



## Managerial Strategy of Principals for the Overall Development of Institutional Schools

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**Abstract:** Institutional schools in Nepal are privately registered and managed at the company registrar's office of government as a private entity. They run under the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education. The principals of such institutional schools are solely responsible for the operation, management, and overall development, crafting strategies to meet the goals of government, investors, and stakeholders. In this context, this study aimed to identify managerial strategies adopted by the principals of institutional schools for overall development. Moreover, this study explores the practices of principals' communication, support, supervision, authority delegation, teaching-learning environment, and commercialization practices in institutional schools. School principals were purposively selected, and in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and shadowing observations were conducted to explore their managerial procedures and strategies. The results showed that principals focused on physical infrastructure development and quality education. Intensive care and counselling for the students are equally emphasized. Teachers are more responsible for their duties and worry about improving students' learning achievement. Private investments such as institutional schools are business motive organizations; besides student enrollment and monthly fees, other exam fees, coaching, uniforms, stationery, and hostels are also the source of the school's income. This study contributes to guiding community and private school novice principals for successful school management.

**Keywords:** Institutional school, student attraction, learning achievement, teacher performance evaluation, authority delegation, school management, etc.

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### 1. Introduction

The community and institutional schools provide education in Nepal. Government funds are allocated to community schools, whereas institutional schools are run privately by investors who register in the company registrar's office. The primary source of income for private schools is student fees (Aryal & Adhikari, 2020). So, private schools are responsible for students' attraction to enroll in their schools and are serious about improving students' teaching-learning activities. They focused on curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities for the overall development of the students (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021). In urban areas, institutional schools dominate community schools (Sherpa et al., 2020) for providing quality education and attracting student enrollment. However, parents blame private schools for taking hefty fees in the name of various sections. In contrast, community school provides free education for all students (Kambutu et al., 2020).

Moreover, community schools provide scholarships for girls, Dalits, socially backward, and minority-cast students. Graduates from Institutional schools have less chance to be eligible for a government scholarship for higher education. In Kirtipur municipality of Kathmandu district (capital city of Nepal), there are 12 community schools with 7347 students and 18 institutional schools with 40883 students (EMIS 2021). In

this municipality, only a few community schools have pressure for students' admission, attracting mostly poor people struggling with day-to-day life, and many such schools do not have an adequate number of students.

The principal in a school is in charge of policy-making, design objectives, and strategies for the overall development of the school. The head of a school must be able to employ the appropriate decision-making technique and leadership style for teachers to function at their best (Astuti et al., 2020). The principal plays a crucial role in establishing an educational institution. They seek faculty support in directing professional resources toward specific school goals and student learning requirements. Their work is essential and relies on their participation in efforts to enhance the School. Moreover, Laghari and Jafri (2022) state that management at the school level is the process of improving the school environment where all resources, including financial, material, and human resources, are appropriately employed to meet the intended institutional goals. At the school level, the principal is regarded as the executive authority in charge of ensuring the smooth and effective operation of the institution.

On the other hand, private schools have high competition for student enrollment. So, principals should always be aware of the quality of education for students. Students' quality education is associated with the school's sustainability. The principal must be more responsible for the school's overall development. In this context, what managerial practices did the principals apply to the overall development of schools? Concerning student attraction, enrollment, planning for students' teaching-learning, providing roles and responsibilities among teaching and non-teaching staff, planning financial strength, and supporting and communicating practices of the principal are the major concerns for the study. Therefore, the central research question of this study is: What managerial strategies of principals are applied to the overall development of private schools?

## **2. Theoretical Overview of the Main Concepts**

Leadership, teamwork, strategic planning, comprehensive programming, knowledge of the competition, critical timing, accurate, secure, and readily available data, as well as appropriate support systems, clear and workable strategies, and the necessary resources, are required for successful enrollment management of institutional schools (Emery, 2020). The theory of student enrollment management emphasizes strategic planning, student support services, recruitment strategies, retention initiatives, collaboration, communication, and ongoing improvement efforts (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). The theory of student enrollment management emphasizes strategic planning, student support services, recruitment strategies, retention initiatives, collaboration, communication, and ongoing improvement efforts. The genuine advantage comes from strategic and integrated decision-making, the systematic integration of duties, open and honest communication, and interaction among coworkers. Social interactions in the formal and informal academic and institutional social systems play a significant role (Carr et al., 2018) in developing the school's characteristics, school personnel's skills, abilities, commitments, value orientations, and student enrollment. Similarly, the features and orientations of the academic and social systems of the institution influence their educational career (Goff et al., 2022). Moreover, enrollment management controls student marketing and recruiting, pricing, and financial assistance, determining a student population's number, shape, and characteristics (Al Hallak et al., 2019).

