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Motivation of Persons with Disabilities towards Mainstream Vocational Training

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Abstract

The present study has explored the motivational factors to join the vocational training programs among persons with disabilities in Nepal. Based on the phenomenological approach, I conducted in-depth interviews with purposively selected eight persons with disabilities who had been undergoing short-term vocational training courses. I followed the thematic analysis technique to analyze the data. With the help of major content theories of motivation and the social role theory of gender differences, I discussed the study results. The participants' expressions revealed that the motivating factors were employment, suitability of training to the type of impairment, utilization of free time, advice from relatives, opportunity to get training for free, personal interest, and a strong desire to do something. The results showed that both extrinsic and intrinsic factors were functioning as the motivators for the learners. Their perceptions supported the traditional gender-based selection of occupations. The study showed the need to adopt relevant measures to leverage the learners' motivation for learning throughout the training.

Keywords: Motivation, persons with disabilities, vocational training, Nepal

Motivation of Persons with Disabilities towards Mainstream Vocational Training

Vocational training can provide the persons with disabilities (PWDs) with practical skills and enable them to earn a living (International Labor Organization, 2013). It can help them secure, retain, and advance in employment thereby enhancing their financial situation, social contact, and self-esteem (Lamichhane, 2015). It helps to reduce poverty and

to empower the persons with disabilities.

Among different models of vocational training for the PWDs, mainstream model is very demanding and effective because of its inclusive nature (Prasai, 2010). In the context of Nepal, most of the government and non-government vocational training centers (VTCs) have been following this model. As this model demands disability friendly physical infrastructures, rules and regulations, curriculum,

assessment and evaluation systems, effective implementation of this model has become a challenge in a developing country like Nepal.

Learners' motivation plays an instrumental role in the success of their learning (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). First, motivation directs the learners' behaviors towards particular goals. Second, it leads to increased effort and energy. Likewise, it enhances the initiation of and persistence in activities. It also affects cognitive processes. Similarly, it determines which consequences are reinforcing and punishing. Finally, motivation leads to improved performance (Ormrod, 2014).

Most adult learners enter any learning experience to create a change in their skills, knowledge, behavior, or even the attitude (Russell, 2006). In this context, this paper has attempted to explore the motivating factors of those adult learners who were with disabilities behind their decision to join the mainstream vocational training.

Review of Literature

Vocational Training in Nepal

In the context of Nepal, formal and non-formal vocational training programs have been conducted by the government and non-government bodies although informal skill learning has been in practice from time immemorial. The major government bodies that provide vocational training in the country are Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) under the Ministry of Education, Department of Cottage and Small Industries (DCSI) under the Ministry of Industry, Vocational and Skill Development Training Center (VSDTC) under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, and Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (Asian Development Bank, 2015). Curricula and duration of training vary across these government-owned vocational training providers. Apart from the government bodies, other hundreds and thousands of non-government bodies including not-for-profit

and private organizations also conduct vocational training in various sectors. These non-government bodies have to obtain consent from the concerned government bodies such as CTEVT or DCSI to conduct the vocational training programs.

National Skill Testing Board (NSTB) under Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) has been conducting skill test for all interested Nepali nationals regardless of their modes of learning, viz. formal, non-formal and informal. To some extent, it has been helping the individuals move ahead in their vocational career path (CTEVT, 2016).

Theories of Motivation

Jordan, Carlile, and Stack (2008) have divided the theories of motivation into two groups: content theories and process theories. The content theories focus on the factors that motivate people. The most influential content theories are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and self-determination theory. The process theories, on the other hand, focus on the cognitive, dynamic, and social processes that develop, encourage and sustain motivation in individuals. Some common process theories of motivation are expectancy theory, equity theory, attribution theory, and goal setting theory. Since this study is more concerned about the factors, I have reviewed only the relevant content theories of motivation.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory maintains that human needs are in a hierarchy. Going from the lower to the upper levels, these human needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, need for self-actualization, and self-transcendence (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Maslow's theory posits that lower level needs must be satisfied or reduced in order to move on to the next level (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008).

Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to this theory, there are two groups of factors: hygiene

factors and motivators (Miner, 2005). The hygiene factors do not stimulate motivation but prevent dissatisfaction. The motivators, on the other hand, motivate an individual to do something (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008). In the context of education, heating, lighting, and seating are examples of classroom hygiene factors. Achievement, recognition, responsibility and promotion of learners are examples of motivators (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008).

