to enhance their soft skills. Further, such trainings and learning can help an individual to develop knowledge and skills which ultimately can contribute to increase the productivity of humans. Thus trainings, workshops and internships can be a way of soft skill development. Nowadays, it is also supported by On the Job training through different colleges and universities.

Yogendra: Learning is a Continuous Process

Yogendra just completed his undergraduate from Tri-Chandra campus. He was fascinated to science thus had this aspiration to study science. He chose physics as his major subject. He was born in Dailekh, which lie in western part of Nepal. Later, his family migrated to Bardiya and carried on with their small family business. He represents marginalized community of the western part. He was sent to a small public school in his own locality from where he was able to complete his schooling. Later, he had to migrate to Kathmandu and he joined plus two. After successfully competing plus two he wanted to do his bachelor's in physics and joined Tri-Chandra College. He also volunteered in Shikshya Nepal which is one of the organistion where he used to work with school and children. Recently, he is teaching in one of the public school in Dang. He is supporting mathematics to the students of class six to class 10. He aspires to complete higher education in science and technology in near future.

While working in development sector for more than seven years, I have seen a value called as "continuous learning" in multiple organizations. I too agree that learning in life is a continuous process. We learn through a lot of ways as there is not a single way. I have learnt many things including soft skills through a continuous process. It requires a lot of practice to have certain improvements in skill sets. We can learn from child to an old man, from a poor to a rich man and so on. So I have a similar experience to my participant. My participant explains soft skill as a separate entity rather than the subjective teaching and learning. Yogendra quotes," Padhai bhanda bahirako skills nai soft skills ho" which means the skills outside the core course is soft skills. He was able to locate few skills like communication, leadership, presentation, creative thinking and time management.

Upon the inquiry, on different ways of learning he feels “learning is a continuous process and it never ends.” He explains few key ways of learning. He says, “Pariwar ani sathi haru bata dherai sikna sakincha” which means one can learn from the family background followed by friends circle. He adds there is a provision of teaching and learning through formal education so schooling is another place from where one can learn. He further adds that one can also learn from understanding self which he termed as ‘self-awareness. He tries to explain about how learning happened in a family. He says there are different type of family some of them may be open and some of them may be strict. He says, “a family where there is freedom, a child can have good exposure and develop certain set of skills.” If a family is strict, the access of a child is limited and there will not be any exposure so there is high chance that the development of soft skill is compromised. For example, “if a child likes painting but the family demotivates the child then the creativity will be limited.” Further, he explains that he learnt time management skill from his family. His family used to wake him up every morning which eventually turned into the habit. Having ample amount of time will help to identify and invest the time in a right way. It helped him to do yoga, meditation and finish homework in time. Therefore family shapes the child and he felt “jasto bani basalyo testai hudo rahecha”. He also reflects that he learnt flexibility and adaptability from his mom and dad as they had to migrate from one place to other for their family business. He quotes, “dherai choti thau sarda milna sakne chemata bodhdo rahecha”. It means adaptability increases when we frequently change the place. This made him feel that flexibility as a skill to adapt to changing situations in the life.

Yogendra feels that the second home to the learning is the school. He continues with his story. In school days, I had a lot of friends. I know I also developed skills in school and college particularly with friends. He further speaks I remember a project in my plus two where we were developing a project on hydraulic press. There were times where I thought that the project will not be complete but having a group of friends who can support us and motive us can help us achieve things in life. He adds, “That was the time when Yogendra learnt about the team work.” I learnt on how can we seek and ask support in life whenever needed, he states. He says, “I feel the extracurricular activities in school and college is useless.” Later I understand the essence of extracurricular activities (ECA) in school, plus two and in colleges. I use to take part in quiz, handwriting competitions, debate competitions etc. in the school. I feel that was the first point where one learns to engage him or herself beyond academic course. Now I am clear “one can learn communication skills, problem solving skills and collaboration skills from those activities.” He believed that such skills are key to development of students. He felt that such activities helped him to push his limits and act beyond the comfort zone. He believes if one has to develop soft skills it is more likely to be achieved through ECA activities rather than the book. Further, the formal education included certain group activities, projects, presentations etc. In his college, he felt that he had to do new things and also meet new people which can help to explore the nature of an individual. He explains there used to be practical in the college and this practical used to be in teams/groups where one has to include graphical representation, charts, paper works. This helped to develop presentation skills and also oral communication skills. Further, working with team helped us to develop delegation skills, planning skills and team work.