From the perspective of students' enrollment management, the study focused on how principals set strategies for institutional sustainability. Enrollment management should be thorough and participatory, with a strong link to academic programs. The principal's strategy for cooperation, positive behaviour, enthusiasm, and ownership is required for the development of the school (Prenger et al., 2021). Inspiration and motivating strategies for the teachers, students, and parents are equally crucial to enrolling the students in the school (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014). Moreover, Basalamah and Asad (2021) stated that it is essential for a team to be both motivated and emotionally invested at work. Employees feel a sense of pride and belonging when they work in an environment where they are appreciated, valued, and challenged. Each employee has different skills, backgrounds, and personality traits that may or may not respond to motivational techniques. Understanding the underlying psychology of motivation is the key to creating an

environment that encourages loyalty, creativity, and appreciation. Thus, the enrollment management process offers an outstanding, integrated decision-making framework that focuses and directs actions toward the school's objective. Institutions' policy, social and academic environment of the school, and culture play a significant role in student attraction for enrollment.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach in which an interpretative phenomenology design is applied. In a natural setting, lived experiences and shared meanings of similar experiences were explored. In a social setting, phenomenological research generates knowledge from people's experiences (Petitmengin et al., 2019). This study explored the perceptions and feelings of the principal's managerial strategy in their school through in-depth interviews, observations, and informal discussions with the participants. This study followed an in-depth interview with eight principals from institutional schools conducting secondary school (grades 1 to 12) in the Kirtipur municipality of Kathmandu. Only those schools with high scores on the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) with a minimum grade of B (60 to below 70 Percent, considered as 'Good' according to the interval and grades table of SEE) or above were selected as sample schools. In the Nepali school context, many students secure less than grade B; thus, purposively, criteria are made to limit the school. A sample size of eight participants is considered sufficient for qualitative research and appropriate for qualitative data collection to generate themes (Budhathoki et al., 2022; Strijker et al., 2020). The participants had more than five years of experience as principals. They were selected purposively to explore their managerial strategy in their schools. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8 were assigned as pseudonyms to participants. Due to ethical issues, their real names, schools, and images were not disclosed to safeguard their identities.

To collect information about the 'Managerial practices of principals applied for the overall development of the school' perspectives, interview guidelines via semi-structural questions were developed and received approval by expert judgment. The researcher contacted the participant for interviews as per the informed consent. The researcher had informal talks about the school and conducted the interviews using interview guidelines in separate zones allocated by the participants. The interview responses were recorded by the audio recorder and transcribed into English after listening two to three times to validate the received information. In addition to the interview, the researcher noted important information in their diary and observed the school's physical infrastructure during the interview process.

The interview response collected from the in-depth interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The transcribed data were categorized to extract the basic theme and were further organized to get an organized theme. A similar theme was reorganized to get the central theme. The main theme was deduced by linking it with the construct of the adopted theory to conclude. The researcher carried out an open coding process in the thematic analysis. The prominent patterns in the data were identified independently and accumulated to ensure analytical triangulation. The data were analyzed manually, using case-by-case analysis linked with theory and relevant literature to support the theme. The study followed a step-by-step procedure, including familiarization with data, generating initial code, searching for a theme, reviewing a theme, defining and naming a theme, and producing the scholarly report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The themes were illustrated using field data and compared and contrasted with data with literature and theory.

The quality standard is essential, and the researchers need to maintain credibility, transferability, reliability, authenticity, and conformability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), which laid prime concern in this research. We designed that each participant and interviewer must develop a rapport for the study's credibility and a genuine data-gathering process. The researchers have visited the schools several times to meet and get to know the participants and create a comfortable interview setting. Participants were informed about the research purpose and allowed to participate as they wished by obtaining informed consent from study participants, keeping their information private, and not using it for any purpose other than that for which it was collected (Jameel & Majid, 2018). Participants also safeguarded their privacy in the published study by using fictitious names and concealing identifying photos. The researchers assured

the volunteers there would be no ramifications for dropping out of the study.

Maintaining the reliability of the data, we had participants describe experiences with adult verbal behaviour and how it may have influenced their capacity to understand teachers' discriminatory behaviour in the classroom. The criteria for transferability were used to construct themes that may account for comparable experiences among people not included in the research. Having the participants' voices and words reflected accurately was contingent on meeting the dependability requirements. The themes are based solely on the responses of the interviewed people. To present the study's findings, a third researcher listened to the audio interviews, read the transcripts, and analyzed the themes to verify the participants' voices in the interpretations.

Ethical approval for conducting the study was obtained from experts' judgment and pilot study. At the beginning of data collection, the participants for the data collection were informed about the details of the research and shared the protocol of the interview. The participants for this study were volunteers, and they could withdraw at any time of their choice without any consequences. All the participants in this study provided signed informed consent before participating. The anonymity and confidentiality of the study participants were ensured. Only the research team was able to access the data.

#### 4. Discussion

This section contains the findings of the thorough analysis of the transcribed data from the participant's interview, backed up by the literature review. The themes and subthemes were identified from the data and appropriately produced a conclusion. The results and discussion have outlined seven different themes as planning for (i) physical infrastructure development, (ii) students' better learning achievement, (iii) authority's delegation, (iv) school benefits and commercialization, (v) supervision and evaluation of teachers, (vi) effective communication and support, and (vii) students' attractions.