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation to do something for its own sake, for the sheer enjoyment of the task itself. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is the motivation to do something in order to attain some external goal or meet some externally imposed constraint (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Hennessey, Moran, Altringer, & Amabile, 2014).

Self-determination theory. According to this theory, individuals are motivated by factors which can be partly extrinsic and partly intrinsic. This theory maintains that the extrinsic and intrinsic factors are the ends of a continuum (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008). Ryan and Deci (2000) have identified different points along the continuum. The extrinsic factors can engender or undermine an individual's intrinsic motivation – a natural human propensity (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

Lieb's sources of motivation for adult learning. Lieb (1991, as cited in Russell, 2006) mentions six factors as the sources of motivation for adult learning. First, adult learners are motivated by possible new social relationships. Second, they are driven by external expectations such as recommendations of someone with formal authority. Third, they are encouraged by the possible opportunity of social welfare. Fourth, they want to have personal advancement. Fifth, they want to have an escape or stimulation through a break in their routine life. Finally, they become motivated because of their cognitive interest.

Gender and Occupational Choice

Social role theory of gender differences asserts that

the inherent physical differences between men and women led to a division of labor in society (Cejka & Eagly, 1999). The innate differences between sexes are the causative factors that lead to the development of gender roles of men and women (Eagly & Wood, 1999). The gender roles are behaviors determined by one's society and culture. Powell and Graves (2003) have classified occupations into male-intensive, female-intensive and sex-neutral. Male-intensive occupations have one third or less number of female. Likewise, female-intensive occupations have two thirds or more number of female. Sex-neutral occupations, on the other hand, have more than one third but less than two thirds of female. In this connection, Watt (2010) says that gender stereotypes contribute to the development of male-specific occupations and female specific occupations. For example, beautician, tailoring and knitting are female-dominated occupations, whereas construction and engineering are male-dominated sectors in the context of Nepal.

The traditional social role of women and men is gradually changing throughout the world (Acharya, 2015). Gender differences in power are perceived to be changing (Watt, 2010). The participation of women in non-traditional occupations is increasing. Thus, change has taken place in the traditional gender stereotypes in occupational choice.

In this context, this paper deals with the research question why persons with disabilities want to pursue the vocational training courses. Empirical studies that explore the motivation of PWDs to join the skill-based training in Nepal are scant. Thus, I reviewed the relevant content theories of motivation and social role theory of gender differences so that I could interpret the results from different theoretical perspectives.

Methodology

The Approach

Based on the interpretivist paradigm, I followed the phenomenological approach of naturalistic inquiry (Flood, 2010). As stated in Taylor and Medina (2013),

I delved into the study participants’ knowledge through a prolonged process of interaction.

Sampling

In this study, I combined purposive sampling and

convenience sampling. Then I selected eight participants with disabilities who were ready to participate in the study voluntarily. The details of the participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Information about Research Participants*

Participants	Gender	Type of disability	Age	Ethnicity	Training attended
Kapil	M	Hard of hearing	26	Brahmin	Building electrician
Renu	F	Blind	18	Dalit	Knitting
Pushpa	F	Physical (short stature)	25	Janajati	Beautician
Champa	F	Physical (leg)	30	Kshetri	Tailoring
Hari	M	Physical (hand)	23	Brahmin	Automobile Mechanic
Khadga	M	Physical (leg)	23	Brahmin	Mobile repairing
Babita	F	Physical (leg)	32	Kshetri	Tailoring
Gita	F	Physical (leg)	20	Janajati	Tailoring

As mentioned in Table 1, three male and five female participantstook part in the study

Their age ranged from 18 years to 32 years. The duration of training programs attended by the learners with disabilities were different. The shortestduration of training was three months,whereasthe longest duration of training was six months.

The respondents were from five vocational training centers (VTCs) which were located in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts of Nepal. Two were government-owned VTCs and the rest three were non-governmental. All the respondents were receiving the skill training free of cost.

