EXPERIENCE OF EMPLOYEES IN EDUCATIONAL MISMATCH JOB: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY

Sunita Maharjan

A Dissertation

Submitted to

School of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

Kathmandu University

Dhulikhel, Nepal

January 2025

AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of Sunita Maharjan for the *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership* presented on the date of *31 January 2025* entitled *Experience of Employees in Educational Mismatch Job: An Interpretive Study*.

APPROVED BY

…………………………………..

Asst. Prof. Basu Prasad Subedi, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons for educational mismatches in the job, how they affect people's careers and lives, and what can be done to the challenges employees face in the mismatched job. Using an interactive method, I have collected personal experiences from participants who were working in fields different from what they have as an academic degree. This sharing helped not to discover not just the reasons behind the mismatches but also the emotional and practical impact on the individuals involved.

Sharing of participants highlights various reasons for being in their current jobs which is different from what they had imagined when choosing their education path. A few reasons to be highlighted are financial needs, family responsibilities, or the unavailability of jobs in their area of study. Another reason showing concern is not getting proper guidance during their education and didn't know how to plan their careers. They mentioned that they felt pressure from family, friends and financial expectations when making career choices. As a result, they ended up choosing courses that did not truly match their interests or abilities. Some have realized their field had very limited job openings or required additional qualifications or licenses, which were hard to get.

It also highlighted the emotional struggles faced by the participants. Many expressed disappointment, frustration, or lack of motivation in their initial days of their current jobs. They have accepted their situation and focused on making the best

of their current jobs. Still, most agreed that with organizational support, self-effort and better career guidance and more realistic expectations during their education, they might have taken different paths.

It identifies key circumstances contributing to educational-job mismatches, such as weak linkages between educational institutions and industries, and the absence of practical training. It also shows how some participants were able to transfer skills from their education into unrelated jobs, though not always fully. Education and Industry collaboration has been an integral part of career development, as it facilitates the mechanisms to make graduates more familiar with the real workplace. Based on the findings, the study suggests that schools, colleges, and universities should offer better career counseling, expose students to real work environments in early stage, and help them understand job market trends. It also recommends that educational institutions build stronger partnerships with employers to create internships, apprenticeships, and job placements that reflect real-world needs.

As career development gains importance in today's work environment, organizations are increasingly prioritizing for facilitating growth of the employees. However, merely designing and offering training programs is not sufficient; the effectiveness of these initiatives heavily depends on the learner's attitude toward growth and continuous learning. Structured interventions—such as on-the-job training, mentoring, and experiential learning—emerge as powerful tools to enhance adaptability and performance among mismatched employees. Both formal and informal learning avenues contribute to skill acquisition and motivation.

In conclusion, this research highlights a real and growing problem in today's job market. By listening to the voices of people who have lived through educational-job mismatches, the study provides valuable insights and realistic suggestions. It encourages educators, employers, and policymakers to rethink how we prepare students for the future and stresses the need for more coordinated efforts to align education with employment opportunities.

………………………….   31 January 2025

Sunita Maharjan

Degree Candidate

शोध सार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि सुनिता महर्जनको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक " शैक्षिक असमानतासँग सम्बन्धित रोजगारीमा कार्यरत कर्मचारीहरूको अनुभव: एक व्याख्यात्मक अध्ययन " १८ माघ २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

....
उप प्रा बासु प्रसाद सुबेदी, पीएचडी
शोध निर्देशक

यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य शैक्षिक योग्यता र रोजगारीबीचको बेमेल (mismatch) किन उत्पन्न हुन्छ, यसले व्यक्तिको करियर र जीवनमा कस्तो प्रभाव पार्छ, र यस्तो अवस्थाबाट उत्पन्न चुनौतीहरू समाधान गर्न के गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने विषयमा गहिरो विश्लेषण गर्नु हो। अनुसन्धान अन्तर्गत विभिन्न शैक्षिक पृष्ठभूमिका व्यक्तिहरू जो अहिले फरक क्षेत्रमा कार्यरत छन्, तिनका जीवन अनुभवहरू संकलन गरी अन्तरक्रियात्मक विधिको प्रयोग गरिएको छ।

सहभागीहरूका अनुभवहरूले शैक्षिक असम्बन्धको कारणहरू प्रष्ट पारेका छन्। प्रमुख कारणहरूमा आर्थिक अभाव, पारिवारिक जिम्मेवारी, अध्ययन अनुसार रोजगारिको अभाव, तथा करियर योजनामा उचित मार्गदर्शनको कमी रहेको पाइएको छ। धेरैले सामाजिक दबाब तथा असमर्थनका कारण आफूले रुचाएको क्षेत्रभन्दा बाहेक फरक रोज्नु परेको बताए। साथै, केही क्षेत्रहरूमा रोजगारीका अवसर अत्यन्त सीमित हुनु, वा आवश्यक प्रमाणपत्र वा अनुमतिपत्र प्राप्त गर्न कठिन हुनु पनि मुख्य अवरोधका रूपमा देखिएको छ।

यस अध्ययनले भावनात्मक पक्ष पनि उजागर गरेको छ। अनुसन्धानका सहभागिहरूले सुरुमा निराशा, असन्तुष्टि तथा प्रेरणाको अभावको अनुभव गरे पनि समयक्रममा परिस्थितिसँग मिलाप गर्दै आफूलाई सुधार्नतर्फ अग्रसर भएको देखिन्छ। उनीहरूका अनुभवले देखाउँछ कि यदि शिक्षा प्रणालीमा व्यावसायिक मार्गदर्शन, उद्योग–शिक्षा सहकार्य, तथा कार्यस्थलसँगको प्रारम्भिक सम्पर्क हुने अवसरहरू उपलब्ध भएको भए, उनीहरूले फरक निर्णय लिन सक्थे।

अनुसन्धानले शैक्षिक संस्था र उद्योगबीचको दूरी, व्यावहारिक तालिमको अभाव, र रोजगार बजारप्रति कमजोर जानकारी जस्ता पक्षहरूलाई प्रमुख समस्या रूपमा औंल्याएको छ। यद्यपि केहीले आफ्नो शैक्षिक सीपलाई अन्य क्षेत्रको रोजगारीमा आंशिक रूपमा उपयोग गर्न सकेका छन्। यसैले शिक्षा र रोजगारीबीचको सम्बन्ध अझ मजबुत बनाउन शिक्षण संस्थाहरूले रोजगारदातासँग सहकार्य गरी इन्टर्नशिप, अप्रेन्टिसशिप, तथा व्यवहारिक तालिमका अवसरहरू प्रदान गर्न आवश्यक देखिन्छ।

आजको प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक श्रम बजारमा करियर विकासलाई प्राथमिकता दिइँदैछ। तर केवल तालिम सञ्चालन गर्नु पर्याप्त नहुने, बरु कर्मचारीहरूको सकारात्मक सोच, निरन्तर सिक्ने इच्छाशक्ति, तथा संरचित

सिकाइ प्रक्रियाहरू—जस्तै कार्यअभ्यास, सह-मार्गदर्शन (mentoring), तथा अनुभवजन्य सिकाइ—अत्यावश्यक रहेको अध्ययनबाट देखिन्छ।

शैक्षिक–रोजगारी असम्बन्ध आजको समयको जटिल र संवेदनशील समस्या हो। यस अध्ययनले प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव भएका व्यक्तिहरूको आवाजमार्फत यथार्थपरक सन्देश र सुझावहरू प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। यसले शिक्षा नीति निर्माणकर्ता, शिक्षक, र रोजगारदातालाई विद्यार्थीहरूलाई वास्तविक श्रम बजारको आवश्यकता अनुसार तयार पार्ने प्रक्रियामा पुनर्विचार गर्न प्रेरित गर्छ। शिक्षा र रोजगारबीचको अन्तर घटाउने समन्वित प्रयास आजको आवश्यकता हो।

....   १८ माघ २०८१

सुनिता महर्जन
उपाधि उम्मेदवार

This dissertation entitled *Experience of Employees in Educational Mismatch Job: An Interpretive Study,* presented by *Sunita Maharjan* on *date of viva voce.*

APPROVED BY

………………………….   31 January 2025

Asst. Prof. Basu Prasad Subedi, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

………………………….   31 January 2025

Prof. Peshal Khanal, PhD

External Examiner

………………………….   31 January 2025

Assoc. Prof. Shesha Kanta Pangeni, PhD

Head of Department, Educational Leadership

………………………….   31 January 2025

Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dean/Chair of Research Committee

I understand that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of the library of Kathmandu University. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

………………………….   31 January 2025

Sunita Maharjan

Degree Candidate

DECLARATION

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

………………………….   31 January 2025

Sunita Maharjan

MPhil Degree Candidate

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mentors, family, and friends, who have shown me unwavering support and made me realize the importance of guidance and mentorship in the career mapping of an individual.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to show my gratitude to everyone who has supported me in completing my dissertation. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Basu Prasad Subedi, PhD, for his unwavering support and guidance, which encouraged me to keep up my work throughout the whole research project. I truly appreciate the time and effort he dedicated to reviewing my work in detail. His constructive feedback helped me to stay focused and improve my work.

I wish to acknowledge Dean Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD, Associate Deans, Prof. Prakash C. Bhattarai, PhD and Hemraj Kafle, PhD for their leadership. I would also like to show my appreciation to Assoc. Prof. Shesha Kanta Pangeni, PhD, Head of the Department of Educational and Prof. Dhanapati Subedi, PhD for their support and guidance during this dissertation. Likely, I really appreciate Prof. Mana Prasad Wagley, PhD and Asst. Prof. Rebat Kumar Dhakal, PhD for their guidance in my whole research process to improve it.

I would also like to show my appreciation to my colleagues Anu Khadka and Shreeram Gyawali, who always motivated me to continue the process and had faith in my ability, which built up my confidence. I would also appreciate my research participants, who coordinated well during my research and shared in detail, which helped me to understand and draw conclusions in my research.

Finally, I want to convey my deep gratitude to my husband, Sudarshan Maharjan, and my entire family for their support in balancing my study, family and work life. Without their trust, completing my dissertation might not be possible.

Sunita Maharjan,
Degree Candidate

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AFU	Agriculture and Forestry University
AI	Artificial Intelligence
GoN	Government of Nepal
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HR	Human Resource
ILO	International Labor Organization
JA	Job Analysis
KU	Kathmandu University
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
NOU	Nepal Open University
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

LIST OF FIGURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a general overview of educational mismatches among employees, highlighting different relevant situations they have faced, as shared. Specifically, this chapter deals with the background of the study and the statement of the problems, including purpose and research questions. Additionally, this chapter deals with the study's delimitation.

Scene Setting

I started my career by teaching secondary-level students and slowly moved toward the corporate sector. Throughout my professional journey, I often hear businesses saying, "Customers are the king of the business," – as they hold the purchasing power and business highly depends on the behavior of the customers. In recent days, I believe that with an enhancement of time and knowledge, businesses are equally prioritizing employees. If customers are king, then employees are the valuable assets of the business. They are brand builders and act as a mediator between businesses and customers, so their productivity level plays a vital role in organizational success.

Educational mismatches in the labor market occur when individuals are employed in jobs that do not align with their field of academic specialization. While it is often assumed that such mismatches result in inefficiency, it is essential to recognize that many academically mismatched employees perform exceptionally well and even become valuable contributors to their organizations. However, this phenomenon is not without consequences—mismatched employees are more susceptible to disparities in salary, job satisfaction, productivity, and career growth. This misalignment is often the result of external pressures, limited career guidance, market trends, or financial constraints. Graduates may follow popular or socially prestigious fields, only to realize later that their interests and capabilities lie elsewhere. While some adapt and excel in their mismatched roles through resilience and self-directed learning, others face persistent struggles in performance, motivation, and self-worth.

I belong to a middle-class family, where my father takes care of all expenses of the household, the education of mine and my two siblings, and other expenses. I grew up compromising many things in life which do not hold much value to survive. Entertainment and friends' gatherings are organized once in a blue moon. The environment I grew up in highly impacted my perception of my career and being financially secure. Despite the financial crisis, my father managed my studies, so I continued till my MBA. I felt like I was carrying some sort of debt that I needed to repay to my father. During my studies, I had a dream of becoming a financial analyst and financially independent. At that time, finance subjects were in much demand, and banking jobs were highly appreciated. So, I took finance subject as a specialization during graduation – thinking it was the most popular and safest way to be successful. Later, I realized finance is way more difficult than I had thought. My interest in my studies started declining, which impacted my final grade, and this ultimately hit during the job hunting after my graduation.

Realizing my mistake in running after the subject prestige and market bubbles, I identified my interest in managing people and their skills. So, I took HR as a specialization during my post-graduation. With my theoretical base and continuous effort, I am a senior recruiter in one of the reputed organizations, and I am enjoying it a lot. Like me, there are many students who are not clear about their interest and their competency, so at last, they end up in a job mismatch after graduation.

Background of Study

Education creates a base in an individual's life, shaping their knowledge and career trajectories (Xing & Rojewski, 2018). Generations and generations have passed, and individuals are prioritizing academic achievements in their lives, believing these will be the credentials for their professional journey (Tomlinson, 2019). Individuals usually select the educational stream aligning with their career goals from the diverse subjects available, mostly influenced by their area of interest, guidance from their teachers and mentors, and social and cultural pressures. In the context of Nepal, the education board has established minimum scoring criteria for stream selection.

Immediately after graduation, students actively seek job opportunities in the field relevant to their chosen educational stream, often shaped by exposure to career-related

information. This does not mean all students will easily get the opportunity in the relevant field. They often face challenges in aligning their education and the job market, which creates an employment mismatch (Esposito & Scicchitano, 2020). Conversely, organizations seek qualified employees based on Job Analysis (JA).

Nevertheless, not every employee that best fits every position can be hired, which is why situations of mismatched employees getting hired arise. The employee's status is like determination of whether they are at the three different levels. A perfectly suitable employee is one who has at least the essential minimum educational degree for the position. An under-qualified employee is one who has an educational degree less than is mentioned, while an over-qualified employee holds a higher degree than is required. In scenarios where employees are underqualified or overqualified, however, other requirements that are in line with the position qualifications are the ones used in the general selection.

Educational mismatch occurs when an individual is engaged in an industry different from the education stream an individual did at the time of graduation. Graduates choose specialized subjects with the intention of creating a theoretical base for their professional lives, so the education phase is very important. Various reasons will impact the choice of the specialized stream during graduation. A few can be highlighted: personal interest, peer/social/ family pressure, subject/industry popularity, easy scoring, current employment opportunities, Nepal's educational policy, and so on. Few students are clear about their future aspirations and confident enough to achieve their professional goals; however, others don't have a clear picture of why they are choosing the specific stream or subject - they will just move with the flow. This group of students will mostly fall into the category of educationally mismatched jobs (Yorke, 2006). They are making extra efforts to compete with the educationally matched employees.

When a job analysis is carried out for posts in organizations, the professionals need to be described through different lenses, such as - education, personality, gender, location, and more. In situations where employees lack education in terms of their jobs, they are employed depending on other job requisites because the recruiters are still convinced that they can contribute to the organization in a positive manner (McGuinness et al., 2018). At the same time, the inclination of individuals towards the mismatch of the

educational requirements of a job may also be due to the lack of education or other reasons such as the quality of the educational program, location, and the higher salaries that are paid by the company or many more (Sloane, 2020). There are several different situations that can best describe why people who went through high school go after educational mismatch jobs, including the money situation where the student gets support from the parents, which is going to be a go-signal in letting the student get his/her first job. If the financial status of the student is weak, then an individual will give high priority to earning and ignore the job mismatch along with their interest. On the other hand, if the student's financial status is good and he or she can easily manage their daily life without a job, then the individual will prioritize their interest and wait for employment in the specialized field. Moreover, the environment in which an individual grows up will also influence the choice of a specialization course.

While some employees in educationally mismatched roles thrive and experience high job satisfaction, others struggle to navigate the challenges of a competitive professional landscape. The experiences of educationally mismatched employees vary with finding fulfillment and success, while others face difficulties in their daily work. I personally and professionally know employees being on the educational mismatched job. Some were there by their own choice, and some employees were forced to pursue the mismatched jobs. A few real-life situations I can share here:

Subang Rai is a 32-year-old marketing head from Nepal who works for Himalaya Wellness and has a degree in electronics and telecommunication engineering. Subang Rai currently works in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods industry and is aware that the industry requires relevant educational support to step up the ladder of professional success.

Likely, Sushovan, Associate Engineer working at Genese Solution, holds a BBA degree from KU – struggle to be on same line with his colleagues and taking support of additional technical courses to compete in the industry.

The above scenarios explain that employees who are in an educationally mismatched job are still not fully satisfied and realize the lack of proper guidance, especially from industry experts. As the skills cannot be developed solely by institutional education (Tran, 2016), the working world should also be incorporated to prepare

graduates with job attributes (Cheng et al., 2021) to improve employability and success. Regarding the market need and academic scope, we can incorporate employer engagement and there is a positive relationship between employer engagement during studies and professional life later (Jones et al., 2015). Many companies view academic engagement as a more valuable means of transferring academic knowledge to the industrial sector than licensing university patents. This highlights the importance of academic engagement in facilitating the transfer of knowledge between academia and industry (Cohen et al., 2018). Different institutions, whether educational or industrial, can provide special guidance through industry experts, which will benefit both graduates/employees and the organizations.

There is an alarming situation where a lack of guidance from industry experts is deeply felt because individuals at educational mismatched employees are facing challenges and experiencing workplace discrimination. It takes a longer time to explore a particular job area. Many individuals value early mentorship and guidance to shape their career path.

