

*Nordic Journal of
Vocational Education
and Training*

NJVET

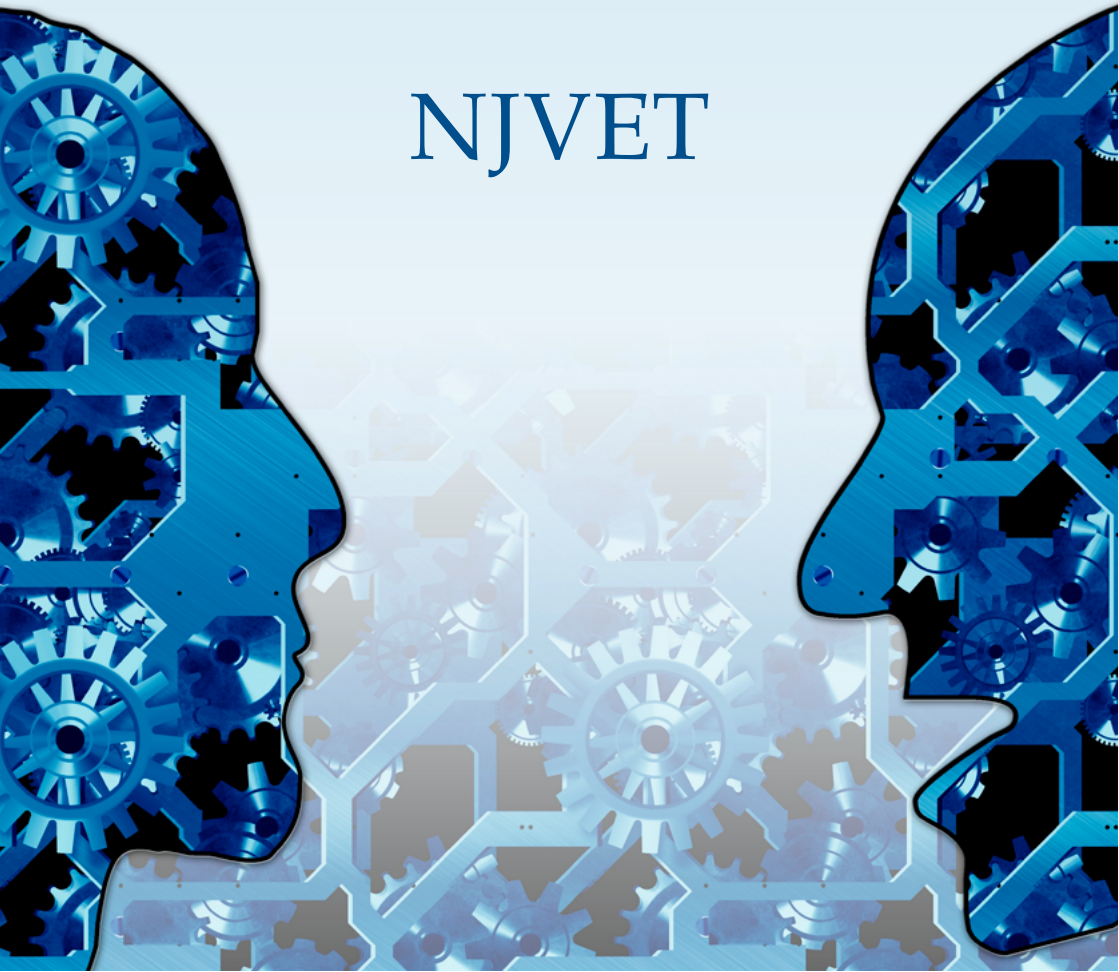




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Editorial: Autumn 2022

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This is the third and last issue of our twelfth volume. It includes five research articles concerning vocational education and training (VET) in Finland, Ethiopia, Sweden, and Norway. We are happy to publish articles not only with studies of VET in the Nordic countries, but also from other parts of the world. As long as the findings are relevant for a Nordic and an international readership, studies of VET in different contexts are welcome in this journal. The different contexts make it possible to compare and learn from each other, and possible differences also help us to discern things we did not see before in our own contexts. The fact that four of the five articles in this issue are written in English also helps readers from outside the Nordic countries to learn from and compare with VET in this part of the world. Still, we also publish articles in the Nordic languages, which makes such international comparison and learning possible at least between the Nordic countries. Furthermore, the English abstracts, keywords, and translated titles of Nordic language articles provide at least a glimpse of the findings to non-Nordic readers.

The articles in this issue

The first article in this issue, *Finnish VET representatives' interpretations of inclusion*, is written by **Sanna Ryökkynen** and **Anu Raudasoja** from Häme University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Ryökkynen and Raudasoja explore how Finnish VET



representatives interpret the concept of inclusion. The study is based on semi-structured interviews with 53 participants who are representatives of different groups; (1) VET college administration (n=10), (2) teachers at VET colleges (n=13), (3) working life (n=10), (4) VET students (n=12), and (5) public administration (n=8). They find six themes: social belonging, accessibility, equality, integration, prevention of discrimination, and special support. While the administration representatives approach and interpret inclusion on an ideological level, the teachers, working-life representatives, and students tend to address inclusion practically. For them, special education practice, the principles of communality and individualising in the studying and workplace learning are important dimensions of a definition of inclusion. The authors stress that the results show that the definition of inclusion is ambiguous and argue that there is a need for collaboration and shared understanding, and further training to increase inclusion in VET.

The second article concerns vocational education in Ethiopia and is part of a research collaboration between Ethiopia and Sweden. *Conceptualisation and experience of ownership in multi-stakeholder partnerships: Lessons from the HDECoVA initiative in Ethiopia* is written by **Eskindir Jembere Asrat** and **Alebachew Kemisso Haybano** from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and **Susanne Gustavsson** from University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In their study, the authors explore how ownership is conceptualised and experienced in a public-private development partnership in Ethiopia. The case is a multi-stakeholder initiative in technical vocational education and training, a Heavy-Duty Equipment and Commercial Vehicle Training Academy (HDECoVA), where they have studied documents and made interviews with project staff as well as other partnership actors. The findings show how the intended equitable participation is not achieved, as power is unequally distributed among local and international actors. Therefore, the local actors do not acquire ownership as intended. The study suggests that co-ownership has to be promoted better, with a partnership built on active engagement and 'implemented through joint commitment, responsibility, and equal participation'.

The next two articles present research from Linköping University, Sweden. In the third article of this issue, *How can students in vocational education be motivated to learn mathematics?*, **Karolina Muhrman** studies how mathematics teaching with a closer connection to students' vocational orientation can increase motivation. In this article Muhrman employs data from two different studies investigating mathematics in vocational education. Using the self-determination theory of motivation, she analyses data from both interviews with students and teachers as well as from interventions in teaching consisting of vocational-integrated mathematics. The results indicate that there are many vocational students who are unmotivated to learn mathematics, but this article highlights positive aspects regarding motivation when students get to work with vocational-integrated

mathematics tasks – and especially when they get to do it in a vocationally authentic environment. In relation to self-determination theory, Muhrman describes the results as increased motivation linked to a sense of meaningfulness, competence, and self-determination, as well as increased social collaboration.

The fourth article is written by **Tobias Lasse Karlsson**, who presents a study of VET in adult education – *Being someone or doing something: How students in municipal adult education view their future vocation*. The article explores adult learners' pathways, educational choices, and formation of vocational identity within the Swedish municipal adult education (MAE) in two VET programmes: assistant nursing and floor laying. The data consists of qualitative interviews with adult MAE students early in their training, and Karlsson is analysing their views of chosen vocation, vocational identity, and vocational habitus. The results of the study show that the adult MAE students' choice of a VET programme is a dual choice of simultaneous future work and who to become. The processes of vocational becoming are influenced by the students' views of their future vocation seen as contradictory or matching with their own burgeoning vocational identity. The article contributes to understanding double standards in students' views and the requirements of the vocations. The study provides insight into adult students' learning and identity processes which could keep them in VET training and hinder the reproduction of unequal ideals.

The fifth and last article is from Norway. **Siw Martinsen Watz** from Oslo Metropolitan University has written about 'Independent health care professionals in tomorrow's health service' – *Selvstendige helsefagarbeidere i morgendagens helse-tjeneste*. In the study 12 apprentices and newly qualified health care professionals were interviewed to investigate how they experience the development of independent professional practices during the apprenticeship period in home nursing care. The study shows that individual independence is both a prerequisite for the health care work and a consequence of high workload during a working day. Furthermore, the study shows that the apprentice's independence is linked to participation in the community of practice and the study thus claims that development of independence takes place in interaction with supervisors, other colleagues, and patients, and when apprentices are given tasks adapted to their level of competence.

Heading for 2023

In 2023 we are looking forward to new articles and issues of our journal. NJVET has a continuous open call for papers within the aims and scope of the journal, with the ambition to stimulate broad research on VET. But we are also looking forward to two interesting special issues that are prepared for publication in 2024. Authors are now writing their contributions for the issue on vocational

classroom research, and it is still possible to submit proposals for the issue on the cooperation between research, teaching, and learning in VET.

Besides the development of the journal, we are of course also looking forward to the next NordYrk conference, which will be arranged in Bergen, Norway, 7-9 June, 2023. We hope to meet you there to take part in interesting presentations of new research that might end up as articles in NJVET.



Finnish VET representatives' interpretations of inclusion

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to learn about Finnish VET representatives' perceptions of inclusion. Discussions and research on inclusion in education have mainly concentrated on the comprehensive school context, although vocational education and training (VET) students may have multiple, intersectional experiences of disadvantage. Our data included representatives (N=53) from five different Finnish VET sectors. Through semi-structured interviews, we investigated their interpretations of inclusion. We applied an abductive approach in our analytical process that followed the principles of qualitative content analysis. Our findings indicated that the definition of inclusion is ambiguous. At the administration level, inclusion was related to ideology, whereas teachers spoke about special education practices. Work-life representatives connected inclusion to the principles of communality, and students appreciated this understanding and individual solutions in their studying and workplace learning. This study supports the view of earlier studies and addresses a need for shared understanding and values to engage with inclusion in practice. The VET sector would benefit from discussions and training in inclusion and inclusive principles, where the study works as an initiator.