Data Collection

I developed semi-structured interview guidelines with the aim of learning about the study participants’ personal views regarding their motivation towards mainstream vocational training. Using a series of open-ended questions, I collected data through in-depth interviews with the study participants. In order to maintain rigor in the study, I had series of meetings with them even after conducting the in-depth interviews. The prolonged engagement with the participants helped me collect rich data with detailed

(thick) and comprehensive descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Analysis

In this study, I collected data in the forms of audiotaped recordings, field notes, and institutional records. Immediately after collecting the audiotaped data, I spent a considerable amount of time repeatedly listening to the recordings and transcribing them in Nepali. I read and reread the field notes and changed them into fuller texts. Then I translated all the data from Nepali into English with the help of an English language teacher, who was also a native speaker of Nepali. I read and reread the transcripts analyzing the narrative threads, tensions, and themes that emerged. I analyzed the data employing the thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To minimize my personal biases in the study, I employed bracketing and peer debriefing techniques. Pseudonyms were used to protect learners’ anonymity.

Results

From the analysis of data obtained from the in-depth interviews, I identified seven broad conceptual

categories. I describe each category in the following sub-sections:

Employment or Self-employment

The study participants expressed that they wanted to join the mainstream vocational training for employment or self-employment. According to them, they would get skills and knowledge from the training. It would help them identify as skilled workers. They perceived that a skilled worker would get jobs more easily than an unskilled person. Stating the reasons behind joining the Building Electrician training, Kapil (name changed, a learner with hard of hearing) expressed:

It has become difficult to get a job these days. My relatives told me that vocational training would make a person skilled. There is a high demand of skilled workers. I thought I would also be a skilled person after the completion of the training. It would help me get a job. That's why I joined the Building Electrician training.

Some participants said that they wanted to start their own business after the training. The training would provide them with technical knowledge and skills which would be useful for their self-employment. In this connection, Khadga (name changed, a learner with physical disability in the mobile repairing training) said:

I am the eldest son in my family. Now I have to look after my family. My parents have become old. Although I am a person with disability, I have to fulfil the responsibility of the eldest son. I have to support my younger sisters and brothers. With the help of my family members, I wanted to run my own mobile repairing center. For that purpose, I joined the mobile repairing training.

Being self-employed or employed was one of the main reasons for joining the vocational training. This factor was same across gender and type of disability.

Suitability of Training to the Type of Impairment

In the vocational training, the participants are required to perform tasks. Depending upon the nature of training, some tasks can be done indoors (e.g. tailoring, beautician, mobile repairing, etc.) and some outdoors (e.g. offseason vegetable farming, masonry, etc.). Some tasks demand the use of hands and legs (e.g. tailoring, light vehicle mechanic, etc.) and some can be done by using hands only (mobile repairing, knitting, etc.).

Some persons with disabilities revealed that they liked to join vocational training because it was suitable to their type and seriousness of impairment. While talking about the reasons for joining the six months long knitting training, Renu (name changed, a participant with visual impairment) stated:

Previously I attended a computer training program, but in the homogeneous group. That was the training program especially targeted for the blind. This time, I have been attending the knitting training with learners with physical disabilities and learners without disabilities. I joined this training as I knew that some of my friends with visual impairment became able to prepare knitted items after the training. This training is suitable to my disability. It does not require complex tools and equipment. It can be done by feeling the yarn, needles, and crochet hooks.

Khadga (name changed) used to walk on crutches. He chose the mobile repairing training.

Sharing the reason behind choosing that particular training, he said:

I wanted to have the mobile repairing training because I have difficulty in moving. I can perform mobile repairing sitting in a place. I can do the work by using my hands. I found this training more suitable to me than other types of training.

Kapil (name changed, a learner with hearing impairment) first wanted to join the mobile repairing training. Later, his instructors convinced him that

he would do better in building electrician than in mobile repairing because the latter field was said to demand the learner to perform some tasks by listening to sounds. Then Kapil shifted into the field which was appropriate to the type of his disability. Champa and Gita (names changed, learners with physical disabilities in the tailoring training) had similar kinds of opinions. They all considered the suitability of training to their type and seriousness of impairment before joining the training.