Interestingly, he also shares on how an individual can learn from self which he called as “Aafu bata sikne”, He terms the word as “reflective practice.” He adds that a reflection culture one can locate the zone of strength and area of growth. “Locating such area can help to work on convert the area of growth to the strength portion? Having such reflective practice develops the confidence and self-esteem.” He also integrated a new way of learning during the COVID-19 when the lock down was in effect. He believed that technology can boost the soft skill and in 21st century the soft skills and ICT is the most. He strongly suggests the digital platform is a boon to develop digital skills. It helped me to keep myself updated. He shared his experience that he used to take Math subjective session through online activities. Working online and doing a lot of research has helped him to be virtually present and contribute in students learning. He adds, “Working virtually had its own advantage life efficient time management, presentation skills, creativity, virtual collaboration and planning.” Therefore, he strongly believes that the learning of anything including the soft skills is a continuous process. He further added, there is so much to learn from each and every activity but we must internalize and be self-aware to learn new things in life.

Learning from family or friends is a cooperative process. In this model student or a family member learns from each other. This is called social learning (Vygotsky, 1933). In this process the social learning helps a student to develop or to construct knowledge and skills. The social interaction and the experience based on the culture in which the child grows helps to construct the meanings (Vygotsky,1978).Vygotsky (1962) was more interested in the role of individual in construction of knowledge of students. In a school or family the student learns through cooperation. The basic soft skills are developed when a student come out

of comfort zone and start to talk, accept other opinion, develop helping nature. Such skills are called as social skills (Ibrahim & Alias, 2018).

Similarly, Johnson, 2019) stated that academic institution uses a lot of teaching and learning pedagogy to develop learning. One of the method to grow soft skills is letting students perform in small groups so that they can have better learning (Pammer-Schindler et al., 2018). This help to develop skills like team work, accountability, communication etc. My participant was able to explain such learning where the importance of family and school is vital to develop the soft skills. Also, there is rapid use of ICT majorly in cities and semi urban schools and families where students are being able to learn through use of computers, laptops, educational software and with the access through internet. Thus, learning can be ensured in schools and families through the use of ICT. This has also developed the digital skills necessary for 21st century.

One of the domain that my participant was trying to imply was learning through problem based approach and project based approach. According to Silen (2001), students learn about the real time problem, they discuss and brainstorm and develop many ideas and refine the ideas and apply the knowledge. Later they reflect on to improve the solutions to the problem. This way student can develop skills like team work, problem solving, creativity etc. Similarly, another way to develop the skills is through project which is also called Project based learning which follows Dewey's progressive educational theory. In this approach products or artifacts are developed which develops problem solving skill. Further the coach or the teachers provide feedback which helps student to develop willingness to learn. Guo et al. (2020), suggested that PBL in school develop life skills like collaboration, critical thinking, communication and problem solving. It develops

cognitive, affective and behavior domain. He also stated that the soft skills are the outcomes of affective and behavior domain. Similarly, my participant stated that he also learnt skills through projects in school and colleges and he is using such skills to teach students in school to develop soft skills.

Gibbs (1988), explains that a person can learn from self- reflection. Only having some sort of experience is not enough to learn things but we have to reflect on the experience to derive the learning otherwise the experience will be forgotten. Davies (2012) adds that such reflective experience can suggest improvement to a specific behavior and can be applied in future situations. Similarly, the soft skills that are practiced and acquired over time must be reflected in order to learn those skills in better ways. Therefore, from the analysis it can be said that there are multiple ways of learning soft skills which includes project based learning, problem based learning, self-reflection, online/digital learning etc.

Talking with this participant, I feel is made through a lot of life experiences. His mature thought was like a summary to rest of the four participants. As per my view, the learning of anything including the soft skill starts from the home and develops in the school. Even in the school and colleges, it can be nurtured through many ways like ECA, Use of ICT, Project based learning and even reflective practice. It is not applicable to say that a specific soft skill is developed through a specific event or activity, but I personally believe that it is reinforced in many ways through people's interactions. Thus, the growth and development of soft skill is a never-ending process (Nepal Journals Online., n.d.).

