

The Challenges of Higher Education Students in Balancing Work and Study Life at a Community College in Godawari Municipality, Nepal

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Abstract

Higher education has become a dominant aspect of the modern world. Despite having the central role in Nepalese educational landscape, Tribhuvan university has witnessed persistent challenges characterized by low pass rate, low graduation rate and high dropout rate which makes an urgent need to examine the challenges of higher education. This study inspects the challenges faced by Nepalese higher education students in balancing work and studies. The study uses a descriptive approach, surveying 137 bachelor-level working students from a community campus in Lalitpur, Nepal. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using IBM SPSS. The findings reveal that financial difficulties pose the major challenge, with majority of students depending on family assistance and a notable portion leaving their studies because of monetary issues. Academic challenges include insufficient practical training opportunities and widespread delays in examinations. Mental health concerns are prevalent, as majority of students experience stress, yet only a small fraction receive proper support. On the social front, disparities across regions and family pressures are major concerns. The study concludes that financial aid, better academic resources, and mental health support are needed. Policymakers and institutions must address these issues to maintain work-study balance for the students in Nepal.

Keywords: work-study balance, financial stress, academic pressure, mental health, higher education

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Introduction

Higher education refers to the learning which usually takes place after the completion of high school at settings such as colleges, universities or technical schools. It incorporates more advanced and career-focused courses after which the students generally conclude with a degree, diploma or graduation certificate (Altbach et al., 2019). Higher education is not limited to acquisition of knowledge but also extends to the development of logical reasoning, enhancement of problem-solving skills and exposure of diverse career options to the individuals (Marginson, 2016).

Higher education has experienced a significant global expansion in recent decades, becoming a dominant aspect of the modern world. Altbach et al. (2019) explored that the students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) increased from 100 million to 150 million worldwide within a short span of one decade. This dominance of higher education is not limited to any one region; it has become a global phenomenon. In developed countries like Australia, more than 70% of university students are engaged in different forms of occupation (Baik et al., 2019). The rapid increase in student enrollment show that higher education has become a necessity rather than a privilege for most of the students. As global economies evolve and competition surges, the demand for educated and highly skilled individuals becomes more serious. Hence, the rising supremacy of higher education emphasizes its key role in determining the modern-day workforce, promoting innovation, and contributing to global economy.

It has been global trend for higher education students to involve in different forms of occupation. Most of the students pursue to work during their studies to fulfill their financial needs, such as paying tuition fees and managing living costs. Beyond financial reasons, employment can also be a supplement to the academic performance of the students by offering practical experience, networking opportunities and industry exposure provided that their job is synchronized to the field of study. Employment during study also helps students to enhance career skills such as time management, communication skills, teamwork and conflict management (Vokic et al., 2021).

Despite these benefits, the involvement in work have some negative impacts on the students during study. Students should deal with conflict and stress while balancing work and studies which hamper their academic performance. As a result, the students may face reduction in class attendance and study time which leads to lower grades, delayed graduation, or even dropout. It can also negatively impact physical and mental health of the students, while limiting opportunities for socializing, leisure, and personal relationships (Vokić et al., 2021).

Students in higher education face many challenges while managing their work alongside the study. Most of the students' struggle become complex due to rising education expenses, increasing academic workloads, competitive job market and lack of adequate institutional support. As a result, students feel difficult to manage work and study effectively. These challenges result in exhaustion, anxiety and academic struggles (Naylor et al., 2021).

Tribhuvan University (TU), established in 1959, is the oldest and largest university in Nepal, incorporating the significant share of the country's higher education system. During academic year 2019/20, 491,299 students were enrolled in TU, representing 76.67% of the total student enrollment in the country. Notably, approximately 77% of all bachelor's level students in the country were enrolled at TU during the same period (University Grants Commission, 2021). Despite its central role in Nepal's higher education landscape, the university has confronted persistent challenges in its academic performance. The pass rate of TU remains considerably low, with only 29.3% graduation rate in 2019/20, representing that more than two-thirds of students failed to complete their academic programs within the prescribed timeframe (UGC, 2021). The low graduation rate indicates systemic inefficiencies and thereby, highlights an urgent need for academic reforms. Majority of TU students come from middle and lower middle-class families, often involved in part-time or full-time work to financially support their education, which in turn have severe impact on their academic performance (Nepal Planning Commission, 2020). These findings emphasize an urgent need to examine and address the multifaceted challenges confronted by higher education students in Nepal.

