Head teachers' perceptions about time spent on teaching and learning: A context from Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study explores the perceptions of head teachers about time spent on teaching and learning in their schools. Specifically, the study investigates the headteachers' perceptions of teacher-spent time (TST) in teaching and its implementation status in school-level education in Nepal.

Design/Methodology/Approach: It is based on the qualitative descriptive survey research design. It was carried out with ten community school headteachers of the Ilam district as the sample. Six of them belonged to three rural municipal areas, and four were from two municipal areas. The sample for the study was drawn purposively. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the data from the headteachers as the respondents, and the data was analyzed by applying the thematic analysis technique under five themes.

Findings: The result indicates that the disparity among the schools in terms of physical conditions and resources resulted in workload management problems, challenges with TST implementation, and weak supervision.

Conclusion: It was concluded that the promotion of teacher awareness about their profession was necessary for effective TST implementation and the overall development of quality education.

Limitations and Implications: The study uses only one variable-headteachers' perceptions of TST and a small sample that may affect the generalizability of the result. So, it is suggested that a further study be conducted covering various dimensions of TST.

Practical Implications: Despite these limitations, the study has a number of practical implications for the Nepalese education policy and practice as well as other contexts with a comparable set of circumstances. These include improving school leadership, enhancing teacher preparation, and addressing resource shortages to improve student learning outcomes.

Contribution to Literature: The study can contribute to the literature on education by highlighting the perspectives of head teachers and providing insights into effective strategies for optimizing the amount of time spent on teaching and learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teacher's teaching time in school is the legal routine time allocated to the teacher that is defined in the education rules and regulations depending on the geographical and ecological conditions of the country. However, individual teachers' teaching time may differ according to the given grade, level, and institution. The actual teaching time is the annual average number of hours that the teachers teach at any grade level in the school (OECD, 2019). In most countries, the determination of teachers' working hours is primarily governed by education

law or teaching regulations. According to the OECD (2020), the actual teaching time refers to the time that is provided for the instruction to the students on school premises. In some countries, teachers are formally required to work a specific number of hours per year on a contract basis.

The number of teaching hours in public schools varies considerably across countries, and teachers' workloads decrease as the level of education increases (OECD, 2021). As stated by the OECD (2019), the teaching hour for the pre-primary level ranges from 519 hours per year in Mexico to 1755 hours in Germany. For example, Japan and Portugal have similar numbers of teaching hours (610 and 612 hours, respectively). However, 32% of working time is spent on teaching in Japan, compared to 48% in Portugal. The average core time spent on teaching and learning across the OECD countries is 78% of the entire classroom period (OECD, 2019). According to Bista (2019), the time allocated for teaching and learning activities is not sufficient due to other factors such as limited resources, large class sizes, and other duties that take up a significant portion of teaching time.

The time spent on teaching (TST) is the actual time the teacher spends in the classroom on teaching and learning. Different terms are used in this regard, such as teachers' workload, working hours in school, allocated time, etc. Allocated time is the amount of time that is formally specified as school time and classroom time (Scheerens, Hendriks, Luyten, Sleegers, & Glas, 2013). Then TST in teaching is the full engagement of the teacher in and out of the classroom activity concerning the curriculum (MoE, 2017). It is the time spent by the teacher engaging himself/herself in teaching-learning activities according to the assigned schedule of the school (OECD, 2020). TST implementation in Nepal aims to increase student achievement through the maximum use of teaching-learning time in the classroom and an efficient management system.

