
A STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study has focused on students' performance level that is affected by different aspects. Research has been centered on bachelor-level students' English subjects at a community campus at Rupandehi, Nepal. The study is based on quantitative approaches supported by qualitative discussions. Data collection was conducted via a Google Forms questionnaire, including interviews. This study has revealed different levels of performance of the students and the aspects affecting them. Especially, the varied background of the students' and their competencies are the major factors of their performances. Besides, appropriate addresses of bridging supports would be more effective in increasing the performance. In the same way, library improvement, technological facilities, extra time classes according to student's convenience, scheduled orientation cum motivational programs etc., would increase the expected outcome towards students' performance. Similarly, the application of modern techniques/technologies to be applied while studying, students' financial status, additional student-focused initiatives by campus, etc., were asked to the students and seen as affecting the students' better performances. And, students' self-motivation towards effective English learning is also a vital part as suggested by the interviewee student.

Key Words: English, students' performance, competence, internet based learning, efforts.

INTRODUCTION

A journey towards academic excellence is a continuous process. Different academic institutions' faculties are involved in many ways to improve the quality of their institutions with good grades and effective teaching-learning activities, which are a never-ending process. Students' performance is the key factor in evaluating the scale of excellence of any institution or faculties of that institution. So many initiatives with innovative ideas are being implemented worldwide for academic excellence. The upgraded steps of academic excellence empower the students' performances. Multidimensional movements in intra-institution academics obviously show the way to success. For the same purpose, this study has been conducted. This study, of course, explores some of the ways the institution

fosters further firmness in performance. Besides, it will show some of the strengths cum challenges of the institution relating to students' English performance. Students' English performance level also indicates their overall academics, which will benefit other subjects' study, institutional strength and a base to create a strategic plan for the mitigation of the challenges. Multiple factors may affect the academic excellence of particular institutions; students' results and their insightful experiences with institutions are vital. Final grading results and students' opinions and experiences can guide the institution as well as faculties for the further exercises. The findings of the study, strengths, weaknesses, feedback etc., are applicable for further implementation.

Successful teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) is determined by many factors. Among factors that have contributed mainly to the success of attaining foreign language mastery, students' learning style preference was considered important. (Brown, 2006). The ways of students learning can opine teachers in well conduction of classroom and library studies. As the students belong to their uniqueness by their learning habits, faculties must acknowledge their learning behaviors. Knowing the behavioral consequences, learning capacities, learning attitudes, and problems with acquiring skills by individuals and groups of students can be an asset to the faculties for classroom preparation and further innovative practices that can make a positive change in English teaching learning with good grades of the students. Further, Csapo and Hayen (2006) also stated that to achieve the learning goals, teachers must be aware of the students' learning style to conduct effective teaching and learning. Their way of learning determines the student's capacity in development of their skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is generally well-known that most people face some problems in learning English as a second or foreign language in non-English speaking countries like Nepal. Several determinants and issues affect the students' learning of English as a foreign or second language. This is because of the lack of several factors to support the learning and teaching approaches. Souvannasy et al. (2008b) identify that teaching and learning English implementation still has shortages of textbooks, unqualified English teachers, and an unstandardized curriculum.

Normazidah, Koo et.al. 2012has presented the factors that impact the EFL learners to have poor performance in English language learning. Their study claims English as a difficult and depends on the teachers as authorities. Lack of support to use English due to limited

opportunity in and outside the class also causes insufficient exposure. In the same way, students have limited vocabulary proficiency because of limited reading materials, their lack of motivation and unwillingness results negative attitude towards the performance of target language.

There are so many applications of the remedial to these obstacles. Faculties can use many supporting tools or teaching methodologies to minimize students' obstacles. One thing causing poor academic performance is the lack of motivation of graduate students. According to Mauliya, et.al.2020 lack of motivation was ignited from two sizeable directions, family and teacher. Not having support from families caused a low level of motivation. Chamber 1999 explains that attitude in learning a language is important because positive attitudes towards language contribute to easier learning.