Keywords: inclusion, equality, equity, vocational education and training, special support



Introduction

Through the ages, inclusion in education has had different interpretations in its practical implementations and as a research field (Florian, 2014; Reindal, 2015). Since 1994 and the Salamanca statement, there has been an international commitment to inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). The commitment has marked a significant shift in thinking about inclusive education: inclusive education has evolved from a narrative of children with special needs to a narrative of inclusive schools and learning environments for all children (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). According to Göransson and Nilholm (2014), research on inclusion has been based on four different understandings of inclusive education: (1) inclusion as the placement of pupils with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, (2) inclusion as meeting the social/academic needs of pupils with disabilities, (3) inclusion as meeting the social/academic needs of all pupils and (4) inclusion as the creation of communities. Many recent studies on inclusion in Finnish basic education report about school improvement through special education and general education practices (e.g., Lintuvuori, 2019; Paju, 2021). Depending on municipalities' aims, the school improvement actions in Finland often represent integration and follow the principle of a less limiting environment and not the principles of real inclusion, which would mean a school for all (Jahnukainen, 2021; Lintuvuori, 2019; Paju, 2021). According to recent studies (Ebuenyi et al., 2020; Takala et al., 2020), inclusion should be understood in a way that everybody is fully entitled to study and participate in society and communities as full members despite illness, disorder, gender, language, culture, religion, wealth, skin colour or other factors.

In Finland, acts on equal opportunities (1986/609), and non-discrimination (1325/2014) create a solid basis for education providers and actors: Accessibility should be the premise in all learning, guiding and support, which means removing all obstacles and discriminatory practices in schools (Finlex Data Bank, 1986, 2014). Furthermore, the Finnish act (531/2017) on vocational education and training (VET) creates a central frame for vocational education. According to Paragraph 64§, students in vocational education and training are entitled to special support if they have severe learning difficulties, serious disabilities or illnesses requiring a customised, broad-based, and diverse form of special needs support (Finlex Data Bank, 2017). The means to meet the needs of students include the development of individual learning paths, individual pedagogical solutions and special teaching and learning arrangements. Finnish legislation permits, with certain conditions, a different treatment according to a person's characteristics like age, origin, or disability. This is defined as positive discrimination, which is intended by VET to support a student's competence acquisition in different learning environments with individually constructed means of support. First of all, achieving inclusion depends mostly on the agreement between teachers, other school personnel and work-life representatives, both in terms of having a shared

vision and on steps that must be taken to put the concept into practice (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2009).

Education has been a central part of the Nordic welfare system (Holm, 2018; Nylund & Rosvall, 2019). It has been regarded as a crucial instrument for social justice and security by providing schooling to all citizens (Lundahl, 2016; Stronks et al., 2016). Education is one of the most important factors constructing equality and equity in society, but education is also one of the main causes of inequality (OECD, 2012; Power, 2012). Educational equality is not uniform across school subjects and schools but socioeconomical and ethnical marginalisation interrelates with poorer school attachment and poorer academic performance (Beach & Sernhede, 2011; Ouakrim-Soivio et al., 2019). It seems that the standard of education is passing from generation to generation: Social background has a huge impact on person's educational success (Kailaheimo-Lönnqvist et al., 2020). Earlier studies have also revealed that to access and complete VET, refugees and asylum seekers are dependent on supporting measures to overcome the variety of barriers (Jørgensen et al., 2021). Most educational policies can be seen as attempts to make education less unequal, but the solutions made embody different assumptions about what counts as a socially just education system and the obstacles that prevent this from being realised. VET may have important inclusive functions in providing alternative learning careers for young people, supporting their study motivation and vocational identities (Larsen & Persson Thunqvist, 2018). The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) evaluated the provision of special needs support in vocational education and training in 2020–2021 (Goman et al., 2021). The report expressed ten development items where the importance of common understanding became explicit. The report recommended closer collaboration between personnel members to ensure sufficient special support practices. It emphasised the need for a common understanding of the practices for adapting the assessment of competence and making exceptions. The interfaces between the different levels and forms of support should be more explicit, and the multi-professional cooperation related to special support should be developed.

The increased need for a common understanding and shared responsibility creates a relevant starting point for this research. The study contributes to the national and international discussion of inclusive excellence of VET through discovering different representatives' (N=53) conceptions for inclusion. The purpose is to create an updated paradigm. Our research question is:

- How is inclusion interpreted by Finnish VET representatives?

The study applies a broad view on inclusion which means that it is not limited to people with special needs, but it includes the realisation of equality and equal opportunities for all in both education and society.

Inclusion in VET

Notably, the discussion and debate on inclusion in education have mainly concentrated on the comprehensive school context although VET students may have multiple, intersectional experiences of disadvantage (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021). Our recent study (Raudasoja & Ryökkynen, n.d.) indicated that students of professional teacher education defined inclusion as teachers' pedagogical special practices and described it only in the comprehensive school context. Also, studies on special needs education in VET in the context of Nordic countries have mainly concentrated on practice or the organisation level and not on the policy level (Björk-Åhman et al., 2021). One perspective of the importance of a common understanding is presented in Vehkasalo's (2020) study on a large-scale dropout prevention programme in Finland during 2011–2014. Their results suggested that the implementation of school improvement programmes should be as uniform as possible to achieve better results. It is essential to deepen the common understanding and examine the inclusion atmosphere at Finnish VET because the goals of VET are directed to promoting opportunities for all and meeting salient social, economic, and personal purposes (Billett, 2014; Vuorinen & Virolainen, 2017). VET programmes are designed to deliver education that enables individuals to secure employment and provides possibilities for further studies (Karusaari, 2020; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2020; Weigel et al., 2007). Hence, the structural premise for VET – namely acts, statutes, student selection and qualification requirements – provide the VET system with an inclusive starting point, which is also the premise for this study.

VET has often been characterised as being for the more disadvantaged members of society (e.g., Herranen & Souto, 2016). Most of the Finnish pupils who receive special support for their studies at comprehensive school continue their upper secondary studies at vocational colleges (Herranen & Souto, 2016; Niemi, 2015). This is obvious because students in VET are entitled to special support if they have severe learning difficulties, serious disabilities, or illnesses, which means that they require a customised, broad-based and diverse form of special needs support (Act on VET, 531/2017). The means to meet the needs of any student include the development of individual learning paths, individual pedagogical solutions and special teaching and learning arrangements.

The VET system balances between being a part of a school for all and providing the labour market with skilled employees (Goman et al., 2021; Jørgensen et al., 2021). In Finland, the education level is high, which has been acknowledged also in the labour market: The attachment to work life without a qualification is challenging (Kailaheimo-Lönnqvist et al., 2020; Schmid, 2020). The reform of Finnish vocational education and training at the beginning of 2018 has increased flexibility in terms of access and completion. The consequential change has been from the system-based approach to a competence-based approach through which

the personal study paths, broad-based competence and close cooperation with labour markets are core concerns. Individualisation can specifically benefit those students who can manage individually; but then again, it might marginalise those who need more support and guidance for their studies (Ryökkönen et al., 2020; Ryökkönen et al., 2022). This is significant because VET programmes are designed to deliver education that enables individuals to secure employment and provides possibilities for further studies (Jørgensen et al., 2018; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2020; Weigel et al., 2007). The goals of VET are directed to promoting opportunities for all and to meeting salient social, economic, and personal purposes (Billett, 2014). Finding one's unique self is complex, specifically for students and workers with special needs who seem to be delimited by learning challenges and workplace exclusion (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). Stenfert Kroese et al. (2013) argue that even with support to mitigate discrimination, workers with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty, poor housing, short periods of employment, unemployment, social exclusion, abuse, and overt discrimination. VET is critical for many workers but particularly for diverse cohorts of workers, such as those with a disability (Cavanagh et al., 2019). Access to Finnish VET for all should refer not only to education as a service that is free for everyone but also to the opportunity to take advantage of it. That is, everyone should be able to experience the personal benefits of acquiring high-quality knowledge and belonging to a social community (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006).

Methodology

The value of qualitative research on inclusive education is to make schools more equitable and to ensure greater equality of opportunity and outcome (Cooley, 2013). The purpose of the study was to explore the different interpretations of inclusion given by representatives of the VET field. The narrative approach became applicable for this study because it is a form of qualitative research where the descriptions of the participants' become the raw data (Butina, 2015). The narrative approach provided us with the opportunity to better understand VET representatives' values, experiences, and expectations. A narrative type of approach means that we have used the participants narratives as a data through which we have produced an explanatory description of inclusion (Bruner, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1995).

Design

The design of the study was carried out in our research team of professionals in education. The team's expertise included knowledge of teacher education, vocational education, special needs education, project management and administration. Working in a research group provided us with an opportunity to carry out the analysis together and discuss interpretations, which was a strength of the

study. It was also one way to ensure the reliability of the research. We found the semi-structured interview to be an appropriate method for the data collection (Galletta, 2013). The interviews created opportunities for discussion, to reflect with the participants on what they valued and thought. It allowed participants to make explicit their opinions that might otherwise have been left unsaid or unnoticed.

Recruitment of the participants

At the beginning of the research process, we contacted the school principals or development directors and sought their permission to carry out the research. After that, the school administration personnel (deputy principals, pedagogical managers, etc.) and teachers at the vocational colleges were contacted. Teachers asked voluntary students from their groups if they would participate. Those students expressed their consent to their teachers who also helped with the scheduling of the interviews. Work-life representatives and those working in public administration were contacted directly, and they were personally asked about their readiness to participate.

Data collection

Data for this study were collected by interviewing participants (N=53) of five focus groups. The participants were representatives of (1) VET college administration (n=10), (2) teachers at VET colleges (n=13), (3) working life (n=10), (4) VET students (n=12), and (5) public administration (n=8). The interviews were carried out by two researchers in the research group, which strengthened reliability. Interviews were carried out during the spring and autumn of 2021 mainly online because of Covid-19. Online interviews might also have been more comfortable and secure for some participants to discuss and share their experiences (Hewson, 2017). The disadvantages of online interviews were small technical problems and the lack of nonverbal communication. The interview process included some surprises. There was a considerable degree of variation among the interviews, with comments of unanticipated questions leading to lengthy discussions on the purposes of VET. We began interviews by asking the participants who were not students to define inclusion and its significance in their work. This question received a diverse reception. Some interviewees articulated clearly, and others found it difficult to verbalise their thoughts. Maybe we could have started with warm-up questions to set their minds at ease so that their stories would flow. The interview protocol consisted of 12 questions about the interviewee's conception of inclusion. We asked about the inclusive practices and methods, about their resources to implement these and about the main development needs for more inclusive education. Students were asked to describe their individual study paths and their opportunities to take initiatives related to their studies. Although we asked for the participants' definition of inclusion separately, all of the interview data were

for our analysis. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcription was carried out by the company that is a contracted supplier for this service. The interviews were conducted in Finnish, and quotations used to illustrate the findings have been translated to English.

Ethical considerations

The ethical commitments of the study were carefully considered before and during the research process. Participation was completely voluntary, and anonymity was repeatedly discussed with the participants. The study's ethical principles are engaged with the principles drawn up by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (2019).