Statement of the Problem

The issue raised by educational job mismatch, where an individual's scope of work does not align with the formal academic background, has emerged as a critical challenge in the industries of every nation. Different studies that have been previously done have comprehensively showcased the negative impact of educational mismatch on job satisfaction, carer development, and the overall productivity of the organization (Wen et al., 2023). There remains a gap in terms of understanding the lived experiences of mismatched employees and the mechanisms they use to tackle the professional challenges in professional sustainability and career growth. This gap is majorly noticeable in industries where industry guidance and career counseling are very limited or do not exist, which makes employees rely on self-learning and skill development to remain competitive.

Despite most of the research highlighting the fact that mismatched workers can achieve the desired success in their role, it is also not negligible that those employees often express their regrets about not having relevant formal education due to the lack of timely guidance from teachers or experts during their initial years of education. This

regret of the educational mismatched employees highlights a wider issue in the educational system: lack of connection between educational institutions and the demand of industries. Research recommends that educational institutions play a vital role in minimizing this gap by adopting various mechanisms to enhance the strong connection with the job market through implementing initiatives like job fairs, trainee programs, internships, or any skill enhancement program collaborating with industries (Paudel, 2024). However, these mismatch addressing mechanisms are underexplored in the current market.

Likely, the labor market is becoming dynamic, with recruiters adopting the sophisticated recruitment process while screening candidates with precise skills and competencies for vacant positions. Such practice worsened the skill gap and prolonged the vacancies for a longer period, though the unemployment rate shoots up due to an oversupply of graduates with mismatched qualifications (Varona Cervantes et al., 2020). Such mismatches not only impact an individual's career journey but also highly impacts the organization, with declining productivity and inefficient utilization of employees.

This study tries to address such critical gaps by exploring the shared experiences of educationally mismatched employees, understanding their adaptation to the position in which they are thriving, and evaluating the role of collaboration between educational institutions and industries in minimizing these mismatch-related challenges. This study aims to contribute to labor market inefficiencies while suggesting policymakers, educators, job seekers and the industries.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the experiences of educational mismatched employees in their professional journey. It also aims to explore the perception regarding organizational support and self-effort in mitigating the challenges faced by the employees in educational mismatch.

Research Questions

1. How do participants share experiences regarding their educational mismatch job?
2. How do the participants of educational mismatch share their views on organizational support and their self-efforts to mitigate the job-related challenges?

Rationale of the Study

This study is undertaken to understand the lived experiences of employees who have been in educationally mismatched jobs for a considerable period and have managed not only to survive but to succeed. These individuals have taken diverse career paths due to various external or internal forces, yet they now recognize the critical value of having a solid theoretical foundation to support their professional practice. Their success stories have sparked curiosity to conduct an in-depth study on how they have adapted and thrived in their roles, particularly focusing on their survival strategies.

While educational mismatch can pose significant challenges, many employees have managed to navigate these difficulties through a combination of self-effort and organizational support. Self-effort—in the form of continuous learning, adaptability, and self-motivation—enables individuals to close knowledge gaps and build competencies relevant to their roles. At the same time, organizational support—through mentoring, training programs, and performance feedback mechanisms—plays a critical role in helping mismatched employees enhance their skills and align better with job requirements.

Organizations review the performance of employees every year to enhance their productivity (Sri Sulistiani & Faozanudin, 2022). Such reviews show the area of improvements and based on that organization can provide expert advice, organize training programs and enhance their job-related skills. Organizational support in both formal and informal learning is very critical in helping employees in their career success, despite having mismatched educational backgrounds.

Similarly, there is a gap between the deliveries of educational institutions and the demand of the job market. Various studies have shown the significant importance of partnership between educational institutions and industries. Study done by Abdiyev et al. (2023) shows that the university mechanism, especially in the IT field, does not match the expectations of the job market. Similarly, Jackson (2018) and Jones et al. (2015) highlighted that graduates will get benefited with the collaboration of educational institutions and industries as it will help to gain real work experience and develop job related skills.

Structured collaboration models, such as the Academia-Industry Collaboration Plan (AICP), offer a strategic framework for linking theory with practice (Ahmed et al., 2019). These frameworks create opportunities for industry professionals to serve as mentors, thereby integrating real-world insights into academic learning environments.

This research seeks to deepen these understandings by exploring the educational-industry linkage in greater detail. It will examine how industry experts contribute as mentors and how their involvement helps prepare students for real-world roles. Additionally, it will highlight how self-driven initiatives by individuals and supportive organizational practices together mitigate the challenges of educational mismatch. Drawing on case studies such as Kazakhstan's IT programs (Jonbekova et al., 2020), this study aims to suggest actionable strategies for improving collaboration between academia and industry, ultimately fostering mutually beneficial relationships. Industries will benefit from a workforce equipped with relevant skills, while students and employees will gain the practical insight and support needed to build sustainable careers—even in fields beyond their formal education.

Delimitation

This study is limited to the four participants in educationally mismatched roles across overall industries where interpretive analysis of their job-related experiences is done. The scope focuses on the engagement of industry experts with the universities and value addition in terms of professional lifestyle, excluding broader societal and economic impacts. It shows the role of self-effort and organizational support to mitigate the challenges in educational mismatched job.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes the literature review corresponding to the research topic undertaken on educational mismatched employees and employer engagement – theoretical framework. Underlined the theories such as the experiential theory, human capital theory and expectancy value theories.

Concept of Educational Job Mismatched

The Transition from College to Workplace

The transition from college to professional life remains a critical stage for graduates, which is mainly dependent on self-aspirations and influences. Vaaland and Ishengoma (2016) highlighted the role of labor market options in liberal economics, and Blokker et al. (2023) shared a broader framework identifying four perspectives on the transition, i.e., single status change, human capital accumulation, life course development, and developmental transition into adulthood. These studies highlight the challenges graduates face in balancing the currently available job opportunities and long-term career objectives. For instance, younger graduates give priority to the work-life balance such as flexible working hours, autonomy in roles, good benefits and pay, meaningful work, speedy career growth, etc. – such shift is influenced by the cultural norms and good economic conditions supported by the high earning power of previous generations. They have seen their parents work long hours and make compromises, which has influenced them to prioritize their dream job over mere employment (Ng et al., 2010). However, along with highlighting the preferences of younger generations, Reddy et al. (2024) also mentioned the imbalance between job market demands and unemployment. Such a gap indicates the emerging need for guidance in the early stage of career planning. Blokker et al. (2023) also suggested that workshops or interlink programs like internships, trainee programs, or volunteer roles can bridge the available gaps between educational institutions and workplace expectations, nurturing flexibility and employment opportunities. This suggestion is further highlighted by Warrick et al., who share the importance of organizations providing targeted training and experiences to align

younger graduates with market expectations while universities should prioritize transferable skills. A generational shift had made the transition more complicated with the changing priorities. Unlike old cohorts who preferred financial stability, younger graduates are increasingly seeking roles that give them more passion and value. This shift reflects the societal change, including the hierarchical flexibility over the traditional boss-employee practice. However, Vaaland and Ishengoma (2016) clearly mentioned that the labor market in liberal economies may not always accommodate such aspirations, mainly in highly competitive and rigid recruitment processes. So, graduates must balance idealism with realism, leveraging continuous learning and required skill enhancement in the professional landscape.

Employability and Job Mismatch: Employer's Vs. Employee's Viewpoint

With the concern about employers' guidance to young graduates, colleges are also working on job-ready skills for employability. Employability and job mismatches have been emerging issues in the modern labor market, where graduates are finding themselves in roles that diverge from their academic background. If an employee chooses to pursue a professional life different than the educational degree, then that employee is called an educational job mismatched employee (Chaudhry et al., 2022). For employees, such educational mismatched roles often lead to system inequalities like pay disparity, workplace biases and limited career development opportunities. It negatively impacts job satisfaction, productivity and compensation (Wen & Maani, 2023). On the other hand, employers are not getting competent candidates and compromise during recruitment and onboarding. Both the number of graduates and the unemployment rate are increasing-creating a huge gap. As per the data of Sano Thimi, every year, around 4.5 lakh students graduate in different streams from various available and will enter their professional lives. On the other hand, the unemployment rate of 2021 is 5.05% - which is 0.33% higher than in 2020. This educational mismatch occurs because of the scenario where education-certified candidates lack the required skills or their specialized subject does not meet their inner personality, so they move to the mismatched job that will meet their expectations. Such a scenario of educational mismatch necessitated costly investments in training and development programs to minimize this educational gap, though it can be considered a long-term investment.
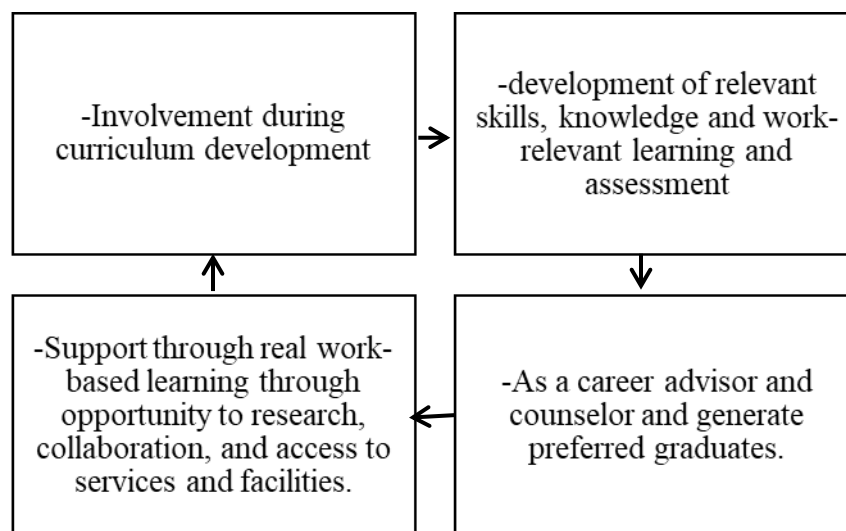
Critically, such rising unemployment rates and oversupply of graduates every year put strong pressure on the labor market, generating an unstoppable race among graduates (Mohd Salahuddin et al., 2023). Moreover, organizations overemphasize technical skill enhancement during employee development, devaluing academic knowledge. Addressing these challenges demands collaborative solutions where the alignment of the academic curriculum with the demands of the labor market plays an important role through partnership mechanisms such as mandatory internships, workshops, seminars, guest lectures, etc. Such a mechanism will mitigate the possibility of mismatching, fostering equitable pathways for career development.

Education and Industry Integration with Employer Engagement

Educational guidance is defined as a technique for helping students get better educational outcomes. Upon receiving educational support/guidance, students are equipped with the information and coping strategies for decisions and changes regarding school, curriculum, courses, and education system and process. This, in turn, implies a comprehensive development of all spheres of the beings' lives. According to Lettmayr (2012), to eradicate long-term economic problems and other intricate issues, countries around the globe should focus on educating students on employment. Professional guidance through employer interaction is one of the useful ways for such guidance. Professional orientations refer to sets of trends and behaviors that depict a given individual's preference toward self-promotion in a certain profession.

Baral (2018) pointed out that industrialized countries, such as the Kingdom of Japan and the Republic of Singapore, took cognizance and developed more universities, colleges, and training institutions to match the required skills in their respective economies. This paper highlighted the value addition created by the support from universities in developing the skills of the students. In addition to this support, these days, universities are focusing on getting support from employers who will hire graduates in the future. Employer engagement is defined as the support of employers concerning educational programs, the incorporation of employers into the process as active parties, and the provision of help to students. From the employer engagement perspective, the students will have an actual feel for the workplaces that they will encounter when they are through with their studies. It will help the students by guiding them on different

influences such as the demand of employers in the industry. Employers can get involved in education in different ways:

-Involvement during curriculum development	-development of relevant skills, knowledge and work-relevant learning and assessment
-Support through real work-based learning through opportunity to research, collaboration, and access to services and facilities.	-As a career advisor and counselor and generate preferred graduates.

Educational institutions incorporate the above engagement mechanisms based on the need; for instance, if the curriculum is very traditional and does not capture real work-based scenarios, then employers can be engaged in curriculum enhancement. If students are not able to understand and compare the real work scenario, then universities can align employers to train the students in the real work scenario, maybe in the form of traineeship, internship, short-term courses, etc. In some scenarios, employers contribute to career counseling, where students will get the platform to clear their doubts regarding their career plans and the job market. Such an interlink of educational institutes and industry will benefit both parties. Educational institutes, with this linkage, can teach students to align with practical exposure, which will support them in having a clear picture of the job market. As the students get a real-time understanding of the industry, they will be able to trace their career path wisely, which will reduce the skill gap and increase employment opportunities. Similarly, with the reduced skill gap, employers will have quality human resources for vacant positions, and the training of employees will be much more effective.

In addition to employer engagement and institutional support, organizational support plays a crucial role in preparing students for their careers. Organizational support refers to the policies, practices, and culture of institutions and workplaces that foster skill development, learning opportunities, and adaptability among potential employees.

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), perceived organizational support—how much employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being—can significantly influence motivation and long-term career outcomes. When educational institutions and employers provide consistent organizational support through internships, mentoring, onboarding programs, and exposure to real-world challenges, students and young professionals are better able to align their capabilities with industry demands. This synergy between institutional, employer, and organizational support ensures that students are not only academically equipped but also practically prepared for the dynamic job market.

Policy Review

As the focal body in charge of education, science, and technology, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is responsible for formulating education policies that concern the employment portfolio of graduates in the labor market. Such policies include career counseling and government policies. As highlighted by the World Bank (2019), MoEST understands the future potential of human capital investment to support the development of technology-related improvements as well as change and innovation. Likewise, as per the National Education Policy of Nepal (2019), the intention is shifted towards the delivery of career counseling services to students in all the education stages. The policy also supports the promotion of professional career counseling centers in educational institutions and the offering of vocational guidance and counseling services to students.

To enhance the diversification of education, the government of Nepal (GoN), with the cooperation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) has provided the National Employment Policy (2015). This policy shall, therefore, seek to facilitate the sustainable economic development of this country and eradicate poverty. Understanding the significance of decent and meaningful work, several global institutions must stress the significance of complex employment policies. Later, in 1966, ILO came up with an employment policy with the aim of providing full, productive and voluntary employment. This policy highlights employability to make efficient use of those who can work while at the same time focusing on the supply and demand of jobs. According to ILO regulations, members of states attempt to establish a safety net in employment to ensure that everyone

is placed in a job matching the highest level of skills (ILO, 2022). It is imperative to maintain such international standards of employment to promote quality employment.

To promote career counseling, Nepal has also instituted career information centers. The Ministry of Labor Employment and Social Security has placed these centers in areas throughout the country to offer career assistance and professional counseling for any employment seeker. These centers provide information about various careers, available vacancies, training that is requisite for a certain line of work and other related services. The GoN also wishes and wants universities to help students with vocational direction and advice. Private institutions are also involved in offering career information and guidance, thus offering career information services through career fairs, mentoring, training sessions, career information meetings, and internships.

With all these policies generated in the educational industry, institutions are still not able to fill the skill gap clearly – unemployment rates are shooting up day by day and organizations are struggling with potential and matching skills. This means the educational policies generated are still lacking. Lately, the policy has supported the need for internships to gain practical insight into the professional journey; however, we still don't have a policy that suggests an effective mechanism for the institutions.

The National Education Policy of Nepal (2019) highlights the various initiations and developments in the educational sector, but it lacks the mechanism to align the curriculum with the market needs and generate the educational system incorporating work-based learning, for instance, apprenticeship and collaborations with institutions. Likely, the National Employment Policy (2015) highlighted employment facilitation; however, it fails to provide clear guidelines for implementing or trying the given provisions. These policies still fail to highlight skill mismatch in the market, and there is no emphasis on job market movement tracking that shows a clear picture of employment status. Such room for improvement highlights the policy implementation gaps, which focus on a lack of clear alignment of curriculum and the real job market expectations, lack of clear and structured career counseling framework and lack of integrated technology in curriculum development which is relevant to the real job market.

Theoretical Review

This research is focused on descriptive research to understand the meanings and experiences of employees who end up working in their workplaces without aligning their qualifications. The framework that is employed for this kind of interpretation is segregated into two parts, i.e. first, two theories show how an individual decides and how he or she gets influenced, and second, how educationally mismatched employees are using experiential learning and social learning to remain competitive in the industry.

Human Capital Theory

Employees are the most valuable assets in the organization. The development of these human assets will add value to the organizational goal and output. This investment is justified by the human capital theory, an economic theory that highlights the fact that investment in people will benefit from economic return. Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker explains that money spent on education training is an investment that individuals undertake to boost their productivity by acquiring marketable skills. This theory suggests that investment in human assets will minimize the skill gap in the job, increase organizational productivity, and give employees an opportunity for career growth. This theory presupposes that the accumulation of human capital, including higher education or special training, should result in higher returns in terms of career ladder and economic profitability (Becker, 1975). It indicates that human capital theory identifies the areas of development of staff who are in educationally mismatched jobs. This investment can be short or long-term depending upon the skill development level requirement. The concept of investing in the skill enhancement of the employees has been an acceptable norm in the company, where all stakeholders are convinced of the importance of investment in human capital. This theory also supports showcasing the changing perception of the company and employees themselves, who perceive the training cost as an investment with expected returns. The sharing of participants showed enough evidence to justify this changing perception in prioritizing training and development in the company.

Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy-Value Theory is credited to John Atkinson, who explains that motivation for achievement and choice is defined by the expectancy of success and attainments' perceived value. This means an individual's motivation towards any job or

position will be driven by their expectation from that job and the value they get by completing the tasks. According to the theory, when employees anticipate success in their tasks and when the perceived value of job outcomes is high, the level of motivation and satisfaction is high. On the other hand, in educationally mismatched jobs, if the expectation of success is low and the worth of the job is not measured by their education level, the employees might, therefore, lose morale and job satisfaction. This is the reason why some people succeed and some fail after getting on an educationally mismatched job. It's very common that individuals are influenced by the success of others and how they choose a career based on the success rate of another person in the same job without considering other forces. I have used this theory to support and showcase how an individual is influenced by the social figure's success and failure. Knowingly or unknowingly, the participants of this research have shown the presence of this theory, where they got driven by this theory and had a career shift.