Chapter Summary

I have narrated the stories of all my five participants in this chapter. They have shared their experience, life stories and understanding. They have shared their understanding about the different ways of learning of soft skills. Further, I have analyzed the stories from the participants and backed my analysis through the literature form many scholars. The participants shared their understanding of soft skills, how they developed soft skills in their life based on their own experiences or the experiences that they have heard or learnt. My participants were able to explain the role of soft skill from the perspective of potential job seeker (CORE, 2017) as they just graduated from the college. All of my participants were very open to sharing and they shared few major soft skills that is very much essential for the applicants to be employable. Finally, form the stories and the experiences I was able to give a heading with different theme and build their experiences in the form of stories. Even though my participants explained major topics on how they developed soft skills, I deliberately chose the most impactful way of soft skill learning for them and described in depth. In the next chapter, I will be focused to explain the stories and experiences of my second research question on how soft skill can contribute to employability.

CHAPTER V

CONTRIBUTION OF SOFT SKILL TO EMPLOYABILITY

In this chapter, I deal with the perspective of the undergraduate student on the contributions of soft skills with the employability. Here, I discuss the understanding of employability among the undergraduate students. Further, I asked them about their idea and experiences on different kinds of soft skills. Also, I asked them if the soft skills are important to achieve the employment opportunities in the market. I have also discussed how soft skill can contribute to employment opportunities and performed the analysis to derived results. The chapter explains that the students with more training, ECA, internships contribute to higher soft skills and are likely to be employable.

Ashish: Basic Soft Skill to Recommend People

I work in recruitment and selection for last five years. We have to create a lot of vacancy every year and publishing the skills or the competencies is mandatory. We require basic soft skill to hire candidates for every position. We also ask our stakeholders to recommend people with basic knowledge and skill so that hiring process is easy.

I knew Ashish for more than two years and I have seen him excel in different form of soft skills. I knew that he used to work in a stationery shop. Now he is working for a book publication company. I wanted to explore the views of contribution of soft skill to employability. In response to the question regarding the contribution, He speaks, “soft skill increases the chances of an individual. If we have soft skills we can talk more, impress people and work more.” Upon further inquiry he shares his experience. “There was an advertisement for an entry

level post in a publication. I read the job description and the necessary knowledge and skills required for the post. I sent my resume to the human resource (HR) office and integrated the key soft skills and knowledge that was necessary." He further added, 'I believe that the job that I did in stationary may have helped me." Further, He was invited for the interview which happened just before the COVID started. He said the interview went so well. He was able to demonstrate his communication skills and was able to impress the interviewer. Thus, he feels he was offered the position.

He then adds a story of a colleague. 'There was a person who used to work very close to me. He was my senior. Talking about the attitude and behavior of that person, he was average in communication. He did not use to speak nor was he more into writing. He used to do day to day job only. His performance was not up to the mark so he left the job.' He further adds the company opened a vacancy and conducted the interview. The HR could not select the people for the position. One fine day, he was called by the HR and asked if he knew some people for the position and asked to recommend few people. The required skills were communication, leadership, digital skills, report writing. I knew a friend of mine who was sitting idle. I called him and asked to send the resume and told the details. He was excited. He was called for the interview and was selected. He told that the entire process helped him to analyze that recruitment team always look for the qualities and traits. They test soft skills and if found they select the candidate. He also believed that soft skills can be developed over time and it needs more awareness and exercise.

From the above experience, he summarized that it is obvious that there is high value of the graduates with high soft skills. Not only, has the degree helped.

Coming to this job from the field of microbiology, I was able to learn about the publication house. So the contribution of soft skill in any job is highly necessary. In interaction with my participants, I could sense that students know the importance of soft skills but they are also aware that they lack soft skills. Many students believe that soft skill is about 3 R (Reading, writing and arithmetic). However, Kamin (2013) believes that soft skills are more important than 3R. Schleutker et al., (2019) also expresses that the youths or students in job market do not have proper soft skills (Electronic Archive of Academic and Literary Texts, n.d.). He further adds the importance of soft skills vary according to nature of work and environment.

All of my participants were able to identify and express few key soft skills (AUETD Home, n.d.). The major skills identified were communication, people management, digital/computer, leadership, collaboration, creativity (AUETD Home, n.d.). Rigden (2019) explained that the primary weapon of the student who are trying to enter the job market are communication skills, leadership skills, team work, and emotional intelligence. Further, Schleutker et al. (2019) stated that the major soft skill which is on high demand is team work and flexibility. Suneela (2014) stated that the major soft skill is the communication skill. Most of my participants were focusing that the key of the soft skill is the communication skill. It creates opening to all other soft skill. If we closely observe the 21st century skills, there are majorly four skills called communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Therefore, from all the information from my participants it can be seen that the basic skills for the employability is the 21st century skills.