Data analysis

The data considered here totalled about 392 pages of transcribed text and were anonymised by making only generic references to participants. To build an abductive framework for the study, we reflected on related perspectives and theories during the analytical process (e.g., Rinehart, 2021; Timmermanns & Tavory, 2012). This means that the analytical process led us to the theories and vice versa, the theories guided our analysis. The data analysis followed the principles of qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). At the beginning of the analytical process, we read each interview transcript repeatedly to become familiar with the material. This was a close reading which aimed at reduction of the data and getting an intensive outline of it (Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Eight connecting themes emerged: belonging in education, accessibility, equality, equal opportunities, social belonging, integration, prevention of discrimination and special support. Then, to particularise and itemise participants' perceptions, another round of analysis using ATLAS.ti software was carried out.

Findings

In this section, the findings of each theme are reported sequentially. The purpose of the study was to examine interpretations given for inclusion by representatives of Finnish VET. According to the findings, the definition of inclusion is not unambiguous. Respondents connected their descriptions of inclusion with social belonging, accessibility, equality, integration, prevention of discrimination, and special support. Next, we present more detailed these dimensions that inclusion received in the participants' descriptions, and they are also summarised in the consolidated Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of inclusion in vocational education and training.

Definition of inclusion	National educational administration	Administration of VET institutes	VET teachers	Workplace instructors	Students
Social belonging	'Everybody has possibilities to participate in education and has a sense of belonging to that community'	'It is a right to belong to a group and feel like a valuable individual'	'Inclusion is a way of thinking; all are included, and they are welcome with a low threshold, and they are provided with needed support'	'Everyone can participate, and everyone has the possibility to do the same thing'	'I can be involved in teaching properly'
Accessibility	'Education should be accessible for all'	'I'd like to attach to this language awareness as one of the topics'	'Support is provided in the current learning environment; it is provided on the spot'	'Accessibility is taken into account in everyday life in all ways'	'Let's find a way for me to move forward'
Equality	'School is for all. Structures should be flexible to serve each student'	'Education is equally provided for all'	'We should include all despite their background and try to engage them with the teaching'	'In working life, we talk more about equality and equal treatment'	'Each student is considered as an individual'
Integration	'It is the right to belong to a group and have a sense of dignity'	'[Inclusion] is connected to integration. Everybody can learn together'	'All students study together, and the support needed will be provided for the group'	'We have employees here of many different nationalities'	'The goals of the WBL have been considered with the employer and then started working'
Prevention of discrimination	'It is very important to play a role in this, alongside acquiring skills and competences, to support young people to grow up to be good people, citizens and people involved in society'	'[Inclusion] means prevention of discrimination'	'Nobody is discriminated against, and there are equal opportunities to study for all'	'The point is that everyone is here as an actor'	
Special support	'Would it be possible in the future not to have such specialised vocational education and training institutions, but to be in the same educational institutions?'	'We are not talking about inclusion, but we are all the time talking about providing special support and what it means'	'[Inclusion] is a definition for special needs education'	'We have to acknowledge if a student has learning difficulties, etc.'	'Everyone works and studies in their own way'

Social belonging

Community and social belonging are the key contents related to social stigmatisation, which also emerged in the responses. Inclusion should be understood in a way that everybody is fully entitled to study and participate in society and communities as a full member despite illness, disorder, gender, language, culture, religion, wealth, skin colour or other factors. Every individual must have the opportunity to feel like a valuable member of a group, team, and community and where no one is excluded. Work-life representatives felt that students should be safely introduced to the work community and work-life in cooperation with teachers. The students' answers showed that they had been provided with individual study paths to support their belonging in education, positive agency, and the development of their competence identity. Their answers also indicated that the transition from the vocational institution to the workplace had been supported by on-the-job learning and work-related discussions at the workplace. Some of the students had also found employment in a workplace where they had previously had on-the-job learning.

Accessibility

Besides the social stigma, respondents often used the concept of accessibility. Accessibility was accompanied by the objective that vocational education and training must be accessible to all, and accessibility is considered in every possible way in everyday life. Accessibility was reflected in the physical, mental, social, pedagogical, and digital achievement of education in various learning environments, such as educational institutions, e-learning environments and working life. Accessibility was also associated with language and cultural awareness, which is taken into account especially in the perspectives of social and mental accessibility. The participating students felt that learning environments and forms of pedagogical support have enabled them to move forward in their studies. Accessibility was also linked to various digital tools used in VET and materials that must be available for everyone. Digital accessibility was highlighted in the responses of students and teachers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equality

The answers highlighted equality in inclusive thinking as a human right and as a school for all. The respondents spoke of a school that belongs to everyone and where its structures enable everyone to participate, learn and succeed as equal individuals. Equal opportunities for studying were reflected in the fact that everyone can study together regardless of their background, and everyone is accepted for who they are. In the workforce, students and employees are accepted as they are: There is no talk of social stigma at work, but according to the answers, equal opportunities are well-realised there. In work life, different students and

employees are encountered as individuals, and their individual needs are considered equally in the work community. The values, attitudes, and professional ethics of guiding persons, as well as the permissive and accepting operating culture of educational institutions and work, become important factors in promoting equality.

Integration

The respondents also compared inclusion to integration, which revealed many different perspectives, such as the importance of belonging to a group. For some respondents, integration meant integration into a study group where students with a need for educational support received individual support but had an opportunity to learn together with others. In work life, integration meant integrating different nationalities, language groups or students with special needs into the workforce and supporting them in getting familiar with the ground rules of Finnish work life.

Prevention of discrimination

Inclusion was also described as a key driver in the prevention of exclusion, as all people have equal value as individuals. VET plays an important role in this, as its role is to educate students to become good and balanced people and citizens (Act on VET 531/2017). The responses highlighted that no one should be bullied or discriminated against and students' entitlement to support to acquire competence according to the qualification requirements. Furthermore, students' ability to develop knowledge and skills according to their individual needs was emphasised.

Special support

Inclusion was also equated with special support and special education practices in the replies. Respondents identified specific support as a form of positive special treatment in support of inclusion, while for others, it meant integrating students in need of special support into vocational education and training. There are also special vocational schools in Finland, the role and significance of which are critically considered by respondents as part of inclusive vocational education and training.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to increase the common understanding of inclusion and to clarify the criteria for inclusion. The study strove to provide a new paradigm. According to earlier studies (Goman et al., 2021; Owal Group, 2021; State Auditor's office, 2021), there is a current need in the Finnish VET field to increase

collaboration between different stakeholders to ensure equal opportunities to study, to gain competence according to qualification requirements and to acquire work experience. The premise for collaboration is on shared views, values, and attitudes. To contribute to this discussion, we asked how inclusion is interpreted by Finnish VET representatives.

We found our research task multidimensional. First, the participants of the study voiced similar perceptions as the recent studies (Ebuenyi et al., 2020; Takala et al., 2020): Inclusion should be understood in a way that everybody is fully entitled to study and participate in society and communities as a full member despite illness, disorder, gender, language, culture, religion, wealth, skin colour or other factors. Administration representatives described inclusion through principles of human rights, they voiced inclusion on ideological level. As for teachers, work life stakeholders and students were more practically inclined. They spoke about the importance of individuality and understanding in different learning environments and in work. Questions of both educational and social belonging were explicitly available in participants' descriptions. They addressed the chance for all to study, to be part of the work life and society.

Secondly, the participants addressed the special support practices and individually implemented teaching and learning solutions as an answer to implement inclusion in practice. Accessibility was connected to physical, mental, social, and pedagogical issues in participants' answers though it seemed that special needs teachers were addressed as responsible for it. Our findings indicate that there is a gap between ideals and practice just as there has been different interpretations both in the research field and in practice (Florian, 2014; Reindal, 2015). The participating representatives positioned a student with special needs at the centre of attention and advocated his or her opportunities to study, to gain competence according to the qualification requirements and to be part of the school or work community though the questions of how and why remained unanswered.

It seemed that teachers and students would benefit from more resources, both for encounters with each other and with work. According to our findings, strengthening the thread between VET representatives necessitates common language and will (see Figure 1). We suggest that fundamental factors increasing inclusion in VET would be collaboration and shared understanding and further training, which was also indicated in earlier studies in the comprehensive school context (e.g., Lintuvuori, 2019; Paju, 2021). It is essential to recognise and identify individual prejudices and attitudes. Lifeworld of students, teachers, administration personnel and work life representatives are composed of various experiences in different situations in life, in different communities where they have been included or excluded both in work and free time. Inclusion is not any institutional construction, but it is developed and strengthened in interaction between individuals in different social settings. Crucial are those experiences where

one's belonging is at risk by the others in that group. Individual's earlier experiences together with the current atmosphere in one's lifeworld have an enormous impact on one's ability to engage with the principles of inclusion. Though in the school context the question is not only about the will of an individual because Finnish legislation provides the VET representatives with a strong ambition to include all in education.

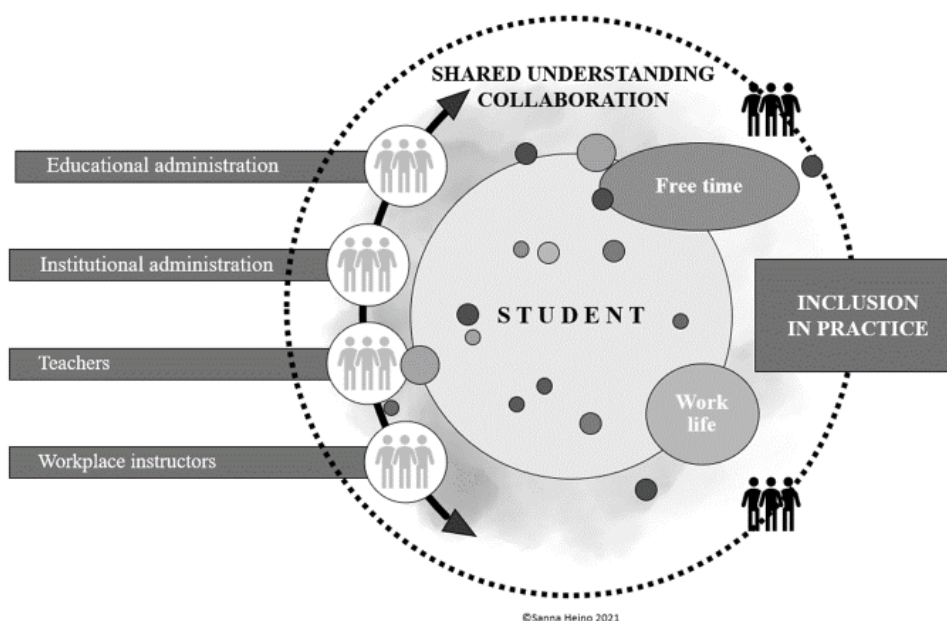


Figure 1. Inclusion in VET.