In Godawari Municipality, there is a lack of empirical works on what challenges are faced by employed students while balancing work and study. Addressing this gap, this study aims to examine the major challenges faced by higher education students in balancing the work and study in the region.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

This study takes the WSB (work-study balance) concept as its theoretical foundation. This theory advocates the balance of conjoining three 'categories of student commitment' – their work obligations, demands of their studies and their private life. Kirchmeyer (2000) defined Work-Life Balance (WLB) as the experiences of fulfillment in the different aspects of life that require various resources such as energy, time and commitment which are spread across all the domains. Work-life balance is often compared to work-family balance, but the former term incorporates other roles like community, social, religious and leisure roles of an individual. Work-Life balance is increasingly challenging in

the modern world. The challenge arises from the fact that it is very difficult to strike the balance between work and other domains of life. In addition to being a challenge to the individuals, the WLB as a concept has been taken up by the organizations and human resource departments across the board, in lieu of which many policies and strategies have been formulated to alleviate the conflict between the domains of work and life.

Empirical Reviews

Some national and international empirical studies have highlighted the challenges faced by high education students. For instance, Vaidya and Bhandari (2025) revealed that students faced long working hours, difficulties in cultural adaptations, and language challenges, impacting academic performance and personal lives. It was also revealed that 56% of students worked an average of 14.5 hours per week. The excessive working hours impacted academic performance and personal well-being of the students. Similarly, Sprung and Rogers (2020) found that work-life imbalance is linked with students' perceived stress, general anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Tumin et al. (2020), revealed that students at International Islamic University, Malaysia often faced time constraints and heavy study loads.

Similarly, Creed et al. (2015) found that study with work negatively affect students' engagement, overall happiness and health. Similarly, Darolia (2014) found that working during study time had various effects on academic outcomes, varying by student characteristics. Wilson et al., (2014) explored that new students consistently worried about similar issues: finding resources, managing time between work, family, and studies, making friends, and understanding early assignments, especially group tasks. Tessema and Ready (2014) exhibited that work has positive effect on both satisfaction and GPA, when students did work fewer than 10 hours per week. However, when students work for more than 10 hours per week, students' satisfaction and GPA were found to decline. Wang et al. (2010) found that incentives to work have most effects on student academic performance, followed by whether the jobs provide opportunities for students to develop skills and whether the jobs are related to their fields of study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive research design is examined the challenges faced by bachelor level students of Jana Bhawana Campus. Since the study examined existing conditions in a natural setting, descriptive research was the most practical approach for conducting the research.

Study Area

Jana Bhawana Campus, situated at Godawari Municipality-11, Lalitpur, is selected as the study area because it enrolls a diverse segment of bachelor-level students who often manage academic responsibilities alongside personal, social, and professional commitments. Conducting research in this campus helps in valuable understandings into the real-life challenges students face in balancing multiple demands of work and study.

Population, Sample Size and Sample Design

In total, 450 working students are currently enrolled in bachelor level of Jana Bhawana Campus (EMIS Department, 2025). Out of 450 students, a sample of 137 students out of was selected through purposive sampling design. Students were selected on the premise that they are either part-time or full-time working students and currently enrolled in bachelor level in either of social science, management, education and information technology stream of the campus with adequate attendance in the class. It was assured that the sample of 137 students reflect diversity in terms of gender, caste, geography, and political backgrounds. However, the sample size is slightly small due to the irregular attendance of the students.

Nature and Sources of Data

Cross-sectional data was used to examine the challenges faced by bachelor level students of the campus. Primary source was used to collect the data from the students.

Data Collection Technique

A self-administered questionnaire was used to conduct survey on the challenges faced by bachelor level students in Jana Bhawana Campus. The questionnaire includes socio demographic information of the respondents. Similarly, it incorporates the questions to identify financial, academic, mental health, and social challenges faced by the respondents. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They were also informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. The data was collected in April 2025 during class time.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data was analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS. Mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values were used to describe the challenges faced by the respondents.

Results

This section incorporates the results of responses collected from 137 bachelor level students. At first, socio-demographic information of the respondents is analyzed.