Therefore, it can be said that the job market always wants the human resource with better soft skills (Schleutker et al., 2019). It can be connected with my personal experience that the assessment of preliminary soft skills during my work experience was done through application review and first round of interview where the basic soft skill measured was writing skills, digital skills, and communication skills. These skills are the weapons to enter the job market and compete in the job market. However, soft skills vary with working environment and nature of the occupation.

Nikesh: ICT a New Soft skill

Personally, I knew about internet and communication when I was studying in class 10. After class 10, I had this opportunity to learn basics of computer. At that time people use to think that digital literacy is somewhat every youth must learn so that they can compete in the global market.

Nikesh says, “I very less connection of soft skill in Nepal.” He has seen people with high soft skills and they are either self-employed or they provide jobs rather than seek job. Such people emerge as entrepreneurs in business or they rise as a leader. Many can be seen in politics as well. I was little confused and asked if there is no connection of soft skills to employability. Immediately, he adds “I did not mean that”. He believes that soft skill is very much needed in the job market. In the context of Nepal, the student see it as less important that is the reason they focus on hard skills to soft skills (Yumpu.com).

Upon further inquiry on how can soft skill contribute the employability; he adds his own experience of teaching. He says, “I was teaching in a private school in Kirtipur. I like teaching as it fulfills the sense of giving and contributing to the society.” He believes learning transfer is a skill. To justify the statement, he said

that having good soft skills means having a good command over communication, team work, creativity, problem solving, and positive attitude. If we have such skills we can easily transfer the knowledge to other people. As a teacher, he believes that a teacher must have a clear command and a good presentation skill to connect to the students which helps a teacher to make things clear (clear the doubts). Further, if a teacher knows more about the use of internet, communication and technology (ICT) then it can add much value to students learning. Teaching life skills and soft skills can help student to be brilliant and adds,"natra student ekohorohuncha." So in a particular job of teacher it is mandatory that a teacher must have high soft skills. Having high soft skills can help a teacher to build a prompt rapport and build the trust with the students which makes the job even easy.

Not just in teaching job, the essence of soft skills can also be seen in other jobs. It is not just about job having the soft skill makes the life easy therefore I also take it as life skills. This has been taken seriously in western countries but in Nepal few have prioritized it. In middle and lower class family it is less prioritized. He finally concluded that having a set of good soft skills builds the higher chances of employability.

Out of five participants, two of my participants were able to locate the use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT). They were also referring the term as digital skills. On conversation with them they emphasized on importance on digital skills and stated that the digital skills is another soft skill for employability. According to European Union (EU) (2013), ICT affects the way of working, accessing knowledge, communication. It emphasize on the necessity of digital skills for the development of innovation in a fast changing world. Further,

EU (2013) added that the digital jobs is growing in a fast pace hence the digital skills must be prioritized.

In context of Nepal, the digital market has started since last decade and it has now touched most of the organizations in major cities. Similarly Leahy and Wilson (2014) stated that the use of technology is in a fast state and every sector has been influenced by technology hence digital skill is a most to everyone. A statement by EU commissioner, NeelieKroes in 2011 stated the importance of digital skills by narrating, “you are nowhere without digital skills”. Similarly, Leahy and Wilson (2014) also connected the need of digital skills to the employment domain. This makes the ICT or the digital skills a new skill for the employability. Hence, the EU (2011) stated the necessity to incorporate the digital skills to be 21st century skills other than 4C’s (Springer - International Publisher Science, Technology, Medicine, n.d.).

Back in my school days, we just heard the term computer and internet but nowadays there is nothing associated with internet and computers. It has proved that the use of computer, internet or any other sort of technology is a mandatory thing. Many in context of Nepal use technology for learning purpose as well but it has been a most due to the innovations of technology and use of internet. Nowadays, many company use ICT to perform certain jobs. Even in my daily work, I use laptop and internet in a daily basis. Further, the use of technology has been used in academic sector. Therefore, I personally feel that the skill to be technology friendly has to be adopted. This shows that ICT is vital for all the working professionals. It can be a tool for academia (Accueil - Inria, n.d.) to teach (Leahy & Wilson, 2014). Thus, the emerging skills that has to be adopted is digital skills or ICT. Many companies that works on technology or uses

technology has a wide vacancy for the employment which states that the digital skills is a must for them. Hence, the new skill for the employability whether technical or non-technical requires the expertise of digital skills (Leahy & Wilson, 2014). Lastly, OECD (2013) stated that the requirement for skilled ICT people and advanced professionals is increasing in most organizations (Accueil - Inria, n.d.). My participant was also able to explain the importance of digital skills in the COVID-19 situation where they mentioned that the jobs, teaching and learning and even health system has to shift their service virtually. Thus the new skills required for the employability is digital skills.