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory explains the mode of learning through observing others, critical reflection on their actions and active engagement in the same job. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes the role of experience in the learning process, which involves four stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Of equal importance is what this theory offers to explain how employees in wrong jobs learn. Mansfield's theory of personal development at work is an intermediary for the purpose of this paper and supports the view that employees experience emotional reactions as well as reflect and think regarding what they observe happen. They experiment and attend to those stimuli with educational consequences that may influence how they respond to their educational mismatch.

The theory highlights that learning is not a direct process but a complex situation where individuals actively generate knowledge by thorough study and interpreting the lived experiences of another person. I have used this theory to explain the professional trajectory of my participant, where he himself learned the theoretical concept and implemented the learned behavior in a real workplace and is now ruling the industry.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework


```
┌─────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Peer pressure,      │   │ Experiential         │   │ Enhance their    │
│ Family Influence,   │   │ Learning Theory:     │   │ skills           │
│ Financial           │   │ Concrete Experience, │   └──────────────────┘
│ Obligation,         │   │ Reflective           │
│ self-interest, etc. │   │ Observation,         │
└─────────────────────┘   │ Abstract             │
                          │ Conceptualization,   │
┌──────────────┐          │ Active               │   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Expectancy   │          │ Experimentation      │   │ Compete in the   │
│ Value Theory:│          └──────────────────────┘   │ educationally    │
│ Students     │       ┌──────────┐  ┌────────────┐  │ mismatched jobs  │
│ choose the   │       │ Graduates│  │ Organization│ └──────────────────┘
│ education    │       │ land on  │  │ Support:    │
│ with some    │       │ mismatched│ │ Human       │
│ expectations │       │ job      │  │ Capital     │
└──────────────┘       └──────────┘  │ Theory      │
                                     └────────────┘
                                  ┌────────────┐
                                  │ Self-Effort│
                                  └────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
        │ Most likely  │ ← │ Struggling│
        │ change their │   └──────────┘
        │ profession   │
        └──────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
        │ Continue in  │ ← │ Doing Well│
        │ the current  │   └──────────┘
        │ profession   │
        │ regardless of│
        │ different    │
        │ education.   │
        └──────────────┘
```

In this research, these theories will be used to understand the push and pull forces that influence an individual's decision-making. Human capital theory says education is important for entering the real workplace. Expectancy – Value theory explains what a student expects to succeed in the future. Social cognitive career theory, which shows self-efficacy, occupational and educational outcome expectations, and the theory of planned behavior indicate the attitudes, perceived or estimated norms and perceived behavioral control of an individual.

The supporting influences that help educationally mismatched employees sustain themselves in the industry are identified in this research. The experiential and Social Learning Theory insists that humans relate a particular stimulus with the consequence it produces. Rewards reinforce positive outcomes in behaviors, while punishment discourages behaviors, hence avoiding them or changing them.

<div align="center">**Empirical Review**</div>

Importance of Academic and Industry Collaboration:

Academic–industry collaboration plays a significant role in shaping graduate's career trajectories. Different research underscores the importance of initiations like internships, guest lectures, and trainee programs to bridge the gap between academic needs and the demands of the labor market. A survey done by Ali and Jalal (2018) supported the study, highlighting the fact that regardless of the gender of students, higher education plays a vital role in entering the employment phase with positive relationships. Likely, the research of Perrin and Sun (2022) is also of no difference. They suggested collaboration with the employer through embracing industry-based learning, innovation and entrepreneurship, educational institutions are making students employability ready. An article published in the Journal of Education and Work in 2015 by Steven Jones, et al. supported the concept of industrial engagement in educational institutions and stated that employer engagement was deemed useful in three stages: aiding students in selecting a degree program (by providing direction on relevant courses), facilitating their admission into the university, and supporting them throughout their higher education journey. This research highlights the relevant guidance that graduates seek while shaping their career and making them market ready.

Educational Mismatch and Job Satisfaction

Educational mismatch, where an employee holds positions or roles misaligned with their academic qualifications, remains a challenge. A literature review done by Mavromaras et al. (2013) claims that job mismatch will impact high job mobility due to job dissatisfaction. They defined worker–job mismatch as analyzed based on overeducated or skilled or both. Research done by Si-Jeoung Kim and Choi at the Institute for Science and Technology Policy (STEPI) in Korea (2018) further supports this claim that job mismatch will highly affect pay structure and job satisfaction. An

individual who is in a job mismatch or is a wrong job fit is less satisfied with the job and doing work for a few hidden reasons. A mismatch can be in the form of education, competency, personal interest, or any organizational-specific requirement. If such mismatches in jobs are not tackled and minimized, employees will get frustrated and feel a lack of career growth. This will result in attrition and loss of talent and time. Despite this research that shows the possible consequences of being on an educationally mismatched job, there are numerous situations where an individual has done tremendous work with the support of short-term academic support. This does not mean that all employees who are in educational mismatch will not be able to survive; however, a critical gap exists in addressing these mismatch issues in developing countries like Nepal, where strategies for minimizing such mismatches are underexplored.

Skill-Based Hiring Trends

Organizations these days are hiring their workforce, prioritizing skills over the educational degree they hold. A study done by Arif and Mir (2023) underlines the importance of employability skills in finding a job. It explains the concept of employability skills as the abilities a person must have to get employment. This practice is further supported by the study done by Bone et al. (2023), who explained the evolving hiring practice around artificial intelligence –skill-based hiring, where practical skills are more highly valued than theoretical knowledge. These shifts demonstrate the evolving labor market demands but also raise concerns about the long-term career development of graduates. Addressing this gap demands a localized and developmental framework.

Role of Curriculum in Employability

A curriculum is a guiding tool to deliver theoretical knowledge systematically within the time frame; the relevant and industry-incorporated curriculum will give crisp and relevant employability guidance to the students and will help in developing relevant skills for future employability. The research done by Swingler et al. (2022) prioritized the value of mentorship and its effectiveness. With this relevant mentorship, students will have knowledge of stimulated real workplace skills requirements. This paper additionally highlighted the role of skill development in increasing employability. A strong perspective was shared regarding the students' perspectives on how curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities support their preparedness for the graduate

workplace. Likely, a survey titled "The State of Campus Recruitment 2024" from VBeyond Corporation (2024) shows that 60% of Indian business schools have enhanced and fulfilled their placement requirement by aligning educational curriculum with market needs. Students who have engaged in internships are more likely to have employment after graduation.

The above empirical review shows that the educational foundation in students can be broadened and deepened through coordination with the employer in career planning. There is a clear understanding of the value addition of involving the industry's expertise in curriculum development and making subtends market ready. However, there is still room to do research as the above research and study lack the implementation of such mechanisms in developing countries like Nepal. There is still no clarity on how deep the industrial intervention or coordination is required. A few areas that can be considered for further research to address this educational mismatch are mechanisms to standardize industry-academic partnerships and generate effective development programs.

Research Gap

In the context of developing countries like Nepal, most of the research done presents several notable gaps. Abdiyev et al. (2023) researched the alignment of university education with the standards expected of the IT Industry. This paper highlighted the different mechanisms universities can enhance their educational standard by aligning with the market needs; however, it often overlooks the critical aspect of graduates' aspirations and preferences. Such studies advocate for customized curriculum to align with the industry needs but ignore the personal ambitions and intrinsic motivations that will impact their career planning. Jackson (2018) showcased the work-related integrated educational style from the traditional education approach, yet it fails to account for individuals thriving in fields that are irrelevant to their academic background, highlighting a lack of understanding of an alternative opportunity for professional success. Likely, O'Regan et al. (2022) conducted a pilot study in Ireland that shows how employer collaboration can enhance graduate employability, leaving an irrelevancy in the literature about the specific challenges and opportunities in the market. Though recent studies strongly suggest employer engagement in curriculum development, they lack a detailed explanation of how these initiatives will add value besides the internships and

trainee programs. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of different forces influencing the success of professional life requires more detailed studies that will consider individual ambitions, a practical scenario of the job market in developing countries, and employability beyond traditional trends in the industry-academia alignment (Abdiyev et al., 2023; Jackson, 2018; O'Regan et al., 2022). This demands further research on how educational support can address these gaps and better prepare students for successful careers.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes an overview of the qualitative research paradigm with philosophical understanding, research design, study method, site selection and rationale for the collected data, study participants, quality standards, and ethical considerations.

Philosophical Foundation of the Study and Research Paradigm

This research is primarily focused on exploring how employers perceive employer engagement during education as career guidance and the importance of educational foundation. An interpretive study is adopted to study this, which involves studying the situations of participants within their natural settings and interpreting them based on their subjective meanings (Chorba, 2014). In this research, the sharing of the participants is interpreted in a meaningful way and draws a conclusion. This paradigm is rooted in a humanistic approach that aims to understand employer engagement from the perspectives of those who are highly impacted because of associated educationally mismatched jobs. Multiple realities from different participants are interpreted individually. This methodology employs multiple perspectives to interpret various aspects of the phenomenon, allowing for a comprehensive understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A qualitative research design based on a humanistic pattern, the study aims to do a thorough study of how individuals and employers perceive career guidance and the need for educational foundations, mainly from an educationally mismatched employment point of view. It seeks multiple realities to obtain in-depth knowledge and analyze complex and distinctive cases to develop profound insights into mismatched jobs in terms of academic certification.

My ontological premise for this study is that there are multiple realities behind the linkage between university and industry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The mere realities will be based on the individual's experiences in the job market. Multiple realities from multiple participants will be analyzed and interpreted, which will form my philosophical realities and highlight the contextual understanding of the mutual interactions with the participants. The unique interpretive of each participant contributes to a more detailed

understanding of the complex relationship between academic institutions and industries. This methodology permits a deeper exploration of the university-industry collaborations, moving beyond simplistic interpretations.

Epistemology suggests that knowledge is constructed from the influence of society through interactions and shared interpretation of individuals rather than being objective (Burr, 2015). This represents the commitment to the participant-based knowledge-centric approach, which aligns with detailed and interpretivist research paradigms, where participant sharing is considered the primary source. Epistemological assumptions support the understanding of how knowledge can be grasped from different research papers, literature and journals, personal observations, surveys, etc. (Creswell, 2014). Active interaction and engagement with the participants support the construction of shared interpretations. As a researcher, my similar experiences as an HR student have influenced the interpretation of the sharing of participants. With the adoption of qualitative methods like semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, this research intends to analyze the market challenges where graduates navigate their professional careers in an AI-driven era.

Axiology will be based on the values and ethical issues of the research. This research highlights the reality of the experiences of graduates, their ambitions and competencies to develop professionally, which represents the connection between self-growth and technical advancement (De Andrade et al., 2020). During research, graduates are considered as the subject and the knowledge source, sharing their lived experiences. This group represents a dynamic unit that is at the intersection of professional aspirations and technological innovation. They are the active data sources who have experienced professional learning themselves. As an observer and interpreter at the same time, the shared experiences are co-constructed, aligning the qualitative paradigms.

Interpretive Study as Research Method

An interpretive study is a qualitative research method in which the researcher seeks to explore the experiences and interpretations of participants in the context of the society in which they live and their historical background. Based on the interpretivist paradigm mainly focuses on understanding the subjective experiences of the participants, where the participants' experiences, beliefs, and interpretations of their experiences are

studied in detail (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). This method helps to do the in-depth analysis of the participants' sharing and generate a conclusive remark that will justify the study content aligning with the realities faced by the participants. With the medium of collecting and analyzing detailed qualitative data through interviews, observations, and relevant journals, we can generate profound insights into specific research areas.

The interpretive study focuses on the bounded system, which can be individual, group, or organization (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). For instance, while studying employees in educationally mismatched jobs, the study can be of an individual or a broader phenomenon of mismatch from an academic perspective. This method allows for a flexible research design and provides a detailed description of participants' experiences to generate an interpretation that explains their decisions.

Study Site and Participant Selection Processes

The participants of the study are employees who are in an educational mismatched job. Since time is constrained and it is difficult to gather comprehensive data for this thesis, I selected four mismatched educational employees from different organizations who have experience in the professional area for more than one year, adopting purposive sampling to ensure the research objective. I considered gender and industry diversity while selecting the participants and considering their willingness to participate. Purposive sampling supports the selection of detailed mismatched employment conditions that provide deep insight into the research topic (Patton, 2015). After communicating with numerous people around, I found these four participants' real professional experiences will add value to the research, representing the scenarios of most of the educationally mismatched employees. They had completed their graduation from various universities in Nepal. The participants were from different educational streams, and they were both male and female employees. Most of the time, mismatched employees prefer to share their success story instead of their failure moments in the workplace. With the motive of analyzing the research area more intensely, I have selected employees who are succeeding in the current mismatched job and where I get in-depth and meaningful data. I want to introduce my participants as follows:

Participant 1: Alina Baniya - Carving a Path towards Marketing Arena

Alina Baniya, a vibrant and ambitious individual, was born on April 4, 1998. She spent her influential years in the lively neighborhood of Naikap - Tinthana in Kathmandu. With a supportive family consisting of her parents and a younger sister, she was nurtured within an environment that values both traditional values and modern ambitions. As a final-year student with a bachelor's degree in social work, she exhibited a keen interest in understanding social dynamics and the art of communication. Alina's family played a crucial role in shaping her values and aspirations. Her mother's role as a hospital employee taught her a sense of care and responsibility, while her father's entrepreneurial spirit – managing a small shoe manufacturing company – stimulated her fascination with the business world.

Stepping into the Marketing Industry:

Over the span of five years, Alina carved a niche for herself as a Marketing Officer at New Business Age. Her talkative nature, an asset she displayed even during the first meeting, transformed into her greatest strength as she improved her communication skills. Her professional attire, often coupled with high heels, reflected her dedication to making an impression. The smile that graced her face not only added to her appeal but also demonstrated her positive outlook on life.

Ambitions and Future Endeavors:

Alina's career-oriented mindset has led her to constantly seek out opportunities for growth and advancement. Her determination for self-improvement ensures that she continues to evolve and excel in her field.

Alina Baniya's story is evidence of the power of communication, determination, and ambition. She has shown an unwavering commitment to her personal and professional growth. With a heart full of dreams and a smile that lights up any room, Alina is destined to leave a stubborn mark on the world of marketing and beyond.

Participant 2: Sushovan's Journey through Technical Industry

A young and dynamic individual, 23 years old, Sushovan Paudyal has been making waves with his remarkable achievements and unwavering determination with a

passion for excellence and a drive for success. Sushovan resided in the lively neighborhood of Kalikasthan.

His early life was colored by the love and support of his parents, an elder brother, and himself. His mother, an educator at a local campus, and his father, a respected professor at Pokhara University, taught him the values of education and determination from an early age. Being a BBA 2nd year student at KUSOM, he displayed his thirst for knowledge and dedication to improve his skills.

Sushovan's appearance shows professionalism. His glasses add a distinct touch to his sophisticated image. This physical appearance mirrors his inner qualities – a blend of practicality and sophistication. Sushovan's exceptional communication skills, along with his ability to clear thoughts, make him effortlessly navigate social and professional interactions. These communication skills, combined with his strong determination, have pushed him on a career path that challenges his age.

Sushovan's elder brother, a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at Genese Solution, serves as an inspiration and role model. His success has motivated Sushovan's desire to succeed. In this relatively short time in the professional arena, he has managed to make a remarkable impact even in roles that might seem mismatched with his qualifications. Sushovan is continuously seeking opportunities to enhance his skill set, refusing to settle for weakness. His proficiency in various AI tools demonstrates his commitment to staying ahead in an ever-evolving technological landscape.

As Sushovan continues to ride through life's journey with determination, he serves as an inspiration to others, proving that age is no barrier to achieving greatness.

Participant 3: Subang Rai's Journey from Electronics to Marketing Excellence

Subang Rai, a marketing personality, has emerged as a driving force in the world of business. Subang pursued a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication. Guided by his affection for technology and its potential to shape the future, he developed a strong technical insight that would serve him well in the years to come.

Realizing the interconnectedness of business and technology, he discovered the pivotal role that management plays in translating technical innovations into real-world impact, and his journey took an unforeseen turn. Recognizing the importance of a holistic

skill set, Subang decided to pivot his career path. Subang enrolled in an MBA program at the KUSOM, which marked the beginning of a transformative phase in his life.

Subang's transition from electronics to marketing was a masterstroke of adaptability. He integrated his technical knowledge with his management expertise, creating a unique skill set that would set him apart in the competitive landscape. His experience in Electronics and Communication gave him a deep appreciation for precision and innovation, qualities that would become his signature at Himalaya Wellness as Head of Marketing. With his chubby face and ever-present smile, he brought an aura of positivity and approachability to the role. Subang's journey was a testimony to his commitment to learning, growth, and the power of human connections.

Leveraging his technical background and strategic insights, he arranged campaigns that resonated with audiences on a profound level. His ability to convey complex ideas with simplicity and conviction made him a persuasive promoter for his brand. Fluent in both English and Nepali, he effortlessly bridged cultural gaps and connected with diverse audiences.

From the halls of Electronics and Communication to the forefront of marketing innovation, he represents the power of embracing change and leveraging diverse skills.

Participant 4: Shiva Kumar – A Portrait of Humble and Family Person.

Shiva Kumar Poudel is a remarkable individual with a tall and imposing physical presence. However, his true qualities shine through his humbleness and unwavering loyalty. He consistently prioritizes the comfort and satisfaction of others, always striving to meet their expectations.

One of his most defining characteristics is his strong sense of family values. He's willing to make sacrifices and compromises to ensure the well-being of his family and friends. This commitment to his family has driven him to be a hard-working individual who never loses hope, even when overcome with financial obligations.