Table 1

Age and Gender of the Respondents

Variables	Classification	Frequency	% Frequency	Descriptive Statistic
Gender	Male	35	25.5	Mean = 20.40
	Female	102	74.5	
	Total	137	100	
Age	16-19	50	36.5	Mean = 21 years Std. Deviation = 2.16 Minimum = 16 Maximum = 29
	20-24	80	58.4	
	25-29	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 exhibits the gender and age group of respondents. Out of 137 respondents, majority of the respondents are female (74.5%) while the male respondents were comparatively low (25.5%). It is because the female enrollment in the campus is significantly higher than that of male. Similarly, most of the bachelor level students (58.4%) are from 20-24 years age group. Mean age is 21 years (SD = 2.16 years) with minimum and maximum age are 16 years and 29 years respectively.

Table 2

Faculty and Level of the Respondents

Variables	Classification	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Faculty	Social Science	49	35.8
	Management	49	35.8
	Education	29	21.2
	IT	10	7.3
	Total	137	100
Level	1 st year	43	31.4
	2 nd year	21	15.3
	3 rd year	42	30.7
	4 th year	31	22.6
	Total	137	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 demonstrates faculty and level of the students. Most of the respondents are from social science and management faculty comprising of 35.8% in each group while IT department has least participation in data collection. It is obvious because both social science and management has higher enrollment than other streams.

Table 3

Nature and Sectors of Job of the Respondents

Variables	Full time	44	32.1
Nature of job	Part time	70	51.1
	Contract based	19	13.9
	Daily wage	4	2.9
	Total	137	100.0
Sectors of Job	Educational Institution	44	32.1
	Shop	29	21.2
	Self-employed	42	30.7
	Service Sector	22	16.1
	Total	137	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows the nature and sectors of job of the respondents. Among 137 respondents, most of the respondents (51.1%) are engaged in part time job while the least (2.9%) are engaged in daily wage. Similarly, most of the respondents (32.1%) are engaged in educational institutions while the least (16.1%) are engaged in service sector.

Challenges Faced by Students

This study examined the financial, academic, physical and mental health challenges and social challenges faced by the bachelor level students in Jana Bhawana Campus.

Table 4 explains the financial challenges faced by the respondents while managing work during study. The respondents were asked about the primary source of funding for their education. 59.9% respondents depend primarily on family income to support their studies, 10.9% students benefit from scholarships, 2.9% depend upon student loans. About 21.2% supplement their income through personal jobs while 5.1% depend upon other sources. It shows that most respondents primary source of income is their family income.

Similarly, the respondents expressed difficulties in covering education expenses. Financial pressures for most of the respondents are substantial, with 44.5% finding it difficult or very difficult to cover expenses. Mean value (2.64) indicates that most of the students find it difficult to finance their studies.

Financial Challenges**Table 4***Financial Challenges faced by students*

Variables	Classification	Freq.	% Freq.	Statistics
Primary funding source	Family income	82	59.9	
	Scholarship	15	10.9	
	Student Loan	4	2.9	
	Job	29	21.2	
	Other	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Difficulty in covering expenses	Very difficult	11	8.0	Mean = 2.64 SD =0.86
	Difficult	50	36.5	
	Neutral	56	40.9	
	Easy	18	13.1	
	Very easy	2	1.5	
	Total	137	100.0	
Drop out due to finance	Yes	16	11.7	
	No	121	88.3	
	Total	137	100.0	
Impact of rising cost of living in affording higher education	Not at all	7	5.1	Mean = 3.2 SD = 0.97
	Slightly	16	11.7	
	Moderately	72	52.6	
	Significantly	26	19.0	
	Very significantly	16	11.7	
	Total	137	100.0	
Major financial challenges in accessing quality higher education in Nepal	High tuition fees	20	14.6	
	Lack of affordable housing	16	11.7	
	Insufficient scholarships/grant	53	38.7	
	Limited access to students	79	57.7	
	Difficulty finding part-time	79	57.7	
	High transportation costs	12	8.8	
	Low family income	31	22.6	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The study also reveals that 11.7% dropped out due to financial constraints. Hence, the financial problem is one of the major cause of students' dropout in higher education.

Regarding living cost, 83.3% respondents agreed that the rising cost of living has impacted in affording their higher education moderately to significantly. Mean value of 3.2 also indicates that the rising living costs is a major concern for higher education students.