Since every sector is now touched by the use of technology and internet.The use of ICT and the way to use ICT is a most. Nowadays, there is also growing demand of jobs which use digital skills. Since, the use of internet and technology has made the life of people easy, it has been a compulsion to learn ICT. Many similar organization who work in ICT like EU and OECD also believe that the digitally literate people and their demand is increasing in the job market.

Sushmita: Soft Skills Enhance Job Opportunity

My experience of working with youths says that the youths complain because they feel that the organisation or the company do not hire them. On the other hand, HR in many companies complains that they do not find better quality people in term of soft skill. I feel students don't know much about the relation between soft skill and employability.

Sushmita explains, "Employability is related to become employable." She feels that people with higher soft skills can demonstrate higher level of work. She also believes, with increase in soft skill the mobility among or across the network. She explains with an example. "The job of a teacher is to deliver the class but a

teacher with higher soft skills can help develop good relationship with the students and staffs. This gives a very good outcome which improves the confidence level of the students and even the teachers." This implies that the soft skill is very important in order to achieve the jobs and even to perform better in the job. She says, 'As a youth who just graduated she used to see a lot of vacancies in the online portals and even in the newspaper. When she saw the skills and competencies, there used to be good communication skills, leadership skills, problem solving skills etc. In almost the jobs these things were repetitive. This showed that these are the key soft skills that are necessary for each and every job.' Her experience of searching job continued. She adds that in private jobs, they also demanded fluency in the English speaking and the writing. She said that when we wanted to do some events or projects, we needed financial help so asking for help is also needed which is also a skill. From her perspective being employable makes people independent and this creates the freedom of choices. Therefore, it is important to have or develop ways to secure the employability. One of the ways is to have or develop key soft skills.

She emphasizes, "In most of the jobs, the candidate with higher soft skill is taken for the job." She had seen people rejected due to lack of soft skills even though their academics were good. Therefore, preparing the key soft skills like communication, problem solving, people management, leadership has been a key to the job market. This helps a person to be more employable and be independent.

According to human capital theory explained by Becker (1964), there lies investment of an individual. The education is a major form of investment that one does. It provides the person with a learning outcome. This adds productivity. This productivity creates job chances in the labor market. Furthermore, it also helps to

increase the job performance. This adds to contribute in earning. In interaction with all of my participants, they were able to explain that the soft skills help to secure job opportunities available in the market which has been explained by Roble (2012). Roble (2012) also explained that the soft skill is connected in a way that increases the people's interaction, job performance and career.

Similarly, Roble (2012) found that the person who already got work experience has higher opportunity to be employable. It is believed that the person with prior work experience can bring certain sets of skill in the team and add value to the organization. Matteson et al. (2016), states that the soft skills involve action which generate value to the organization when executed properly. Therefore, soft skill not just increases the opportunity for an individual but it can lead to the growth of organization. Students who have better soft skills (RMS – Research Management System, n.d.) can also search the opportunities across different countries as the people with such skill can have greater mobility across the countries (Korpi, 2003). Thus, the soft skill can be a great tool to increase the human potential inside and outside the country.

My experience of last five years working as a recruiting officer provides a similar experience. We prioritize qualified people.It is due to the belief that students come better prepared with hard skills rather than soft skills. In my work experience, people with better soft skills got many more opportunities and received the jobs.

Anu: Developing Value to Life

As per my experience, life is about developing ourselves and developing value in term of social, economic and human capital. Taking the reference of human capital theory, it speaks about developing productivity. Similarly, my participant also link soft skill and employability to develop value in life.

We start to talk about the contribution of soft skill to the employability. She is very positive regarding the direct relationship. She says “relation ekdumchha” which means absolutely. She shared two examples where she stated that the soft skill add value to the job. She explains, “My parents are involved in jobs. During the job, I was taken to the work place. My parents taught her to develop good behavior. They also told the stories on how to tackle the problem.” She said her parents are the role model from where she learnt humility, clear communication, problem solving skills etc. Even many friends of my parents used to visit my home to take advice as well. Looking at her parents she feels that politeness, humility and personality help to solve the problem. She stated that the growth and promotion of her parents was possible due to such soft skills. Even I had heard from my parents that many other organizations had offered the jobs to my parents. Therefore, she believed that such soft skills add value to the job and also develop the value of self.