Similarly, positive attitudes encourage students to learn English (Ellis, 2008). Brown (2001) explains that second language learners benefit from positive attitudes, whereas negative attitudes may reduce motivation and cause students to fail to attain language proficiency. However, learners can change negative attitudes when they experience real-life language situations or a person from another culture. Learners of second languages can change their negative stereotypes about the language. Teachers must be aware that every student has positive and negative attitudes and replace their negative ones with a realistic understanding of the language (Brown, 2001).

According to Quist D. 2000, "The teaching and learning process involves two active participants in the classroom - the teacher and the learner, and that language learning does not fall entirely on the teacher. The students must also assume more responsibility for the learning process." This clarifies that teaching learning and students' performance is interconnected to teacher-students' mutual progress. Both of the parties should be cooperative with each other for the outcome. Mosha further clarifies this statement, citing Vuzo (2010): "It is through interactions with each other that teachers and students work together to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the target subject. However, such a situation is not commonly found in secondary schools in all subjects due to the fact that lecture method dominates the teaching and learning process, which leads to passive learning" (p.18).

Better English performance empowers better academic performance, too. As English is a major source of academics in this era, a competent person in English can easily empower their academics. Aina, J. K. et.al. (2013) mention, "Students who have so much difficulties with their communication skill in English language may not function effectively, not only in English language but in their academic and this is no reason than the fact that English language in Nigeria today is the language of textbooks and the language of instruction in

schools." In the same way, they further elaborate that "When Students' Proficiency in English Language is high, it will definitely affect and improve the academic performance of such students." These facts further raise the significance of English performance beyond language and communication. As English has a legacy to academics, it is necessary to measure and empower the English performance of students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper focuses on quantitative data collection. In the context of quantitative data collection, the researcher has prepared a questionnaire with 13 problem-based questions and 4 demographic queries. The questionnaire was prepared in Google form and distributed via email and instant messenger to fill up and submit online. In the same way, interviews with selected respondents were conducted and transcribed in the paper.

The respondents for the questionnaire were selected on the basis of their performances in Compulsory English in the Bachelor's first-year examination. Well performers and least performers in the final examination from each academic year were taken as the samples and requested to participate in the survey. The sample respondents represent B.B.S. (Bachelor of Business Studies), B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) and B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) faculties of a community campus in Rupandehi. They also represent 5 academic years which are the examinations of 2078, 2077, 2076, 2075 and 2074. In the same way, respondents are balanced based on their racial, class and gender issues too. A total of 52 people submitted their responses to the questionnaire survey.

Questions in the questionnaire were in English with their translations in Nepali. The questionnaire contained objective questions only, mainly focusing on the Likert scale format. Five point Likert scale varying from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) was applied during the study. Google form based survey questions and analysis was conducted by Google engine that explored analysis automatically as per the instruction. Among the respondents, 56 percent were females and 44 percent were males. In the same way, 55 percent of respondents were full-time students and 45 percent were representing part-time in their studies. Likewise, 63.5 percent of respondents had English medium school background and 36.5 percent of respondents did not have an English medium school background.

After the survey, an interview was conducted with 8 respondents on the basis of the questionnaire. They also represent each of the academic faculty, genders, and performances. The recorded interview and transcription of the interview aimed to explore the ideas and experiences of respondents while at campus. Some interviewees delivered

their answers in Nepali which are translated and transcribed herewith. It also discussed the issues not included in the survey questionnaire.

Additionally, they were asked to provide if any suggestions and feedback to the concerned parties (campus administration, teaching faculties, library and students) towards effective English teaching learning practices. The raw data analysis was carried out via Google engine because of the nature of Google form. The comprehension and interpretation of data including responses of interview are mentioned herewith as the outcomes.

Interviews

Among the 52 respondents, some of the respondents were taken for the interview. Total 8 individuals were taken interview, who were selected from various faculties and performances in examination as traced while doing research. They were asked to clarify the previous questionnaire submitted via Google Forms. Additionally, they were let to mention if any about the English performance of students. And, they were asked to provide their feedback/suggestions if any. During the interview, they opined some of the ideas to be discussed for implementation at campus. One of the interviewees suggested "duly organize orientations and motivational seminars for the students".