His career path is evidence of his determination and adaptability. Although he initially pursued his career in a sales and marketing job out of financial necessity, he didn't let that discourage him. Over time, he developed and honed his sales skills, becoming a competent sales professional in his own way.

During a visit to Kathmandu, despite his busy schedule, he managed his agenda to meet a prior commitment made during our telephone conversation. This willingness to accommodate and fulfill his promises highlights his reliability and dedication to others. Above all, he demonstrates politeness and lacks any trace of pride. This is evident in our meeting experience, where he went above and beyond to assist me with my information needs. He made sure all the required information was gathered and even provided me with his personal contact details for future assistance.

Shiva is a remarkable figure, not just physically but also in terms of his qualities as a person. His humbleness, loyalty, strong family values, work ethic, adaptability, and commitment to others make him a truly exceptional individual among the individuals I met to date.

Data Collection Methods and Instrument

In this interpretive study method, an interview is one of the effective mechanisms to have an interactive conversation with the participants. An interview refers to a structured, semi-structured, formal, or informal conversation between two or more people where one-party requests information from other parties (Cohen et al., 2018). Interviews help to have interactive dual communication and are one of the most effective ways to collect data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such qualitative interviews will give a platform for participants to share their life experiences without any boundaries (Rubin & Rubin, 2019). I used semi-structured and informal interviews for the information collection as I was trying to generate a comfortable and friendly environment for them while having a conversation. Through numerous interviews and interactive two-way conversations with the participants, the relevant life experiences have been collected (Patton, 2015). Data Saturation was considered during the sampling process to ensure the validity of the collected data (Guest et al., 2017). Triangulation was also adopted by cross verifying the interview data with the collected field notes and observations.

Open-ended questions were prepared to ensure the sharing of participants was authentic and they had enough space to extend their sharing instead of limiting their sharing within the questions – maintaining originality and neutrality by using direct quotes in the interpretation of the sharing.

Meaning Making Process

The making process supports analyzing the available data in a meaningful or structured way. Initially, interview conversations are transcribed in a universally acceptable and understandable language, i.e., English. Then, all the collected data are coded and thematized properly to showcase the meaning of the conversations (Charmaz, 2014). Upon coding, the clusters shall be organized in such a way as to provide meaningful scrutiny along the lines of thematic analysis. By thematizing and coding data effectively, researchers can construct clusters that allow for detailed scrutiny, aligning with the principles of thematic analysis that emphasize transparency and coherence (Clarke & Braun, 2017). A detailed exploration of the circumstances and settings in which meanings are constituted would be possible to ensure rigor and insight into the findings.

Quality Standards

Assuring the quality of the study is essential in the research. (Armstrong, 2010) stated that the quality standard of any research can be judged by credibility, and reflexivity. I have adopted Credibility and Reflexivity in my research to evaluate the quality of my study.

Credibility

Credibility is basically about the truthfulness of the research. For credibility in this research, I have collected the data in natural settings to get the relatedness of the data and have more detailed conversation, spending longer time in the field. I have incorporated extended engagement, triangulation and detail checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To collect relevant and sufficient data to study, I used to have multiple meetings with the participants at their workplace, which are necessary to understand the sharing. Pre–visiting the participants was done, followed by multiple visits to build up a rapport, which helped me have a deeper conversation with them. I have maintained regular communication with participants so that they will share their true experiences comfortably (Shenton, 2004). Semi-structured interviews, self-observations, and relevant documents are adopted to collect data and verify the findings. Furthermore, the observed data, conversations, and interviews are correlated and analyzed for the meaning-making process, along with an in-depth literature review. I have also used peer debriefing where I

shared my findings with my colleagues and captured their feedback as well. To maintain credibility, I have also shared the final findings with the participants. With these measures, my research ensures a detailed interpretation of the experiences shared by the participants who are in mismatched job roles.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the approach that involves consciously examining the subjective perspectives, personal biases, and possible influences on the overall research process. It is a reflective method where the participants and their sharing are critically analyzed based on the background, experiences, cultural context, and personal assumptions of the researcher, which might shape the understanding, interpretation, and concluding the research findings. As a researcher, it is very important to understand how my own experiences may shape the analysis of the collected data. During the study, I have maintained a reflexive journal where all my thoughts and reactions are documented (Berger, 2013), which will help in balanced interpretation. Also, the background of the participants, their academic background and the trend in the job market have been carefully analyzed as this will influence the decision of graduates in career planning. Reflexivity will support generating the conclusion with a sense of awareness of the possible impact of self-bias on the collected data and interpreting them in a meaningful way. I encouraged the participants to have open-ended dialogues so that they would have enough freedom to reflect on their past experiences. This surely demands the authenticity of the data that has been collected.

By integrating credibility, and reflexivity, this research ensures a detailed analysis of educational mismatches and career development. By linking these quality standards with the research problem, a detailed understanding of how and why any graduates ended up on educationally mismatched jobs and what influence their decisions can be achieved. It will enhance the reliability and practical applicability of the findings.

Ethical Consideration

All participants were properly informed about the study and the purpose of doing this research. They had full freedom to reject my queries during the interview if they felt not to share. Five ethical issues highlighted in Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) are very relevant to my study, i.e., informed consent, maintaining privacy, causing no harm, no

exploitation, and no negative consequences for future research. There is no harm to anyone during my research.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIENCES ON EDUCATIONAL MISMATCH JOB

This chapter begins with the sharing of experiences of the participants including how they have chosen educational mismatch job, what are the challenges they faced and how they tackled the challenging situations. This section is divided into three subtopics, i.e. process towards the educational mismatch, challenges in the educational mismatch and leading the mismatched industry. I have carefully interpreted the shared experiences and outlined in terms of my first research question: How do participants share experiences regarding their educational mismatch job?

Process Towards the Educational Mismatch – Journey Begins

When an individual chooses to pursue his or her career in an industry which is different from the academic background, then it is called an educational mismatch. The transition path form academic to professional arena is not straight – there will be turning points which will decide the career for the graduate. Graduates step out of the university with an expectation to start their career in the relevant industry. However, if we see in the real workplace, many graduates find themselves working in the industry which is not relevant to their academic degree (ILO, 2018). Educational mismatch might not be always because of individual's poor decision; there are other emerges as well, for instance, labor market dynamics, personal circumstances, social and cultural expectations, etc. This research studies how individuals adapt to the mismatched industry.

Career Choices Driven by Economic Benefits:

The sharing of participants reflects the transition to mismatched jobs and changing trends in recruitment. Recruiters are switching from educational fit to Skill fit which is evident from sharing. This reflects a shift within organizations where talent and skills have become key competitive advantages over formal education (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Participants are moving to the mismatched job for various reasons, for instance, some are choosing the career based on their financial need, family obligations,

and some are moving because of their self-interest and career growth (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). Sushovan is an example of this. He shared:

> *I usually seek benefits when it comes to choosing among the options available in front of me. I joined the IT industry and planned my career in the technical line because of the attractive benefits this industry offers. Flexible working hours, competitive pay structure, fringe benefits, and many more learning opportunities are the major for my preference to start my career. I joined this company for the benefits and flexible working hours, which helped me manage my college timing and the monetary value that helped me be financially capable. Now, I am willing to continue my career in this field only because of the growth opportunities I get here. I am also getting international exposure to international standards and can groom myself to international standards.*

Sushovan's above sharing reflects the understanding of the professional journey which is shaped by both practical needs and personal growth. Before joining the company, he was much more influenced by the tangible benefits such as good pay, flexible hours, bonuses, etc., which helped him to manage his studies and achieve financial independence. However, as he gets involved and experiences real work, his perception towards professional life changes. The global exposure and opportunities he got in the company became the prime reason for him to continue in this job. This shift is evident that individuals will continuously interpret and reinterpret their work experiences, keeping a balance of long-term career goals.

I agree with Sushovan's view on the current employment sensing. After nine years in the human resources industry, I have seen the challenges that accompany the processes of staff acquisition in a wide range of positions, all of which are dependent on the organization's requirements and external opportunities. Studies have revealed that some jobs are always bound to have high turnover rates because of issues of satisfaction, organizational culture, and the type of work that the position entails, hence creating the illusion of an unending job market for the jobs (Hom et al. 2017). Front-line jobs like Sales and marketing, customer management, business development, etc., can be a better example of positions that hold a high attrition. On the other hand, positions where the turnover rate is lower normally require different expertise or a better

working environment and thus, recruitment is periodic, and employees tend to stay for longer (Hausknecht & Holwerda, 2015). This shows that employees stay in such jobs due to some comfort areas they get, such as a stable work environment, job security, and work-life balance.

Above sharing and analysis shows, despite acknowledging an educational mismatch, he finds the motive of continuing in the current job focusing on the financial benefits and growth prospects along with learning opportunities in the job. His story is evident that career decisions do not solely depend on matching education to the occupation but also valuing the aspirations. Sushovan demonstrates the positive career identity balancing his career priorities and financial security and flexibility.

Working Before Earning a Relevant Degree

Responsibility is one of the most influencing circumstances which will make an individual obliged to do certain things that includes joining the job as well. Shiva shared how his family and financial obligation lead him to mismatched job.

> *I belong to a middle-class family and a job is the goal of my life. I have a joint family with my parents, wife, and two children. In 2014, after my intermediate level in management, one of my friends joined a sales job. It's a door-to-door sales job. As I did not have any job and being a man of the family, I needed to be financially capable of covering all the expenses, so I was obliged to start a job in 2014 as a marketing executive at Jaya Pathivara Suppliers. We need to do regular household expenses, there are educational expenses for children and on top of that, I also need to manage for my graduation degree. Inflation every year is adding up the challenge to middle-class people like us. So financial stability has been my priority. I felt the degree is important instead of a stream. As I was already working and needed to complete a degree for the promotion, I decided to join the easiest subject to get a degree - BEd.*

Shiva's above expression shows the pressure of society to earn and take care of the family, being a son. Society's perception still has not changed yet, where males are responsible for earning, and women are there to take care of the house. Financial need and the willingness for future security have compelled him to dedicate himself wholeheartedly to the corporate world. After achieving a level of success in profession,

he rationally chose BEd degree, not because of interest or future in it, but because it is the most accessible way to obtain the academic degree while continuing at work.

I can compare his sharing with my own experience as a recruiter. While advertising a position, we intentionally write 'applicants should have completed their bachelor's degree' without stressing the discipline. This approach is hinged on our belief that skills and abilities are more important than the specific field of education. In our organization, workers usually share responsibilities that are a little off their academic skill set. These people, nevertheless, do continuously deliver high and to expectations. Some of them are laid down in our HR policy with respect to promotions, whereby one must have some educational qualification. Not only me but also most of the recruiters I know follow this mechanism during recruitment and selection.

Above sharing of Shiva's represents the broader issue faced by individuals who are in similar situations where male is perceived as a breadwinner, the financial security is prioritized over the personal interest or educational alignment (Kanji & Samuel, 2017). His story highlights that for most middle-class individuals, an educational degree is used as a tool to get the job and get stable financially rather than personal growth. Above sharing is evident that this practical approach can lead to a gap between the academic degree and actual job market, affecting job satisfaction and long-term career plan (Sam, 2018). Shiva's sharing urges the need for systematic support allowing individuals to better align their both education and job. Shiva's sharing is in line with research conducted in the recent past, which shows the growing trend of emphasizing educational achievements while seeking promotion, including those employees who had high performance. There is always a grey line that still exists in people's perceptions, which dominates their understanding and confidence

Discovering Passion Through Work

Alina, another participant, shared another influencing circumstance which is very similar in most of today's generation. They want to be financially independent. She shared her passion-

I want to be financially independent, so when I got the offer of this marketing job, I accepted the offer. At that time, it was my financial need, but over time, I started liking this job – networking, advertising, and writing content- which has been an enjoyable job.

Besides social activities, I realized that writing creative articles and drafting advertisements are also my cup of tea. I am really enjoying it. My writing skills and social nature backed me up to be a competitive staff.

Alina's sharing shows the influence of her feelings and thoughts to change her job over time. Initially, she joined the marketing job with a motive of being financial independence, but later he continued because of her interest in the job she is doing. She started enjoying her job – meeting new people, socializing, work on advertisements, content writing, etc. - which was initially out of necessity. She became closer to the job reality and her own interest.

From Alina's sharing it is demonstrated that her job which was initially a way of earning, now became an area of interest – an internalization of professional values and career adaptability (Yates, 2025). After joining the job and doing the core responsibilities, she realized her interest and confidence at work made her realize the long term stay in the mismatched job. She found personal satisfaction and growth in the job which keeps her motivated all the time.

All the sharing of participants above shows various situations when an individual lands on the educational mismatched job. Moving forward, Subang, another candidate highlighted the personal interest in choosing the educationally mismatched career – where he or she expect a kind of success as profession.

Joining the marketing field is my personal interest. I like to communicate with people and socialize with new people, so I enjoy being in the marketing field. I started my career at Real Time Solutions. It's an IT-based company that manufactures attendance devices, electric door lock systems, wiring services, and so on - started by my seniors at engineering college. In my tenure of 1.5 years there, I realized management is an important skill one should have in any organization - regardless of the industry and its size. So, I joined MBA for my master's degree. Then I joined Thompson in the marketing field. There I got the opportunity to know most of the national and international brands. As the days go on, my interest in marketing deepens.

Subang's sharing beings with sharing of strong personal interest in marketing industry. He states that he enjoys socializing and connecting with people through

marketing. His preferences and personality influenced him to settle his career in the marketing industry, which is not aligned to the technical degree he has.

He started his career in the IT industry with Real Time Solutions after getting a degree in electronics and communication. With an expectation of financial benefits, in coordination with his seniors, he joined, however, in later days he realized the importance of management, regardless of industry. Challenges faced by his seniors in the tech field pushed him to do the management course, MBA which landed him in marketing job. This observation seems to be the result of practical experience. He developed his skill in marketing, starting from setting foundation with doing MBA and joining Thompson where he got exposure for both national and international brands. There is a clear mixture of personal interest, experience and perception which defines his career choice.

Sharing of Subang clearly shows that career growth, self-realization and continuous learning are the prime reasons for him being on the current job. Marketing is the industry where he finds his personality fits well. His socializing nature gives him a feeling of attachment towards marketing. Subang values self-improvement and takes an academic degree as a gateway for a job, which is evident from the transition from the IT industry to marketing. His career path is not just a decision, it's a journey shaped by reflection, relatedness and personal growth (Brazier et al., 2024). Subang's sharing supports the interpretivist idea that reality is socially constructed. He doesn't just adapt to the marketing industry; he builds his own identity with self-realization and continues learning.

This theme explores the situations when an individual landed on the profession far different than the academic background they have, which is referred to as educational mismatch. Sharing of participants shows that the career decision is not always straightforward, it is a mix of various influences that has an impact on decision making processes, for instance, family and peer pressure, self - interest, labor market, etc.

Graduates enter the job market with the hope to get a role in line with their academic specialization. However, such mismatches occur often, mainly in developing countries like Nepal where the job availability in the market is not aligned with the graduates' preferences (ILO, 2018). Participants in this study have chosen this educational mismatched job due to family responsibilities, financial need, expectation of

career growth or self-interest in that field. In terms of family obligations and financial need, earning an income will be the priority for an individual over waiting for the academically matched job. This is supported by Robst (2007), who stated that people chose the mismatched job mainly when they have economical need.

Another prominent reason is the expectation of a better career along with working conditions like better monetary benefits and non-monetary benefits like flexible working hours, global exposure, etc. From the above sharing of participants also it is evident that these reasons are enough for them to choose the educationally mismatched job as a career. This reflect the changing recruitment trend where recruiters are preferring the skills over the academic degree while screening for the vacant positions – competencies are valued over the academic degree (Brown et al., 2011). Not only the changing recruitment trend, but also the gap between the job market and graduates' expectations also creates educational mismatches. There is no clear connection between the individual expectation with the available jobs in the market.

Being on an educational mismatched job does not mean failure. With the direct involvement in job, over the time they realized their self-interest, skill and competencies along with job satisfaction. Such realization and circumstances support career construction theory, which emphasizes how participants shape their career trajectory through self-experiences and personal meaning (Savickas, 2013).

Challenges in Educational Mismatched job

Educational mismatched jobs, where an individual works in an area that does not align with academic qualifications, presents significant challenges during the adaptation to new job, new industry. This research explores the sharing of three participants – Shiva, Sushovan and Alina, who have experienced various challenges in job during the early stage of the career. Regardless of the reason for being on the educationally mismatched job, all participants are embracing the challenges they face and remain competitive in the industry. They are examples of self-awareness and dedication, and they overcame any challenges that came their way to professional growth.

Shiva is also one of the warriors in the field of mismatched industry. His sharing showed the remarkable progress he had made.

I started my career from scratch, learning basic selling skills to critical customer handling. In the initial stage, I had been working hard to match the speed of my colleagues and meet the expectations of my supervisor. I used to visit clients more frequently as at first my communication was not that convincing, and I used to take longer to close the deal. Our supervisor used to brief us about our responsibilities and certain mechanisms. Sometimes, I used to get lost, and his words would go out of my mind. Most of the time, I wished for his extra attention and support, but every time, it was not possible, and I was hesitant to ask for his help again and again. Now, I am confident enough to conquer any difficult customer. I can achieve every target set by my organization and meet the expectations of my supervisor. I am willing to plan my career in this field.