TST mainly depends on the workload of the teacher. The workload for the community school teacher in Nepal is at least 24 periods a week and at least 250 working days a year (Education Rules, 2002). However, most of the community school teachers have been found to have borne 5-7 periods per day due to the unequal teacher allocation system (Khatiwada, 2019). It is also the same in the case of other developing countries that have full teaching loads during the working day (ADB, 2017). In school-level education, the headteacher is the key person with academic as well as administrative roles. The headteacher bears the leading role and responsibility in the school in areas such as teaching, management, and policymaking. The head teacher's role deserves high significance in creating a collaborative, collegial environment and keeping the teachers on task (DoE, 2014). He or she should have a sound leadership skill, a strong interpersonal skill, an effective communication skill, the ability to delegate responsibilities and tasks, workplace management skills, and the ability to monitor workplace practices (DoE, 2014). To optimize student outcomes, it is essential to strike a proper balance between teaching key concepts and skills and providing opportunities for application-based learning. Head teachers, as leaders responsible for the effective implementation of the curriculum in schools, play a crucial role in determining the allocation of time for teaching and learning. This study examined the head teachers' perspectives on the time dedicated to teaching and involving students in the learning process in the core.

Researchers have looked for years at how much time teachers spend on teaching. It has been found that the time teachers spend on teaching has a significant impact on student learning outcomes (Lloyd & Bowers, 2014; Pekrun, Hall, Elliott, & Marsh, 2019). Therefore, how teachers spend their time on classroom teaching aimed at student learning improvement is very important factor.

Studies have shown that the amount of time teachers spend teaching varies greatly from country to country (OECD, 2019). According to a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), primary school teachers spend an average of 77 hours per year on teaching in OECD countries, while secondary school teachers spend an average of 63 hours (OECD, 2019). The majority of OECD countries have annual statutory teaching hours between 561 and 1063 for primary education, with an average of 783 hours; in lower secondary education, teaching hours range from 481 to 1063, with an average of 709 hours; and for upper secondary education, teaching hours vary from 405 to 1063, averaging at 667 hours across OECD countries (OECD, 2021).

As found, the amount of time spent in the classroom varies not only from country to country but also from school to school. A study by Lloyd and Bowers (2014) found that, for a sample of American high schools, teachers spent an average of 65% of their time on teaching, while the rest of the time was spent on non-teaching activities such as administrative ones, assignments, and professional development. Likewise, Pekrun et al. (2019) found that in a sample of German schools, teachers spent an average of 69% of their total time on teaching activities and the rest on non-teaching activities. This shows that the time spent on teaching by teachers varies widely in different

countries and schools, and even within schools. Therefore, it is very important to understand how teachers spend their time in the classroom, resulting in the improvement of students' learning outcomes.

The term TST is not a new one in school education but has been practiced for long. When it comes to the Nepalese context, it is a legal provision as well as the duty of each teaching professional. However, teachers are failing to utilize their time on the tasks mainly by not getting into schools in time, not spending enough time there, not staying full time in the classroom, and not getting more and better support in the process (DoE, 2014). Therefore, to improve the student's achievement, it is necessary to ensure the strict implementation of the TST program at schools. According to the report of ERO (2019), a large number of students are underperforming. The achievement gap among the students in different subjects and grades is still similar to the ERO (2017) result. However, the studies made so far in this respect have not been sufficient. Effective use of time spent on teaching and learning is the key to achieving educational goals (UNESCO, 2017). However, it is inconsistent with the spirit of TST that much time in schools is spent on non-teaching activities, chiefly administrative tasks and non-academic activities, instead of direct teaching time (ADB, 2015; Upadhyay, 2009). There is no evidence of how headteachers in Nepal perceive the allocation of time between teaching and learning compared with other activities.

This study aims to examine the headteachers' perceptions of time spent on teaching and learning in comparison with administrative and extracurricular activities in schools in Nepal. Although educational reforms in Nepal have aimed to increase the number of lessons, there is no evidence of the actual allocation of TST. No doubt, the headteachers play an important role in managing school time and resources, but the time spent on teaching and learning activities as the core relative to other work remains poorly understood. Thus, this study is intended to investigate the headteachers' views on how TST has been appropriated to maintain balance between teaching and learning and administrative and extracurricular work in schools in Nepal. By exploring the headteachers' perspectives, this study aims to provide insights into the actual time-use practices and identify potential barriers to maximizing teaching and learning hours. Addressing such issues can help improve learning outcomes and the quality of education in Nepal. In specific, the study has the following objectives.