During the interview they were asked about styles of teaching by faculties, students' learning, satisfaction with teaching faculties' performances, satisfaction with library facilities, English as easy/difficult subject to learn, campus's facilities being provided, academic environment and English medium environment inside the campus, impact of internet and social sites in students' learning, students' psychological status relating to English learning, factors that can empower students towards wellbeing in English learning, campus's probable efforts to the effective English learning, faculties' probable efforts to the effective English teaching-learning and students' probable efforts to energize and empower themselves.

Structure of Respondents

This study is conducted with the sample survey of 52 respondents of a community Campus, Rupandehi. The respondents belong to different categories on the basis of their annual grading performances. Respondents also represent 5 academic years, including three different academic areas. They are Bachelor of Business Studies (B.B.S.), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Bachelor of Arts (B.A.). Respondents who took examination 2078, 2077, 2076, 2075 and 2074 B.S were taken as sample for the study. They were distributed questionnaire with necessary instructions via Google Form to fill up and submit.

On the basis of their classes, 21.2 percent were Bachelor level passed out, 23.1 percent were waiting for their final results, 19.2 were Bachelor fourth year regular students, 21.2 percent were Bachelor third year regular students, and 15.4 percent were Bachelor second year regular students. Among these 52 respondents, 8 of them are interviewed and transcribed here for the more authenticity of research. Identities are kept confidential and interviewees are marked as respondent A, respondent B and so on.

RESULTS

Responses

Respondents have differently responded to the each of 13 questions asked in questionnaire. In the query of individual help by campus; 42 percent responded could agree, where less than 10 percent students responded strong agreement and 26.9 percent responded as disagreement.

Your campus provides individual help to needy students in English learning. (तपाईंको क्याम्पसले अङ्ग्रेजी सिकाई आवश्यक परेका विद्यार्थीहरूलाई व्यक्तिगत रूपमा समेत मद्दत प्रदान गर्दछ ।)
52 responses

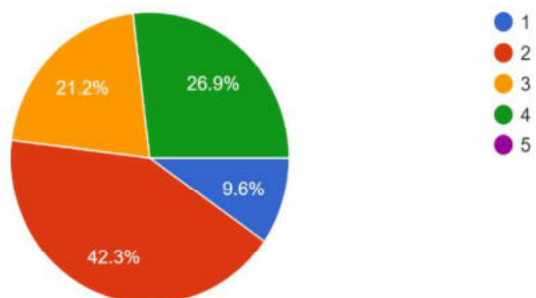


FIGURE 1. *Individual Help by Campus*

Another query about teaching outside the curriculum for extra learning was strongly agreed by 19 percent respondents, agreed by 46 percent and disagreed by 19 percent respondents. The following figure number 2 illustrates the result:

Your teachers teach things even from outside the curriculum. (तपाईंका शिक्षकहरूले पाठ्यक्रम बाहिरका पनि विषयवस्तु सिकाउँछन्।)

52 responses

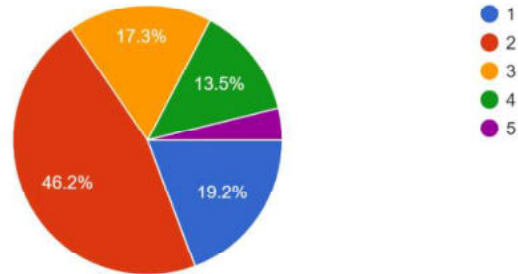


FIGURE 2. *Teaching Outside the Curriculum for Extra Learning*

The query about the family encouragement to study at home was strong in 53.8 percent of respondents, whether adverse for 7.7 percent. Family encouragement was responded to satisfactorily by 25 percent of respondents. Figure 3 demonstrates the result in figures:

Your family does not encourage you to study at home. (घरभित्र अध्ययन गरेर बस्नका लागि तपाईंलाई पारिवारिक प्रोत्साहन छैन।)