Shiva's sharing shows emotions, struggles and experiences. With no theoretical knowledge to rely on and too shy to ask his workmates to guide him' Shiva had to try it practically. His sharing showcased a lack of confidence and how he struggled to be on same line as his colleagues. This is an evident that work is not just about the tasks but also the relationships among colleagues, customers and seniors (Billett & Choy, 2018). In the later part of his sharing, he claims the confidence and ability to tackle difficult situations. He devoted extra hours; he mingled around with friends and other people, especially in the market, to see how clients executed transactions. His approach exceeds traditional learning mechanisms which showcase a proactive attitude toward personal growth and professional improvement. Shiva's approach to immense learning highlights the power of interest, determination, and hands-on experience in overcoming challenges in a professional journey (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). This is evident from his frequent visits to the dealers, because of which they were willing to take time and advise him on how to become a better player. This example, therefore, illustrates the positive attitude that Shiva adopts pertaining to learning as well as his extra effort to perform better in his official position.

Shiva's personal transition in the job is commendable. He faced various challenges like, delay in sales closure, weak communication, low socialization, etc., which he turned into learning points. Shiva has taken these challenges and necessary steps in building careers. His dedication towards the frequent visit to the clients and open

for suggestions have helped him to overcome all these challenges. By reflecting on own areas of improvement timely helped him a lot. There was the emotional dependency where Shiva stated as "extra attention from supervisor", which often exists in early stage of the career trajectory. Yet, he learned on his own and improved the skills needed for the job. This self-reliance became a turning point in his career growth.

The same level of interest in educationally mismatched jobs is also visible in Suhovan's sharing:

> It's a new industry for me and of course! my first professional step, so most of the terminologies and processes are new for me. Initially, I struggled to understand the technical terms used in the work which created a challenge for me to perform. Being in the technical industry, most of the terms are very difficult to understand and I was expected to know all the relevant terms and perform. I struggled a lot to get all the understanding of technical terms which I need to use in my job.

People like Sushovan are so familiar with the complexities of roles and responsibilities that they can hardly switch jobs or pursue further education qualifications. Having enough self-confidence as well as support from supervisors and sessions for skill development, Sushovan is confident of finding a job in the IT field even without any related education. This is like a sub-group that uses experiential and on-the-job learning to succeed in fields unrelated to their academics (Stenard & Sauermann, 2016). His journey demonstrates that self-confidence, cooperative workplace, and experiential learning can support him in succeeding in any complex role instead of not having a similar academic background. This gives enough evidence that the personal motivation and ability to learn will surpass the formal educational limitations (Akkermans et al., 2020). Entering to the unfamiliar industry is not just a journey, it's a high jump to the unfamiliar world, where everything will be new – from terminologies and work processes to the unfamiliar faces. It's a symbol of unfamiliarity which will hinder success in a career. Sushovan showcased the effort towards the learning where he has not mentioned about the overcame of the challenges, he just simply put forward how he tried to know and perform. This awareness helped him to understand his own journey as an adaptation to the new industry and demands (Tomlinson, 2019). He clearly shows that the struggle might not be the sole outcome of personal weakness, it can also be

because of the gap in expectations at work (Bridgstock et al., 2019). Sushovan's sharing is evident for the challenges that may arise due to the transition into technical role without prior technical base. He demonstrates the on the job learning through self – learning, gradual adaptation and informal learnings.

Alina, another participant, shared the role of self – effort in career growth. She happily shared as:

> At the initial stage, I was very shy and hesitant to communicate properly in front of my supervisor when I joined one of the call centers. There were times when I waited till my supervisor left me alone before making a call to the client. As I realized my areas of improvement, I worked in those areas and joined the New Business Age. However, teams were new and felt left behind in the mass, and of course corporate terms were very new for me. It's a busy world and everyone has their own stuff to do.

Alina's sharing reflects the transition from the introvert, shy and hesitant person to the confident and extrovert person as expected by the job she is holding. Her sharing on early stage of career journey shows the emotional discomfort and fear of negative feedback from the supervisor. She openly admits to being introvert and has the low adaptability of the new environment, which is leading to low self-confidence. She was trying to cope with the need for the job and perform as expected, which shows her dedication. In later sharing of Alina, it is evident that it's her self-awareness that she realized the need for improvement in communication. She had taken the challenge, worked on it and with the improvement she moved to a new job in the New Business Age, which shows the personal agency (Brown et al., 2021). However, the new job and new workplace bring new challenges. The work culture, unfamiliar terminologies and new colleagues took her confidence, where she relied on her skills and seniors to be on the same page with the colleagues. She had a silent struggle with her job where she had a complex and emotional journey (Ficarra et al., 2020). Alina's sharing is much more than an expression of the career journey; it is also about the experiences she had and how she interprets her working life. She expressed the internal reflections by stating - staying silent, feeling left behind, job switching. She figured out her inner areas of improvement – a process of self-awareness. She shifted to new job with an intention to improvise the

communication skill in broader scale – a developmental step to the career growth. Her desire to do better and engage more confidently at job is evident in her sharing. Alina's sharing also highlights how the structure and work culture of the organization will affect an employee's confidence. The emotional support and learning struggles are often unnoticed in the organization.

This theme highlights the challenges for mismatched employees in the workplace. One of the major challenges is the lack of a theoretical base of knowledge. Shiva's sharing shows a lack of understanding of practical models for customer engagement. His repeating visits to dealers, making extra effort in almost every work and informal learning highlights the importance of theoretical base (Carnevale & Smith, 2018). Likely, Sushovan also shared the similar struggle in a tech – industry. He had struggled to be familiar with the terminologies used in the IT industry, which formed a huge barrier for him to move ahead.

Likely, mismatched jobs mostly create emotional stress in the form of low confidence, anxiety and fear of negative judgement (Verhaest & Van der Velden, 2017). Alina shared the similar incident of being afraid to communicate in front of her supervisor, delaying her work. Such mismatched employees generally look for extra attention from their supervisors but hesitant to ask – which is evident from the sharing of Shiva. He was reluctant to ask for help just to avoid the feedback of incompetence, which is very common among new employees joining the workplace.

Such challenges of educational mismatch are addressed by self-realization and experiential learning. Shiva learned the sales techniques by observing his colleagues and spending more time in dealer's point to observe the customers. Likely, Sushovan also enhanced his theoretical skill with repetitive tasks and informal guidance from the colleagues.

Leading the Mismatched Industry

The satisfaction in sharing of the participants is an evident that they are doing well in their current mismatched profile. They have a strong mindset and persistence to do better in future as well. Sharing of participants highlighted the fact that they are leading the market despite of educational mismatch.

Sushovan represented the new generation whose perception towards the job market is different. He said that:

There is no one solution for a single problem if you could solve it differently. Likely, I also believe that there is no one perfect job for an individual and there is no one rule in the world. You just need to update yourself a bit to fit in any environment by enhancing the required skills and competencies. I believe you will get an employment opportunity in almost every industry – we just need to have good academic scores due to screening criteria and a learning attitude.

Sushovan's sharing reflects the flexible and open mindset where he stated that there is no one job for any person and success at any job depends on the adaptability to the new environment by enhancing relevant job skill set. Navigating uncertainty is very important in the career journey which is highlighted in his further sharing as:

I joined Genese Solution as an intern where I was given an opportunity to do the first formal business communication with the client. I was supposed to sell the product to CG where I crashed the deal in one shot. This success incident supported me to get on roll in the company. Now I am leading projects pitching independently and getting business. My company is very happy with my performance and have high hopes for my career growth.

Sushovan's career journey starts with the Genese Solution where he recalls being given the platform to showcase his competency by pitching a sale to one of the major clients. As he succeeded in closing the deal in single attempt, he marked his turning point where he got promoted to permanent employee from an intern – where he independently led the clients and contribute directly to the business. Sushovan's sharing gave enough evidence on the feeling of an individual where he experiences the process of professional entry and timely recognition, supporting the career growth (Setyawati. et. al., 2022). Success at the first attempt of client pitching became a key moment in his career journey which showcases the capabilities and his worth in the organization. Sushovan's journey reflects an interesting shift from a passive learner to a valuable active contributor in the team.

Sharing of Sushovan signifies that the ability to adapt and having a growth mindset is an integral part of an individual's professional journey. It is very important to

understand their own experiences instead of focusing on external measures. Sushovan's perception towards his work sets an example where he has considered his current profession as a process of continuous learning and upgrading, instead of perfect fit, which gave him a direction to grow with reflective thinking. Instead of representing the successful pitching during his internship as luck, he shared because of readiness and own ability which represents his self-belief (Sharma & Joshi, 2025). Likely, the recognition he got from the company also supported him to see himself as a valuable member of the team.

Alina, marketing officer in New Business Age, is leading the team in the company and is renowned as a good marketer in the industry. She proudly shares her 3 years of achievement journey:

> *It's been 3 years since I started my marketing career and now, I am doing very well in my current job in the new business age. I am recognized as one of the productive employees by my supervisor often. She is very supportive and helpful. I am achieving my target every month and maintain consistency in my performance, which supported me to get promoted immediately after 1.5 years of joining this organization.*

For three years, Alina has consistently developed in the field of marketing and representing as one of the valuable members in the team of New Business Age. She proudly shares the feedback from her supervisor where she got praised for being a fast learner and productive. Additionally, she also mentions about the supporting nature of her supervisor whom she has taken as an example of organized and supportive leadership. Her supervisor helped her a lot to grow herself in professional journey and lead the team.

Alina has maintained her consistent performance by meeting targets every time, which shows her commitment to the work, focus on the job and skill in her field. This consistency got recognized by the organization and rewarded with the promotion just in one and half years of joining. Research shows that timely recognition and advancement significantly boost employee morale and retention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Her sharing shows confidence, motivation and passion for her job.

Alina's sharing demonstrates that career growth gets smoothen with the right support from supervisor, self – effort, and positive work environment. Her supervisor

played a really important role in shaping her career - which supports claiming that having a supportive supervisor can make a huge impact on career growth. Employees will be satisfied and committed to the work when they feel valued. Her consistent performance leads to trust which resulted in early and timely promotion which helped in boosting the morale of highly performing employees and created a right work culture. She seems to be self-aware of her capabilities and confident in the achievements, which come from experience and support (Lent & Brown, 2017). This shows how the sense of belonging is shaped by how the employees perceive in the office and how their efforts are treated (Carmeli et al., 2017). The timely recognition will boost employee motivation.

Likely, Shiva is another participant who is making an impact in the sales industry and representing as a reference figure to all the sales professionals. Shiva's career journey is one of the good examples that shows how practical skills and learning attitude can balance the academic gap.

> *Despite being from an educational mismatch, my selling skill helped me to perform well in my job. I have been the most competent employee in my sales team, and I often get praised for meeting targets most of the time. I am the high incentive earner in my team. My organization is willing to promote me as soon as I get the bachelor's degree. I have my own team of front-line sales -whom I am leading. I really enjoy my job as a sales officer and am willing to continue in the future as well. – Shiva*

Despite being from a different academic background than the job he is handling, Shiva is performing as expected and meeting all the sales targets. As mentioned, his selling skills have helped him a lot to perform well. Though in the initial days, he felt it was difficult to match the speed as expected, later with his self-development attitude he is performing well, earning highest incentives in his team. In a sales driven job, earning the highest incentives means good performance and high job satisfaction. With good performance, his company is willing to promote him as soon as he completes his bachelor's degree. This indicates that only the specific academic requirement is the barrier to recognize Shiva as a valuable member in the team with promotion (Verhaest & Van der Velden, 2017). He expressed the highest job satisfaction and interest in continuing in the same role- sales.

He is an example of skill-based hiring preferences over screening solely based on academics. Shiva has turned the potential disadvantage into a neglecting situation where his performance with regular target achievement supports him to lead in the sales industry. Organizations are becoming more flexible in hiring and recognizing talents (Cappelli, 2015). However, it is still not totally ignorant of the academic degree. Recruiters are still asking for an academic degree to be in some positions (Burning Glass Institute, 2022). Shiva's company is also waiting for him to complete the bachelor's degree to get him promoted. His potential and competencies support him to get recognized and grow professionally – leading the team.

This development and success through overcoming challenge is further supported by the sharing of Subang. He shared as:

> *I realized the importance of marketing in my first job, so did MBA. After joining Himalaya Wellness, I realized of being on the right place where I am leading the whole marketing unit of the company, coordinating with the global team and innovating new marketing strategies. My performance is as per the expectation level of my seniors. I am really enjoying this profile and willing to continue.*

Subang's sharing represents the personal journey of clear career planning and self – awareness. He started with how he took the initiation of starting his career in marketing after realization at first job in the IT industry. This self-realization led him to pursue MBA, expressing that he took the conscious career step to have a strong theoretical foundation. This was a turning point for him where his own experience at work inspired him to have a theoretical advancement. After MBA, he joined Himalaya Wellness, where he believed to be a perfect fit as a career. He expresses the sense of belonging and alignment with the current role. Working as a Head of marketing, Subang is leading the entire marketing team of Himalaya Wellness, Nepal office. His current role is much more strategic and collaborative (World Economic Forum, 2020). He is coordinating with entire global team of the company and representing as a valuable member of the team – involving in new product development, marketing strategies, branding, etc.

Despite having technical degree, he refurnished his theoretical skill with MBA, which helped him to perform as expected by the company and enjoying the role, adding a layer of job satisfaction and personal satisfaction as well. I can relate his transition from

technical field to management to my own career journey. I did MBA in finance as major specialization and HR as minor specialization. After my internship completion in the banking sector, I realized my interest and passion in employee management, then I started my professional career in the HR industry. Now it's been a decade, I am continuing in HR contributing to the industry.

Subang's sharing is full of personal meanings where he stated about the self-realization of increasing need of management knowledge, self – discovery of new career trajectory, and job satisfaction. His experience reflects the intentional alignment between his interests and career journey. It was his practical experience in his first job where he realized the gap in management knowledge among the team, because of which they are facing challenges. Such experiential learning shaped his career direction by taking MBA course with a desire to formalize the management knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). With passion, Subang joined the marketing industry and now leads the global team of the company and takes strategic decisions in terms of marketing.

This theme explores the career path of the participants, where they have succeeded in their respective industries unrelated to their formal educational backgrounds. Despite the gap in theoretical foundation, they have managed to build a successful career where their efforts are valued by the industry as well. Their sharing shows a trend of adaptability, learning mindset, and initiations in the profession (Hirschi, 2018). Sushovan's experience can be considered as an example for flexibility and open minded, who shared as – "there is no one perfect job for all", which clearly indicates that regardless of the industry an individual chooses, they need to be updated and upskill their competencies to match with the demand of the market (Brown et al., 2011). He demonstrates the transformative power of situational adaptability and readiness in overcoming the challenges in mismatched job. Likely Alina, currently a marketing officer at New Business Age, also showcase the success story where she leads the industry with consistent performance with the support of the supervisors. It is evident from her sharing that supportive supervisors are very crucial in career development and timely recognition (Nielsen et al., 2020). Despite coming from a different academic background, Shiva excelled in sales with the support of his self – learning and communication skills. His

consistent performance and dedication to the work leads him to be recognized as a top performer in the team.

Subang is leading the marketing industry through the realignment of his career trajectory through the self – awareness and support from formal education. His story gives a motivation to others which resembles the timely shift to the required education (MBA) – a turning point for his career alignment (Brown et al., 2011). Currently he is heading the marketing unit of Himalayan wellness, coordinating globally and playing a strategic role.

Each of the sharing shows different strategies adopted to deal with the challenges faced in the mismatched job. Sushovan relied on adaptability and confidence, Alina got supported from supportive environment, Shiva outperformed with the self – learning, and Subang strategically upgraded his knowledge with additional formal education. A common strategy for all the participants is self – awareness, continuous learning and timely recognition at workplace.

CHAPTER V

MITIGATING THE JOB-RELATED CHALLENGES

This chapter deals with the mechanisms which will support minimizing the challenges which arise in educational mismatched jobs. This section is divided into two sections i.e. Self- effort and Organizational support. Self-Effort section will highlight the individual's effort for continuous improvement, and the organizational support section showcase the role of organizational guidance in employee's career development and the collaboration between educational institute and industries.

Self - Effort as a Coping Mechanism

Educational mismatch has been a growing concern in today's workplace, where both employees and employers are working on mitigating the challenges raised for the employees. Self-effort refers to personal commitment and persistence to improve her or her own adaptability, upskilling and improving productivity in the workplace which may not be aligned to the academic degree. Employees who do self – effort are more likely to reinterpret their mismatched position and better position to minimize the gaps with continuous learning and adaptability (Senkrua, 2021). Self-reflection is the process of passive observation, representing an approach to improvement areas, challenging personal shortcomings that hinder success.

All the participants are showing the importance and value addition from self – effort in their survival at educational mismatched job. Starting with the sharing of Subang, he shared his experiences and challenges he had in his job. When I requested him to share his journey in detail, he became too excited and replied

> *During my work in the IT sector, I realized my strength in creative work and this sector would not satisfy me in the long run, so I decided to shift. Even my seniors felt the lack of management knowledge. I consulted industry experts also. When I decided to shift to the advertising industry, I was aware of the consequences and was prepared. I did a lot of research before approaching this field, discussed it with friends in similar profiles, and took guidance from my mentors. Even after*

joining the marketing field, I have been taking relevant courses and participating
in seminars to be updated with the recent innovations in the marketing field.

Subang represents as one of the strong examples of how self – realization and self – effort will make a difference in an individual's professional life. When he realized the value of management in any business, rather than staying in the job that did not satisfy his interest, he took the initiative to his own strength and desire. This self – reflection is the first step to self - effort. Subang also realized that the IT sector is not meeting his expectations and desires, he decided to shift to the advertising industry. He had consulted his seniors and industry experts before shifting and doing the MBA degree, which shows a proactive approach (Hirschi, 2018). Likely, he continued his self – effort by taking further relevant courses and trainings, rather than being satisfied with the existing skill set – because of persistence and dedication. Subang's sharing clearly highlights that self – effort is a combination of proactive learning, consistent improvement and self – awareness (Akkermans et al., 2020). Subang's above sharing is an evident that proves the power of self – effort in professional growth of an employees.