##### (i) Planning for Physical Infrastructure Development

Healthy and safe buildings, playgrounds, well-furnished classes, and water taps are the basic needs of the school (Sprague & Walker, 2021). Physical infrastructure is valuable for students' educational, physical, and psychological development. Concerning physical infrastructure development, participant principal (P1) stated:

*The school management committee plans are coordinated with the principal. They developed physical infrastructures such as buildings, well-furnished rooms, vehicles, gardening, playgrounds, and extra-curricular activities. They are always ready to invest in physical development. They thought they were the only means of attracting the students.*

The statement indicates that physical infrastructure development is the concern of the school owner and school management committee. School owners stereotypically perceive that only a good building, playground, and other infrastructure are the backbone of quality education. Private schools attract students and parents by showing their excellent facilities, which seems to be a strategy adopted by school management. Parents and students have perceived that the standard buildings symbolize quality education. Parents are seeking a well-furnished classroom (Sprague & Walker, 2021). So, a well-furnished classroom is also a means of attracting students. Likewise, vehicles, playgrounds, and school areas are major factors that attract students. Similarly, extra-curricular activities are vital for student attraction, which is possible when good infrastructure is available on school premises. For the same issue, another participant (P2) asserted:

*The 7.8 magnitude earthquake on April 25, 2015, with its epicentre in the Gorkha district of Nepal, collapsed our school building, and the school could not manage the building after the earthquake. So, more than half of the students left the school. Moreover, private schools are paying hefty fees for playgrounds and extra-curricular activities. Now, dance, art, sports, and music are the leading choices for students.*

The view states that students are interested in extra activities rather than bookish knowledge. So, private

schools hire dance, sports, art, and music teachers. Large areas of schools are necessary to practice all these activities. So, the school needs to plan for a good playground with enough space. Moreover, a good canteen for breakfast and lunch is equally valuable in the school's surroundings (Stokes et al., 2019). In the same issue, another participant (P3) stated:

*We have enough office space and a playground. After the earthquake, most of the school's buildings collapsed, but our single-storied classroom remains safe. So, about fifty percent more students were enrolled after the earthquake. Now, the school has heavy enrollment pressure. Each grade has two sections, and some of the grades have three sections.*

This statement shows that physical infrastructure is necessary for the schools for students' choices. If no good buildings and playgrounds exist, the school cannot continue with their students for long periods. They will search for well-equipped schools. Supporting this statement, another participant (P4) said, "Investment in land and buildings is very costly in urban areas. On the other hand, large areas for school spaces are also unavailable in urban areas". New schools with their land and schools with rent have the challenge of sustaining and competing with each other for quality education. These statements also emphasized the values of land and buildings. After the earthquake, the parents and students shifted their mindset and chose open spaces.

Similarly, old physical infrastructures are redesigned and maintained to promote the staff's motivation and competency (Na-Nan & Sanamthong, 2020). The redesigned and advanced structures help advertise the schools. From the perspective of student enrollment management, private schools seem more serious about providing well-furnished classrooms and well-equipped buildings with playgrounds.

In the context of physical infrastructure in selected schools, the researcher found that only three schools have their land and buildings. However, only one school has reasonable grounds where students can play football and cricket, and the other two have only limited spaces for games where they play only basketball and badminton in the playground. The five sample schools were operated in rented buildings. They pay heavy rent for the building and take their students on private grounds, paying fees on special occasions for the game. The pressure of heavy building and playground rent influences the determination to increase students' tuition fees. The increased tuition fees at schools may aggravate educational disparities by limiting low-income students' access to quality education, raising dropout rates, and putting a strain on families.

In summary, the building of a private school has seismic susceptibility, limited site availability, and the need to manage contemporary facilities. They must maintain a safe, environmentally friendly environment while conforming to local legislation and seismic safety standards. Developing the physical infrastructure of schools is mandatory for attracting students; however, planning for infrastructure has created heavy pressure on all private school owners to manage good physical infrastructure (Takmazyan et al., 2019). Similarly, poor physical facilities, lack of resources, and ineffective management affect the school's performance (Ackah-Jnr & Danso, 2019). However, all the schools cannot manage their buildings and playgrounds at the establishment. Most private schools are conducted on rent, and gradually, the school owners develop infrastructure each year. Some school plans for land and building purchases are similar to Joshi's views. To manage the land, buildings, and playgrounds, owners are taking loans from the bank and need to manage bank loan installments that directly affect students' tuition fees and become costly education for parents for their children. If the school cannot manage good buildings and playgrounds, the students change schools (Takmazyan et al., 2019). So, private school owners are constantly struggling with infrastructural development. Parents and students are choosing safe and secure buildings for learning, open spaces for fresh environments, and playgrounds for games. These choices of students and parents create problems for the school owner, who struggles to exist (Khadka, 2021). In the current context, schools with no own land and buildings are always under pressure to manage physical infrastructure and cannot manage spaces for school buildings and playgrounds in a centralized location.

