

Contingencies of Growth in Teaching Career in Nepal

Saleem Dhobi, PhD

Asst. Professor of English, Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ppj.v5i1.85841>

Abstract

This paper examines diverse career possibilities in Nepalese education system. Teaching as one of the most renowned and prestigious professions embodies diverse facets that can enrich the basket of opportunities for both growth and satisfaction. This paper explores numerous possibilities of career growth in teaching that has been narrowed to the teaching and learning in the classroom and the compensation paid to the teachers based on that limited engagement. The paper counters the argument that teaching does not endow employees to grow much as expected and seen in other professions including engineering and medicine which are also traditional professions like teaching in both contexts national and global. Confining to the classroom may be monotonous for the teachers.

The paper has employed an exploratory approach to unveiling the possibilities of growth by diversifying teaching. The data used in the paper are secondary and based on the participant observation. The purpose of this article is to investigate into different possibilities of growth pertaining to education. A teacher who begins her or his career in an elementary school can hold high-profile positions by relentlessly serving in the education sector and consequently she or he can experience exponential growth in the financial aspect of their lives as well.

Keywords: Teaching, Career, Growth, Leadership, Authorship, Entrepreneurship

Introduction

This paper analyzes myriad aspects of education including teaching widely accepted as a promising career in some countries but discarded and demeaned in other countries including Nepal as people associated to it hardly see possibilities of financial and career growth if confined to the teaching and learning in the classroom. There are multiple contingencies of financial growth and career satisfaction when teacher incessantly work on enriching and empowering them through continuous learning, participating in training sessions and joining the professional learning clubs. Some of the most achievable positions in education sector are the academic leadership, authorship, school business, stationery entrepreneurship, editorship, trainer and coach, teacher mentor, student counselor, curriculum designer, course developer, school manager, subject expert etc. these are some of the most probable opportunities for teachers that they can do and hold due to their experience in teaching. Of course, they need other attributes besides teaching experience such as capital, risk taking personality, training, management skills, digital literacy, linguistic competence, collaborative skills, communicative skills etc. However, the other requirements are

dependent variables and the education and its experience is the main quality that can drive teachers to explore other possibilities within.

Literature Review

There has been huge information on teaching career and its diversified arenas of career growth ranging from teachers of ethnically diverse communities to that of traditional teaching and training. None of the critics have raised the issue of the possibilities of other professions in education particularly teaching through diversification. Elaine Keane et al. (2023) have highlighted the importance cultural diversity in teaching profession in the United States of America. The advantages of the presence of more diverse faculty members in schools, students (most minorities and minorities), and society as a whole, from a social cohesion perspective are associated with capital through admission. This chapter is dedicated to demographic justification for diversification of education professions. This is based on the concept of justice through acceptance and the benefits expected of schools and students. The results of this study were divided into five categories by Villegas and Irvine (2010). Minority teachers tended to (a) higher expectations for minority students, and (b) more classes and schools.

Numerous factors influence people's decisions about career changes. These factors may be organizational or individual, voluntary or forced (Rhodes and Doering, 1983). The degree to which people control the changes they bring and their agency are key factors in their decisions. Unlike forced involuntary transitions, voluntarily initiated professional transitions are motivated by individual institutions and are argued to demonstrate career adaptability (Damle, 2015). Before their careers began, the majority of respondents had considerable experience in other industries. Numerous respondents changed their careers during the first decade. However, they admitted that they worked in other sectors on an average of 13 years before their current regional entry. 18% of respondents worked for more than 20 years before their career change. Often it was a forced change caused by redundancy (Neary, Siobhan, 2019).

It was believed that more career growth potential could be exploited in private sector and higher education, where practitioners could expand new capabilities such as training, expertise and the use of psychometric testing tools. Despite the fact that 68% of employees are in higher education, there are few opportunities for traditional career growth. It can be said that many people in this field do not receive value or complete rewards for their skills, knowledge, or experience (Neary, Siobhan, 2019). Sun Yee Yip and Jeffrey Shengjun Ji (2024) have determined the need for a more diverse teaching workforce that grows emergently because of the tremendous increase in the globalization. The continued expansion of international mobility, which has created businesses, classrooms and more diverse educational facilities, will urgently increase the need for a more diverse educational workforce. To ensure justice, diversity and inclusion in research, a high-level group of the UN Secretary-General recently recommended that certain policies be adopted to increase the representation of ethnic and cultural minority teachers (ILO, 2024). A certain number of

justifications have been set for diversification of labor education, including a. social justice, b. benefits of all students and teachers, and c. advantages of school organizations.