Utilization of Free Time

Another factor for motivation of persons with disabilities towards vocational training was related to the utilization of free time. They liked to have some useful knowledge and skills in their free time, which would help them in the future. Renu (name changed, a person with visual impairment in the knitting training) used to go to college in the morning. She was free during the day time. Therefore, she liked to utilize the time by undergoing the knitting training. Likewise, Gita (name changed, a person with physical disability in the tailoring training), became free after her +2 level examination. It would take a couple of months to get the results published. She liked to utilize her free time by receiving the vocational training. She expressed:

I could not pass English of Grade XII. I have taken the examination. It would take some time to get the results published. I thought it would be better to utilize this time by taking a vocational training.

Pushpa (name changed, a person with short stature in the beautician training), also had a similar case. She was pursuing the Bachelor's degree level from a college in Kathmandu. She had to go to college in the evening. She wanted to make use of the day time. Then she joined the beautician training, which was conducted from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Advice from Relatives

Some participants joined the vocational training because of the advice from their family members and other relatives. Their family members informed

them about the opportunity to take vocational training. Those relatives encouraged the participants to take the training saying that the training was suitable for them from the perspectives of their gender, type of disability and getting a job in the future. Kapil, a learner with hearing impairment, expressed:

My bhanja (sister's son) told me that vocational training would help a person find a job. He also told me that such types of training were available at ABC Technical School (name changed). My parents also advised me to take the training. So, I came to the school and started the building electrician training.

There were some other female participants who were also advised by their relatives. Renu, a person with visual impairment, got the information about the training from her elder brother. Her elder brother encouraged her to have the knitting training. Likewise, Gita, a person with physical disability, got the information from her *thulomummy* (mother's sister). Her *thulomummy* and parents advised her to take the tailoring training. They told her that tailoring was suitable for her because it was suitable to her gender as well as the type of her disability.

Opportunity to Get the Training for Free

All the eight participants I interviewed had been receiving the training without paying any fees. They clearly said that they might not have received the training if they had to pay the fee. In this connection, Khadga, who was a person with physical disability, said:

The government and different donor agencies are funding for the vocational training for the persons with disabilities. I am also associated with some organizations working for the persons with disabilities. I get such information from the organization I have been associated with. I share such information to my friends as well. I joined this training because it was a free of cost training. I might not have taken the training if it was a fee paying course.

As stated by Khadga, the PWDs with poor economic condition could hardly afford the vocational training. Champa said that she had to quarrel with the training center administrator to receive the free of cost training. According to her, there would not have been such disputes if it was not for free.

Personal Interest and Benefits

As stated by some participants, vocational training was an opportunity which provided them knowledge and skills useful for their personal life. They had not thought of getting a job after the training. Rather, they believed that they would do something useful for themselves after the training. When I asked Pushpa (a participant with short stature) why she liked to have the beautician training, she replied:

Every girl wants to be beautiful. I liked to have this training to make myself more healthy and beautiful. It's my area of interest.

Renu, who was a person with visual impairment, wanted to have the knitting training so that she would be able to make knitted items for herself and her elder brother.

Ikh¹ to Show Others

One different point of motivation was *ikh* to show others. Hari, a person with physical disability, was in the vocational training with this feeling. It was totally different from the views expressed by other participants. Sharing his feeling, Hari said:

Some of my relatives have told me that I am a disabled. I cannot do anything. I am not

worth living. Actually I am badly hurt by their statements. Since then, I have got a strong desire to do something for my self-reliance. I want to show them that I am worthy. Because of this ikh, I came to join the training.

Different motivating factors thus played the role behind their decision to join the vocational training. They looked at the vocational training from different perspectives: capability development, suitability of gender and type of disability, employment, personal benefits, and a strategic technique to show one's power to others in the future.

Discussion

To be motivated means to be moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). From the perspective of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the participants were motivated to join the vocational training in order to fulfil their deficiency-based needs. The participants' telling expressions revealed that they were driven by the basic human needs rather than the higher level or aspiration-based needs (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008).

The participants were motivated to join the vocational training for different reasons. Each participant was motivated by more than a factor to pursue the training. Some of the motivating factors were intrinsic and some extrinsic (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008, p. 157). Table 2 presents the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to join the vocational training as expressed by the participants.