i)   To explore the head teachers' perception of TST in classroom teaching in school level education.
ii) To investigate the implementation status of TST in classroom teaching in school level education.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study is based on a descriptive survey research design applied to the description of the real situation of TST, the condition of its implementation, and its effectiveness. This design consists of a semi-structured interview to collect the data, which was analyzed using the thematic analysis technique.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of the community school headteachers of Ilam District, Province 1, Nepal, selected with the application of multi-stage sampling. At the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select schools in coordination with the local government considering the coverage of the location and the developmental status. Thus, 2 municipalities out of 4 and 3 Rural Municipalities out of 6 were purposively selected. At the second stage, a total of 4 headteachers, 1 basic level and 1 secondary level school from each Municipality were selected by a simple random sampling technique. In the same way, a total of 6 head teachers, 1 basic level, and 1 secondary level from each Rural Municipality were selected. Of those 10 headteachers, 2 were female and 8 were male. The data were collected using a semi-structured interview in the face-to-face mode to achieve the objectives.

2.3. Data Collection

All the sampled head teachers were requested for the interview, and the date, time, and place for conducting the interview were fixed via phone before the interview. Each headteacher's respective school was fixed as the interview spot so that the real teaching-learning environment of the respective school could also be observed. Each interview was recorded with the permission of the participating headteacher.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data were first transcribed, coded, and categorized to generate the themes as defined by Neuendorf (2019). Thus, the collected data were analyzed by employing the thematic data analysis technique. In this study, the six-step approach was applied to drawing out the themes through an inductive approach that was helpful to formulate a new interpretation of the problem and to discuss the results (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

3. RESULTS

The result is based on five main themes related to the status of TST implementation, its effect on delivering quality education, and teachers' perceptions of TST. The theme-wise results obtained from the data are discussed under separate headings below.

3.1. Quality Instruction

Quality instruction generally denotes an effective way of delivering education where the students are engaged in the learning process with full interest and learn in a meaningful way (Sogunro, 2017). A teacher can deliver quality instruction only when he or she has the skill of integrating three knowledge dimensions, namely, content, pedagogical, and technological (Kunwar, 2019). The teacher is the main agent for delivering knowledge to the students. If the teacher is equipped with the necessary knowledge dimensions, then he or she can make students learn effectively. In this study, the participants viewed quality instruction as (Participant 5).

The key to fostering active student participation in lessons and cultivating enthusiasm for learning among students is through high quality instruction. It always focuses on engaging the students by delivering the content according to their needs and interests. Effective instruction can motivate the students so they can learn quickly and easily.

Participant 3 viewed quality instruction as something that focuses on student motivation and personalization of the teaching and learning to create interest. Participant 10 focused on delivering the content in a simple and easy way with ample illustrations so as to make it easy for the students to understand it. Participant 4 emphasized that full utilization of the allocated time for each class by the school is better for engaging the students in the classroom, which, according to him, also assists in improving their achievement level. However, the workload of the teacher diminishes his or her performance.

The aforementioned views of the participants show that quality instruction is the main aspect of effective classroom teaching. It is more important than fully utilizing the allocated teacher's time in classroom teaching. Effective teaching is unquestionably necessary and vital to education since it assists learning and improves student achievement (Chirimi, 2016). The maximum utilization of TST in classroom teaching helps the students engage themselves in the class and also helps to promote their performance. However, a challenge to the fundamental principles of the teaching profession is the workload of a teacher. (Pacaol, 2021). Likewise, the workload of teachers affects their performance in the classroom (Kyung-Nyun, 2019).