Self – effort begins with self – realization of the scenario and the clear expectations in future. Subang's courage to leave stable IT job for a new and challenging industry illustrates how self – effort resembles taking responsibility for one's own career, moving forward. Self – Effort is a continuous process where an individual needs to keep on enhancing his or her skill as the market changes. Subang's sharing inspires to believe that change in career will get smoothened with self – effort (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017). Subang is an example of this. He initiated the change in industry and kept on learning new skills as needed for the job and adapting to the marketing world. He has been attending workshops, seminars and training sessions for skill updating.

Similarly, Sushovan demonstrated the scenario of self–reflection and realization of learning. He shared, "With the realization of the growing IT sector, I started googling about life in the IT sector. He shared:

If you have a learning attitude, you can learn anything, and you do not need any
prior knowledge base. After joining Genese Solution, I started using different
mediums and learning modalities for my skill gradation, and the theoretical
foundation came at the right time – during the initial days of starting up a

professional career. Whenever I had a doubt, I reached out to my seniors, or if
not, I just googled it. Technology has been so advanced these days that you will
get answers to almost every question in your mind – from the dumbest to the
smartest. I really prefer technology to another learning mechanism as you will not
have time constraints and can repeat it again and again until it is understood.
Yeah! Also, it saves money.

Sushovan's sharing presents his primary reason for transitioning from the IT industry to marketing, revealing his adaptability and determination to excel in a different field. With the implementation of multiple learning mediums, including senior guidance and leveraging online learning resources, he demonstrates an adaptive strategy (Chen et al., 2021). AI-based learning is preferred widely due to its unlimited accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and no time constraints (Strielkowski et al., 2024). Others have similarly ended up in jobs that don't require their attained education but have grown to love them over time through practical engagement. Sushovan expressed how maintaining high grades mattered to him more than the degree itself.

Above sharing of Sushovan highlights the importance of Self – effort in the context of both personal and professional contexts. Self – effort is all about taking initiative on own to achieve career growth and expected success. In Sushovan's sharing, his willingness to request for help and take initiative to ask for information and continuous learning helped him to learn the relevant skill set timely, which represents persistence and self – motivation. His preference over digital learning stands out as an example of modernized self – effort, where he made his learning more accessible and tailored to his personal learning need. His story underscores the importance of lifelong learning, especially when self-initiated, and how supervisors and modern tools like AI play a vital role in helping individuals succeed in unfamiliar industries (Nguyen et al., 2020). His drive for management has also contributed to the development of his soft skills.

Alina shared about herself – realization and self – initiation to learn and be competent in her marketing role. She proudly shared:

I started my professional career as a customer service representative to have
some financial support. I was not confident in dealing with customers, even in

telephone conversations. On top of that, if my supervisor stood in front of me while dealing with clients, I was not able to speak a simple sentence. Later, with everyday practice guidance from supervisors, I enhanced my skills and was able to progress a lot. I also took communication and public speaking classes to improve, which added value to my performance. So, now I am leading the marketing department of New Business Age. Everyone appreciates my communication and convincing skills. – Alina

Alina's sharing is the lived example of self – effort. She began her career with a call center where she struggled with basic communication, which is clearly visible when she mentioned the events when she used to wait until her supervisor left to communicate with the client. It was her desire to be financially independent, so she worked hard on improving her communication skill, instead of giving up and avoid the challenge. She was dedicated to regular self-practice, initiated to enrolling in communication and public speaking classes. It was a proactive approach to the learning with persistence and continuous self – improvement. Alina changed her weaknesses into strengths, finally leading the marketing department of her company.

Sharing of Alina showcase that self – effort will add value to both personal and professional development. The patience and persistence of learning she showed is an example for all who want to overcome the challenges. With an initiation to take relevant trainings, embracing feedback from supervisors, Alina took the self – ownership of growth both personally and professionally. Alina's experience, as noted by Pandey (2017), demonstrates how hard work and determination can lead to significant improvements in communication and overall competence. The effort of improving communication on own helped her to build confidence in professional level, enabling her to take on leadership responsibilities. Her sharing demonstrates that self – effort is the combination of self – realization, persistence to learn, and hard work. Alina's transformation from a hesitant individual at first job to a recognized leader shows how self-effort can inspire individuals to overcome challenges and achieve progress in their careers.

Self-analysis plays a key role in recognizing personal weaknesses and making the next steps toward learning more effective. This is evident from the sharing of Shiva where he shared about his professional journey.

As you know, I was new when I joined my current organization as a salesperson. As I was too hesitant to ask my supervisor about my doubts, I tried figuring things out on my own. I was embarrassed to ask my friends also, so to avoid being a topic of discussion, I started reaching out to my friends out of the office and requested help from them. I started spending my maximum time at the dealer's point, which gave me real-time exposure to study different categories of customers and their demands, which I would face in the market. Also, I started going along with my other team members to understand their way of working. This came as a turning point for me and now I am one of the top performers in my company and I am frequently awarded for my extraordinary performance. - Shiva

The above sharing of Shiva demonstrates the struggle in early professional stage and a transformation into a high performing employee in the team. As he shared, he joined the sales, having no prior knowledge with an expectation of being financially stable for the family. He lacks confidence, felt being neglected in the team, hoping extra care from the supervisor and fear of judgement. His reluctance to ask for help shows the internalized anxiety about being perceived as incompetent from the peers and supervisors. In sales the performance is purely judged by the individual output. To overcome such challenges, he adopted self – directed learning approach. Rather than waiting for formal trainings or joining any formal sessions, he looked for the help on personal level – asked friends, spent more time on dealers, etc. This approach helped him in two ways – avoid the environment where he felt scrutinized, and engaging himself in the real time learning in the marketplace. By observing his friend's ways of working and analyzing the customer behavior at dealer's point helped him to learn sales tactics. As the days passed on, these efforts led to a positive transformation and build a confident in Shiva – which is evident from his sharing of being recognized as a top performer by his supervisor (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Such experience – based social learning worked as the key strategy for him.

Shiva's sharing on the transition reveals an in-depth understanding of informal and often unnoticed processes of learning and adaptation of employees at workplace. His shared situation of maintaining competent image is very common in workplace where new employees avoid asking help from seniors or colleagues – where the office culture plays the role in influencing employees to seek for help. Shiva did an experiential learning experience when he spent time at dealers point and got engaged with the customers, observed the behavior of customers and refined his knowledge. The shift from hesitant to high performing employees and recognition shows the rebuilding of the professional identity (Caza et al., 2018). His knowledge and situational adaptation strategies shows the evident that how an employee can navigate the challenges through self – effort.

This theme explores the crucial role of self – effort in mitigating the challenges faced by employees in educational mismatched job. This segment givens enough evident that self – initiative and proactive learning can minimize the gap between required academic base and real market job demands. Sharing of all participants highlights the role of self – awareness, consistency in learning and adaptability helps employees to lead despite of academic mismatches.

Self – effort can be explained as a coping mechanism which will help an individual to reinterpret their professional journey. Instead of remaining passive recipients of the mismatch, participants who are actively engaged in self – learning and skill upgrading, demonstrate the higher adaptability and productivity. Here, self-realization plays an important role, which gives an individual a conscious acknowledgement of their situation. Subang's sharing purely matched this process. During the early career phase in the IT sector, he realized the importance of management in the business and after consulting with industry experts, he transitioned into the advertising sector and pursued MBA. Notably, even after joining the marketing field, he continued his learning through seminars and relevant courses, emphasizing long term growth in career. Similarly, Sushovan shared how the modern tools (AI) and a learning – oriented mindset can mitigate the obstacles in mismatched roles. He has little knowledge of IT industry but knows how to utilize AI for learning, so he relied on digital platforms and AI tools for self – learning (Workable, 2023), along with guidance from supervisors.

He sets an example for right mindset can remove the barrier for career growth. Alina's sharing resembled the value of persistence and self – development. Started a career with the call center job, she overcame her weakness and lack of confidence with continuous practice, guidance from supervisor and self – development initiatives by joining public speaking classes and workshops. Today, Alina is recognized for her strong communication and leadership skills.

Shiva's sharing showed another dimension to self – effort. He highlighted the role of experiential and informal learning. Due to hesitant to ask queries and fear of negative judgement, he turned into an informal source for skill development. Informal source refers to friends outside the workplace, experts outside work and any external parties. Shiva uplifts his skill by observing his friends on how they deal with the customers and spending long hours at the distributor's point to observe the customer's behavior.

Collectively, these sharing illustrate that self-effort is a multidimensional process rooted in self-awareness, resilience, and the continuous pursuit of relevant skills. Whether through formal education, digital learning platforms, or experiential methods, individuals who take charge of their growth can successfully mitigate the challenges of educational mismatch. The stories show that self-effort not only facilitates adaptation but also fosters a stronger professional identity, greater job satisfaction, and recognition within the organization.

In conclusion, self-effort emerges as a powerful and essential strategy for surviving and thriving in educationally mismatched roles. Through proactive learning, self-reflection, and consistent improvement, individuals are not only able to bridge skill gaps but also redefine their career trajectories on their own terms. These personal accounts affirm that while educational mismatch may present initial hurdles, it need not determine one's long-term success—provided one is willing to commit to growth through personal initiative.

Organizational Support – A Weapon to Battle

In an increasingly dynamic labor market, the alignment between educational qualifications and job requirements has become more complex and inconsistent. Educational mismatches may initially appear as a liability; organizations have a critical role to play in mitigating the challenges such mismatches create. Through targeted

support systems such as training, mentoring, flexible job design, and career development pathways, employers can enhance the productivity, satisfaction, and long-term growth of educationally mismatched employees (Cedefop, 2012). This paper explores how organizational support acts as a buffer, helping individuals can mitigate the challenges.

Sushovan has started sharing with the changing thought process of organizations where talents are valued over the certificate. He proudly shares:

> In the Genese company culture, getting a particular job is respected when one has the talent for it than when one only possesses a certificate or qualification for it. They value the work input people give and very much prefer reciprocal benefits.

Sushovan's statement provides insight into the cultural values and hiring philosophy of Genese, a company that appears to prioritize talent and contribution over formal qualifications. According to him, Genese places a higher regard on whether an individual can perform and deliver value in a role, rather than relying solely on their educational background or certification as a proxy for competence. This reflects a meritocratic ethos — one in which skill, potential, and practical output take precedence over institutional credentials. Above sharing and interpretation invites an in depth understanding on the changing valuation of academic certification in today's workplace, mostly in performance driven cultures. In such organizations, employees are evaluated by practical skills and competencies rather than only focusing on formal educational achievements. Organizations like Genese Solution are motivating employees with good financial benefits, international platforms to learn and explore, and support needed to develop the required job-related skills.

Additionally, Sushovan's experience at Genese Solutions reflects a progressive shift in workplace values. He shares that his organization prioritizes talent and contribution. Genese fosters a culture that respects individuals for their skills and dedication, regardless of their degrees. The company provides various forms of support including international exposure, formal learning platforms, mentoring from seniors, and internal training sessions such as workshops and IT meets. These opportunities have helped Sushovan develop the necessary skills to succeed in his role despite any mismatch in academic background.

Organizational support in overcoming the challenges in educational mismatched jobs has been highlighted in the sharing of Alina, where she shared as:

Like in other organizations, we also have morning meetings where our senior employees share ideas and experiences, they came across in their entire career life. This session can be considered as the kind of experiential study learning for us once we get to know about the possible challenges and issues that may be of concern to sales activities. Besides this, sales and marketing seminars and meets are inspiring to me, in whom I was able to polish my skill.

Alina's sharing demonstrates the workplace culture where the organization is initiating in skill enhancement of employees. She shared that formal and informal learning opportunities she got in her organization helped her a lot in her professional development. She showed satisfaction while sharing about the morning meetings where senior staff share personal stories about where they faced the challenges and how they tackled them. It gives an employee like Alina, a relatable knowledge to anticipate future challenges and gain industry – specific insights. Research by De Grip (2020) emphasizes that informal learning is more important for workers' human capital development than formal training courses. Those stories include mostly case studies or any practical past scenarios with similar issues. Alina again highlighted the value addition she gets from seminars and marketing meet ups. Such events helped her to be updated about the market developments and be confident in her role (Office Vibe, n.d.). Through active participation, she gains practical knowledge which helped her to mitigate the challenges of being on a mismatched job.

The sharing of Alina is an evident to claim that organizational support plays a transformative role for employees who are in educational mismatched jobs. Alina developed her skill and been competent with the support of learning platforms she got within the organization. Such support helps employees feel connected and reduce the work stress which might be caused by mismatches at work. Her sharing is the example of experiential learning where she learned required skills in support of the organization and is now thriving in the marketing field.

Subang also shared a perception of continuous learning and skill enhancement, regardless of years of experience. He said:

Regardless of the years of experience in the job, one must update his or her skills as the market demands. Nowadays, there are institutions that arrange training, and numerous trainers are willing to provide customized training to organizations. It's just that you need to identify the right training for your employees. T&D is an investment you make in your employees.

Subang acknowledged that the job market is changing rapidly, and employees need to be updated as the market changes. He added about the training available openly in the job market which is also very effective. The key lies in the right learning platform provided by the organization to employees. With this learning opportunity, the organization enhances employee performance as well as it shows the care for employee's career growth.

"T&D is an investment" – this sentence of Subang reveals that the organizations are considering expenses done for training and development is considered as an investment rather than expenses. This investment will revert as a value addition to the performance of an employee. These days, organizations are organizing frequent internal and external training sessions to keep their employees enhancing their skill as the market demands. It will help in aligning the skill of individuals with the market demands.

Likely Subang also demonstrates the example of proactive approach from organizations to the education and industry collaboration. by the partnership Mr. Subang had with Tribhuvan University (TU), as evidenced by his visit to the University. He shared his collaboration with TU in designing a 31-hour voluntary marketing course for students.

In my experience as a visiting faculty member at TU, I realized the absence of the proper understanding of marketing career. Students assume marketing is all about selling a product and doing a kind of TV advertisement. Being a marketing expert in the industry, I requested TU management to broaden the marketing concept of the students. So, we came up with the idea of generating an additional course in marketing that would enhance their understanding of the marketing career.

Subang's approach is very similar to other professionals' – they also generate additional topic studies to help students understand the content more easily. With this additional course, Subang is generating manpower in the market and broadening the

marketing concept among students. Such sessions will nurture the students in their career choice and proper educational stream selection. Students might not have a full understanding of the market, and they need expert-level guidance, so the initiation Subang did is one of the effective ways of interlinking the education and the industry.

Above sharing of Subang supports the idea that organizational support in learning, education and industry collaboration and enhancing the skill will reduce the challenges of educational mismatch. His sharing on support within the organization and learning shows how employees take such opportunities and appreciate the effort – shifting to the skill adaptability. Support from organizations will help in reducing the job-related stress and build a future ready workforce.

As a part of the HR Team, I also come across issues concerning the value of a learning attitude. In 2020, my supervisor recruited a candidate who had good knowledge and experience in a relevant field. Although initially, this person was able to provide a good level of service, the changing conditions in the market emphasized the need for skill development. Having conducted training needs analysis, he arranged for different training to be provided to the candidate to upgrade him. Unfortunately, during this process, we found a poor attitude to learning and a set mindset as key barriers. Having worked for a year to make the candidate understand the changes happening in the field, it seemed that he was not changing at all. Finally, my supervisor had to conclude terminating this employee's services to the company. Later, my senior replaced him with a new boy who had the energy and willingness to learn the trade quickly. The outcome of this decision is positive as the new hire proved to be very efficient and even got a promotion within 2 years of joining the company. It was a valuable lesson in understanding the difference between attitude and formalities and the benefits of being proactive in the constantly evolving environment of today's workplace.

Above study concludes that as career growth becomes increasingly important, management has shifted significant responsibilities to HR to ensure that this development is effectively facilitated (Sharif et al., 2019). However, the establishment of training courses and the actual deployment of such programs are only part of the equation. The learner's attitude toward learning remains influential in the overall success of the process (Niati et al., 2021). In today's fast-changing labor market, many individuals work in roles

that do not directly align with their formal educational background. While educational mismatches can be seen as a disadvantage, this challenge can be overcome when organizations provide the right kind of support. The write-up explores how structured organizational support—such as training, mentoring, and experiential learning—plays a key role in helping mismatched employees grow, perform, and stay motivated.

Sushovan's story highlights how performance-driven organizations can reduce the negative effects of educational mismatches through a focus on practical learning and talent development. Alina's story further emphasizes the role of informal and experiential learning. She explains how her organization holds regular morning meetings where senior employees share their work experiences, challenges, and solutions. Additionally, she attends sales and marketing seminars, which help her stay updated on industry trends and sharpen her marketing skills. Her experience clearly shows how consistent learning opportunities and mentorship can bridge the gap caused by educational mismatches. Likely, Subang offers another perspective by highlighting the need for continuous skill development regardless of how long someone has been in the workforce. He believes that as the job market evolves, it is essential for employees to keep updating their skills. He points out that organizations now have access to customized training programs and qualified trainers who can cater to specific employee needs.

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section includes the key insights of the research. It includes insights and discussion on reasons for being on educational mismatched job, challenges they faced, what are the mechanisms they use to mitigate such mismatched challenges.

This study reveals a compelling and multifaceted interpretation around the growing prevalence of educational mismatch in the Nepalese labor market situation where individuals work in roles that do not directly correspond to their formal academic training. While conventional economic theories have historically viewed such mismatches as symptoms of market inefficiencies or systemic flaws—resulting in skill wastage, job dissatisfaction, and underemployment (Leuven & Oosterbeek, 2011), this research presents a noticeably different interpretation. The mismatch, as demonstrated through participants' experiences, certainly does not indicate failure. Instead, it often reflects a labor ecosystem characterized by resistance, adaptation, and human agency, in which individuals creatively align their capabilities with evolving work opportunities, even outside the boundaries of their formal education.