In addition to the initial landing issues, candidates for ethnic minority teachers face many problems when starting their learning careers. The professional authority and effectiveness of class minority teachers, as well as the self-confidence in the ability to succeed at work, can be undermined by cultural stereotypes and biases associated with cultural markers due to the sense of belonging to their school and satisfaction with their work. Finally, the outcomes of faculty diversification are beyond class. It promotes tolerance, mutual respect and understanding between communities and cultures, and a diverse range of faculty ignites social change. This allows you to practice and teach cross-cultural skills. Furthermore, it provides an educational environment that transforms and allows students to see each other and goals through teachers (Yip and Ji, 2024).

Phelton C. Moss (2022) has ascertained the approach to effective implementation of racial diversity. For him, the most effective way to promote fairness in educational programs and institutions is through the development of policies and practices that lead to a teacher workforce that is racially diverse. Policies and practices include not just attracting teachers of color but also establishing a framework to support them. The state education agency's leaders must ensure that efforts to diversify the educator pipeline are prioritized by diverse educator preparation programs, professional development opportunities, and licensing laws. To maintain responsibility for the endeavor, those in charge of state education agencies may monitor and release information about the advancements made by state-level initiatives to diversify the educator pipeline (Moss, 2022).

Per Dannefjord & Magnus Persson (2022) have examined the contributions of the teachers from distinct cultural backgrounds. Although instructors appreciate the differences between schools, qualitative distinctions are more important than a general list of preferences. Teachers with diverse professional backgrounds contribute to the expanding segregation as a result of their choice for different schools. This conduct is displayed by teachers who are or have been going through a process of synchronization in which they integrate their own professional views with the school's material and ideological framework. The synchronization process results in teachers developing institutionally shaped, slow-moving professional attitudes that restrict their job options to schools located near their formative institution.

Different professional dispositions are influenced by the local school market structure, but lock-in effects occur regardless of whether the labor market is compressed or socially segregated. The real labor market for teachers diminishes as distinctions increase, regardless of what that may entail, because they are trained to operate in a certain sort of school in both local settings (Dannefjord & Persson, 2022). Celia Whitchurch (2018) has explored the possibility of career growth in teaching profession. For her, the senior manager issue guide served as the basis for conversations that concluded that academic careers are no longer often based on the linear apprenticeship model. By "drilling down" into the data, one might

examine individual narratives that shed light on how individuals interacted with their surroundings and what seemed to work for them. It became clear that there were many career routes that were not well recorded but that, when viewed collectively, demonstrated a high degree of flexibility between educational institutions and outside environments. Furthermore, it became evident that the formal narratives included in documents such as job descriptions, workload models, and annual review reports could no longer be presumed to reflect actual day-to-day interactions, relationships, and working methods. It was thus possible to gain insight into what one respondent referred to as "lived reality". As we advance, career and professional intelligence become more and more important. This is most likely to originate from online, professional, and interpersonal networks that provide help and inspiration in identifying potential possibilities. The definition of what it means to be an academic becomes more flexible as individuals see themselves as business owners, partners, collaborators, and practitioners outside of the school and reconstruct their identities (Whitchurch, 2018). These existing studies do not cover the career possibilities as explored in this study. To address the knowledge gap in education and its diversified career contingencies, the paper highlights the career pathways for the teachers in Nepal.

Methods and Materials

The research paper is based on qualitative data drawn from the secondary sources for review. The firsthand observation has fueled the author to justify the proposition that there are five specific possibilities of career when teaching is diversified in Nepal. The study has followed an exploratory and analytical approach. To meet the objective of the study, the primary data from participant observation has been analytically presented.

Discussion

This paper discusses five major possibilities of career diversification in education sector. The first is subject expert. The second is school principal. The third is the school manager. The fourth is the writer. The fifth is the specialist and trainer for teachers. These contingencies of career advancement through diversification in education can help educationists to grow professionally and financially.