Her mother once shared about her own colleague. The nature of the colleague was not accordance with the organization. She said that her friend was not punctual and she could not manage the time properly. She used to do the table work and did not use any creativity in her work. She was a less thinker and little careless. This was the main reason she could not do well in the job. If she was able to manage herself and perform better she could work for the organization but not she had to leave because she lacked the skill. As per her mother she once said soft skill adds value to hard skill so it is crucial for a person to have better soft skills. She told that the rude, ignorant people are less valued therefore a person must be polite and must be responsible. Also, punctuality helps to be properly managed and set the responsibilities.

Finally, she said due to all the reasons and the experiences from her mother she feels that there is a strong relationship between the soft skills. She finally stated that the contribution of soft skill is huge for the growth in the organization and that finally adds value to the life.

A research done by ICIMS Hiring Insights (2017) suggests that those who are string in soft skills are likely to be promoted to higher level in an organization compared to those who has less soft skills. This shows that that people who gets such opportunity due to soft skills can earn better and have a productive life. Similarly, Sharma & Gupta (2016) explains that the soft skills can help students to develop specific frameworks and they can develop and manage the teams in the office which can be linked to development of social capital. Further many research already proved that 75% of work success are because of the soft skills (Klaus, 2010). Similar argument was also presented where they explained that the soft skill develops social capital of the employee (Zhuk and Grishnova, 2021). Also, from the human capital theory it is clear that the soft skills add to the social efficacy and productivity an individual.

From my perspective, I believe that soft skill play an integral part in adding value to the life. The soft skills are necessary to be promoted in one's job whereas these soft skills can also contribute to develop the social capital of the people. There is a Nepali proverb which states "Bolne ko pitho bikcha, nabolne ko chamal ni bikdaina" which means a clear speaker can sell anything. This implies that the soft skill can help people promote their things and they as well in order to be economical better or socially better.

Yogendra: Measuring Soft Skill- a New System of Evaluation

Many recruiter and human resource person including me has seen the gradual change in selecting human resource in an organization. I have seen selectors selecting candidates just by seeing the resume, academic certificates and taking a short interview. I feel it is not adequate to find the right fit for the organization. In recent few years, many organizations including my organization has changed the way to assess the candidates.

Yogendra was unknown about the importance of soft skill until he applied for a traineeship. He had not applied for any kind of job of internships before. He never knew the importance or even the relationship of soft skill to employability. He says, “If one has a bachelor degree and that too in Physics then most of the door in my life would be open but that mindset did not work right for me.” One day his friend and he were talking about the job openings in the market. His friend used to tell him that his good grades are always going to help him to get a good job. One day, he was surfing in the internet and found about the UN traineeship. He learnt all the procedure on how to apply for the traineeship. Then he applied. His application was forwarded to the next round which was the interview round He was able to crack the interview round as he was able to communicate orally and his written form was screened. He says, “I was invited for another round of selection which was the test of digital skills but I was scared because I did not have much knowledge about computer and digital skills.” Since, it was just five years that he was in Kathmandu he did not have fluent command over the computer and digital skills as he went to simple school in his life. He says, “I had never been to computer lab and I saw computer after coming to Kathmandu but did not have the opportunity to work on it. I had a minor concept of using the

keyboards and typing. In such a case, I was invited to a digital skill test." It was obvious that he could not perform well in that test and eventually he failed the test and the opportunity and the dream to work in the UN did not go as planned. That day he felt that there were few and key major soft skills which is mandatory nowadays. He explains "the basic and key soft skill included communication, collaboration, leadership, digital skills and integrity." He feels that most of the job demands these key soft skills.

He says, "The hiring system has changed and people are using technology to hire the people." I agree with his statement that many companies nowadays go through a long process of selection that also includes technology and rubrics. Human resource department (HRD) measures soft skill based on the nature of the job. This measure of soft skill has been a new system of evaluation. In his experience, once the measure of soft skill is complete then only the measure of technical skill is done. This shows that having soft skills is a plus point that complements the technical skill. He added, having said that not only the soft skill is needed but the combination of soft skill and hard skill can ensure a higher level of job opportunity in the market.