(ii) Planning for Student's Better Learning Achievements

Better learning achievement of students plays a positive role in parents' and students' perceptions of the schools (Bano et al., 2018). Thus, every principal focuses on providing quality education to their students. Generally, in the Nepali context, schools' performances are evaluated based on their student's performance in the board examination, particularly from the results of such an exam. The school's good results are a banner for the school's advertisement (He & Giuliano, 2018). Concerning students' learning achievements, the principal is asked what strategies they applied to develop student's learning achievement. In this question, a participant (P4) stated:

*Class teachers are responsible for overlooking all the students in their class, such as preparing students' results, keeping students' portfolios, and providing regular feedback to the parents and students to improve student's learning achievement. All subject teachers are made responsible for their student's academic achievement. They must answer if students cannot succeed or if their achievement level is poor.*

This quote illustrates that teachers are responsible for their duties and must answer for their student's performance. Teachers' performance is evaluated based on their accountability and sincerity in their duties. Teachers who are not responsible and passionate will be fired (Heffernan, 2018). They are always trying to motivate and counsel good habits and learning. Similarly, another participant in the same issue (P5) stated:

*Weak students are provided extra classes and cared for intensively. We conduct commando classes for all students for the final board exam. In this class, all students are on day borders. They were in school campaigns under the supervision of teachers. They were made to prepare for the exam and needed to follow the school schedule for reading. They took their lunch and dinner at the school hostel.*

The principal must collaborate and coordinate with parents, staff, and students. If there are weak students, they are forced to be residential at school premises and must attend rapid preparation classes for at least six months to prepare for the final exam. Parents and all students believe that student achievement is the most crucial indicator of a good school (Ma et al., 2022). Thus, school administration, teachers, and staff are equally devoted to students' good results. In this case, schools counsel students and parents to get a good score on the board exam. Similarly, in this issue, another participant (P6) asserted:

*Private schools are commercial institutions, so their main motto is to earn profit from them. The yield depends on students' numbers. Many students, when joining schools, make more profit, and they may lose if there is a low number of students. So, parents and students evaluate students' overall performance in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Parents and students consider extra-curricular activities such as singing, dancing, playing games, speech competitions, quizzes, and other activities while selecting schools. As a result, the principal continually thinks about the student's overall development.*

It shows that principals plan and design strategies to improve students' performance. The teachers of private schools were always worried about the student's teaching-learning and extra-curricular activities for their overall development (Sherpa et al., 2020). However, schools do not take teacher motivation seriously. They pay the salary they agreed upon at the beginning of the session. Concerning teacher's salaries, the participant (P4) stated:

*Teachers at the same level are paid differently. Only a few teachers paid well, while most paid insufficiently to support their families. However, teachers are responsible for preparing lesson plans and teaching materials for regular classes. They submit everyday materials to the coordinator or principal for inspection.*

Teaching students with lesson plans and materials makes teachers confident, helps them focus on content, provides guidelines, makes the classroom interesting, and motivates the students. Daily checking lesson plans and materials helps to find the teacher's sincerity and dedication to a better classroom and pedagogical outcomes (Hakim & Dalli, 2018). On the other hand, it makes teachers sincere in their

profession. Likewise, we questioned participant (P4) concerning the evaluation practices for students' learning achievement. He stated:

*In our school, all subject teachers conduct unit tests after completing the unit and provide feedback to students, basically monthly tests as a formative evaluation. The school conducts the terminal exam and half-yearly and yearly exams as summative evaluations. Terminal test results are provided to the parents for observation and return to school. Schools provide answer sheets to students and make them return after a week. All students and their parents are provided feedback to improve their learning achievements.*

This expression shows that all the teachers are constantly engaged in student teaching-learning. Regular tests and feedback for the students make them familiar with each other (Watling & Ginsburg, 2019). Teachers can explain the students' details regarding their learning status and suggest an improvement. Moreover, we asked about the practices for students' awards in school. One principal responded that first, students get full scholarships for their monthly tuition. The second students get a 75 percent discount on fees, and 3rd students get a 50 percent discount on fee payment. During this same question, another participant, P3, said the same scholarship practices are introduced in his school. Likewise, he said if a parent has three children, one will get free monthly tuition as a strategy to attract and retain students. This statement shows that private schools plan to attract students by applying different school strategies. Another participant added that last year, I hired two teachers to teach concerning student attraction in a private school in a neighboring area. He brought about 50 students with him. Popular, qualified, and experienced teachers are always the target of neighboring schools. Those teachers who bring students from their influence are provided better salaries, residential facilities, incentives, and bonuses to motivate them.