Teaching as a career affects the human world widely and without teachers a changed world cannot be imagined. The collective goal of the school is to change the life of children positively. The contributions made by all the stakeholders including teachers, principals, guardians and education administrators are integrated in shaping the future of students. The teachers who are contained to the classrooms do not seem to have a lot of professional and financial boom across the world. Due to their confinement to the teaching and learning in the classrooms, they have not been able to scale up their career. At the same time, they do not seem progressive in terms of having myriad talents and capacities. There are multiple instances in which teachers stop having fun in their profession because of their long-term engagement in the same position and work. Consequently, their productivity starts decreasing and they neither remain productive to themselves nor to the associated organizations.

Subject Expert

Long experience and consistent learning can empower teachers to become subject experts of their respective disciplines. They can advance their knowledge with the continuous learning and ceaseless performances in the classroom and beyond. Having command on a particular subject can help to have more and better opportunities in the market. It can increase the possibility of having higher payment as well. We reside in the world that prioritizes specialists rather than generalists. Therefore, to excel in a specific subject of interest and access, teachers need to have tremendous passion and growth mindset. By keeping oneself self-motivated, she or he can boost up both competence and morale for better career opportunities. Henk G. Schmidt et al. (1993) have stated the effect of subject-matter on achievement was strongest in the first curriculum year, suggesting that novice students are more dependent on their tutors' expertise than are more advanced students". When the teachers are subject experts, their performance impacts on the motivation of the students particular those who are new to the school system. Novice learners depend on teachers' expertise rather than those who are advanced. This gap implies that teachers with subject expertise are more sought after than those who are just teachers and do not have any expertise in a particular subject.

Most of the schools in Nepal prefer to hire subject experts and pay handsome amount of remunerations as well. The research mentions, "The students guided by content experts reported spending 15% more time on self-study, whereas in the fourth year the difference was no less than 47%" (Schmidt et al. 1993). Students are more motivated to engage them in the classes given by the content experts than the teachers. The comparative figure suggests that context experts are likely to be easily employed and their market scope is higher. It is advisable that teachers need to become subject experts for advancing their career. This is possible when teachers can diversify their focus within the education sector.

School Principal

Teachers with leadership skills tend to become principals in the academic institutions. Those who are interested in seeking positions in the education sector can endeavor for principalship. Of course, teachers need to have communicative and collaborative skills to hold this position. This position can heighten the public image of teachers and can provide opportunities to learn about how to lead an academic institution. Nevertheless, this can be possible provided that she or he is proactive and adaptable to changing workplace environments. The teachers who are likely to become principals should change their behavior and must embolden themselves for the new roles as they are demanding and promising. There is a transition from a classroom teacher to school principal. The latter role is more responsible. Therefore, someone willing to become a principal must be resilient and confident for the new responsibility. The principal has to build up good relationship with teachers who are the co-partners and collaborators to achieve the school's goals. Pertaining to the relationship between teachers and principals, Steiner et al. (2022) have stated, "Understanding the relationships among teacher and principal well-being, perceived

working conditions, and teachers' and principals' intentions to leave their current position is critical for pandemic recovery and for the long-term health of the principal and teacher workforces". Pandemic is a critical phase when the teachers and principals need to be resilient and overcome the challenges instead of quitting the profession. Teachers when shifting to the position of principals should be mentally prepared to manage the crisis including natural calamities like pandemic.

School Manager

Teachers can learn numerous managerial aspects of the school during their engagement in both classrooms and beyond. They can prepare them to undertake the role of school manager after certain years of experience as teachers. Preparing themselves for new and promising roles, teachers must have consistent learning habits and aptitude. In contrast to classroom-focused instruction, teachers when shifting to new roles i.e. school managers, they have to frequently supervise finances, staffing, compliance, facilities, parent relations, and more general academic or operational planning. When they hold the positions, they are expected to execute the plans related to instruction, employee development, budgeting, financial affairs, relationship between teachers, students and parents. Most often school managers play more administrative roles than academic ones. Therefore, the school managers must be friendly and competent at using digital devices for efficiency and effectiveness. Computer knowledge and software uses are some of the basic skills that school managers need to have.

The Writer

Teaching experience can help teachers to develop expertise on a particular subject. The very specialization on the subject of long-time engagement can motivate the teacher to shift to the authorial career. Mostly teachers have firsthand information about the problems students face during learning in the classroom. This information becomes the basis for writing textbooks for the learners in schools. Although there might be challenges she or he has to face in terms of language proficiency and structural set-ups of the books, she or he can seek for both linguistic and thematic professionals who can make their rough drafts fine and comprehensive. This career possibility pervades across the world. To grab this opportunity, teachers should stay consistently engaged in teaching certain subjects of their interest and competence. Besides, they must ceaselessly excel in their respective subjects. Consequently, they can grow competent and confident enough to write books that can be sought after locally and globally.