From the view point of my participants, they know very less about the importance of soft skill. In the school and college the curriculum is more oriented towards development of hard skill rather than soft skills. It has been found out that the students also focuses on hard skills rather than soft skills. Few of my participants had the knowledge that without soft skill, it will be going to be extremely hard to find the jobs. They know that people with higher soft skill ability are likely to be employed first (Roble, 2012). It was also noted that students do not do prior research on what skills the job demands. Few of my participants were able to

explain that the key skills in the major job vacancy are communication, team work, creativity and critical thinking.

Klaus (2010) presented a data, 75% of work progress is due to soft skills whereas only 25% hard skill contributes for the success (IACIS, n.d.). This showed that soft skills are very much crucial for job market. This implies that the job market prioritize soft skills to the hard or technical skills. Similarly, from the HCT, it stated that the skill being one of major part (TRX Prognose 2021, n.d.) that the job market demands (Schultz, 1961). Thomas et.al (2013) stated that the performance of any individual in an organization is dependent on the skill that he brings in. Similarly, International labor organization (ILO) (2013), believes that the development of employment aspect in term of humans develops the human capital. This human capital during the work increases the productivity. ILO states that the cores are the skills that affect the employability. Further, better education, trainings, motivations can help develop soft skills which can complement the hard skills. Similarly, when we assess the skills required my major job companies, they place the 21st century soft skills at the core. Furthermore, organization like ILO in Asian countries started a skill development module where they train people with 14 major soft skills that include communication, teamwork, creativity, developing personal relations, time management etc. This clarifies the importance of soft skill over hard skill.

During my work, I was in a role to assess applications and screen the applicants. My major task is to categorize and screen the application based on the soft skill rubrics. Even during our learning sharing opportunities, we talk a lot on the importance of soft skills rather than hard skills. Many other companies and organization believes that if a person can bring in basic soft skills than the hard

skill part is trainable. Furthermore, the soft skills can help a person for future career growth (Subedi, 2018). He had suggested companies to focus on soft skill part rather than hard skill part. Thus, prioritization of soft skill is very much essential than hard skill. Therefore, students must know that the market is much competitive and for human resource soft skills is prioritized to hard skills.

Chapter Summary

I have narrated stories of all five participants in this chapter. They have shared their experience, life stories and understanding. They have shared their perception on contribution of soft skills to employability. Further, I have analyzed the stories from the participants and backed my analysis through the literature form many scholars. The participants shared their understanding on contribution of soft skills and how they link essence of soft skills to job market (AUETD Home, n.d.). My participants were able to explain the role of soft skill (CORE, 2017) from the perspective of potential job seeker as they just graduated from the college. All of my participants were very open to sharing. Finally, form the stories and the experiences I was able to give a heading with different theme and created the experiences as stories (Northumbria University, n.d.). The stories were deep and meaningful; however, I deliberately chose the most impactful stories and created the meaning from it. In the next chapter, I will be focused to explain insights, implications and conclusions of my research.

CHAPTER VI

INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

In this chapter, I am explaining the insights that was generated during the research. Further, I am mentioning the conclusions and the implication of the research.

The important findings are summarized in this chapter. I summarize key findings of my research based on the themes of the research question. Here I also present the conclusion and implications of my research (Bravo, 2020).

Insights

My objective of the research was to explore the understanding of undergraduate youth on ways of learning soft skills and its contribution to the employability in a public college of Nepal. After analyzing the stories of my participants, I have come with the following insight from those stories. My student participants believe that there are multiple ways of learning of soft skill. They believe that the soft skills can be learnt through trainings, internships and workshops. They also believe that extracurricular activities, online tools through ICT help to develop and practice soft skills. Furthermore, working in groups through project based learning and reflective practice through self-awareness can also contribute to soft skill development. On the other hand my participants were able to see the contribution of soft skill to be employable. They were able to describe how soft skill can develop the opportunity for the individuals. They could clearly feel the importance of soft skill to the hard skill and also define the key and basic soft skills necessary for 21st century job market. Finally, they were able

to explain and add the importance of digital skills and the knowledge to use the ICT in different organizations.