The respondents expressed major financial challenges in accessing higher education. 57.7% respondents expressed limited financial access and finding part-time job as the major challenges in obtaining higher education. Similarly, 38.7% regarded insufficient scholarships, 22.3% regard low family income, 14.6% regarded high tuition fees, 11.7% regarded lack of affordable housing and 8.8% regarded high transportation costs as the major challenges in obtaining higher education.

Academic Challenges

Table 5 depicts the academic challenges faced by the higher education students while managing work and study. The survey findings revealed mixed perceptions about Nepal's higher education system among students. While 41.6% found their courses moderately relevant to job market needs, another 36.5% perceived academic course high relevant, about one-fifth (21.9%) consider their programs slightly or not relevant to employment demands.

Practical learning opportunities appear limited, with only 26.9% students reporting adequate hands-on training despite its importance for career readiness. Field work and educational tours are also not much effective as only 27.8% thought they received adequate activities. Similarly, internship access proves particularly challenging, as 45.3% indicate these opportunities are scarcely available or nonexistent. Resource limitations significantly impact studies; affecting 76.7% respondents moderately to severely, compounded by widespread exam delays that 76.6% say substantially disrupt their education. While faculty support generally meets expectations (54% satisfied), these systemic issues from curriculum relevance to infrastructure deficiencies collectively hinder students' academic and professional preparation, suggesting critical areas for educational reform in Nepal.

Table 6 exhibits the physical and mental health challenges faced by the higher education students. 86.1% students experienced stress due to academic or financial workload. Only 50.8% students did not get sufficient mental health support. 38.7% students experienced academic stress and physical health issues during higher education. Similarly, 10% students were deprived of basic needs. 25.5% were affected by burnout, 62.8% were financially constrained, 19.7% were impacted by lack of social support, 8.8% were affected by unsafe living conditions, 10.9% were affected by limited healthcare access, 25.5% were affected by academic pressure, and 62.8% were affected by financial stress. These findings revealed that financial stress was the predominant challenge surpassing academic pressure and living conditions in impacting students' academic journey.

Table 5*Academic Challenges faced by students*

Variables	Classification	Freq.	% Freq.	Statistics
Relevancy of academic course to Nepal's job market demands	Not at all	10	7.3	Mean = 3.12 SD =0.97
	Slightly	20	14.6	
	Moderately	57	41.6	Mean = 2.98 SD =0.93
	Relevant	43	31.4	
	Highly relevant	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Opportunities By college for practical learning & skill development	Not at all	12	8.8	Mean = 2.98 SD =0.93
	Slightly	19	13.9	
	Moderately	69	50.4	Mean = 2.98 SD =1.19
	Adequately	31	22.6	
	Very much	6	4.3	
	Total	137	100	
Provision of field work and educational tours by college	Not at all	14	10.2	Mean = 2.48 SD =1.12
	Slightly	34	24.8	
	Moderately	51	37.2	Mean = 3.46 SD =0.90
	Adequately	16	11.7	
	Very much	22	16.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Internship opportunities by college	Not at all	36	26.3	Mean = 3.22 SD =1.01
	Slightly	26	19.0	
	Moderately	53	38.7	Mean = 4.22 SD =1.07
	Adequately	17	12.4	
	Very much	5	3.6	
	Total	137	100.0	
Level of satisfaction with the guidance and support from professors	Very dissatisfied	6	4.4	Mean = 3.22 SD =1.01
	Dissatisfied	10	7.3	
	Neutral	47	34.3	Mean = 3.22 SD =1.01
	Satisfied	63	46.0	
	Very Satisfied	11	8.0	
	Total	137	100.0	
Level of Impact in academic progress limited access to library, internet, and research facilities	Not at all	5	3.6	Mean = 3.22 SD =1.01
	Slightly	27	19.7	
	Moderately	53	38.7	Mean = 3.22 SD =1.01
	Significantly	36	26.3	
	Very significantly	16	11.7	
	Total	137	100.0	
Effect in education due to delays in annual exams and result publication	Not at all	3	2.2	Mean = 4.22 SD =1.07
	Slightly	10	7.3	
	Moderately	19	13.9	Mean = 4.22 SD =1.07
	Significantly	27	19.7	
	Very significantly	78	56.9	
	Total	137	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Physical and Mental Health Challenges**Table 6***Physical and Mental Health Challenges*