3.2. Professional Accountability

Professional accountability of the teacher denotes liability towards the profession and profession-related aspects. Hence, teacher professional accountability comprises the teacher's profession, knowledge and values, students, society, and the teaching-learning process (Kanika, 2016). Therefore, professional accountability is a key aspect of the teachers' role in the delivery of quality education. It also denotes the dedication toward the profession that helps promote the students' active learning. Regarding this, Participants 2, 5, and 10 observed that most of the teachers are forgetting their professional accountability and becoming more and more individualistic and selfish. Participants 1 and 3 emphasized the professional duties and responsibilities that existed in the education rules and regulations. Participants 6 stated that if we could account for our professional responsibilities, TST implementation in classroom teaching would not be necessary. Participant 7 seems to have emphasized professional accountability when he expressed "If we are fully accountable to the learner, then the teacher will certainly try to address the needs and interests of the students". Participant 9 expressed her view that they are fully qualified academically and trained in both pedagogy and subject matter but could not be responsible for their profession without losing social value and prestige. Negligence towards the profession is the main cause of the poor achievement of students, according to him.

These views of the participants show that an accountable teacher should understand the needs and interests of the students. He or she should also account for the profession of providing education. The professional

accountability of the teacher helps the overall development of the students as well as their complete quality development. Effective teaching and learning depend on the readiness of the teacher, and he or she should constantly be ready to fulfill quality education despite the challenges that she has been facing during the process (Fitriyani, Supardi, & Amin, 2021). The accountable teacher should always be a role model by showing good behavior to her or her learners and demonstrating acceptable attitudes and actions. Such behaviors by the teacher automatically contribute to implementing the TST concept in teaching and learning and enhancing the students' achievement and, in turn, the quality of education.

3.3. Student Motivation

Student motivation denotes a kind desire to take part in the learning process. It is defined as the condition of meaningfulness, value, and benefits of academic tasks to the learner regardless of whether or not they are intrinsically interesting (Marshall, 1987). Highly motivated learners are likely to learn readily and make any class fun to teach, while unmotivated learners may likely learn very little and generally make teaching painful and frustrating (Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany, & Okoronka, 2020). The participants in the interview also emphasized student motivation for improving their learning. Participant 7 argued that:

Student motivation is a very important aspect of teaching. Some students may be self-motivated for learning, and they can learn easily, but those students who are not motivated for learning should be motivated before teaching so that the teaching and learning can be effective.

Similarly, participants 4 and 9 emphasized creating a proper classroom learning environment for the students so that they could actively participate in learning. In this situation, the teacher can inspire them and make teaching fun. Participant 10 viewed student motivation as the first condition and only then TST in teaching. In his own words, "Teaching students [shorter] with full motivation is better than teaching at length".

From the participants' views, it can be concluded that student motivation is an important aspect of teaching and learning. It is one of the major tasks of teaching and learning that determines the students' success or failure. Student motivation creates the internal energy that generates efforts to achieve or perform the required task or activities. It brings the learner into the proper frame of mind for learning. Motivation helps to concentrate the persons' attention and energy on the activity to be learned (Fitriyani et al., 2021). If the students are intrinsically motivated, they participate actively in the class and thus can learn the subject matter effectively. Yet, if the students are not motivated by the subject matter, the full utilization of the allocated time in teaching doesn't matter.

3.4. Monitoring and Supervision

In school, monitoring and supervision for educational quality improvement are often regarded as an academic aspect. Academic supervision consists of a series of activities that help teachers develop the ability to manage the learning process to achieve the learning objectives (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). It is inseparable from the performance of the assessment of teachers' classroom teaching and the improvement of pedagogical competence. In this study, Participant 5 comments on monitoring and supervision in his context, thus:

There is no monitoring or supervision by the concerned authority. We should always be busy with teaching-learning tasks as well as many other administrative chores. In our school, a very small number of approved teacher positions have been granted, and all staff have to be engaged in classroom teaching. Thus, we could not maintain the supervisory task effectively due to time constraints, so the gap in supervision and the feedback system are growing day by day.

However, Participants 7 viewed it differently when he remarked, "We have managed the internal monitoring system by installing the CC camera in each classroom and also in the school premises that are displayed in the headteacher's office". He also focused on daily classroom supervision. To quote him, "We daily prepared the duties of each teacher and fully utilized the time given for teaching in the classroom. In the same way, each month at a staff meeting, we discuss the teaching-learning situation".