52 responses

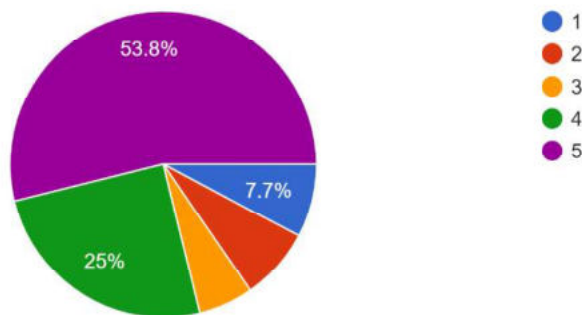


FIGURE 3. *Family Encouragement to Study at Home*

Query about the books available in the library that students need well satisfactory to 7.7 percent of respondents, satisfactory for 40.4 percent of respondents. Some 11.5 percent responded strongly as unavailable, 17.3 percent responded as unavailable and 23.1 percent were neutral about issue. Figure 4 herewith clearly shows the result.

Your campus's library does not have books that you need. (तपाईंको क्याम्पस पुस्तकालयमा खोजेका पुस्तकहरू पाईदैनन् ।)
52 responses

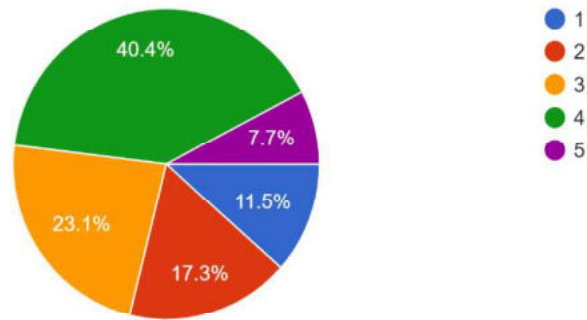


FIGURE 4. Books Available in Library that Students Need

Using audio/visual learning supports for English empowerment of the students was strongly agreed by 17.3 percent of respondents and 36.5 percent of respondents. However, this was seen as dissatisfying to 21.2 percent of respondents, where 36.5 percent responded neutral on the issue. Figure 5 mentions the responses to the issue.

Your campus provides audio/visual learning supports. (तपाईंको क्याम्पसमा श्रव्य/दृश्य अध्ययन सुविधा उपलब्ध छ ।)
52 responses

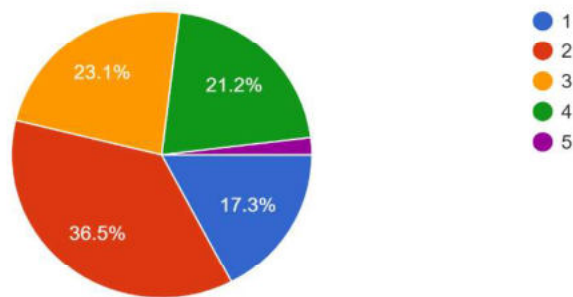


FIGURE 5. Use of Audio/Visual Learning Supports by Campus

The effective English learning programs organized by campus from time to time were somehow satisfying to 23.1 percent of respondents, where 15.4 percent reacted strongly

against the issue and 34.6 percent reacted somehow against this topic. Among them, 21.2 percent of respondents remained undecided. Figure 6 clarifies the result of the issue.

Your campus provides effective English learning programs from time to time. (तपाईंको क्याम्पसले प्रभावकारी अँग्रेजी सिकाई कार्यक्रमहरू समय-समयमा प्रदान गर्दछ ।)

52 responses

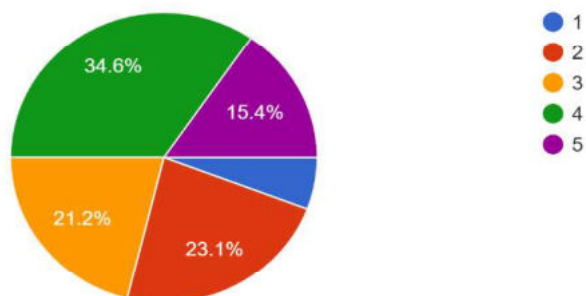


FIGURE 6. *Effective English Learning Programs Organized by Campus*

On the issue of their strong English in the school level, only 17.3 percent were well confident, 55.8 percent were somehow confident, 15.4 percent were unaware, and 9.6 percent of respondents replied as less performers. Figure 7 herewith is to show the picture of responses.