Nepal is a productive land for such prospective writers that they can stay engaged in both teaching and writing simultaneously as both of the professions are intertwined. The best teachers can be commendable writers and they can enjoy the journey of writing much. Educational institutions in Nepal seek for reliable, data-based and logical textbooks designed in accordance with the cognitive needs of students. Some of the academic institutions have been using textbooks written and published in India over the years.

Therefore, there is a dire need of commendable books in Nepalese market. In fact, this is good news for the teachers who deserve to become writers.

Teachers' Trainer

The competence to teach teachers about teaching techniques and latest approaches to engaging students can come from the teaching profession. Experience is the best teacher. However, this generalized concept does not work if teachers do not consistently learn new things about the subject they teach in the classroom. The roles of both teachers and trainers are almost the same. However, the teachers have to focus on teaching courses prescribed by a particular legal education system. The evaluation is imperative and teachers have to engage in the examinations to produce the results of the students, whereas trainers do not have to conduct any formal examinations to qualify trainees. The feedback from the trainees and the certification based on the participation and accomplishment of the course is the part of the training session. The teachers who have worked for more than five years can work as trainers for the fresh teachers who enter into the teaching profession after graduation in Nepal. Nevertheless, to work as trainers, teachers must update them with the latest approaches to teaching. Besides, they need to work on personal development skills including communicative skills, digital skills, and leadership skills. These skills are essentials for trainers.

Conclusion

This research paper has explored multiple possibilities of career growth in education. Teaching as a job can enrich mentors to enhance their career in different ways ranging from teacher to writer. Of course, teaching as such has been considered one of the most productive and contributive careers in the world over the centuries. Provided that educationists remain committed and consistent in learning and upgrading, they can benefit from diverse contingencies of growth in education. Although teaching has been discarded by the youths in Nepal, it garners multiple choices and endows the people engaged in education in one or other to grow exponentially for better opportunities and eventually they can reach the peak of success. The major finding of the study is education embodies numerous good opportunities for the educated as they can enhance their financial aspect as well provided that they enrich and empower themselves during their association with the academic institutions.

The most attainable positions that teachers or educationists can obtain are principal, author, trainer, entrepreneur of educational tools and utensils, curriculum creators, school manager, school and college owners, course developer, subject expert etc. They can advance their career in myriad ways. However, the professionals need to have tremendous passion, commitment, and consistency and growth mindset. Besides, they should be conceptually prepared to undertake the risk of shifting to new domain and commercializing their time and resources for both personal and professional growth. Meanwhile, they need to excel in soft skills including communication, collaboration and digital literacy as these skills help to create value in academic journey.

References

- Danneffjord, Per & Persson, Magnus (2022). Teacher Careers and Professional Dispositions in a Diversified School Market. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 59(1), 203—208, <https://doi.org.37062/sf.59.23617>
- Keane, Elaine et al. (2023). *Diversifying the Teaching Profession: Dimensions, Dilemmas and Directions for the Future*. New York: Routledge, <https://taylorandfrancis.com>.
- Moss, Phelton C. (2022, Spring). State-Level Education Leaders' Role in Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline. *Educational Planning*, 29(2), 27—41.
- Neary, Siobhan (2019). Diversifying the Careers Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges. *International Centre for Guidance Studies*, 65—81, <https://doi.org/10.18290/pepsi-2019-0009>.
- Schmidt, Henk G. et al. (1993). Influence of Tutors' Subject-matter Expertise on Student and Achievement in Problem-based Learning. *Academic Medicine*, 68(10), 784—791.
- Steiner, Elizabeth D. et al (2022). *Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools: Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys*. RAND Corporation, www.rand.org.
- Whitchurch, Celia (2018). From a Diversifying Workforce to the Rise of the Itinerant Academic. *High Edu*, 77, 679—694, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0294-6>
- Yip, Sun Yee & Ji, Jeffrey Shengjun (2024). Diversifying the Teaching Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). *Globalization, Societies and Education*, 1—13, <https://doi.org.10.1080/14767724.2024.2409230>