In this regard, Participant 8 expressed her views in the following way: "Some of the teachers are not responsible in their duties. They sometimes neglect the allocated time for teaching because there is no provision for reward and punishment". In the view of Participant 6, "Academic monitoring and supervision are the backbones of the teaching profession, but the trend of the weak monitoring system has degraded the teachers' teaching and learning, and it has also affected TST implementation in teaching and learning".

From the views of the participants, it comes out that supervision is an aid in the development of teaching and learning situations that are provided to make the teaching profession better. Schools have their challenges and variabilities in terms of the approved teacher positions, physical facilities, and practices of monitoring and supervision. In most cases, the shortage of teachers has resulted in an overloaded workload, causing further difficulty in managing proper supervision. Supervision provides services and assistance to improve the quality of classroom teaching in the form of academic supervision that not only improves teaching skills but also serves as a potential development of teacher quality (Fitriyani et al., 2021). However, the concerned authority, which deserves high professional skills in supervision and improving the quality of education, has also neglected their duties, which have affected the TST implementation in teaching and learning. The feedback to the teacher is diminished due to the lack of supervision from the concerned authority, and that has also weakened mutual trust and the willingness of the profession to move forward.

3.5. Teaching-Learning Environment

Teaching environment refers to the existence of the proper conditions for classroom teaching and learning. It consists of both physical and psychological conditions. The physical condition comprises the physical setting of the classroom, such as room size, seat plan, workspace, placement of the board, lighting, air, outer noise, etc. A well-physically managed classroom helps to mold students' behavior and creates a happy learning atmosphere (Paul & Kumari, 2017). The physical layout and attractiveness of the classroom impact the students' psychology positively and thus motivate them to learn. Thus, the teaching environment of the class or school also affects the teacher's content delivery and TST implementation.

In this connection, Participant 10 viewed the teaching environment as "the availability of the proper size of the classroom, furniture, and other important teaching and learning resources. In their absence, it is difficult to motivate and concentrate the student on the subject matter". He focuses on an attractive classroom, proper desks and benches, a lighted room, electricity supply, and electronic devices like computers, TVs, projectors, etc. for the effective delivery of the subject matter and also for the full-time engagement as allocated by the school administration. Similarly, participants 4 argued in this way: "The appropriate teaching environment helps the teacher with effective classroom management that produces positive interaction between students and teachers. They even don't know the class time that has already passed or is over". Participant 6 viewed that "a proper teaching environment is essential for every teacher to motivate the students, participate with the students actively, and develop creativity in the students".

The views expressed by the participants in this regard include that teachers are central to determining or utilizing the most effective strategies in the classroom that can help them deliver the subject matter effectively. In the 21st century, the teacher is considered a facilitator who facilitates the students' proper learning, creates the teaching-learning environment, and attempts to make the class effective. Therefore, the teacher should always be cautious about the subject matter and make the classroom environment conducive to learning (Pacaol, 2021). So, a minimum of physical facilities related to the classroom, teaching-learning-related resources, and equipment should be available in the workplace. In the absence of such basics, students cannot be motivated, and it makes little sense to spend the whole time in the classroom.

4. DISCUSSION

By providing insights from the perspective of school headteachers, this study contributes to understanding the time spent on classroom practices that affect learning experiences and outcomes in schools in the context of Nepal. Time is an impotent factor for achieving school educational goals (UNESCO, 2017). So, as Upadhyay (2009) notes, effective use of instructional time is crucial to improving student achievement. However, there is a concern that teachers spend much time on non-educational activities in the classroom (ADB, 2015). Although educational reforms aim to increase study time, there is no evidence of how this time is actually allocated to the effect that it is fully utilized for actual teaching and learning purposes so as to maximize learning outcomes for the learners. Headteachers are empowered to play an important role in managing and arranging school time and resources. However, their perceptions of the balance between teaching, learning, and other working time remain poorly understood (ADB, 2015). This research has explored headteachers' perceptions of the appropriate use of the allotted time in actual classroom instruction to provide insights into real-time practice and identify barriers to maximizing the learners' learning outcomes. Addressing these issues can help improve the quality of education and