In line with Goman et al. (2021), our findings support the view that the VET system balances between being a part of a school for all and providing the labour market with skilled employees. If the aim is an inclusive VET, we argue that instead of emphasising individuality in gaining the competence according to the qualification requirements to be employed, more attention should be paid to shared understanding and values. This means providing versatile opportunities for students to belong which consists not only participation in work but the whole lifeworld of a student (Billett, 2014; Vuorinen & Virolainen, 2017). If quality in VET could be understood not only as measurable outcomes but in more nuanced and expanded way, it would provide opportunities for a more attractive VET (Tsagalidis & Terning, 2018).

This study had some limitations. Firstly, the number of participants from each field is quite small, which makes generalising the findings difficult. Secondly, we would have received richer data if we had started the interview protocol with an easier question. But on the other hand, we wanted to hear the participants' initial

thoughts without influencing their thinking, which improves the reliability and validity of the research.

In conclusion, inclusion is interpreted ambiguously in Finnish VET, so it is important to have a uniform definition at the national level. This would require cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Agency of Education, and education providers. A clear definition would facilitate the work of both education providers, individual teachers, and work life when the objectives and interpretations are consistent.

Acknowledgements

This research is part of the G.I.V.E. – Governance for Inclusive Vocational Excellence Project (621199-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA3-VET-COVE) and co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission.

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Conceptualisation and experience of ownership in multi-stakeholder partnerships: Lessons from the HDECoVA initiative in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Ownership is commonly considered a key principle aiming to promote effective multi-stakeholder partnerships. This article explores the conceptualisation and experience of ownership in a multi-stakeholder initiative in TVET, with an empirical focus on a Public-Private Development Partnership (PPDP) in Ethiopia. The qualitative case study is based on insights derived from semi-structured interviews with project staff and partnership actors and an analysis of relevant documents. The findings indicate discrepancies between rhetoric and reality of ownership dynamics, which complicates the actual ownership practice. The goal of all-inclusive equitable participation, originally intended, is not achieved. Power is not equally shared in the initiative, as local actors play a limited role in the decision-making process, and therefore do not acquire ownership as intended. In this case, the PPDP approach reproduces inequality as international actors exert influence through indirect governance. This study suggests a coherent understanding of the ownership concept, which emphasises the relationship between all parties, promoting co-ownership, rather than merely defining the roles of donors and beneficiaries. PPDPs are likely to achieve better results and local actors may sustain outcomes when their capacity is built through active engagement in the process and the partnership is implemented through joint commitment, responsibility, and equal participation.

Keywords: multi-stakeholder partnership, public-private development partnership, ownership, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Ethiopia



Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, the issue of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs) has become a development mantra and is widely seen as a new form of global governance with the potential to link multilateral norms and local action in tackling sustainability challenges (Bäckstrand, 2006; Biekart & Fowler, 2018). The nature of such constellations goes beyond the partnership of traditional actors, with a significant realignment of roles among a multitude of state and non-state stakeholders from both the global north and south (Beisheim & Liese, 2014). MSPs are considered pivotal to driving development and are rapidly increasing in all areas, including the education sector (Knutsson & Lindberg, 2019; Menashy, 2018).

The rapid change in the partnership landscape following the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2005) strongly promotes and formalises the principle of ownership bringing issues of participation, power relations, and organisational agency as key considerations (Black, 2020; Burghart, 2017; Fowler & Biekart, 2013; Menashy, 2018). The notion of ownership has been integrated into several international policies and was reaffirmed in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (United Nations, 2015) as a guiding principle to promote development cooperation by equipoising the relationships between international and local actors (Fraiser & Whitfield, 2009).

Despite the imperative of emphasising local ownership as a crucial aspect of legitimate development cooperation, ownership remains contesting and ambiguous. Critics contend that partnerships are nothing more than a mask to continue donor dominance and development initiatives are often driven in line with donor priorities (United States Institute of Peace [USIP], 2010). Proponents who advocate the importance of partnerships, highlight the challenges of establishing a genuine partnership based on equality and mutual respect in circumstances, where one party has the purse and the other the begging bowl. Burghart (2017) argues that although actors at the receiving end are better engaged in development projects today, their influence over the partnership implementation process has not paralleled that of donors, who have assumed more power and domination.

Partnership practices under the banner of ownership mirror a mechanism of indirect governance, witnessing that there are apparent differences between ownership rhetoric and practice (De Carvalho et al., 2019; Lie, 2019). In Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) partnership stakeholders who provide financial support frequently exercise a dominant role (Cardini, 2006), which is manifested in the direction given to other partners. Such power imbalance can weaken mutual and reciprocal relationships (Flynn, 2015). As Billett (2011) argues, the provision of TVET programmes' goals, processes, and outcomes are often determined by 'the voice of powerful others'. However, an

inclusive and comprehensive involvement and decision making of actors in the provision of vocational education must be considered.

In the increasingly complex donor-recipient relationship, how different actors experience their own role in a partnership is affected by the inconsistent interpretation of the ownership concept, which makes the concept more problematic. This ultimately makes the coordination, implementation, and management of collaborative endeavours between donors and recipients difficult (Keijzer et al., 2018).

This article explores how multi-stakeholder initiatives capture the essence of ownership through the analysis of a TVET-sector PPDP initiative in Ethiopia. It also analyses whether the PPDP model belongs to local actors, and international partners, or caters to ownership in terms of applying collective agency and co-ownership. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate how different actors in different landscapes conceptualise ownership, and how these conceptualisations influence international actors' approaches to and local actors' experience of ensuring ownership within the PPDP.

Discourses of partnership-ownership nexus

With the persistent decline in legitimacy of aid-based collaborations following the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (OECD, 2005), the global community called for alternative approaches to redefine the relationship between benefactors and beneficiaries, with a major focus on ownership and participation of stakeholders in developing countries, to address the prevailing shortcomings in global governance (Black, 2020; Brown, 2017).

Ownership takes a central stage among the five key principles of the Paris Declaration, in which 'partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and co-ordinate development actions' (OECD, 2005, p. 3). MSPs necessitate the global community to ponder about the centrality of both better participation and decision-making of not only those in the drivers' seat but also disadvantaged actors, and end-users at the local level (Glasbergen et al., 2007).

A comprehensive and genuinely meaningful sense of partnership is founded on a set of values such as trust, accountability, transparency, reciprocity, and respect for the identities of different partners that develop through time, because of mutual development, interdependence, participation, and commitment, to attain collectively agreed-upon goals (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Schaaf, 2015).

Although the practice of partnership for international development continues where ownership has become a buzzword, there is a powerful critique, which refutes ownership principles as not more than rhetoric. In the context of multi actors' engagement, consistent and comprehensive application of shared norms and values are not much more than aspiration (Black, 2020).

Menashy (2018) argues that several partnership initiatives implement certain controlling mechanisms and put a new form of conditionality on local stakeholders, influencing them to commit to donors' principles. In support of this, Knutsson and Lindberg (2019) regard MSPs as 'hegemonic and incomplete education projects' that mystify power asymmetries through the implementation of consensus-oriented initiatives with the intent of diffusing policy priorities of the economically powerful international actors.

Ownership as a contested concept

According to Menashy (2018), the confusion in ownership discourse is one of the major reasons used to conceal and reaffirm the regeneration of the unbalanced North-South relationship in the new development order. Since its inception ownership has often been a contested concept. The understanding of its essential meaning varies among stakeholders and even raises concerns in scholarships (Black, 2020; Fraser & Whitfield, 2009). Policymakers and researchers use the term interchangeably; some examples are 'inclusive ownership', 'democratic ownership', 'community ownership', 'local ownership', or 'national ownership' (Brown, 2017; Hasselskog & Schierenbeck, 2017; Saliba-Couture, 2011).

In some literature, the understanding of ownership is presented with optimism, a means for successful and sustained partnerships, as prescribed in the normative aspiration of the Paris Declaration. Ownership has become a major shared concept guideline and a means for the success and sustainability of development practices across the globe (Brown, 2017). This implies that in transnational MSPs, the concept of ownership suggests the lessening of international actors' dominance in terms of their visions and priorities over the interests of the receiving end. This captures the essence of 'below-governance' and is alleged to enhance the participation and implementation gap in internationally funded partnerships (Lie, 2019). Similarly, Brodin (2017) and Jerve et al. (2008) explain that end-users must take responsibility for managing and implementing their development agenda if the partnership is to sustain. The term ownership denotes recipients' capacity and right to set their development objectives and define their strategies for achieving these objectives (Brodin, 2017).

Söderbaum (2017) perceives ownership as the goal of any development cooperation and criticises the way it is described in the Paris Declaration as a necessary condition for the actualisation of effective collaboration. As he reiterates, the idea of ownership is viewed as a goal or an end by itself in the declaration. Such an unclear understanding of ownership in partnerships is problematic, blurring which dimensions of partnership projects should be owned – implementation processes rather than the ultimate goals or vice versa.

There is also division in the scholarship regarding the concept of ownership as to who should own which dimensions of partnership projects. Brodin (2017), Brown (2017), and Lie (2019) tend to see ownership from the recipients'

perspective. For example, Brodin (2017) provides a broad definition that attributes the concerns of ownership neither to the multi-stakeholder approach nor the donors' side but considers it as a mechanism for balancing the asymmetrical relationship between the donor and the recipient in favour of the latter. There is also a wide understanding of ownership expressed in terms of the right and capacity of locals to define their priorities.

In their dualistic but contradictory view of ownership, Fraser and Whitfield (2009) first conceptualise ownership as partners' commitment to partnership policies, without considering the way policies are formulated and decisions are made. The idea of ownership is also perceived as a degree of control exercised by the recipients over partnership implementation and outcomes. Here, two contradictory conceptualisations of ownership are reflected: 'ownership as conditionality' and 'ownership as autonomy', making the term more unequivocal. Lundin's (2019) multi-actor approach to ownership is viewed as a relational and interactive concept, by which a multitude of actors take the responsibility and joint commitment. In this pragmatic conceptualisation, ownership is considered in relation to every actor's engagement in accordance with their respective potential strength. Keijzer et al. (2018) suggest all-inclusive participation, commitment, and capacity development, as a prerequisite to multi-stakeholder ownership of several aspects of a partnership leading local actors to ultimately take over partnership outcomes.