Regarding student attraction, a participant (P7) asserted that school results and students' overall performance in curricular and extra-curricular activities are good. We are suitable in playgrounds, buildings, furnishing, and teaching and non-teaching staff. This assertion states that students and parents seek quality education with the all-around development of the students. So, providing quality education in a friendly environment for the students (Fitriani & Qodariah, 2021), good counseling for their overall development, and good caring and sharing practices are in the student's interest. From the perspective of student enrollment management, private schools seem more serious about creating a social and academic environment in the schools for a good score on the board exam.

In private schools, the teachers have practiced and contributed tirelessly to the student's learning achievement through continuous feedback and suggestions, caring, support in extracurricular activities, and conducting various tests for better learning achievement (Waruwu et al., 2020). On the other hand, most private school teachers were struggling with their basic needs and seeking better opportunities. Similarly, private schools have a poor sharing culture among staff and school administration and less practice of appreciation and respect for teachers' needs, desires, or interests (Sherpa, 2021). Thus, private schools must address the teacher's needs and interests for their justice in teaching.

Similarly, the study found that private schools have challenges retaining qualified and experienced teachers. The private school has issues with increasing students' learning outcomes by offering individualized teaching, cutting-edge pedagogical approaches, technological integration, maintaining a pleasant school atmosphere, ongoing professional development for personnel, and enough resources. Regular evaluations and feedback systems assist in minimizing individual learning gaps, fostering an atmosphere conducive to academic and personal development. Moreover, private schools may minimize teacher dropout rates by prioritizing competitive salaries, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, fostering a friendly work environment, promoting work-life balance, and giving possibilities for growth. Transparent regulations and feedback methods can help create a fair environment, eventually lowering dropout rates and guaranteeing staff continuity.

### (iii) Planning for Authority Delegation

Human resource planning (HRP) is the ongoing process of systematic planning to deploy an organization's

most important asset- quality workers. Human resource planning ensures personnel and occupations are a good fit while preventing workforce shortages or surpluses (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2019). A good organization provides each employee with as many opportunities for personal development as possible, maintains personnel dignity at work, creates a good atmosphere, and provides incentives for developing creativity, maintaining good interpersonal and workgroup interactions for employee well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Likewise, a delegation of authority refers to the division of work and decision-making duty to a person who reports to a leader or management. It is the organizational method through which management divides their labour among all their employees. In this aspect, the participant (P8) stated :

*Teachers are assigned as a principal, vice-principal, subject-wise department, level-wise coordinator, examination coordinator, extra-curricular coordinator, discipline coordinator, class teacher, and subject teacher. They all are accountable and need to answer for their assigned duties. They were strictly monitored and supervised by the administrative body of the school.*

The above statements state that the private school has created various working units where a specific individual is assigned a role for the unit's effectiveness, and all authorized individuals are made accountable. The team culture and accountability increased the effectiveness of their job performance (Picciotto, 2018). Suppose all the working unit, such as subject-wise departments and coordinators, perform their duties effectively. In that case, students' learning achievement and the school's learning culture can be changed as society expects (Wang et al., 2018). The quality of education is influenced by the performance and accountability of existing individuals in the working unit. In the context of private schools in Nepal, all authorized body of the functional unit in the School performs their roles using their maximum capacity for better performance in their assigned roles (Hakim & Dalli, 2018). Mostly, the vice principal is accountable to the principal. He is supporting hands for the principal (Ho et al., 2023). The principal can assign them to any role in the development of the School. Other coordinators are responsible for their assigned tasks. For example, the subject coordinator is responsible for strengthening their subject, and the examination coordinator is accountable for managing the exam well (Harper et al., 2021). Level-wise coordinators are responsible for enhancing their level of quality education. Such delegation of authority enhances schools' overall development (Ali et al., 2021) and is practiced well in private schools.

In private schools, staff's capacities, energy, and time are utilized to the maximum possible. The teachers and staff are accountable for their responsibility. The school management committee /owner observes the principal and evaluates their performance. The principal designs the planning and submits it to the school management committee. Teachers need to answer their subject to parents and administration. Moreover, private schools face challenges regarding effective power delegation, such as strategic planning, defined roles and duties, communication channels, accountability, collaboration, training, and openness. Regular training and accountability ensure individual abilities and competencies that establish a collaborative culture. From the perspective of transformative leadership theory, the principal has effectively delegated authority to the administrative and other authorities, motivating and inspiring them. The inspired and motivated authorities perform the assigned duties well for the overall development of the school.