Your English subject was good at school level. (विद्यालय तहमा तपाईंको अँग्रेजी विषय राम्रो थियो ।)

52 responses

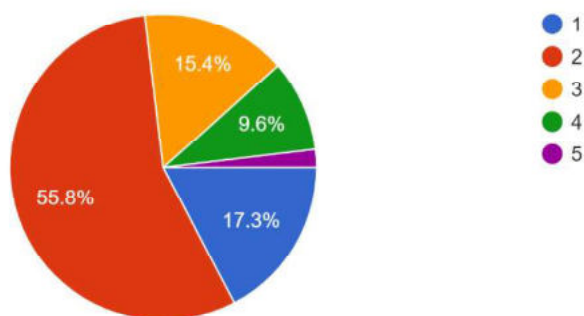


FIGURE 7. *English Strength in School Level*

The response in getting feedback after examination evaluation is that only 9.6 percent of respondents have shown total satisfaction, whereas 26.9 percent are somehow dissatisfied. Somehow, satisfaction is marked by 36.5 percent of respondents, and 21.2 percent are neutral in the query. The response can be seen in Figure 8 below.

You do not get feedback after exam evaluation. (परीक्षाको मूल्यांकन भैसकेपछि तपाईंले सुझाव वा पृष्ठपोषण पाउनु हुँदैन ।)

52 responses

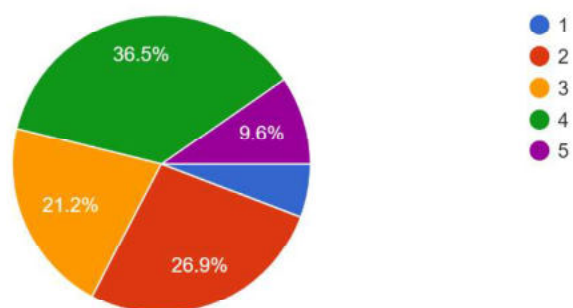


FIGURE 8. *Getting Feedback after Examination*

Minority number of respondents has agreed on their weakness in English subject in past (the school level). High confidence in strong English in the past is marked by 23 percent and somehow confidence is marked by 40.4 percent of respondents. This shows that they weren't much weak individually in the past. Figure 9 herewith illustrates the result.

You are weak in English Subject. (तपाईंको अंग्रेजी विषय पहिले देखि नै कमजोर हो ।)

52 responses

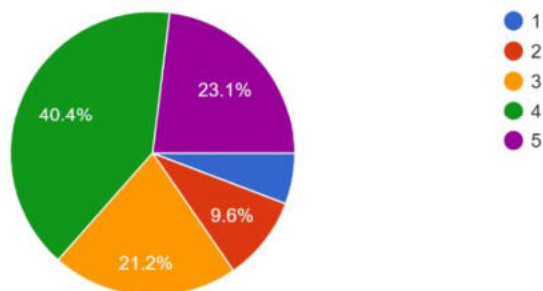


FIGURE 9. *Weakness in English Subject Since Past*

Similarly, there are not a remarkable number of respondents to get extra time of teachers to help with low performing individuals. Only 21.2 percent have agreed somehow to receive the extra time of teachers for their wellbeing. Majority percentage 36.5 percent of respondents remained undecided in this issue, whereas 23.1 percent have shown somehow dissatisfaction and 13.5 percent have shown strong dissatisfaction in getting extra time by their faculties to empower low performing students in English. Figure 10 herewith demonstrates the figure.