De Valk et al. (2005), who understand development partnerships as a dynamic practical relationships and interactions, introduce 'co-ownership', which equates to shared ownership, where various actors respect the sovereignty of other actors and re-enforce each other. Their discussions result in a functional approach that demonstrates ownership as a non-exclusive concept, associated with three major distinctions that can be owned across different phases: objectives, substance, and processes. Ownership of objectives is about the extent to which partnership goals are owned by recipients and aligned with local priorities. It also involves why and by whom the partnership was initiated. Material and non-material inputs and outputs are related to what each partner takes to the partnership in terms of resources and technical assistance. It entails who determines partnership outputs and owns them. Ownership relates to the degree of engagement by partners across various stages of the partnership process.

Despite the change in the rules of the game that marks alteration in the structural relationships between the most and least powerful actors in the new partnership landscape, confusion exists concerning what ownership is, characterising it as a problematic concept. In a situation when stakeholders and practitioners interpret ownership differently, its application as an instrument for achieving sustainability is jeopardised (Keijzer et al, 2018) and generates discrepancies between ownership rhetoric and its practical actualisation in MSPs (Lundin, 2019).

The Heavy-Duty Equipment and Commercial Vehicle Training Academy (HDECoVA)

This case study concerns a PPDP project, the HDECoVA, established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012. HDECoVA comprises a collaboration between three groups of international partners, a local TVET school, and a government authority. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is the donor partner, while Volvo, a private multinational company, provides equipment, technology, and expertise with an investment of a minimum of 50 % of the total cost associated with a project (Samsioe, 2013). The United Nations Industry Development Organization (UNIDO) takes on the role of project coordination, implementation, and management. Selam David Rosceli Technical and Vocational College, or SDTVC, a local host educational establishment offers the collaborative TVET programme to underprivileged youths.

The principal objective of the PPDP project is to improve the supply of adequate skills in advanced commercial vehicle maintenance and increase Ethiopia's youth access to productive employment through high-tech training and thereby contributing to poverty reduction in the country (UNIDO, 2012). The project also focuses on addressing the demand for highly skilled mechanics, where the existing TVET programme is of low educational quality and ineffective due to resource constraints and a lack of qualified academic staff.

The novelty of this PPDP model offers an addition to the development partners and a local host institution, instead of the traditional and dualistic Public-Private Partnership or the PPP approach. The PPDP, with an added 'D' for Development, forms another layer of partnership and is useful for the understanding of a development-driven constellation in TVET from a multi-stakeholder perspective (Moll de Alba & Virpi, 2019).

The project establishes the first state-of-the-art TVET academy for heavy-duty equipment technicians in Ethiopia. This academy is intended to provide three to four years of training to its students in a course cycle lasting from level I to IV training qualifications, within the Ethiopian national qualification framework for TVET that has five levels of qualification, from national TVET certificates I to V (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2008). In addition to heavy-duty mechanics training, students undertook courses in soft skills, English language, and Information technology training courses. The active operation of the first phase of the project was delayed for three years as the validation and approval process of the new curricula with the Ministry of education in Ethiopia took substantial time. The academy trained 142 students whereof 29 (20 %) were female. In 2019, the project partners announced the second phase of this project, called 'the Misale Project' that aims to provide a driver education, which is not the focus of this study. As a PPDP project, the HDECoVA academy focuses on developing a pilot model, which can be scaled up and emulated by other TVET institutions in the country.

Samsioe (2013) defines PPDPs as semi- or non-structured partnerships. Non-traditional and traditional partners, public and private sectors, as well as transnational and local actors, make a joint investment in a project implemented by a third, but non-profit party with the main emphasis on development. The objective has a wider development impact of creating conditions for people living in poverty to improve their lives.

Among the factors that differentiate a PPDP model from the traditional PPP approach is its focus on aspects of sustainable development to enhance TVET. As Cerar et al. (2018) state, the PPDP model anticipates and responds fully to SDG 17, which aims to encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships. These partnerships are used in areas where poverty reduction cannot be achieved by separating private actors, the public sector, and development agencies and where all these actors share a common goal.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, which explores how a PPDP initiative captures the essence of ownership to qualify as a successful partnership model in TVET. The qualitative research methodology is chosen to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation. Prior research on how ownership is conceptualised and experienced from local actors' perspectives in MSPs, and more specifically PPDPs, are meagre. The exploratory case study design was appropriate to this study, as it is carried out to gain insight into an existing problem in detail, when little is known about the phenomenon and when a contribution to a limited body of research on the topic is required (Mills et al., 2010).

The fieldwork in this study was conducted over three months, investigating a five-year-long initiative, i.e., the HDECoVA project in Ethiopia. As described in the above section, we selected this project as our case study as an illustrative example of a multi-stakeholder public-private development partnership.

A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 research participants representing the main members of the partnership from both international and local actors, including teachers and local company representatives. The subjects were approached to take part in semi-structured interviews through purposive sampling, based on their in-depth knowledge of the initiative and all volunteered to participate (Denscombe, 2010). A summary of participants is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Research participants.

Participants	Number of participants
Tripartite international partners	5
Project staff	2

School management	2
School teachers	3
Local government authorities	2
Local companies	4
Total	18

The interviews with representatives of UNIDO, VOLVO, and SIDA were carried out via Skype meetings, whereas all the participants from local actors, project staff, and local companies were interviewed face-to-face. The interview guide comprises questions focusing on the way local ownership was conceptualised, experienced, and manifested across the different dimensions of the partnership. The interviews with international actors were carried out in English, those with local actors were held in Amharic and later translated into English. The research participants were asked a series of semi-structured and open-ended questions, amplified by follow-up questions for clarification to provide an opportunity to elaborate on issues in the study and obtain clarifications to secure a better understanding of perspectives. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. Except for one participant, all the interviews were audio-recorded, and data were transcribed verbatim. The semi-structured interviews provided depth and comprehensiveness to the collected data (Denscombe, 2010).

As part of the research methodology and design, document analysis has also been employed using document reviews as data collection instrument to help in the supplementation, corroboration, and triangulation of data from the interviews (Silverman, 2007). This was important during the analysis phase, to consider not only the perspectives of research participants but also to understand what was agreed upon or formalised initially and what the project tried to accomplish concerning ownership. The secondary data, in the form of project documents, primarily consisted of project agreements, memoranda of understanding, progress and final project evaluation reports, as well as Learning Knowledge Development Facility (LKDF) documents found within the HDECoVA project management system.

In this study, thematic analysis was used, inspired by Creswell’s (2014) framework for coding and organising segments of large data gathered to identify and analyse major themes. This analysis was conducted by reading through notes and transcripts to develop a series of codes, by which the structure of the data was organised into different themes. These themes are organised in a manner to provide detailed insight into various segments of the ownership dimension. They include ownership of objectives, inputs, processes, and outputs, along with issues such as inclusion, commitment, equal participation, and decision making. The general themes emerged at the initial stage of the data setup and were later reorganised into sub-themes after familiarisation with transcripts and better comprehension of the collected data on how actors understand and experience

ownership in the HDECoVA partnership. To ensure the credibility of the results, we employed a method of triangulation across the data by different participants and by combining qualitative interviews and document analysis, which helps in obtaining substantial data about actors' conceptualisation and experience of ownership (Creswell, 2013). Member checking was also employed to validate the responses by sharing the data with the participants (Stake, 1995).

Regarding ethical considerations, as mentioned in Yin (2009, p. 73), 'the study of contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context obligates the researcher to important ethical practices'. Management of risk was considered in terms of confidentiality of respondents, by keeping them anonymous. Reports of data that represent the participants remain confidential to minimise the risk of harm emanating from this as some of the positions of interviewees can be identifiable. Throughout the research process, we followed ethical standards of good research practice (Swedish Research Council, 2017) and comply with the GDPR regulation to process all data from individual participants (University of Gothenburg, 2021).

Results and discussion

In the following section, the the results are presented and discussed. The empirical data are merged in the discussion, which is structured into two sections: Conceptualisation of ownership with in the PPDP, and The practice of ownership.

Conceptualisation of ownership within the PPDP

Our analysis of data shows ambiguity and an inconsistent and differentiated understanding of ownership among partners. The idea of ownership takes an indispensable part of the initiative in this study. The partnerships started with the acknowledgment of project execution using a common participation framework, as made explicit in the project document: 'The implementation of the project will be exercised by a rights-based approach, meaning that central principles such as participation, transparency, non-discrimination, and accountability will be concretised along with implementation' (UNIDO, 2012, p. 9).

The assessment of ownership conceptualisation reveals that ownership is commended throughout the project document. The initiative was designed on the premise of maintaining equal participation, as set out by the principles of the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2005). However, with the Paris Declaration resulting in an incomplete and elusive ownership conceptualisation (Söderbaum, 2017), the project document intricates the concept of ownership failing to provide a complete explanation of who should own what and which elements of the partnership. Therefore, participants provide various interpretations of the concept. These are subsumed into three major categories as follows.

Stakeholders' engagement confused with mutuality and reciprocity

Firstly, it is understood that most respondents from all members of the partnership view ownership in terms of mutuality and reciprocity. Respondents highlight that partnership duties and responsibilities should be based on the general presumption that all stakeholders contribute according to their potential capabilities. Partners are expected to be assigned tasks that they are able to perform. However, this notion of ownership, implying actors' involvement or contribution, is fused with a symmetrical relationship between stakeholders. A respondent from SDTVC reflects:

When we entered the partnership what we agreed upon was to put in place holistic ownership and a mutual relationship, by that we mean implementing a mutually beneficial partnership. We assume this to mean that all stakeholders exchange and combine their competencies and resources.

The significance of understanding the concept concerning who is responsible during various parts of the project stresses each member's role in maintaining equal participation. The conceptualisation of ownership from the perspective of stakeholders' engagement is mistaken for equal participation and a mutual relationship. Another respondent reflects:

It is difficult to distinguish the exact responsibility of each partner as we are multi-actors. Every stakeholder's contribution matters equally in this PPDP to address TVET problems. We should have equal participation and mutual engagement. That way we assume a mutual relationship.

When ownership is associated with sharing responsibility and division of duties in accordance with different partners' potential capabilities, it can be an important requirement for the practical functioning of the project. However, its interpretation must not be confused with the degree of relationship and reciprocity maintained. None of the participants articulated the distinction clearly.

Ownership as local participation and commitment across partnership process

Secondly, when examining ownership and the factors that facilitate the promotion of ownership, the consideration of issues related to participation, commitment, and responsibility is crucial. For recipient parties to acquire ownership of not only partnership objectives but also the implementation process, the level of their commitment is vital (De Valk et al., 2005).