Variables	Classification	Freq.	% Freq.	Statistics
Experienced stress, pressure due to academic workload or financial in the past year	Never	10	7.3	Mean=3.25 SD=0.99
	Rarely	9	6.6	
	Sometimes	70	51.1	
	Often	33	24.1	
	Very Often	15	10.9	
	Total	137	100.0	
Sufficient mental health support from college for students	Not at all	32	23.4	Mean=2.67 SD=2.83
	Slightly	37	27.0	
	Moderately	46	33.6	
	Adequate	16	11.7	
	Very Much	6	3.9	
	Total	137	100	
Academic stress, physical health issues during higher education	Never	6	4.4	Mean=3.29 SD=0.9
	Rarely	12	8.8	
	Sometimes	66	48.2	
	Often	42	30.7	
	Very Often	11	8.0	
	Total	137	100.0	
Basic needs security (foods, shelter)	Very Poor	2	1.5	Mean=3.36 SD=0.8
	Poor	13	9.5	
	Moderate	65	47.4	
	Good	48	35.0	
	Very Good	9	6.6	
	Total	137	100.0	
Burnout	Yes	35	25.5	
	No	102	74.5	
	Total	137	100.0	
Financially-constrained	Yes	86	62.8	
	No	51	37.2	
	Total	137	100.0	
Lack of social support affect students' higher education	Yes	27	19.7	
	No	110	80.3	
	Total	137	100.0	
Unsafe living conditions affect students' higher education	Yes	12	8.8	
	No	125	91.2	
	Total	137	100.0	
Limited healthcare access affect students' higher education	Yes	15	10.9	
	No	122	89.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Academic pressure affects students' higher education	Yes	35	25.5	
	No	102	74.5	
	Total	137	100.0	
Financial stress affects higher education	Yes	86	62.8	
	No	51	37.2	
	Total	137	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Social Challenges**Table 7***Social Challenges*

Variables	Classification	Freq.	% Freq.	Statistics
College promote inclusion for diverse backgrounds	Not at all	16	11.7	Mean = 3.22 SD = 1.07
	Slightly	7	5.1	
	Moderately	57	41.6	
	Well	45	32.8	
	Very Well	12	8.8	
	Total	137	100.0	
Students faced discrimination based on caste, gender, or region	Never	102	74.5	Mean = 1.47 SD = 0.88
	Rarely	13	9.5	
	Sometimes	15	10.9	
	Often	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Social expectations and family pressure affect education goal	Not At All	40	29.2	Mean = 2.47 SD = 1.22
	Slightly	30	21.9	
	Moderately	37	27.0	
	Significantly	23	16.8	
	Very Significantly	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Student involved clubs and peer support by college	Very Weak	12	8.8	Mean = 3.06 SD = 1.01
	Weak	23	16.8	
	Moderate	53	38.7	
	Good	42	30.7	
	Very Good	7	5.1	
	Total	137	100.0	
Social factors hinder higher education	Caste Discrimination	7	5.1	
	Gender Inequality	10	7.3	
	Regional Differences	71	51.8	
	Social Class Discrimination	18	13.1	
	Marriage Pressure	25	18.2	
	Others	6	4.4	
	Total	137	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 7 depicts the social challenges faced by higher education students. The survey reveals mixed perceptions about inclusion and social factors in Nepalese colleges. While 83.2% students believe their institutions promote inclusion moderately to very well, 21.1%age reported limited or no inclusion efforts. Discrimination appears relatively uncommon, with 74.5% never experiencing caste, gender or regional bias. However, social pressures impact education significantly for 21.9% of students, with regional differences emerging as the foremost social barrier (51.8%). Peer support systems receive moderate ratings (38.7%), though 25.6% consider them weak. These findings suggest colleges generally foster inclusive environments but face challenges addressing regional disparities and strengthening student support networks, while most students navigate their education without facing overt discrimination.

Discussion

The study highlights that financial difficulties are a major concern for Nepalese students. A majority of students (59.9%) rely on their families for financial assistance, while only a small proportion receives scholarships (10.9%) or educational loans (2.9%). Given the financial struggles many families face, 44.5% of students report difficulty in covering the costs of education, and 11.7% are forced to drop out due to financial constraints. These findings are consistent with international studies (Darolia, 2014; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006), which show that students who work long hours to support themselves often experience poorer academic outcomes. Nepal's limited financial aid system further intensifies challenges for students from low-income backgrounds.