Your teachers spend extra time to help students with low performance in English. (अंग्रेजीमा कमजोर क्षमताका विद्यार्थीलाई तपाईंका शिक्षकहरूले अतिरिक्त समय दिने गर्नुहुन्छ ।)
52 responses

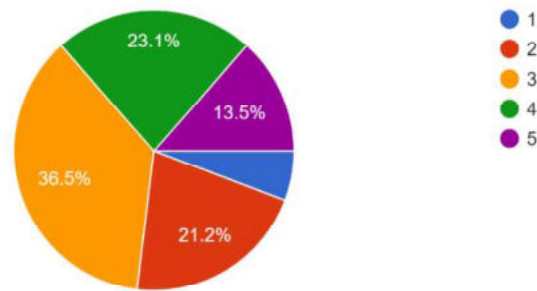


FIGURE 10. *Teachers' Spending Extra Time to Help Students with Low Performance*

There is no illustration of the number of respondents who could not learn English because of their financial problems. But 15.4 percent of them are undecided to the issue. Including 40.4 percent of respondents having somehow financial satisfaction, 36.5 percent have shown total rejection of financial issue with their English learning. Figure 11 herewith illustrates the figure.

You cannot learn English as much due to your finance/money related problems. (तपाईंको आर्थिक अभावले चाहेजति अँग्रेजी सिक्न सक्नुभएको छैन ।)

52 responses

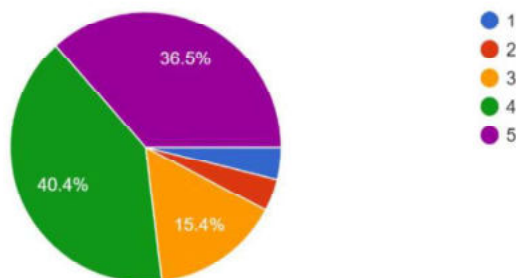


FIGURE 11. *Obstacles in Learning due to Finance Related Problems*

In terms of paying enough time for continuous study, 26.9 percent of them are well prepared for the exam. Similarly, 25 percent of respondents have marked as prepared somehow. Nearly 20 percent of them have marked as being unable to dedicate their time for regular studies. Figure 12 attached herewith, clarifies the result in figures.

You cannot give enough time for your studies. So, you have to rely on market solutions, guides, guess-papers etc. for exams. (पढाइको लागि पर्याप्त सम...लुशन पेपर, गाइड, गेस-पेपर आदिमा भर पर्नु परेको छ ।)

52 responses

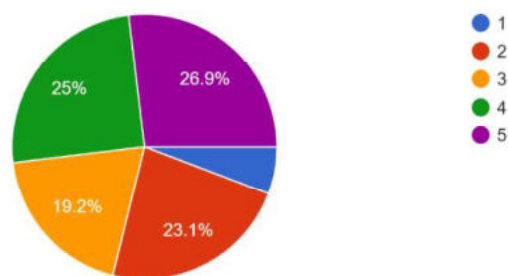


FIGURE 12. *Students Paying Enough Time for Continuous Study*

Final question relating to use of internet and online learning materials to improve their English is strongly in 23.1 percent and somehow strong in 57.7 percent of respondents. The remaining respondents are well illustrated. This also shows the respondents' well access and use of the internet. Figure 13 shows the result.

You have been using internet and online learning materials to improve your English learning. (आफ्नो अँग्रेजी सिकाई राम्रो बनाउन तपाईंले इण्टरनेट तथा अनला...मा उपलब्ध सिकाई सामग्रीहरू उपयोग गर्दै आउनुभएको छ।)

52 responses

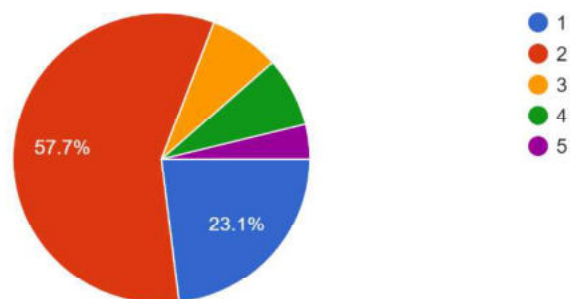


FIGURE 13. *Use of Internet and Online Learning Materials by Students to Improve their English*