Some interviewees representing local actors deliberate on the notion that ownership should be a guiding principle right from the setup of the partnership, and that this will ensure that the aims of the project are achieved, and this is also intended to secure strong commitment and equal participation of local actors in the implementation process and eventually to achieve better results. A respondent discloses: 'maintaining equal participation should be a motto for collaboration. Because the efforts of obtaining the required level of commitment to

achieving the project outcome would become a futile exercise without the appropriate participation of the end-users.'

Similarly, other respondents from SDTVC underline that ownership is considered meaningful and partnership secures commitment when local actors jointly plan, design, and participate with international counterparts in the partnership process. Otherwise, as Nathan (2007) maintains, there is no commitment where there is no ownership. This conceptualisation of ownership with local control and commitment in many aspects of a partnership is a new finding vis-à-vis the previous interpretation.

The importance of local commitment is crystal clear, and a partnership will be more easily accepted and can secure stronger local commitment when there is balanced participation, free from any kind of influence (Swedlund, 2011). With the change in the new form of partnership modality, major project activities should not be left to some actors only. Participants from the public sector underscore that it should be clear from the beginning to whom ownership relates.

As local partners, we need to share the influence and power with international actors, that way we can own the project. Otherwise, if we are amenable to the whims of international actors it will be hard to commit to the partnership and thereby our ownership could become uncertain.

Local ownership, fully in charge over various stages of the initiative, is associated with equal participation promoted for recipients to influence the partnership process. According to Swedlund (2011) participation by locals, having a seat at the table does not necessarily imply local control or influence, unless equal power relations are maintained between them and donors.

Ownership will be enhanced when local capacity is built through active participation in the process of project operations and management, and this will, in turn, facilitate better conditions for commitment. A participant from the TVET agency stresses:

For local actors to develop their capacity and learn to stand on their own two feet, government representatives and the host school should have to claim ownership over their responsibility in project decision-making. The staff must take part in the administration and implementation process.

Local empowerment thrives when participation is allowed into the process – when it 'enables local people to make their analyses, to take command, to gain confidence and to implement their own choices and decisions' (Lie, 2019, p. 1112). Hence, local participation, commitment, and ownership cannot be separated. Ownership concerns local actors' commitment and to what extent they take part in the development project process. Overall, ownership is conceived as a means for triggering local actors to feel included in all aspects of the initiative requiring commitment secured through capacity built by active participation in the process.

Ownership as local actors' control of the outcome and as part of PPDP sustainability

Thirdly, in contention to what is enshrined in the project document and the responses of local actors, the deliberation of most respondents from international actors relate to the notion of ownership to project sustainability and locals' control over the outcomes. Ownership is considered crucial for the recipients taking over the programme at the end of the project's lifetime, and for them to sustain what the initiative aims to accomplish. This understanding of ownership can be evidenced in a respondent's remark: 'At the onset, we designed the partnership as a pilot project with a sensible governance structure to put in place for local actors to take over, sustain and scale up the initiative's best experiences when international partners move.'

The interpretation of ownership as an outcome of the development intervention is further evidenced in an interview with a participant representing international partners, who argues that collaborative outcomes of the PPDP initiative will be owned by the recipient government and the end-users. Hence, especially SDTVC should never rely on external actors' support but should keep sustaining the impacts beyond the project.

To this end, the participants from international parties argue that local incompetence of PPDP implementation is believed to interfere with the sustainability of the project, and, therefore, they strive to build the capacity of the Ethiopian government and the project host to prepare them for ownership at the end of the intervention. A project staff member reiterates:

The sustainability of the project is worrisome unless we empower local management. The goal is linked to strengthening the host institutions', and local authorities' technical, analytical, and managerial capacity, and the understanding and the acceptance of the PPDP management principles.

Bearing in mind that the participants from SIDA and UNIDO perceive ownership as local control over project outcome, the tripartite international stakeholders emphasise their leadership intention by ascertaining project control and follow-up as basic principles and masking their domineering position under the cover of local empowerment and institutional capacity building. This is mirrored in their interest to offer project implementation to a third party (UNIDO). A participant explains:

We want the host school to run the programme independently after five years. Empowering local staff during the project lifetime is our job. UNIDO's presence is to meet this purpose because they have experienced how to implement and coordinate PPDPs elsewhere.

This notion of ownership as an end, and control of the outcome without recipients' possession of the process, signifies power asymmetry between the 'endogenous' and 'exogenous' actors. Such a conceptualisation deviates from what is currently used in partnership policies and literature. Cooke and Kothari (2001)

criticise that donors keep camouflaging centralisation under the banner of decentralisation, indicating an indirect form of tacit governance that threatens local autonomy. Therefore, one may question why 'international actors exclusively refer to the idea of ownership to full control over all partnership dimensions?' (Reich, 2006, p. 7).

In conclusion, in accordance with other research, like Fraser and Whitfield (2009), Gibson et al. (2005), and Lundin (2019), this study concludes that there are inconsistent and different understandings of what ownership is between actors. However, no reflections appear from respondents regarding their understanding of ownership relating to the possession of the partnership objective. We argue that in the context of an all-inclusive partnership, the concept must be unpacked, for all members to have a clear understanding of to what extent every partner exercise ownership and how they will own different aspects of the partnership process. Balanced and equitable participation free from any form of influence should be considered.

The practice of ownership

This section examines how various dimensions of ownership conceptualised above have influenced ownership practice. Discrepancies are observed between how ownership is conceptualised and experienced.

Alignment and harmonisation to local priority

The practice of ownership at the design stage of a partnership programme is decisive. The principles of alignment and harmonisation of the partnership development agenda to local policy priorities are promoted for the benefit of each partner, as they are linked to the need for ownership in MSPs (Bickert & Fowler, 2018; Hayman, 2006).

The TVET initiative in Ethiopia was not formally initiated with ideas of partnership and ownership, as it is an international programme, and only later tailored to local priorities. As interviews indicate, the initiation of the project was based on the decision by the international parties to set up an education project framed in terms of the PPDP model they had previously implemented in Iraq in collaboration with Scania. A participant highlights:

The international actors believed that the project in Iraq was a ground-breaking venture well underway and progressing positively. As a new approach to providing TVET, it has a high potential for the expansion of best practices in other countries, including Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's growing economic performance attracted the trans-national actors to provide well-targeted training directed at reducing the skills gap. They discussed the development needs of strengthening TVET in Heavy Duty Equipment and Vehicle Repair (HER) following the growing demand for skilled technicians in

the country (UNIDO, 2018). Participants have a common view, that to bridge the skills gap the PPDP initiative is crucial so that the goal of attracting private investment can be addressed, as well as the promotion of industrial development and a contribution towards poverty reduction.

As mentioned above, the establishment of HDECoVA implies that the initiation of the project is not home grown, but the partnership agenda is deemed crucial to local demands. As part of tailoring the PPDP model to fit the local context, there was an open dialogue with local stakeholders. According to a participant from a local authority:

When this initiative came, the point was whether it best fits our development agenda. I think the PPDP came with a project as a response to Ethiopia's scarcity of skilled mechanics in HER, which has challenged the country's socio-economic development in many ways.

Concomitantly, another respondent states that although the project is internationally driven, it aligns with Ethiopia's TVET priority because of its competency-based approach, and it promotes close cooperation with local companies. The innovative partnership builds a state-of-the-art academy and develops a market-oriented curriculum. Ownership principles, alignment efforts, the integration of locals in the design phase, and the relevance of the project to meet existing challenges, resulted in actors at the receiving end to agree to an agenda prescribed by international actors (Hayman, 2006).

However, this 'rule of the game' in the partnership, implies a consensus on a predetermined agenda, which characterises HDECoVA as a hegemonic partnership, but this raises concerns: 'It is within the interest of the funding partners and the international implementing agency that the project was designed, with training mainly focusing on the HER programme. We cannot change this...'. The straightforward concern in this response is that given the scarcity of resources and the poor quality of TVET in its entirety, locals would have preferred the project to have been extended further into various other programme areas, not only HER. Another respondent adds that the school and the local companies, for example, demand that the new TVET intervention integrate drivers-mechanic training, which encountered a challenge from international actors who want to exclusively focus on the mechanics aspect only.

Against the rhetoric of harmonisation in the agreement, such decisions indicate that strategies in development partnerships tend to be designed in line with the preferences and priorities of funding actors (Hughes & Hutchison, 2012). This project is not well-anchored with the local context, as the local authorities and the school have unfulfilled demands that are not included in the project structure, so they did not influence their priority agenda. Ellersiek (2018) and OECD (2005) state that recipient actors better own a partnership initiative when it is directly linked to their development priorities, under the framework of the Paris

Declaration and the sustainable development agenda. If local partners and the school do not have a say in the project's design, a superficially initiated consensus-oriented education partnership is an incomplete project from the start. In light of sociological and institutional factors, it is necessary to understand what comprises TVET programmes and how they might be implemented most effectively (Billett, 2011).

Exclusion of relevant stakeholders

Agenda 2030 urges stakeholders to commit to leaving no one behind in partnerships. To this end, the third principle of the 2011 high level forum on partnership for effective development cooperation held in Busan (OECD, 2011) stresses the need for 'inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships' to redress all the bottlenecks towards ensuring democratic ownership (Eilersiek, 2018). Once the design of the partnership is crafted, it is wise to question how actors' engagement can be explained in other stages of the partnership. The answer is that ownership is promoted with the commitment and participation of local actors, however, this is overlooked in most cases. A general depiction is that structural or power inequities, poor representation, and participation as manifestations of a limited ownership function, noted throughout the case study, attests that ownership is 'abundant in policy, but absent in practice' (Krogstad, 2014, p. 105).

The participation of local stakeholders, both at the strategic and operational levels of the HDECoVA initiative is very limited. As learned from the project document, neither the MoE nor the Federal TVET Agency, high-level authorities in charge of all the responsibilities of educational matters in Ethiopia, were signatories to qualify as foundation partners in the development project (UNIDO, 2012).

Interviews demonstrate that representatives of the international partners claim that there is an interest conflict between the Ministry of Industry (MoI) and the MoE, as the PPDP excludes a relevant actor from the education sector. There is an overlapping role that demands the contributions of both the education and industry sectors to oversee the TVET project. The competition over mandates is justified as a factor for transnational actors to decide with who they would like to partner. The PPDP involves the MoI as a potential local ally because of its allegedly 'better insights' and 'appropriateness' to coordinate the work of a TVET partnership concerning industry development. A project staff member explains:

The MoI was chosen as the right partner because we believe it is mandated to the promotion of industrial development in the country, which is the main concern of our partnership. The international partners assumed that working with the ministry could provide good opportunities for coordination with the project and make it easier if we wanted to access industries for cooperative training and employment opportunities.