A key insight emerging from the data is that educational mismatch does not necessarily result in occupational dissatisfaction or hindered professional growth. On the contrary, many mismatched individuals in this study reported considerable levels of job satisfaction, pride, and career advancement. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, which traditionally suggests that individuals' education enhances their productivity in the labor market. The findings of this study challenge long-held assumptions about the co-related relationship between education and work and suggest a pattern shift. Non-academic attributes such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and self-directed learning—hold greater influence in determining career success (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). These qualities, often overlooked by traditional academic metrics, where workplaces increasingly value agility, teamwork, and soft skills over narrowly defined technical expertise (Deming, 2017).

This trend is supported by recent literature. For instance, study done by Gerli et al. (2015) evaluates individual emotional and social competencies and operationalizes boundaryless career paths across organizational, industrial, and geographical boundaries. Instead, individuals are navigating careers through diverse, adjustable pathways shaped by personal choice, evolving industry demands, and the availability of lifelong learning mechanisms. A study by Chakravarty et al. (2019) on vocational training programs in Nepal found that such interventions significantly increased non-farm employment and earnings among youth, particularly women, indicating the importance of flexible skill acquisition in the Nepalese labor market. In Nepal's context, this career adjustment is often a practical necessity given the country's limited formal employment opportunity in the market. Many professionals such as marketing, information technology, customer service, and human resources enter the workforce through one field of study and afterward change the sector, acquiring competencies through experience, short-term training, and workplace exposure rather than formal reskilling. This highlights Experiential Learning Theory, where learning through direct experiences—whether it's on-the-job learning, short-term programs, or informal skill-building—becomes a central component of career progression and development.

Another overlooked aspect is the socio-cultural context in which educational mismatch occurs. In Nepal, where family and societal expectations often place significant pressure on individuals to follow traditional career paths, e.g., engineering, medicine, law, etc. (Silwal & Baral, 2021). Yet, the employees in mismatched jobs demonstrate a capacity to reinterpret these social norms, constructing ways of success that are grounded in self-worth, contribution, and real-world achievement rather than formal titles. Expectancy Theory (V H, 1964) helps explain how these individuals are motivated by the expected outcomes of their efforts—such as career growth, satisfaction, and sense of purpose—rather than adhering to traditional educational expectations. The findings suggest that the mismatched employees derive a sense of personal fulfillment from their work, driven by the belief that their efforts lead to meaningful outcomes, such as personal growth, social contribution, and career advancement.

An important area of discussion relates to the recruitment and talent management strategies of employers in Nepal. Across various sectors there is evidence of an evolving

employer mindset that favors potential. Hiring decisions are increasingly influenced by demonstrated capability, learning agility, work ethic, and cultural fitness, rather than rigid academic qualifications (Cappelli, 2015). This shift also signals a growing awareness among employers of the limitations of education systems in producing "work-ready" graduates. In practical terms, this means that job descriptions are becoming more flexible, interview processes more behaviorally oriented, and onboarding programs more skill-development focused. This cultural shift in hiring not only expands opportunities for mismatched individuals but also fosters workplace environments that are more inclusive of diverse skill sets and life experiences.

Additionally, the study underscores the proactive role played by self in navigating and overcoming the challenges of educational mismatch. Far from being passive recipients of structural restrictions, mismatched workers actively construct and manage their career pathways. Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes that learning is a continuous, cyclical process that involves experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting. Workers in the study actively engage in this cycle, navigating through informal learning, mentorship, and real-time problem-solving, which enables them to acquire new skills and succeed despite educational mismatches. Study by Paudel and Parajuli (2023) examined workplace learning in Nepal and emphasized that individuals actively construct and manage their career pathways through various informal learning strategies. Their research indicates that workers are not passive recipients of structural restrictions but are proactive in overcoming educational mismatches by engaging in continuous learning and skill acquisition. Similarly, Baral (2022) conducted a qualitative case study exploring how informal skills learners in Nepal acquire and develop skills within small-sized enterprises. The study found that learners predominantly use two approaches: reflection and action (including observation, memorization, imitation, and trial and error) and social interaction (including feedback and peer learning). These methods highlight the importance of informal and non-formal learning avenues in skill acquisition. All participants recounted strategies such as pursuing online learning, enrolling in short-term skill development programs, engaging in on-the-job mentorship, and participating in peer-to-peer knowledge sharing groups—including informal networks and digital mediums. These practices highlight the growing role of non-formal

education in Nepal's labor economy and reflect the increasing accessibility of global learning platforms that empower individuals to upgrade skills irrespective of their academic background.

A powerful insight relates to the emotional and psychological resilience demonstrated by mismatched employees, where self-belief, perseverance, optimism, and emotional regulation considered as critical enablers of the ability to succeed in unfamiliar roles. Expectancy Theory offers insight into how these psychological traits motivate individuals: if employees expect their persistence and positive mindset to lead to career satisfaction or advancement, they are more likely to continue exerting effort. A recent study done by Coetzee et al. (2023) examined the influence of career agility and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on career adaptability and resilience among public sector employees. Their findings revealed that components of PsyCap—self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—significantly activate career adaptability resources such as career concern, control, and curiosity. This activation, in turn, fosters greater career resilience and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of these psychological states in navigating complex career paths. Many expressed confidences in their capacity to adapt and learn, even without formal training, and reported feeling a strong sense of accomplishment in having "grown into" their positions through lived experience. Similarly, a meta – analysis done by Miao et al. (2017) demonstrates that employees who has higher emotional intelligence (EI) will have higher job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions.

An unexpected but powerful insight is that individuals rather than regretting their deviation from their academic field, expressed a deep sense of purpose and identity in their current roles. For them, success was not defined by alignment with academic qualifications, but by the meaning derived from workplace contributions, the quality of workplace relationships, personal growth, and the ability to make an impact. This reflects a growing body of literature that highlights the shift from traditional credentialism to subjective career success, emphasizing meaning-making, adaptability, and identity work (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017). It also suggests a shift from credential-based systems to experiential value systems, where individuals assess their worth and satisfaction through self-defined indicators rather than external validations like degrees.

However, the study also draws attention to a critical structural barrier: the persistent mismatch between educational curricula and labor market needs. University programs in Nepal tend to be overly theoretical, lacking in practical skills, industry integration, or career preparation. This leaves graduates poorly equipped to meet the expectations of the job market, skills-driven workplaces (Agricultural Development Bank [ADB], 2019). This shows the need for institutions to reform their approaches by embedding work-integrated learning, such as internships, industry case studies, live projects, and skill-based assessments. Human Capital Theory underscores this gap, where the lack of alignment between education and the labor market leads to suboptimal human capital development. Valiente Bermejo et al. (2022) present a practical model for university–industry collaboration in curriculum design, based on the Plan–Do–Study–Act cycle. The study emphasizes the importance of structured collaboration loops during both the design and delivery phases to bridge the gap between academic instruction and practical application. Collaboration between academia and industry must become systematic and strategic, involving shared curriculum design, guest lectures from practitioners, and employer feedback to ensure relevance in the employability status of the job market.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that job market of developing countries like us Nepal is unpredictable – today's planning might not be relevant or effective in future because of why the educational mismatch happens. However, it does not always lead to dissatisfaction and failure. There are many success stories that evident the role of general job-related competencies for succeeding in the role different from the academic background. Adaptability, emotional intelligence, and continuous learning are the three pillars based on which an individual will mitigate the challenge of mismatched job.

CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a consolidated overview of the key findings, conclusion drawn from it and implications for job seekers, employers, educational institutions and policy makers. The chapter also discusses how these findings contribute to theoretical understanding and suggests actionable strategies to improve career development practices, recruitment policies, and education-to-employment alignment in the Nepalese context.

Summary

Many times, people end up in mismatched jobs due to reasons like family pressure, financial responsibilities, lack of suitable jobs in the market, or a personal interest that developed over time. In Nepal, educational mismatch is quite common. Even though students hope to get jobs that match their academic background, the reality of the job market is different. Many graduates don't find such jobs right away. In these situations, they often take up jobs that are available, even if they don't match what they studied. For some, earning money becomes more important than waiting for the "perfect" job. For others, the decision is influenced by the desire for career growth, better salaries, flexible working hours, or international exposure.

A common misconception prevails that individuals from mismatched educational sectors can never perform well at their jobs. The educational mismatch is not the end of a successful career, although, they face many challenges in the beginning, such as not having the right knowledge, struggling with technical terms, or feeling low confidence, however, they eventually learn how to deal with these issues. They work hard to understand their roles, learn from others, and gradually gain confidence. This supports the idea from Career Construction Theory, which says that people can build their careers over time based on their experiences, values, and learning.

Employees in such mismatched jobs show adaptability, willingness to learn, and self-awareness to solve the challenge at work. Their efforts help them succeed despite not

having formal education in their current field. A positive attitude and proactive learning can help bridge the gap between academic qualifications and real job requirements. Another important influence is organizational support. The participants shared how their organizations helped them grow through different learning opportunities such as training programs, morning meetings with experience sharing, regular mentorship from seniors, opportunities to attend seminars and workshops. These opportunities help the employees gain new knowledge, feel more confident, and stay motivated. Training and Development have become the inherent elements of the HR strategy in modern organizations. Whether or not workers are educationally matched or mismatched, work-related training is quite necessary for increasing productivity and equipping workers with abilities that can enable them to perform effectively in their jobs. The study also highlights that just having training programs is not enough. The success of these programs depends on the learner's own attitude and interest in learning. If the employee is motivated and takes initiative, they can benefit a lot from the support provided.

This study highlighted the changing trend of the job market which previously depends on the correlation between academic degree and professional journey decision, now shifted to the skill focused industry chosen with the self-interest and opportunity to grow professionally.

Conclusion

Educational mismatch, when people work in jobs that don't match their field of education, is becoming more common, especially in developing countries like Nepal. This is not just due to personal choices, but also because of limited job options, financial needs, and family responsibilities. Many graduates take jobs different from their field to earn a living and support their families. Today's job market also values skills, experience, and adaptability more than just having the right degree. As a result, people often find success and satisfaction in jobs they didn't plan for. Though mismatched workers may feel frustrated at first, many adjust over time by shaping their roles to match their strengths and interests.

The growing mismatch also shows a gap between what schools teach and what the job market needs. To fix this, education and employment systems must work together—offering skills training and creating better job opportunities. This study likely

emphasizes the collaboration between academics and industries through curriculum updates, guest lectures, internships, workshops, job fairs, and so on. Such involvement will increase employability by ensuring practical skill enhancement before entering the job market. Educational mismatches bring both challenges and new paths. With flexibility, resilience, and continuous learning, individuals can build meaningful careers—even outside their original field of study. It reflects how work is changing, and how success today depends on more than just formal education.

Self-effort is the most powerful and effective way to address the challenges of educational mismatch in the workplace. Personal initiative—expressed through self-awareness, continuous learning, adaptability, and resilience—plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between academic qualifications and job requirements. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. Continuous learning is an ongoing process of evolving with changing industry demands, technology, and workplace expectations. Individuals who engage in continuous learning—through online courses, mentorship, and real-world problem-solving—demonstrate greater career resilience and adaptability. When individuals take ownership of their professional growth, seek out learning opportunities, and proactively build new skills, they are better equipped to succeed, even in roles unrelated to their field of study. Whether through formal education, digital platforms, or hands-on experience, these efforts enable employees to gain relevant competencies, boost their confidence, and improve job satisfaction.

Along with the organizational support of training and mentorship, the individual's mindset of learning and career growth also matters in long term growth and success of an employees. This proactive approach helps to minimize skill gaps.

Implications

This research highlights how important an individual's education is for construction the right skills for their job. Throughout the study, it became clear that many people end up in jobs that don't match their education, which creates challenges for them. However, their own efforts to learn job related skills can help them overcome some of these problems. The research also shows that organizations have an important role in

supporting employees who are in mismatched jobs. This support can include training programs, mentoring, or adjusting job roles to better fit the person's strengths.

Additionally, the research points out that organizations should work more closely with educational institutions to help students choose the right career paths before they graduate. This way, students can better align their education with their future careers. Programs like internships, career counseling, and partnerships between schools and companies might help and guide students toward the right careers early on. There are a few implications of this research in industry that will support the whole linkage cycle to be effective, which are listed below:

For Job Seekers:

With the support of the findings of this research, it is evident that job seekers or graduates must focus on developing adoptive skills beyond academic certifications to minimize this educational mismatch gap. As recruiters are focusing on skill-based hiring rather than a set academic qualifications basis, graduates need to be updated with the demand of the labor market.

i.   Continuous Learning and Upskilling:

Continual learning is very crucial in bringing the educational mismatch. The traditional mindset of depending totally on academic certifications needs to be upgraded to incorporate skills that are directly aligned with the job. This involves proactive efforts in upskilling and reskilling to stay relevant in the job market. Upskilling can be done using different digital platforms like enrolling in online courses (platforms like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning and social media pages for learning). These skills would enhance their employability and allow them to adapt to the evolving demands of the job market.

ii. Practical Experience and Internships:

Practical experience is invaluable for any individual trying to transition from academic to real job market. Even if their academic qualifications may not fully align with the industry's requirements, gaining real-world experience through internships or part-time jobs can significantly bridge the skills gap. By participating in internships or freelancing, they can work on actual projects, gain familiarity with industry-standard tools and develop a portfolio that demonstrates

their capabilities. These practical experiences will make their transition from an academic background to the workforce smoother.

iii. Industry Guidance and Mentorship:

Guidance from industry experts can be a very effective mechanism to connect the competencies of the job seekers with the demand of the market. Industry mentors can support through career advice, knowledge on industry trends, and guide individuals through the process of acquiring necessary job-related skills. LinkedIn and Industry associations can be a good mechanism to connect with industry experts.

iv. Soft Skills Development:

Graduates who focus on developing soft skills will be better prepared to integrate into the workforce demands. By taking part in workshops, team-based assignments, or leadership programs, the job seekers can build their interpersonal skills, making them more adaptable to diverse work settings.

In conclusion, graduates must focus on continuous learning, gain practical experience, seek mentorship from industry professionals, and develop essential soft skills.

For Organization:

This research clearly shows that education is not the only thing that should be considered during hiring. Many employees shared that skills are often more important than just having a degree. Because of this, companies are encouraged to change the way they hire—moving away from only checking educational qualifications and instead focusing on what skills a person has and what they can do.

i. Skill-Based Hiring and Training:

It is not necessary that the educationally matched employees perform as expected from the first day. They also need to adapt to the new environment. Likely, when companies hire people based on their skills, they might still find that some employees don't know everything they need right away. To minimize such challenges, organizations can provide training programs to help employees learn or improve their skills. These can be done inside the company or with the help of outside experts. For instance, organizations can

organize regular workshops, offer online courses or certificates or bring in trainers to teach specific job-related skills.

ii. Mentorship and Job Rotation:

Employees can learn a lot by working with experienced people or by trying out different types of work. A mentorship program helps newer or less experienced employees get advice and support from senior staff. Job rotation means letting employees try different jobs in different departments, so they learn more and grow faster. This helps them understand how the whole business works and find what they're good at. Organizations can pair new employees with mentors or let staff move between departments for short periods or organize team learning sessions across functions.

iii. Reducing Employee Turnover by Improving the Work Environment:

This research also shows that people working in jobs that don't match their education can often feel unhappy or dissatisfied. If not managed well, these employees may leave the company in less time. To stop this from happening, companies should create a positive workplace and try to design jobs that match what employees are good at. Some mechanism to enhance the work environment can be listening to employees' feedback through surveys or meetings or changing job roles as much as it is possible to match an employee's actual skills or let employees move to roles that suit them better when needed.

iv. Using Technology to Support Employee Growth:

Companies can also use technology and data to find out which skills employees need, which employees might leave soon, and which training they are doing. This helps the company make better decisions about training and promotions. By using technology, organizations can track employee performance and skills, offer learning plans based on each employee's needs or use short surveys to check how employees feel about their work for future changes.

For Educational Institutions:

This research highlights that many graduates struggle in the job market because what they learn in school or college does not always match the skills needed in the workplace. Educational institutions have an important role in helping to reduce this gap by making learning more job-relevant, practical, and future-focused.

i. Align Curriculum with Job Market Needs:

Colleges and universities should work closely with employers and industry experts to design or update courses that match current labor market trends. This ensures that students graduate with the skills employers are looking for. Educational Institutions can include subjects like digital literacy, communication, and teamwork which will help in soft skill development or can update technical and vocational content regularly or invite professionals to guest lectures or review course plans.

ii. Strengthen Career Counseling Services:

Many students choose study programs without fully understanding which careers they lead to or what jobs are in demand. Schools and colleges should provide strong, updated career counseling to help students make better education and career choices. Few mechanisms that educational institutions can use are:

- Hire or train career counselors with knowledge of current job trends.
- Organize career talks, workplace visits, and alumni interaction sessions.
- Provide tools and guidance for students to assess their strengths and interests.

iii. Practical and Work-Based Learning:

Practical experience helps students understand how to apply what they learn in real jobs. Institutions should include internships, project work, or industry-based assignments as part of the curriculum. Such learning can be possible by partnering with local businesses for internships and field visits, including real-world projects in coursework and encouraging students to volunteer or freelance during their studies.

iv. Support Lifelong and Flexible Learning:

Not all students follow the same learning path. Institutions should offer short-term courses, evening or online programs so that both young people and working adults can learn new skills anytime. Educational Institutions can initiate creating certificate or diploma programs in high-demand areas, using online platforms for flexible learning (Santiago et al., 2021) and allowing credit transfer or recognition of prior learning to support non-traditional learners.

Apart from these, this study also shows the implication for policy makers, there is a need to promote policies to improve career counseling, make learning continue, and adopt policies that catalyze partnerships between government & private and develop human capital. Thus, when adopting such policies, governments are to meet the significant challenge of building a more skilled and adaptive population that would be in the best interest of individuals and the economy.