Table 2. Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivators for PWDs to Join the Vocational Training

Extrinsic motivators	Intrinsic motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For employment and self-employment • Suitable to one's type of impairment • Utilization of free time • Advice from family members and relatives • Opportunity to get the training for free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of personal interest and benefits • Ikh

¹It is a term from the Nepali language that describes feeling to show others that one can do something worthy after being hurt or impressed. It's similar to the feeling of jealousy or envy. For this, there is no exact equivalent term in English.

Although Table 2 has divided the motivating factors into two categories, the respondents' expressions revealed that both extrinsic and intrinsic factors played the role in their decision to join the vocational training. Some participants were driven by factors which were more extrinsic and some were by more intrinsic ones. The extrinsic and intrinsic factors were not found to be mutually exclusive. Rather, they were complementary to each other.

The data supports the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which challenges the classic distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators as mutually exclusive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Rather, the extrinsic and intrinsic factors are the ends of a continuum. The theory maintains that motivation is not a unitary phenomenon. People are motivated by factors which can be partly extrinsic and partly intrinsic (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008).

From the perspectives of Lieb's sources of motivation for adult learning, the participants' expressions showed that they were motivated by external expectations, personal advancement, and cognitive interest. The external expectations were met as the participants had to fulfil the expectations of their relatives and parents. They had the hope of getting a better job, which supports their desire for personal advancement. Some participants had the interest in doing the work. Thus, the data partly support Lieb's principles of motivation (Lieb, 1991, as cited in Russell, 2006).

After having in-depth interviews with them, I came to notice that there was gender-based selection of training (Cejka & Eagly, 1999). The female participants had attended tailoring, beautician, and knitting training programs. The female participants said that all their peers were female. This scenario supports Acharya (2015) that women's gradual involvement in non-traditional occupations had not influenced their perceptions. They could not go beyond the traditional norms regarding their choices of occupations. The same was true to the male

participants. There were three male participants, and there were only male participants in each of their groups. As stated by Watt (2010), they wanted to follow the masculine-typed career by attending training programs such as mobile repairing, building electrician, and automobile mechanic. Thus, the participants were choosing the training program from the gender-based perspective.

Khadga, an individual with physical disability, was from a Brahmin family. He said that he was the eldest son in the family, and he had the responsibility to look after his family members. He was expressing the gendered role of the eldest son typically found in a patriarchal Nepali family. The eldest son in the family is expected to provide economic support to his family members. He was trying to fulfil the role as prescribed by his society (Rothchild, 2006).

Limitations

Being a qualitative study, its findings are not generalizable to the entire population of persons with disabilities. This study focused the experiences of motivation among learners with disabilities who were undergoing vocational training courses together with their peers without disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Thus, the limitations of the phenomenological approach are also the limitations of this study.

I conducted in-depth interviews orally with the study participants except with Kafil. Since he had hard of hearing, I communicated with him through writing. As I did not have skills of communicating in sign language, the written form of communication might have affected him in expressing his emotions and feelings in right words.

Implications and Conclusion

As most of the participants expressed that the possibility of employment after training drove them to have the vocational training, the vocational training centers need to provide employment support to the individuals with disabilities after training. The training contents and training methods need to meet learners'

basic requirements for subsistence, security, and self-esteem. Based on the learners' drives, flexible and diverse training methods can be adopted to deliver the knowledge and skills.

Some participants viewed that they wanted to join the training because they had free time and a free of cost opportunity. These results highlight the need to convey the message to the participants that training is an opportunity to learn knowledge and skills rather than for the utilization of free time. How learners value training has a close link with the success of training events.

The participants were influenced by the gender stereotypes. It indicates that the vocational training center need to encourage the participants of vocational training to join the non-traditional trades in order to break the traditional gender roles. The female participants can be motivated to join the non-traditional occupations.

I conducted this study employing the in-depth interview method among eight individuals with disabilities. Further studies can be done employing additional methods to triangulate the study methods and findings. This study was concerned with the motivational factors to join the vocational training. Other studies can be done to explore the motivation for learning among learners with disabilities during the vocational training.

In conclusion, the persons with disabilities were motivated to join the vocational training for different reasons. The motivating factors were partly extrinsic and partly intrinsic. As the literature supports that extrinsic factors have the pivotal role to suppress or nurture the intrinsic motivation, necessary instructional and organizational measures can be taken to strengthen such learners' intrinsic motivation.

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