Here, the identification of local partners mirrors the preferences of the international stakeholders, conflicting with the interests of local stakeholders, who feel they are peripheral in the partnership. Despite the rhetoric, such excluding decisions, and preferences of who should be involved in the partnership without careful analysis of their relevance, shape power relations in favour of the international actors (Swedlund, 2011). This reflects again a new and different face of partnership governance (Reich, 2006) that can weaken the collaborative endeavour.

The international actors' selective, but inappropriate inclusion of local actors, consequently, infringes on the notion of ownership, which eventually amplified tension when the project failed to secure the required commitment from the MoE in Ethiopia and put project implementation on hold for some time. Although the curriculum for the new academy was prepared in harmony with the national TVET strategy, to make training acceptable at a national level, the bureaucratic process for getting it approved by the MoE took about three years (UNIDO, 2018). This situation was worsened by the authority's consistent leniency to scale up lessons learned from HDECoVA to other TVET schools.

As the international actors reacted to the problem late in the process, it bore little fruit in the end, according to a participant:

Initially, we imagined that the Ministry of Education might not have direct roles in project operations. They could have helped in many respects, including maintaining national quality standards. We realised their importance when the project was delayed for a long period. Even later, they showed little sense of ownership in the partnership to scale up best practices of the TVET programme in general.

The situation, where relevant actors are considered to play a secondary role in the partnership, provided weakened opportunities for locals in the process. One cannot expect responsibility from stakeholders who are not recognised or who do not consider themselves as main participants (Draxler, 2008).

Most respondents from the host institution also identify HDECoVA's structure as problematic overlooking the active engagement of experts or personnel from SDTVC. They tend to see the dominance of a few UNIDO employees in the project operation. An academic staff member says, 'if the partnership sought to introduce innovation and if it had been implemented well, it would have been important to at least involve the department head or college dean of HDECoVA in the decision-making process.'

The finding supports Biekart and Fowler's (2018) claim of the importance of 'unpacking' stakeholders in partnerships. The more limited the level and size of participation, the thinner the possibility of exercising ownership by diverse, relevant stakeholders, both at strategic and operational levels. The absence of adequate representation and engagement of local actors can never guarantee local commitment to project sustainability.

Hegemonic role of the international partner

The findings from the research of the HDECoVA partnership reveal a perpetuation of historically constituted power inequalities in education partnerships. The structural setup of the PPDP model points to instances of power asymmetry and a hegemonic relationship, where the international actors exert an indirect influence over local counterparts. One strong weakness of the partnership is that all administrative staff members of the SDTVC project frequently point out that the management approach of the PPDP model offered a domineering role to the agency. The partner identified as having a massive influence on the process is UNIDO, exclusively shouldering a multitude of project implementation roles. UNIDO staff members occupy several important positions and are responsible for school management coaching, day-to-day project operation management, procurement, business plan development, reporting, and donor outreach (LKDF, 2018; UNIDO, 2018). A representative of SDTVC expresses his resentment:

... some of the tasks should be left to local partners. I know we have contributed in terms of staff salary, but we are not included in the main operations. I do not believe we have full ownership of the partnership.

In the changing partnership landscape, the irony, as learned from the participants at SDTVC and the project document, is that the framing of HDECOVA's governance structure reproduces asymmetries between international and local actors, where the local college is labelled as a 'training host', while UNIDO is referred to as an 'implementing agency'.

Such dominant references to international actors regarding project management and implementation contradict what was decided upon at the design of the partnership, which states that the project will be implemented on the ground according to a common participation framework. This gives rise to the view that the rhetoric of decentralising power is easier in writing than performed on the ground by international actors reasserting hegemony in development cooperation (Borchgrevink, 2008).

The justification for this presented by the international actors mirrors the reasons described by Ludin (2019) i.e., lack of institutional capacity to run the project. Concentrating the different tasks around the UNIDO project office was considered fair and positive to local actors. This management approach is derived from the discussion forums and the governance structure that all partners agreed to comply with. Although many of the tasks are skewed towards the implementing partner, all the responsibilities in the PPDP agreement consider every actor's potential capability, according to respondents from the international actors and participants from MoI.

As an innovative model of partnership in its kind, applied to strengthen TVET in Ethiopia and build the institutional capacity of SDTVC, this project was considered vital, according to a UNIDO representative:

It is good to be aware of the varied nature of partnering organisations, and essential to understanding how to combine partners' different capabilities to work together, to manage and implement the PPDP project well. This demands the use of good experience and extensive knowledge of UNIDO in managing and implementing PPDP projects.

Furthermore, TVET projects are human resource-intensive and demand a wide variety of expertise and competencies. Cognisant of the institutional resource and skills gaps at SDTVC, UNIDO was mandated to empower and coach local staff to ensure future ownership and sustainability of the project. A representative of Volvo points out:

Weak local capacity seemed to interfere with the smooth running of the project. We worried about the sustainability of the project if the problem persisted. For sustainable development of the TVET project, the initiative strives to strengthen the partners, the host institutions, and significant local authorities' implementation and managerial capacity.

Most participants from the international partners say that due to constraints and weak capacity on the part of the recipient government and the host college, the implementation of the PPDP initiative is considered a learning platform on how to strengthen and transform TVET programmes. This should end up as a complete takeover of the programmes by locals after the projects are phased out, regardless of their ownership, with active engagement in the partnership process.

The assumption that the accomplishment of local ownership is impeded by constraints in local capacity, however, is challenged in literature by, for example, Krogstad (2014) and Nathan (2007), who argue that ownership should not be taken for granted as easily nurtured during the programme and should be made available by international partners to the local side. Instead, it should be a function of skills to be developed through active participation in the development process.

On the part of the local actors, a respondent from the MoE discloses that these actions not only crystallise international actors' domination but also stifle local autonomy. The point is supported by Krasner (2004), who claims that such arrangements can be maintained even in the case of voluntary agreements, which on the one hand show sovereignty, but on the other hand threaten local autonomy. Hence, hiding behind the camouflage of addressing institutional constraints and building capacities, the role of the 'implementation agency' does not qualify the PPDP model as fair and participatory by any standard of a development partnership (Ellerisk, 2018).

As the case of HDECova reveals, despite the efforts to reframe a partnership into a better participatory form of governance, asymmetrical power relations endure, whereby those in management positions, financial, technical, and material resources, remain in their hegemonic hierarchical positions. Stakeholders' decision-making is pretended to be exercised on an equal basis, yet the most powerful actor takes on a differing position in the partnership relative to others. This can

impede HDECoVA from bringing forward the desired change and limit local actors from influencing the PPDP operation. Consequently, the implementing agency wields a strong capacity to shift the direction of the partnership, maintaining previous historical forms of governance in development cooperation. Similar findings have been provided by Lie (2019).

Financial ownership

Partnerships need different accountability structures, among these financial ones (Mena & Guido, 2012). There is a weak financial accountability and transparency structure in the HDECoVA project, resulting in local actors acquiring little ownership of the project in terms of financial decision-making.

Participants voice concerns regarding the framework of the partnership, which features few opportunities for direct decision-making on financial matters and procurement procedures, through the exclusion of SDTVC and the recipient authorities. Instead, the international actors exert influence on financial matters in the partnership.

A representative of SDTVC reports that the school was only mandated involvement in monitoring and evaluation, in discussions on already prepared financial reports, and when necessary could request the project management unit for a purchase order for equipment and supplies:

... the college has no financial freedom. It is all up to UNIDO to operate financial routines and make decisions. I feel that they have accountability concerns, but they never reveal it openly. Instead, they prefer to do it by themselves.

The weak PPDP accountability and transparency structure has created discontent among SDTVC staff, who feel that engaging local actors in financial routines, decision making, and reporting is a non-negotiable condition. One of the participants shared this sentiment saying: 'One never sees a horse's teeth when it comes as a gift'. He continues:

We do not want to ruin our relationship with our partners coming with resources and finance [...] though we don't participate in financial issues; we believe that the money coming from them at least serves the interests of poor students attending the college.

Given that the PPDP model is implemented by a third party, notably the multi-lateral agency, SDTVC did not directly receive either in-kind contributions from Volvo or funds from SIDA, but only through the channel of UNIDO, as reflected in the following excerpt.

The ownership of in-kind goods passes to UNIDO and upon receipt by UNIDO, with the intent for ownership to pass to the training centre at the end of the project period. Volvo is responsible for the transfer of in-kind goods to UNIDO, where UNIDO takes responsibility for the transfer of the in-kind goods to HDECOVA.

More interestingly, the TVET institution, especially the leadership at SDTVC, does not disclose their discontent against the unbalanced representation of locals for fear of losing their international allies, who come with a pro-poor agenda for improving the TVET programme through the PPDP. This implies the existence of a principal-agent relationship between the international actors and the TVET School (Irfan, 2015).

Although financial management, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation are valued as important and systematic, the results from the above analysis, indicate that these activities were implemented according to UNIDO's management and reporting systems. The progress reports are also not jointly prepared by all project stakeholders but discussed afterward by the main partners, including local actors. As argued by one of the government representatives, approving mid-term and final evaluation reports by the Addis Ababa Bureau of Finance and Economic Development does not imply local ownership of project finances.

Based on evidence from the HDECoVA project, international actors rhetorically support local 'ownership', yet financial decision-making, in this case, is controlled entirely by the international actors. Although SIDA and UNIDO do have rigorous guidelines for budget transfer and utilisation and employ strong financial management strategies, these can also vary across different projects with different governments and private sector actors (Edgren, 2002). In this case, participants reflect that there was a strong demand by both international actors to control and manage resources invested to ensure transparency and accountability. Although organisations strictly follow their rigorous financial guidelines, the design of the partnership could be adjusted in a clear manner, to ensure mutual accountability and transparency, as stipulated in the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2005) without affecting the strict procedures of the international partners.

This suggests that the influence of financially strong actors has not declined, but rather altered its approach to what Swedlund (2011) claims to be a more centralised collaboration, but, in this case, appears to be neither the old form of donorship nor a new approach of ownership. Instead of attaching conditionality to financial support or exerting pressure from outside, the donor and the implementing agency shape the PPDP model to their preferences, and local actors can have input at a later stage regarding the reports and final evaluations, while the donor and UNIDO exercise implementation and decision making on their own.

Hence, there are loud concerns that the PPDP initiative under the leadership of international actors curtails the autonomy of local partners to exercise financial decision-making and this puts a strain on the relationship between different donors and local actors, and thereby the legitimacy of the PPDP and its effectiveness can be questioned. Equitable financial decision-making, to better ensure transparency and accountability within HDECOVA, needs to be maintained.