student achievement in Nepal. The data indicate that the headteachers are imposed with triple roles stemming from the paucity of teaching and non-teaching staff: teaching, administration, and supervision. The results highlight the commitment of school headteachers to teaching, but also reveal several challenges that limit their usefulness. Some argue that the lack of teacher involvement, overcrowded classes, excessive administrative responsibilities, and the pressure of extracurricular activities hamper optimal utilization of time for teaching, supervision, and, ultimately, learning.

The findings suggest that systemic and capacity issues need to be addressed to enhance teaching and learning as desired. Therefore, reforms are required to reduce the triple roles of school headteachers. They particularly need to get rid of the non-academic activities they are supposed to accomplish. This can be achieved by ensuring the placement of an adequate number of qualified human resources at the school. By doing this, school headteachers can play a facilitating role in managing classroom time to maximize learning outcomes.

The headteachers in this study were of the belief that the quality of teaching is a central factor that determines student success. They believed that high-quality teaching and learning were critical to student learning outcomes. They also emphasized the importance of incorporating interactive as well as engaging teaching methods to improve student engagement and understanding. Their stress was also on the need for teachers to have a clear understanding of what and why they are teaching and what teaching materials best help to that end. This finding is consistent with Hatties' (2009) research showing that facilitating student learning is a key step toward high quality education. Their views imply that the entire time spent in the classroom should be oriented toward the quality of teaching and learning.

The participants emphasized the importance of quality teaching by spending time on teaching concepts and principles that are critical to developing a strong knowledge base in the students. Strong academic ability facilitates deeper learning, critical thinking, and the application of understanding (Gersten et al., 2009; Mastropieri et al., 2006). They also highlighted the importance of teachers' professional responsibility. They believed that teachers must take responsibility as laid down by their own professional development and be responsible for their own teaching practices. They also recommended that teachers undertake continuous professional development to improve teaching practice and keep abreast of the latest teaching methods. This finding is consistent with the previous literature that emphasizes the importance of professional development in improving teaching practice (e. g., Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001). In their view, teachers need to be responsible for the time they spend on classroom teaching and learning. According to them, there is a need to ensure that teachers are well trained and have enough resources to deliver a quality education. They also emphasized the importance of providing feedback and support to the teachers to improve their teaching practice. Taking time for guided exercises, discussions, presentations, and projects can be designed to stimulate student interest, foster retention, and increase willingness to use knowledge. Positive learning experiences develop higher-order skills, creativity, problem solving, and a lifelong love of learning (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chinn, 2007). The responsibility to deliver courses within a given timeframe leads to the prioritization of teaching, while a focus on holistic development leads to providing learning experiences. A balanced approach with gradual modifications based on a deep understanding of the needs of students can improve student results.

The headteachers expressed their profound belief that student motivation is an important factor in facilitating student learning. They recommended that teachers use a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged and motivated. They also emphasized the importance of giving students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in real-life situations. It is consistent with Schunk, Pintrich, Meece, and Pintrich (2008) finding that student motivation is a key factor in facilitating student learning. The headteachers were found to have understood that student engagement is critical to student learning outcomes. They believed that time spent on teaching and learning should be used to motivate students for their learning. This can be achieved by using engaging teaching materials, providing student-centered learning opportunities, and recognizing student achievement. Challenges associated with limited instructional time, limited resources, and class sizes were seen as barriers to optimal time allocation, effective teaching, and active learning. As has been established, professional development, additional resources, and smaller classes can remove barriers and promote a balance between teaching and application (Dixit, 2006; UNESCO, 2010). The headteachers emphasized the importance of observation and supervision in promoting effective teaching practice. They recommended observing teachers regularly and providing feedback to improve their teaching practices. They also suggested that schools should have a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of classroom teaching practices. This finding is consistent with previous research

showing that observation and supervision are important factors in promoting effective teaching practice (Mann, 2003).