This study has revealed different aspects affecting to students' performance in English. As study was based on survey with the bases of different questions; the different outputs has been carried out as following:

Styles of Teaching by Facultyies

The answers of the interviewees, except one respondent, showed satisfaction in overall to the styles of teaching by facultyies. Interviewee 'G' claimed that teachers do not fulfill the expectations of students. Yet, respondent 'B' suggested including different innovative teaching methodologies. She added to become more focused in student-centric activities. She added "effective assignments and project works should be focused to motivate the students in English learning". In the same way, respondent 'C' suggested to use audio/visual materials extensively in teaching. 'F' suggested implementing an English medium environment to make teaching learning effective. Respondent 'D' illustrated that facultyies should especially address the different learning capacities of students. Respondent 'E' suggested using internet and audiovisuals in teaching.

Students' Learning Trend

Interviewee responded diversely to this issue. They said that various issues are interconnected to the students' learning trend. Some of the students are self-motivated; they go ahead at any situation. The answers were, "Some of the students have a Nepali medium background; they cannot cope with the classes and subject matter. Some of the

students are affected by different factors (social sites, awkwardness etc.). They cannot tune into the curricular aspects." Interviewee 'F' claimed his data that 70 percent of students only realize about their duties towards study, and 30 percent students do not realize whether they need to study. He further said "some of the weak (less performing) students are lazy and they are demotivating to the study." These facts and the discussed responses of students towards their attempts are similar in the sense that each of the students have their own situations and backgrounds that cannot be addressed in one way.

Satisfaction with Teaching Faculties' Performances

Interviewees' responses about the satisfaction with their teaching faculties' performances found similar in overall. Interviewee 'E' and 'F' claimed that the faculties are highly qualified in terms of their performances and helping attitude to the students. The rest of the interviewees showed their positive responses to the performances by campus faculties. Still interviewee 'E' could not praise to the performance of teaching faculties. He just said, "Normal and common teaching trend is going on at campus".

Satisfaction with Library Facilities

The majority of the interviewees have something to say about the improvement of campus library. They suggested upgrading the library with modern facilities and scientific management. Additionally, interviewee 'F' urged to add more books in the library. Some of the interviewees didn't want to talk about the library as they were not using it.

English as Easy/Difficult Subject to Learn

High scorer respondents/students in the examination replied that English is easy to learn. They claimed that practice and motivation make a person better performer in English. Low performers in examinations accepted English as a difficult subject to learn. Additionally, interviewees 'A', 'B' and 'D' argued that a teacher could positively change 'English as Easy Subject to Learn'.

Campus's Facilities Being Provided

There were mixed versions of the facilities being provided by the campus. As the above questionnaire received diversified answers, this interview also got mingled answers. To talk about the dissatisfaction relating to the facilities, they suggested making easy access in technology based teaching-learning, digitized library system, digitized options for learning.

Academic Environment and English Medium Environment Inside the Campus

Interviewees appreciate English medium separate classes. Interviewee 'E' highly appreciated the English medium classes for the higher performers in English or students with English backgrounds. He, along with interviewees 'F' and 'G' also suggested empowering the Nepali medium students with different tools and methodologies of teaching.

Impact of Internet and Social Sites in Students' Learning

Most of the interviewees explored their positive experience with the internet and social sites in English learning. Interviewee 'G' stated that some students are spoiling their time with the social sites. They are not taking advantages of the technology rather being disturbed by the technological aspects. Interviewee 'F' suggests providing timely motivational classes to engage students positively.

Students' Psychological Status Relating to English Learning

As the interviewee replied, students with different backgrounds have the different psychological status relating to English learning; the institution's initiative should solve the problem. As mentioned above, motivation programs and motivation while teaching English learning should be studied according to their requirement. As interviewee 'E' stated, hesitation and awkwardness among the less performing students should be studied and remedies provided.