#### (iv) Planning for School Benefits and Commercialization

Privatization of school education is related to neoliberal commercialization, which is the process of bringing new products or services to market (Bayram, 2018). The enormous act of commercialization includes manufacturing, distribution, marketing, sales, customer support, and other vital operations critical to the commercial success of the new product or service. Concerning commercialization, participant (P1) states:

*At schools, owners are doing business with the students. They took heavy fees from the parents and provided low salaries for teachers and staff. The school took fees for different titles such as admission, sports, first aid, examination, extra-curricular activities, transportation, uniforms, etc. The school expensed a nominal amount for these titles and took heavy fees from the students.*



This statement states that every fee title is a business title. Participant P3 said that the enrollment fee title is the school's net income. Other titles such as examination, extra-curricular, transportation, and uniform school take more than a hundred per cent profit. Similarly, another participant (P2) agreed with a participant (P3) and stated:

*Schools are doing business by conducting hostels. The hostel is like a guest house where students pay hefty fees, and the school owner earns a profit. Similarly, schools gain profit from charging stationery bills to students. Further, schools also benefit by recommending students for higher education in colleges and universities. Directly or indirectly, they took incentives like cash or goods.*

Private schools are business motive companies that provide services and earn benefits by charging fees on different titles. They intend to get financial benefits from all business items such as stationery, clothes, hostels, etcetera. On the other hand, schools pay poor salaries to teachers who can hardly manage their problems except for countable teachers (Hasanah & Supardi, 2020). Thus, teachers are not getting justice and are not satisfied in their profession due to the business motive of school owners. Similarly, private schools have a vast difference in salaries among staff. Salaries are based on personal influences rather than qualifications, experiences, and workload. On the other hand, some teachers are school owners (Sanchez-Sanchez & Fernandez Puente, 2021). They take a good salary and allowances, show an equal balance sheet, and become safe from government tax. However, school owners are always ready to expense the school's physical and infrastructural development, which are the main inputs in the education process. The commercialization of education in Nepal raises concerns, including the possible exclusion of economically disadvantaged students owing to increased expenses, degrading educational quality, and an overemphasis on marketability. This might impede equitable educational opportunities and widen the socioeconomic divide. Strict regulation and monitoring must balance financial sustainability and marketability to promote inclusive, high-quality education.

#### (v) Planning for Supervision and Evaluation of the Teachers

Supervision is the direct and immediate guidance and control of subordinates' work performance. Similarly, performance evaluation is a structured and fruitful technique for assessing employees' work and outcomes concerning their job obligations (Sabir et al., 2022). Concerning supervision and teacher performance evaluation, a participant (P4) asserted:

*The school management committee and school owner observed and supervised the principal. The principal observed the vice-principal, and the principal and vice-principal both observed the school's overall performance. They formally and informally observed the school activities. Students learning achievement, teachers' dedication to teaching, regularity, honesty, and self-discipline are observed. Teachers' and staff's weaknesses are observed rather than strengths aspects. They are discouraged and demotivated by their weakness and will be fired if they cannot improve their limitations.*

It shows that monitoring and supervision are conducted strictly in private schools. All the authorities, including the principal and teachers, are under strict monitoring and supervision for their identified responsibility (Joshi, 2019). Teachers' weaknesses and implementation of codes of conduct such as dedication, regularity, and honesty, effective implementation of daily routine, focused on students' learning achievement, and making teachers busy with students learning and caring develop the trust of parents for quality education (Oswald et al., 2018). All the teachers are aware of and sincere about their duties and students' learning achievements due to the strict rules and regulations of the school. The teachers have no excuses for their minor weaknesses and would be fired. The monitoring and supervision practices from the teachers' side, the private schools are not doing teacher-friendly behaviour. Thus, private schools are selected by many parents and students. In this same issue, another participant (P3) asserted:

*The principal and vice principal supervised the daily lesson plan and teaching materials and checked the teachers' overall activities in and outside the classroom. Parents' and students'*

*feedback is the basis for evaluating the teacher's teaching performance. Suppose the students and parents are unsatisfied with the teachers' performance in the classroom. S/he is under pressure from the administration to improve teaching performance.*

This statement states that teachers' performance is evaluated based on parents' and students' satisfaction with their teaching performance and students' learning achievement in their subject. It is compared with the results of the district board exam and the national board exam (Rana & Rana, 2019). If the students failed the National Board exam, the teacher would be asked the reason for failing the exam. Punctuality and regularity in duties are essential aspects for teachers. Similarly, self-discipline, being student-friendly and caring for the students by providing feedback, and convincing parents of their student's learning achievement are equally crucial for teachers to be engaged in overall development.

In this sense, the teachers were dedicated and responsible for the students learning achievement through strict monitoring and supervision (Joshi, 2019). Teaching students with lesson plans and teaching materials enhanced the quality of teaching. Further, feedback from the principal and vice principal to the teaching staff enriches their teaching efficiency, which impacts the student's learning achievement (Ezzani, 2019). The student's learning achievement is the banner for the advertisement to new students. The necessity for an impartial and equitable evaluation and supervision procedure is a key challenge that considers the variety of teaching styles and topic subjects. Effective planning should address these challenges by creating a supportive and growth-oriented assessment process that, in turn, leads to general development in teaching quality in private schools.