MY REFLECTION

This journey of writing this thesis has been an emotional and challenging experience, and every phase of the progress proved to be a struggle throughout my life. I started this project as soon as I was through the classes, and I was very energetic and ready to face the challenge. But life had a different plan for me, and soon, a new phase of my life with a complicated pregnancy hit me. This was arguably one of the trying eras in my life where the entire focus was not on school but on life issues related to survival as well as that of a baby on the way.

Having taken a year off after first attempting to start my thesis, I tried to continue with it. But turning from a new mother to a woman who can handle her academic work was in no way a walk in the park. My days were centered around the care of a toddler, resulting in getting very little time and headspace for focused research and writing. Each attempt to move up appears to be followed by a new string of difficulties, and there were times when I asked myself whether I could finish this thesis on my own.

Besides, I also experienced a change in organizational structure, which added to the numerous demands of being a mother. The new workplace was a new environment that required acclimatization; thus, the transition process consumed a lot of energy and attention, making it hard to manage with already jam-packed timetables.

Although this has posed several challenges, I have not succumbed to them. I was able to find some time to attend to the participants, carry on with my studies, and go to college to work on my thesis. It was not easy, and I was free from any hitch, but every single accomplishment that I achieved on the way made me nearer to my goal.

Now that I am concluding my thesis, a feeling of accomplishment fills me when I look at this journey.

REFERENCES

Abdiyev, K., Zhassandykyzy, M., & Primbetova, G. (2023). The alignment of university educational programs with the professional standards of the IT industry. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*.

Akkermans, J., & Kubasch, S. (2017). Trending topics in careers: A review and future research agenda. *Career Development International*, *22*(6), 586-627. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-08-2017-0143

Akkermans, J., Richardson, J., & Kraimer, M. L. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis as a career shock: Implications for careers and vocational behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 119*, 103-434. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103434

Ali, M. S., & Jalal, H. (2018). Higher education as a predictor of employment: The world of work perspective. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, *40*(2), 79–90.

Arif, A., & Mir, T. T. (2023). Employability skills for education graduates: A narrative literature review. *Global economics review*, *VIII*(II), 200–213. https://doi.org/10.31703/ger.2023

Armstrong, J. (2010). Naturalistic inquiry. In *Naturalistic inquiry*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256294652

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *22*(3), 273–285.

Baral, D. P. (2022). *Informal skills learning: A case study of small-sized enterprises in Nepal.* Kathmandu University.

Baral, K. B. (2018). Employment status of the graduates and postgraduates of Janapriya multiple campus. *Janapriya Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *7*(1), 100–104. https://doi.org/10.3126/jjis.v7i1.23059

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *13*(4), 544-559. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573

Becker, G. S. (1975). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education. *University of Chicago Press*.

Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2), 219-234.

Billett, S. & Choy, S. (2018). Learning at working: Emerging perspectives and new challenges. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. https://doi.org/10.1108/13665621311316447

Blokker, R., Akkermans, J., Marciniak, J., Jansen, P. G. W., & Khapova, S. N. (2023). Organizing school-to-work transition research from a sustainable career perspective: A review and research agenda. *Work, Aging and Retirement*, *9*(3), 239 -261. https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/waad0121.

Bone, M., Ehlinger, E., & Stephany, F. (2023). *Skills or degree? The rise of skill-based hiring for AI and green jobs.* Oxford internet institute & burning glass institute.

Brazier, C. E., Masdonati, J., Borges, A., Fedrigo, L., & Cerantola, M. (2024). Drivers of Involuntary Career Changes: A Qualitative Study of Push, Pull, Anti-Push, and Anti-Pull Factors. *Journal of Career Development*, *51*(3), 303-326.

Bridgstock, R., Grant-Imaru, M., & McAlpine, A. (2019). Integrating career development learning into the curriculum: Collaboration with the careers service for employability. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, *10*(1), 56–72.

Brown, C., Hooley, T., & Wond, T. (2021). Personal agency and organizational attachment: A career capital perspective. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, *51*(4), 587–602. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2021.1937940

Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. N. (2011). *The global auction: the broken promises of education, jobs, and incomes*. Oxford University Press, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199731688.001.0001

Burning Glass Institute. (2022). The emerging degree reset: How the shift to skills-based hiring holds the keys to growing the U.S. *Workforce*. https://www.burningglassinstitute.org/research/the-emerging-degree-reset.

Burr, V. & University of Huddersfield. (2015). Social constructions. *Journal-article*.

Cappelli, P. (2015). *Will college pay off? A guide to the most important financial decision you'll ever make*. Public Affairs.

Carmeli, A., Dutton, J. E., & Hardin, A. E. (2017). Respect as an engine for new ideas: Linking respectful engagement, relational information processing and creativity among employees and teams. *Human Relations*, *70*(12), 1483–1506.

Carnevale, A. P., & Smith, N. (2018). *Balancing work and learning: Implications for low-income students.* Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Caza, B. B., Vough, H., & Puranik, H. (2018). Identity work in organizations and occupations: Definitions, theories, and pathways forward. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 39*(7), 889–910.

Cedefop (2012). Skill Mismatch: The role of the enterprise. *Key insights*.

Chakravarty, S., Lundberg, M., Nikolov, P., & Zenker, J. (2019). Vocational training programs and youth labor market outcomes. *Journal of Development Economics, 136,* 71–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2018.09.003

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Sage.

Cheng, M., Adekola, O., Albia, J., & Cai, S. (2021). Employability in higher education: A review of key stakeholders' perspectives. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, *16*(1), 16–31. https://doi.org/10.1108/heed-03-2021-0025

Chorba, K. (2014). A review of qualitative research: Studying how things work. *The Qualitative Report*. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2011.1127

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *12*(3), 297-298.

Coetzee, M., Mbiko, H. N., & Nel, E. (2023). To what extent do career agility and psychological capital activate employees' career adaptability and foster their career resilience and career satisfaction? *South African Journal of Psychology*, *53*(3), 438–451. https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463231186271

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (Eighth). Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

De Andrade, M. L., Leite, R. S., De Andrada Ibrahin, S. T. C., & Costa, K. C. (2020). Axiology, personal values and ethical rationalities: A proposal for theoretical frameworks integration. *Research Gate*, *21*(55), 115–133. https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-8077.2019v21n55p115

De Grip, A. (2020). The Importance of Informal Learning at Work. *IZA World of Labor*. https://wol.iza.org/articles/importance-of-informal-learning-at-work/long.

Deming, D. J. (2017). The growing importance of social skills in the labor market. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132*(4), 1593–1640. doi:10.1093/qje/qjx022.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *71*(3), 500–507. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.71.3.500

Esposito, P. & Scicchitano, S. (2020). *Educational mismatched, routine biased technological change and unemployment: evidence from Italy.* INAPP.

Ficarra, L., Rubino, M. J., & Morote, E.-S. (2020). Does organizational culture affect employee happiness? *Journal for Leadership and Instruction*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1282787.pdf

Gerli, F., Bonesso, S., Pizzi, C. (2015). Boundaryless career and career success: the impact of emotional and social competencies. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6*, 1304–1304. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01304

Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. (2017). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*. SAGE Publications.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice.* Routledge.

Hausknecht, J. P., & Holwerda, J. A. (2015). When does employee turnover matter? Dynamic member configurations, productive capacity, and collective performance. *Organization Science*, *26*(1), 1-17.

Heckman, J. J., & Kautz, T. (2012). Hard evidence on soft skills. *Labour Economics*, *19*(4), 451–464.

Hirschi, A. (2018). The fourth industrial revolution: Issues and implications for career research and practice. *The Career Development Quarterly*.

Hom, P. W., Lee, T. W., Shaw, J. D., & Hausknecht, J. P. (2017). One hundred years of employee turnover theory and research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *102*(3), 530-545.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. *International Labour Conference*, 110th Session. https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/ilc/110/2022-report-application-international-labour-standards

Jackson, D. (2018). Developing graduate career readiness in Australia: Shifting from extra-curricular internships to work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, *19*(1), 23-35.

Jonbekova, D., Sparks, J., Hartley, M. (2020). Development of university-industry partnerships in Kazakhstan: Innovation under constraint. *International Journal of Educational Development, 79*, 102-291. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102291

Kanji, S., & Samuel, R. (2017). Male breadwinning revisited: How specialization, gender role attitudes and work characteristics affect overwork and underwork in Europe. *Sociology*, *51*(2), 339-356.

Kim, S. J., Choi, Sang Ok. (2018). The effect of job mismatch on pay, job satisfaction, and performance. *Department of Science and Technology Studies, Korea University.*

Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development. *In Englewood Cliffs.* Prentice Hall.

Kolb, D. A., & Kolb, A. Y. (2017). Experiential learning theory as a guide for experiential educators in higher education. *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education*, *1*(1), 7-44.

Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2017). Social cognitive model of career self-management: toward a unifying view of adaptive career behavior across the life span. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *64*(2), 190-201.

Lettmayr, C. F. (2012). *From education to working life, the labor market outcomes of vocational education and training. Luxembourg*. Publication Office of the European Union, ISBN 978-92-896-1125-1.

Leuven, E., & Oosterbeek, H. (2011). Overeducation and mismatch in the labor market. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the economics of education*, *4*, 283–326. Elsevier.

Mavromaras, K., McGuinness, S., O'Leary, N., Sloane, P., & Wei, Z. (2013). *Job* mismatches and labor market outcomes: panel evidence on university graduates. *Economic Record*, *89*(286), 382-395.http://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4932. 12054.

McGuinness, S., Pouliakas, K., & Redmond, P. (2018). *Skills mismatch: Concepts, measurement and policy approaches.* International Labour Office.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* Jossey-Bass.

Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2017). A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and work attitudes. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 90*(2), 177–202. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12167

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). (2019). *National education policy of Nepal.* Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE). (2015*). National employment policy.* Government of Nepal.

Mohd Salahuddin, N. F., Mahpar, N. S., Ishak, M. F. (2023). The relationship between employability skill and job mismatch towards graduates' unemployment. *Information Management and Business Review, 15*(3), 96–104.

Ng, E. S. W., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. T. (2010). New Generation, Great Expectations: A field study of the Millennial generation. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *25*(2), 281–292. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9159-4

Nguyen, P.T., Yandi, A., & Mahapura, M.R. (2020). Factors that influence employee performance: Motivation, leadership, environment, culture organization, work achievement, competence, and compensation. *Dinasti Publisher, 1*(4). http://doi.org/10.31933/DIJDBM

Niati, D. R., Siregar, Z. M. E., & Prayoga, Y. (2021). The effect of training on work performance and career development: The role of motivation as intervening variable. *Humanities and Social Science*, *4*(2), 2385-2393. http://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i2.1940

Nielsen, K., Yarker, J., Munir, F., & Bültmann, U. (2020). *IGLOO: An integrated framework for sustainable return to work.* Work & Stress.

O'Regan, M., Carthy, A., McGuinness, C., & Owende, P. (2022). Employer collaboration in developing graduate employability: A pilot study in Ireland. *Education + Training*, *65*(10), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1108/et-03-2022-0081.

OfficeVibe. (n.d.). *The benefits of seminars for employee development*. Office VibeHub. https://officevibehub.com/seminars-for-employees/.

Pandey, D. L. (2017). Training performance relationship: A study of Nepalese banking sector. *Saptagandaki Journal*, *8*, 31-41. http://doi.org/10.3126/sj.v8i0.18460

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Paudel, P. K. (2024). Workplace Learning in Nepal through the lens of employers, principals, and students. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v18i01.67550

Paudel, P. K., & Parajuli, M. N. (2023). Schooling beyond the school: workplace learning in Nepal. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *35*(2), 228–241. https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-03-2022-0038.

Perrin, S., & Sun, H. (2022). Graduate Employability through Industry-Oriented, Problem-Based Learning: A Case Study. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v4i1.1023

Pervin, N., & Mokhtar, M. (2022). The Interpretivist Research Paradigm: A subjective notion of a social context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v11-i2/12938

Reddy, A. S. D., Rani, C., Jagarlamudi, R., Deepika, D., & Mekala, H. (2024). Flexibility to fulfillment: Work-life balance preferences of Gen Z in the modern workplace. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, *5*(12), 3692-3698.

Robst, J. (2007). Education and job match: The relatedness of college major and work. *Economics of Education Review*, *26*(4), 397–407.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2019). *Continuing the design: Making the research credible* (pp. 64–78). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226651.n4

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *61*, 101-860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

Sam, V. (2018). Education-job mismatches and their impacts on job satisfaction. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*.

Santiago, S., Jr., Ulanday, Ma. L. P., Centeno, Z. J. R., Bayla, Ma. C. D., & Callanta, J. S. (2021). Flexible learning adaptabilities in the new normal: E-Learning resources, digital meeting platforms, online learning systems and learning engagement. In Asian Society for Open and Distance Education (ASODE), *Asian Journal of Distance Education*. *16*(2), 38–39. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5762474

Savickas, M. L. (2013). *Career construction theory and practice*.

Senkrua, A. (2021). A review paper on skills mismatch in developed and developing countries. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Policy*.

Setyawati, N. W., Woelandari, D. S., & Rianto, M. R. (2022). Career development, motivation and promotion on employee performance. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (EAJMR)*, *1*(9), 1957-1970. https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr. v1i9.1453

Sharif, N. Ahmed, N., & Sarwar, S. (2019). Factors influencing career choices. *IBT Journal of Business Studies*, *15*(1), 33-45. http://doi.org/10.46745/ilma.jbs.2019.15.01.03

Sharma, R., & Joshi, S. (2025). Bridging the gap: How career development learning mediates higher education and employability outcomes in Nepal. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *23*(1), 643–655.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, *22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/efi-2004-22201

Silwal, P. P., & Baral, R. K. (2021). Factors influencing college choice of Nepalese undergraduate students. *Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, *3*(2), 229–244. https://doi.org/10.3126/qjmss.v3i2.41572

Sloane, Peter J., Mavromaras, Kostas (2020): *Overeducation, skill mismatches, and labor market outcomes for college graduates*. Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn, https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.88.v2

Sri Sulistiani, L. and Faozanudin, M. (2022). Effectiveness analysis of the employee work performance assessment system – A critical three component approach. *Expert Journal of Business and Management*, *10*(2), 41-50.

Stenard, B. S., & Sauermann, H. (2016). Educational mismatch, work outcomes, and entry into entrepreneurship. *Organization Science*, *27*(4), 801-824. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2016.1060

Steven Jones, Anthony Mann & Katy Morris (2015): The Employer engagement cycle in secondary education: analyzing the testimonies of young British adults. *Journal of Education and Work*. doi: 10.1080/13639080.2015.1074665

Strielkowski, W., Prague Business School, Grebennikova, V., Lisovskiy, A., Rakhimova, G., & Vasileva, T. (2024). AI-driven adaptive learning for sustainable educational transformation. *Sustainable Development*, 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.3221

Swingler, M. V., Roy, A., Manoli, A., Gardani, M., Hasty, W., Macfarlane, D., Kapoor, A., & Kokkinidis, G. (2022). *Bridging the gap: Skill development in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and the impact on readiness for employment*. https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/dvhmf.

Thornhill-Miller, B., Camarda, A., Mercier, M., Burkhardt, J.-M., Morisseau, T., Bourgeois-Bougrine, S., Vinchon, F., El Hayek, S., Augereau-Landais, M., Mourey, F., & et al. (2023). Creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration: assessment, certification, and promotion of 21st century skills for the future of work and education. *Journal of Intelligence*, 54. https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11030054

Tomlinson, M. (2019). Conceptions of the value of higher education in a measured market. *Higher Education*, *77*(2), 173-192.

Tran, T. T. (2016). Enhancing graduate employability and the need for university-enterprise collaboration. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, *7*(1), 58–71. https://doi.org/10.21153/jtlge2016vol7no1art598

V H, V. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley.
https://garfield.library.upenn.edu/classics1985/A1985AKX9100001.pdf

Vaaland, T. I., & Ishengoma, E. (2016). University-industry linkages in developing countries: perceived effect on innovation. *Education and Training*, *58*(9), 1014–1040. https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-07-2015-0067

Valiente Bermejo, R., Lasa, C., & Castro-Sánchez, E. (2022). A systematic model for university–industry collaboration in curriculum design. *Industry and Higher Education, 36*(5), 564–575. https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222211064204

Varona Cervantes, C., Cooper, R., & National Bureau of economic research. (2020). Labor market implications of education mismatch; *Working paper* 28169. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28169/w28169.pdf

VBeyond Corporation. (2024). The State of Campus Recruitment 2024: *Insights and strategies for aligning higher education with industry demands.* https://vbeyond.com/the-state-of-campus-recruitment-2024-insights-and-strategies-for-aligning-higher-education-with-industry-demands/

Verhaest, D., & Van der Velden, R. (2017). Cross-country differences in graduate overeducation. *European Sociological Review*, *33*(3), 408–421.

Warrick, C. S., Daniels, B., & Scott, C. Accounting students' perceptions on employment opportunities. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, *7*, 1–10.

Wen, L., & Maani, S. A. (2023). Earnings penalty of educational mismatch: A comparison of alternative methods of assessing over-education. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 15943*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4360826

Workable. (2023). *How AI can enhance human skills and collaboration at work.*

World Bank. (2019). Nepal development update*: Investing in people to close the human capital gap*.

World Economic Forum. (2020). *The future of jobs report 2020.* https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020

Xing, X. & Rojewski, J. (2018). Family influences on career decision-making self-efficacy of Chinese secondary vocational students. *New Waves Educational Research & Development*, *21*(1), 48–67.

Yates, J. (2025). Graduate career development: two empirically derived models of the career decision-making processes of students and graduate in the UK. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, *54*(1). https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5403

Yorke, M. (2006). Employability in higher education: What It Is, What It Is Not. *Learning & Employability, Series, 1*, 1–18. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083582