Monitoring student classroom engagement and understanding the subject matter through regular supervision and feedback is essential (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007). The school headteachers in this study believed that monitoring and supervision were necessary to ensure the effectiveness of time spent on teaching. They argued that regular classroom observations and teacher feedback could help identify areas where teachers need support and professional development. The headteachers viewed the classroom learning environment as an important factor in facilitating student learning. They also suggested that it was essential for teachers to create a positive and conductive classroom environment to improve learning outcomes. They also emphasized the importance of providing students with a safe and supportive environment to improve their emotional condition. This finding is consistent with the research showing that the teaching-learning environment is an important factor for facilitating student learning (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). The headteachers regarded the teaching-learning environment as critical to student learning outcomes. They believed that the time spent on teaching and learning should be used to create a proper learning environment that is conducive to learning. According to them, this could be achieved by providing a safe and supportive learning environment and by using adequate resources in an effectively managed classroom. The headteachers focused on the quality of teaching, professional responsibility, student motivation, supervision, and management of a proper classroom learning environment. These findings suggest that various teaching strategies should be made an integral part of teacher professional development. In addition, educational institutions should develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching practices, ensuring that they contribute to student learning and, ultimately, to quality education. It is, therefore, critical to ensure that time spent on teaching and learning results in improved student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

School headteachers play a vital role in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education. Allocating sufficient time for educational activities is a crucial factor in quality education. Research shows that school headteachers generally have a positive attitude towards the time they spend teaching and learning because they understand its importance for improving the quality of education. However, they may also face the challenge of balancing the demands of teaching with other administrative responsibilities. The problem results in low student achievement in school-level education. In this context, TST can be implemented by facilitating teachers' accountability for the maximum use of teaching-learning time in schools.

The condition of community schools in terms of infrastructure, resources, and equipment was found to be diversified. Thus, schools with poor physical facilities should be improved to create a proper learning environment. It is concluded that, in some schools, the teacher has been seen as the crucial problem in delivering quality education. Some head teachers were also found busy with their administrative and regular teaching tasks due to the paucity of the teaching staff. The triple roles of the headteachers were found to be the central barriers to quality teaching and learning. However, it was not a problem common to all schools in this study. Therefore, teachers' inequitable distribution should be broken down, and the provision of uniform allocation for the approved teacher position should be managed in consideration of the workload.

The school monitoring and supervision system was only loosely implemented. As a result, the teachers were found to have lacked appropriate opportunities to apply their professional qualities to educational quality. Similarly, the major problem of implementing TST in teaching and learning rested on the teachers' unawareness of their duties and responsibilities. Students' motivation has been viewed as essential by the headteachers. This could be achieved by creating a motivational environment in school. When the teachers are reasonably aware of their duties and responsibilities, TST in teaching can automatically be implemented, thereby increasing the quantity and quality of the learners' learning. In a nutshell, the condition of TST implementation in classroom teaching was not found to be reasonably satisfactory.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT

As regards the ethical approval, none of us were the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators of the project mentioned- the first and the third authors were just selected/appointed as field researchers by Tribhuvan University, Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) which we have acknowledged to. Moreover, Tribhuvan University has only just recently set up the ethical review board. This means that at the time the research was carried out, there was no provision for an ethical approval under the university.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The data collected during the study, conceptualized and designed the article, and supervised the article development process, R.K.; the article outlines prepared, developed the preliminary draft of the article, and undertook correspondence, A.K.S.; the study coordinated at the district level, collected data and accomplished language edit at different levels, K.K.P.; the relevant reviewed of literature and addressed the comments/feedback from the reviewers, S.P.P. All authors collaborated at different levels of article development till its finalization. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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