#### (vi) Planning for Effective Communication and Support

Communication is interacting with others and one's surroundings (Arnaout & Esposito, 2018). Two people interact and affect one another's ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. They can communicate via words, gestures, signs and symbols, expressions, and other means. Similarly, proper support keeps group members and volunteers engaged and committed throughout time and through obstacles. Volunteer and employee assistance enables workers to complete tasks more quickly, effectively, and pleasantly (Gray & Stevenson, 2020). In this issue, participant P2 states that there is one-way communication between the principal and staff in the school. Teachers report what conditions are in their subject and their students' learning achievement. Principals make decisions based on the staff's decisions for day-to-day activities. Similarly, a participant (P5) said :

*Most of the time, teachers engage in teaching-learning activities with the students. They do not have time to communicate and interact with their staff in any content and context related to subject matters. They have full working periods for the whole day. If they get a leisure period, they must check students' homework or support other staff.*

This statement states that teachers have heavy duties in the classroom. So, they do not have sharing and communication practices. The whole class load makes teachers tired and demotivated toward teaching. They do not like to continue their jobs and continually seek better opportunities. In this issue, the participant (P4) agreed and stated that teachers must care for children even during tiffin time. The teachers engaged with students by caring, sharing, guiding, and supporting them. Moreover, concerning the sharing and supporting practices among staff, a participant (P8) said:

*During the last of the months, the school arranges staff meetings. The meeting focuses on students' teaching-learning achievement rather than the teacher's professional development and well-being. Most of the teachers do not like to share their problems. If they share, others will undervalue and demotivate them. So, sharing and supporting practices are very poor. Sometimes, private school associations manage teachers' training with minimum fees. However, teachers do not get the opportunity to participate due to the class load. Schools have no practices for excursions and field trips. They do not get any allowances or incentives.*

The above assertion states that all the staff and teachers of the schools are engaged in teaching-learning, improving students learning achievement, and developing quality education for the development of the

school. Similarly, the assertion states that teachers' professional development, refreshment, and motivation practices seem poor. In this context, the school seems to have poor staff motivation. However, the school is serious about increasing students learning achievement and is always worried about students.

The teacher has sacrificed all the wishes and happiness for quality education and improvement of the learning achievement of the learners. Teachers have tried on their investments to update and upgrade to sustain and continue their jobs (Alam, 2022). They do not care and share with their staff and friends due to full teaching periods/classes for the students. Teachers do not care about harassment and domination of the administration. They were ready to apply the decision provided by the authorities (Khadka, 2021). In this sense, teachers are unsatisfied with their profession due to administrative pressure on students' achievement of good learning (Ghosh & Bray, 2020). However, only a few teachers received the expected salary, and professional development-related activities were poorly conducted. If the teacher's professional development and motivational aspect were priorities of school owners, the teachers would feel proud and delighted in their profession.

Creating a transparent and open channel for information exchange is critical for efficient communication. All teachers in private schools are overloaded, with no time to communicate with colleagues, administrators, and parents. On the other hand, administrators and owners did not give importance to teachers. If a teacher reports adversely to the administration, they will be fired. A clear communication plan is necessary for sharing information among administrators, teachers, students, and parents, as it is an essential requirement, as stated by Broadfoot et al. (2008). Regular newsletters, emails, and internet platforms can be utilized to communicate essential notices, events, and academic accomplishments. Scheduling regular parent-teacher conferences and open houses fosters community engagement, encourages in-person involvement, effectively addresses issues, and contributes to the educational community's overall success and well-being.

#### (vii) Planning for Students' Attractions

Planning is a systematic procedure that helps companies carry out their current and future actions to attain their goals (George et al., 2019). Planning can be updated and reconstructed based on the needs and information provided. Among investors, private schools reform the management committee. They are responsible for the management of the school. The school's overall development is under their guidance. They set the school's physical, academic, and administrative plans. One of the principals (P1) said:

*To develop the student attraction centre, we clearly instruct all teachers and staff to communicate positively on the school's behalf and assure parents and students that they will visit the school. Those teachers and staff through which more students are admitted during the admission period are appreciated and given full consideration when required.*

This idea of the principal indicates that school management and administration adopt a strategy to attract students through teachers and staff by providing incentives, positive support, and appreciation. The teachers were priorities of administration and school authorities based on their contribution to student enrollment (Joshi, 2019). The school's primary concern is student enrollment, which all teachers and staff were focused on. Regarding student attraction, the participant principal (P6) stated that students' enrollment depends on parents' and community feedback and their influences. Parents and students are members of the community where the school lies. According to P6, private schools are equally responsible and wish to influence parents and society to attract students. The school tries to consult with and take advice from parents and community members. The private schools require community support. Consultation and advice with parents and community members make the school feel honoured and favoured (Ghosh & Bray, 2020). They assist the school in its administrative and academic activities to ensure its success. Thus, the school wants to be involved in their sociocultural and community welfare activities in the community. Private schools frequently prioritize quality education, well-equipped facilities, and diverse extra-curricular activities to attract students. People's poor financial status limits their capacity to access private schools. Growing unfair competition among private schools for student enrollment has created an unhealthy environment among private schools. However, implementing creative teaching

techniques, introducing technology into the curriculum, and providing various academic and non-academic programs can boost the school's attractiveness.