Factors That Can Empower Students towards Wellbeing in English Learning

Proper guidance duly can help to the empowerment of students towards wellbeing in English learning is experienced by the interviewees and respondents. Students support programs guidance is emphasized by the interviewee. Interviewees 'D', 'F' and 'G' suggested conducting student centric programs that can improve the students' wellbeing in English learning.

Campus's Probable Efforts to the Effective English Learning,

Interviewee has focused on the extra-curricular and co-curricular programs to be conducted by campus. As interviewee 'D', 'F' and 'G' has suggested organizing students' development programs by the institution; campus can organize programs according to needs and feedback. Such programs can be probable efforts to improve the students' English learning.

Faculties' Probable Efforts to the Effective English Teaching-Learning

Faculties can add innovative techniques in teaching to make effective English teaching-learning. In the same way, they can dedicate extra time to the students. Interviewees D', 'E', 'F' and 'G' have suggested that teachers become more individual and focused; teaching faculties can develop newer teaching methodologies as much as possible.

Students' Probable Efforts to Energize and Empower Themselves

Students must change their attitudes and habits to empower effective English learning. They should not hesitate to minimize their problems and move towards progress. As interviewees 'D', 'E', 'F' and 'G' suggested students become keen learners and avoid laziness; it should be done from the students' part too.

DISCUSSION

This study comprises a sample survey to the respondents and interview. Respondents were selected on the basis of their performances on annual examination. Interview with the selected respondents is additional data. Moreover, study of the previous scholarly publications is taken as the resources for the literature review and support to this study.

Responses from the questionnaire and interviews show the curiosity of students towards technology assisted and innovative ways of teaching learning process. Assignments are to be practical for the field, and project works focusing on wider career opportunities, and audiovisual materials for depth level of cognition with ease. In the same way, meeting the students' expectations to motivate them for study is another subject to be addressed. An institution's initiative towards broadening and sharpening post-study goals and preparations towards accomplishing goals can be beneficial with long-term achievements. The state of realization about the significance of academics in the students is seen vital.

Competent teaching faculties are assets to the institution and pillars of academics. Updating and strengthening faculties with appropriate assets, opportunities and addresses can empower faculties as potential game changers which can lead the institution with multiple dimensions. Well-equipped library is supposed to be skeleton for academic exercises and intellectual innovations. Full material facilities with well-skilled librarians are the expectations users. The 'Anglophobia' is a type of dementia for some of the learners as they are not well oriented towards easy English learning. Therefore, institutions and faculties should organize remedial sessions to familiarize the students with easy English learning.

Overall physical facilities of the institution are supposed to be well-warm up or good mind-set for the learning environment. Therefore, convenient physical/technological services are also factors of learning that students explored during this study. Likewise, a friendly English environment is another expectation of the students towards their English learning. They were expecting some orientations to learn English inside the medium English environment as well as via the internet and social sites.

Some psychological status based on students' backgrounds is another aspect revealed during this study. Different empowerment orientations, motivation seminars, and familiar wellbeing environments on campus can address such issues. Additionally, co-curricular activities by the institution and faculty's initiatives can be probable efforts to effective English learning. Some individual-focused teaching and application of newer methodologies can be more beneficial to the students' effective English learning. The role of learners (students) to remain keen to learn is associated or interconnected to all these aspects that can be improved with institution-faculty initiatives and students' involvement.

CONCLUSION

The study based on a field survey and interviews with the respondents, has explored various information regarding English performance of students in a community campus. The diversity of students' backgrounds is seen as the key factor of their different performances. In the same way, tuning with the academics is to matched/bridged by extra methodologies. Students suggest improvement of library with technological facilities and management for their longer stay and more achievements. Extra time of teachers, extra classes, timely organized motivation programs etc., are expected to be implemented. Moreover, some of the initiatives by the institution to make the students accustomed to academic programs and teaching learning should be done. In the same way, teachers can explore newer ways of teaching for the students to learn English effectively. And students themselves should be self-motivated towards effective English learning.

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