In response to the ways of learning, I found out that most of my participants believe that the family, community and the school is the place where a student can learn things and of course soft skill is one of the components. Many of my participant felt that they learnt something meaningful through formal education but one of my participant clearly stated that the learning of soft skill is very less through formal education. The participant was able to explain that the colleges and school focuses on subjective skills rather than focusing soft skill development. Two of my participants were clear that the training and internship opportunities can help to develop the soft skill portion of an individual. It also comprises attending seminars and workshops. Further, four of my participant agreed that the experiences of parents as role models, mentors and seniors have positive impact to learn certain skills form them. Use of internet, communication and technology has added another dimension of soft skill. It can also be called as digital skills. Few of my participants agreed that the engagement in extracurricular activities can boost the soft skill development. Finally one of the participants was very clear that the project based approach can help to develop skills like presentation, communication and team work in a better way.

On the other hand, all of my participants believe that soft skill is very much necessary to be employable in the job market. One of my participant expressed that prior work experience can help develop soft skills and this experience can further help to ensure better work. One of my participant believe that the persons with high soft skills tend to become entrepreneurs or the politicians He further stated that the soft skills is valued in developed countries

but in context of least developed country like Nepal, families from low or middle economic background prioritize less. Another participant used to check vacancies where she was able to find key soft skill competencies necessary for the job. So, she believes that soft skill is necessary. She also elaborated that the soft skills help to develop overall performance and it also helps to develop higher mobility of a person across the job market. Most of my participants agreed upon the key soft skills to be communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity which is also called as 21st century skills. One of my participants explained that why digital skills should be added as another key soft skill.

Conclusions

Education in the present day is changing. Now, education has been a central pillar for decent jobs. To guarantee the overall growth of a person integration of the soft skills has been a key. In this 21st century, the basic 4C's play a crucial role in the job market. Every year a lot of Nepalese youths complete their undergraduate and they seek for the best job available but there is a gap. Working in recruitment for last five years taught me that the students emerge in job market with limited soft skills and this has frustrated the youths. Even in college placements, many youths could not secure their seat in the jobs. This happens because students are either unaware or the skills necessary are not developed at all.

In this research, I was able to find out that the students have their ways to learn the soft skills. It was not limited to one but they discussed multiple ways like integration of ICT, project based learning, reflective practices, internships and seminars and so on. They also explained the learning of soft skills starts from the family, community and from the role models. Many participants were able to

explain that the soft skill backs the employment opportunities in the market. Prior work experience can be added benefit. Participant was also able to explain the necessary soft skills needed for the jobs. Though students focus more on hard skills, it is clear that soft skills is something that compliments hard skills and brings out best in students to ensure employment opportunities. Additionally, there is a growing demand of soft skills or 21st century skills in such a case the ways of learning has to be adapted and innovated. This can contribute to higher job opportunities.

This study was only able to find out the ways on how five of my participants learnt the soft skills in their life. They also explain their understanding on the contribution of soft skills to the employability. Here, the ways of learning and its contribution of employability were interpreted from the students' perception. By conducting further research, the ways of learning and the contribution can also be seen from the employers and academic perspectives.

Implications

My study is mainly focused on student's understanding and learning the ways of soft skills and how they describe contribution of soft skills to employability. In today's teaching and learning activities the learning of soft skills is very much important. However, many institutions and curriculum prioritize less about the integration of soft skills in the daily content. Many students know the importance of the soft skills but they have limited knowledge on the ways of learning soft skills (Huda et al., 2021). Furthermore, most of the students can connect the contribution of soft skills to the employability. However, they feel that academic institution prioritize hard skills rather than soft skill. So, the development of soft skills from basic level to the undergraduate level is very

much limited. The insight of this research will be useful for the policy development in all three governments including the Curriculum development centers, development and research organizations school's administration, college administration and others related stakeholders who directly or indirectly work in skills with youths.

Implication in Government and Policy Level

All three level of government including the curriculum development center and the organization that work in education and skills may use this insight for making and implementing policies in different level and organization. Such insight can be useful to design the ways to implement the soft skills and also tailor the soft skills upon the availability of the jobs in respective places (O'Brien, 2005).

Implication in Development Sector

The finding of this study may be useful for the researcher in the development sectors who wants to work in soft skills and employability. They can further investigate the ways of learning and find out the contributions of soft skill necessary for the growth of students.

Implication in School and College level

The school and college administration which looks after the implementation of curriculum in schools and in colleges can use this insight to develop a balance in providing the skills through various ways. This can help students learn the soft skill part which can balance the theory. The colleges can also integrate the new ways of adding such curriculum in college routine (Charoensap-Kelly et al., 2015). They can also contextualize the necessary soft skills as per need and the interest of the student and connect it to the job market.

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