## **5. Synopsis of the Main Research Outcomes**

This study highlights the crucial role of institutional school principals in ensuring the overall development and sustainability of private schools in Nepal. The findings indicate that private schools, particularly those operating on rented land and buildings, face significant financial pressures and intense competition for student enrollment. Principals prioritize quality education to attract students, emphasizing academic performance and exam results. In addition to academic excellence, schools employ various marketing strategies, such as infrastructural improvements and extracurricular activities, to enhance their reputation. The study reveals that private schools adopt individualized student care approaches, including extra coaching classes and counselling, to improve student performance. Teachers and staff are held accountable for their responsibilities, with job security largely dependent on their effectiveness in contributing to student attraction and academic success. However, the heavy workload and performance pressures limit teacher collaboration and sharing.

Furthermore, the research underscores the necessity of community engagement and branding efforts for school sustainability. While exam results remain a key metric of school success, the study argues for a broader definition of quality education, including student behaviour, social skills, and transformational learning. The study also identifies major challenges in private school operations, including infrastructure constraints, teacher retention, commercialization concerns, and communication barriers. To address these challenges, the study suggests a comprehensive approach involving strategic planning, fair compensation for teachers, efficient communication systems, and policy reforms that promote equity and quality in education. The research concludes that fostering a supportive and transparent educational environment is essential for the long-term growth of private education in Nepal.

## **6. Conclusions**

The institutional school's principal plays a vital role in the overall development of the school. The sustainability of private schools, which run on rented land and buildings, constantly faces financial pressure and struggles for competitive benefit. The main factor that attracts students is quality education. So, the principals are always serious about providing quality education to the students. The quality of the exam results is a means for the student's attraction. Besides quality education, they are trying various marketing strategies for student attraction, such as good results in board exams and other infrastructural improvements. Schools' performance is evaluated based on students' activities such as playing, singing, and dancing. For the students' good scores, private schools focus on caring for and counselling the students individually.

Moreover, they run extra classes or coaching classes for weak students and intensive care for their examination preparation. All teaching and non-teaching staff are made responsible for their duties. Most teachers in private schools have specific responsibilities and are always accountable for their roles. Teachers and staff's job security depends on their school performance, dedication, and building student attraction. The private school teachers have full workloads, so they do not have sharing and interaction practices among staff and others. Regular feedback and suggestions to the students and parents are crucial roles of the principal, and they realized community engagement is needed to build school branding and the students' centre of attraction. Except for some of the reputed schools, most of the private schools may find unfair competition for the enrollment of students. Good grades are not the only determinant of quality education; quality education must also change the learners' perceptions to transform society. Thus, good exam results and students' behaviour and social aspects needed to be emphasized. Similarly, teachers' professional development and human and economic aspects of teachers need to be prioritized by school owners for pride and job satisfaction.

Establishing and operating private schools in Nepal has several problems, including infrastructure, teacher retention, educational quality, authority delegation, commercialization concerns, and communication

hurdles. Overcoming these obstacles necessitates a holistic strategy that includes strategic planning, competitive salary, efficient communication channels, and regulatory measures to ensure inclusion and educational standards. A dedication to honest assessments, continued professional development, and collaborative efforts is required to provide a positive environment for students and teachers, eventually contributing to the overall growth of private education in Nepal.

## **7. Limitations, Implications, and Further Directions of Research**

This study on the role of institutional school principals in private schools in Nepal has certain limitations. First, it primarily focuses on the perspectives of school administrators, with limited input from students, teachers, and parents, which may not provide a holistic view of school sustainability and quality education. Second, the study is context-specific, focusing on private schools operating on rented land and buildings, limiting the generalizability of findings to government schools or those with permanent infrastructure. Third, socio-economic conditions, government regulations, and cultural influences affecting private school operations are not extensively analyzed. Finally, the study does not incorporate longitudinal data, which could provide deeper insights into long-term trends and the effectiveness of principals' strategies over time.

The findings have several implications for private school administrators, policymakers, and educators. First, the study highlights the crucial role of school principals in ensuring academic excellence, student attraction, and financial sustainability. It underscores the need for school owners to support principals in decision-making processes and provide necessary resources for teacher development and student well-being. Additionally, the study points to the importance of holistic education, emphasizing that quality education should not be only measured by exam results but also by students' personal development and social impact. Policymakers can use these insights to develop regulations that promote fair competition and improve overall educational standards. Furthermore, private schools must balance financial sustainability with ethical educational practices to prevent excessive commercialization and ensure equitable access to quality education.

Future research can explore several paths to build on the findings of this study. A comparative analysis between private and public-school leadership could provide deeper insights into effective educational governance. Additionally, incorporating perspectives from teachers, students, and parents can offer a more comprehensive understanding of school management challenges and best practices. Research on the long-term impact of various student attraction strategies on school sustainability and educational outcomes would be beneficial. Further studies could also investigate the role of technology, innovative pedagogies, and community engagement in enhancing private school education. Finally, exploring teachers' mental well-being and job satisfaction in private schools could inform policies to improve teacher retention and professional development.

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