Although, most students (78.1%) believe their academic programs are relevant to future employment, there is a significant gap in practical training opportunities. Only 26.9% students reported having access to effective hands-on learning, while 45.3% struggled to secure internships. This difficulty is attributed to factors such as geographical constraints, a shortage of internship programs aligned with students' academic disciplines, intense competition, and weak collaboration between industry and academic institutions. As a result, many students graduate without sufficient real-world experience, which hampers their employability. Other academic challenges include delays in examinations, affecting 56.9% students, and inadequate research facilities, impacting 76.7%. These structural issues mirror the findings of previous studies (Tumin et al., 2020), which indicate that high workloads and poor institutional support negatively affect student performance.

Delays in conducting the exam and publishing the results can hinder students' career progress, which affects further study or employment opportunities, and students may lose opportunities. In addition, due to the delay, additional expenses may be incurred. On the other hand, it can have an economic impact on students and their families.

Mental health concerns were another critical issue identified in the study. A large proportion (86.1%) of students experience stress due to academic and financial pressures, with 35% suffering from severe, recurring stress. Unfortunately, mental health support remains insufficient, with 23.4% respondents indicating that their institutions offer no counseling services at all. According to Sprung and Rogers (2020), the pressure of balancing work and academic responsibilities significantly contributes to anxiety and depression. In this study, financial insecurity (62.8%) was found to be a greater source of stress than academic workload (25.5%), making it a primary factor in mental health challenges faced by students.

While the majority of students (83.2%) perceive their colleges as inclusive, social and regional disparities still pose obstacles. More than half (51.8%) report challenges

stemming from regional inequality and 21.9% cite family expectations—such as pressure to fulfill traditional roles—as hindrances to their education. Although most students (74.5%) have not experienced discrimination, some face social pressures like being urged to marry early (18.2%), which can disrupt their academic journey. Peer support plays a crucial role in helping students cope, but 25.6% feel that such support is inadequate, suggesting the need for improved social integration and institutional care.

On May 2, 2025, the Government of Nepal announced its policies and programs for the fiscal year 2082/83 (2025–26) in the federal parliament. Among the key announcements was a new policy that allows students above the undergraduate level to work up to 20 hours per week. This provision is intended to provide financial support to students while they pursue their studies. It guarantees a minimum wage for student workers and encourages a “work while you study” model. Additionally, the government aims to involve interns at various levels of public service, from local to central government, to provide practical exposure and opportunities for young learners Nepal Government Policies and Programmes, (2082–83).

The Government of Nepal’s policies allow undergraduate students to work up to 20 hours per week. However, it was found that many of the students participating in the study were working more than the permitted 20 hours. This has had direct impacts such as irregular class attendance, weak academic performance, and increased risk of dropping out, detachment from family functions and social-cultural life, and mental distress. It is therefore essential that employers offering jobs to students adhere to government policy and support the creation of a student-friendly working environment. On the other hand, colleges should keep track of the types of jobs their students are engaged in and coordinate with employers to encourage and facilitate supportive working conditions for student workers.

The findings suggested that students need additional support in study skills development, English language learning, career counseling, motivation, and avoiding digital distractions to mitigate these challenges for better retention and graduation rates.

Kirchmeyer’s WLB Theory suggests that work should not dominate life to the point of harming personal well-being or academic performance. Study find out that students work more than 20 hours per week (despite government policy) to support themselves, leading to academic struggles (irregular attendance, poor performance, dropout risks), mental distress and so on. This reflects a severe work-study imbalance, where financial necessity forces students into unsustainable work-study arrangements.

Conclusion

The study reveals that financial hardship, inadequate institutional support, and limited practical opportunities significantly hinder the academic experience and well-being of Nepalese students. While many students see value in their education, challenges such as delayed examinations, lack of research facilities, poor internship access, and insufficient mental health services continue to affect both academic performance and employability. Social pressures, regional disparities, and unmet family expectations further compound these issues, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Despite recent government efforts, including policies permitting limited student work hours and promoting internships, enforcement remains weak. Many students exceed the 20-hour work limit, leading to academic decline and emotional strain—highlighting a serious work-study imbalance. Institutions must enhance support systems through better career guidance, language support, mental health care, and closer coordination with employers to create student-friendly working environments that align with Kirchmeyer's Work-Life Balance Theory.

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