Conclusion

This study has explored actors' conceptualisation, and experience of ownership in MSPs. Close to 15 years have passed since the notion of ownership became a central principle in international development cooperation. As evidenced in this case study, however, the way ownership is interpreted remains inconsistent and incoherent.

In the case of HDECOVA, the notion of ownership was not implemented as originally predicted, i.e., a less donor-driven, and inclusive of relevant local actors. Thematic agendas were set, and local partners were selected in accordance with the preferences of the international actors. Education/TVET authorities, including the administration and academic staff of the training host, were excluded from the management and implementation of the project. As is clear from the fieldwork, facilitating local empowerment due to weak institutional capacity and the novelty of the PPDP approach, served as a cover-up for international actors to maintain a hold over the project by allowing a third party outside of the recipient end to manage, implement, and financially administer the PPDP.

A major implication is that neither the traditional form of donorship nor ownership typifies the project, but what is observed is a more centralised form of collaboration in favour of the international partners. If the main purpose of institutional capacity is to facilitate a local takeover at the end of the project, how can empowerment become possible without the recipients' active engagement in the implementation process? These indirect governance mechanisms not only undermine ownership but also put locals under exogenic supervision and reproduces asymmetrical relationships, which work against the original rhetoric of the ownership concept.

MSPs are not sustainable if they are dominated by external actors and merely implemented locally. Recipients must be integrated into the design and decision-making process, for it to work well (Reich, 2006). Donors must recognise that ownership in its contemporary meaning requires equal responsibility from every partner and local ownership can be maintained only when local actors are part of the design, implementation, and decision-making process founded on grounds of mutuality, power symmetry, and free from influence. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to focus on co-ownership of partnerships and the nature of the relationship between internal and external actors when conceptualising and implementing ownership in the PPDP approach.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest.

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How can students in vocational education be motivated to learn mathematics?

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to discuss how mathematics teaching with a closer connection to students' vocational orientation can increase their motivation to learn mathematics. This article uses a motivation theory called self-determination theory to analyse interviews and observations made in two different studies investigating mathematics in vocational education. The results indicate that there are many vocational students who are unmotivated to learn mathematics because they do not see any relevance in the subject. However, there seem to be positive aspects regarding vocational students' motivation to learn mathematics when they are given the opportunity to work with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks, especially in a vocationally authentic environment. In relation to self-determination theory, it is possible to see increased motivation linked to a sense of meaningfulness, competence and self-determination, as well as increased social collaboration. However, teachers need to be observant of students' goals for their studies, so that even those who do not see a future in the vocation they are training for will find motivating factors for their learning in mathematics.

Keywords: vocational education, mathematics education, motivation, self-determination theory (SDT), subject integration



Introduction

In addition to practical vocational knowledge, many vocations today require relatively extensive knowledge in general subjects such as language and mathematics. In Sweden, however, there has long been criticism from employers that vocational students have insufficient mathematical knowledge to meet the demands of working life (see e.g. Muhrman, 2016; TYA, 2015). At the same time, several reports from the Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE) and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) show that there are problems with vocational students' learning in mathematics, and that one of the most common reasons why vocational students do not achieve an upper secondary school diploma is that they fail in mathematics (cf. SNAE, 2003, 2017; SSI, 2010, 2017).

One reason for the poor mathematics results often cited in reports and studies is that vocational students lack the motivation to learn mathematics and therefore fail in the subject (cf. SSI, 2017). Students' low motivation to learn mathematics is explained in several studies by the fact that the connection to the profession the students are training for is weak, and that they therefore cannot see any relevance for the subject (Lindberg, 2010; Muhrman, 2016; SSI, 2017). In a review of mathematics teaching in Swedish upper secondary school, SSI (2010) states that students often lack a learning environment that creates motivation and that 'for most students, it does not seem to be the desire to learn mathematics that is missing, but the desire to learn something they do not understand and do not see the benefit of' (p. 24). The review also shows that students' attitudes towards mathematics deteriorate with monotonous teaching that is tightly controlled by a mathematics book. According to SNAE (2003), mathematics teaching becomes more monotonous and lacks variation from working with tasks in the mathematics book as students progress through school grades, meaning that many secondary and upper secondary students no longer see any concrete use for mathematics and are therefore uninterested in the subject. Many students also find it difficult to work with mathematics on a purely theoretical level, and therefore call for more realistic mathematics tasks (SNAE, 2003).

This article is based on a new analysis of data from two previous studies that are already carried out, and published (see Frejd & Muhrman, 2022; Muhrman, 2016; Muhrman & Frejd, 2018). In both studies, mathematics teaching at upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is examined. The data consists of interviews with vocational students and mathematics teachers, as well as participatory observations in lessons where mathematics and vocational subjects are integrated. The purpose of the two studies was to understand what mathematical knowledge vocational students require in relation to the needs of professional life and how it is possible to arrange mathematics teaching that leaves them well prepared in terms of professional requirements for mathematical knowledge. This article uses a motivation theory called self-determination theory

(SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) to analyse and discuss how mathematics teaching with a closer connection to students' vocational orientation can increase their motivation to learn mathematics, based on the following questions:

- Which factors do vocational students describe as being important for their motivation to learn mathematics?
- How can mathematics teaching be organised so that vocational students have increased motivation to learn mathematics?

Context of the study

In Sweden, most young people start upper secondary school the year they turn 16, after nine years of compulsory school. Upper secondary education lasts for three years. There are 18 national education programmes, of which twelve are vocational programmes and six are university preparatory programmes. All educational programmes are school-based, but vocational programmes – unlike the pre-university programmes – must include at least 15 weeks of internship at a workplace. After upper secondary education, students are expected to be ready to either start work in the profession they have studied for (if they have studied a vocational programme) or continue their studies at university (if they have completed a pre-university programme) (SNAE, 2021). The current model for upper secondary education was introduced in 2011 through a reform (Gy11) in which vocational education was more clearly separated from pre-university education. Gy11 involved vocational students no longer being automatically eligible to apply for university and the subject of mathematics being separated into three tracks with different specialisations: vocational education, social science education, and natural science education.

Between 1994 and 2011, all upper secondary programmes – regardless of specialisation – gave eligibility for further studies at university, and all students studied a common mathematics course called Mathematics A. One reason for the changes to the subject of mathematics in Gy11 can be found in Government Bill 2008/09:199, which emphasised the importance of mathematics being designed so that its content is more clearly relevant to the focus of the programme. This is because there were problems with the previous Mathematics A course, especially for vocational programmes. In reviews, many vocational students described Mathematics A as abstract and theoretical, and that they lacked motivation for the subject as they could not understand how the content of the course could contribute to competence in the profession they were studying for (SNAE, 2003; SSI, 2010)

The content of the new syllabus for vocational programmes in mathematics, Mathematics 1a, introduced in 2011 has a clearer connection to students' vocational orientation compared to Mathematics A. Despite this, both research studies and reviews show that the connection has remained weak when it comes to

realisation in the classroom. Mathematics teachers who lack knowledge about students' vocational orientation find it difficult to follow the vocational content of the syllabus for Mathematics 1a in their teaching, and many students still express low motivation for mathematics as they do not understand the purpose of the subject (Muhrman, 2016; SSI, 2014).

Motivation for learning

The focus of this article is on analysing and answering questions about what can increase vocational students' motivation to learn mathematics. There is no unambiguous definition of what is meant by motivation in the research literature, but summary definitions have been proposed by various researchers. According to Jenner (2004), motivation can, for example, be explained as a driving force in relation to a goal. Motivation is not in itself a trait, but is a sum of different experiences. Several research studies show that motivation has direct significance for students' learning (e.g. Berger & Karabenick, 2011; Jungert, 2014; Murayama et al., 2013). Students' motivation for learning consists of cognitions such as what goals the students have, what they expect from their own learning, and emotions such as feelings, commitment, job satisfaction or fear of failure. This is expressed in behaviours that are seen in the form of students' concentration, attention, effort, perseverance, and choice (Berger & Karabenick, 2011; Jungert, 2014).

There are a number of different theories that can be used to explain why students are motivated or lack motivation to perform tasks, these theories concentrate on various motivational factors related to cognitions, emotions, and behaviours. For this study, the motivation theory self-determination theory (SDT) is used, which includes several different motivational factors (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT distinguishes between internal and external motivation, and is based on the assumption that people are basically active actors with internal conditions to acquire knowledge, which means that their internal motivation is central to their learning. External motivation is seen as instrumental, and is about students' attitudes to learning. It is governed by external demands such as fear of penalties or anticipation of rewards such as high grades. Internal motivation, in turn, is about students having an internal drive to do tasks without the need for rewards because they find the tasks interesting and/or meaningful (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Jungert, 2014). A person is most often affected by both internal and external motivation. The type of motivation that dominates can vary over time, and varies between different people. Studies show that those who have a high degree of internal motivation work harder on their studies, invest more energy and look more positively at their studies, which benefits learning. This leads to internal motivation predicting school performance in general and being related to good study results in the long term. This is especially true for mathematics and science subjects (Taylor et al., 2014).

SDT describes three basic needs that affect students' internal motivation and that must be met for people to be motivated to learn. These are the need for autonomy – the opportunity to make your own choices, the need for competence – the opportunity to develop and feel a sense of competence, and the need for belonging – the opportunity for good relationships with friends and teachers (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Studies show that students who are given choices perform better and are less likely to drop out of education (cf. Otis et al., 2005). Upper secondary school students have been given a certain amount of self-determination through their choice of education. However, the need for autonomy also involves having the opportunity to make independent choices within the framework of the education regarding aspects such as content, structure, and working methods within the free space in the curriculum. However, some researchers express concern that trends of increased central control in the form of tests is reducing the free space within the curriculum and thus students' opportunities to influence teaching, which does not promote internal motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016).

When it comes to the opportunity to develop and feel a sense of competence, students assess their own ability based on the difficulty of tasks, expectations from the environment, and previous experiences of succeeding or failing to solve tasks (Brophy, 2010). A sense of competence has a positive correlation with higher study performance, in that students who feel competent become more motivated to perform their study tasks (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gulikers, Runhaar & Mulder, 2018). In order to maintain students' sense of competence even when tasks become more difficult, they need to encounter tasks at the right level of knowledge for them. These tasks must not feel impossible to solve, as students can then lose both self-confidence and motivation, but must also not be so simple that the student never experiences challenges. Expectations should be high based on each person's ability, and should be positive without feeling valued (Holden, 2001).

SDT also emphasises the importance of feeling included in a group that is important to oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students are asked what they think is the best thing about being at school, a common answer is social interaction (Hofer & Peetsma, 2005). According to Leary and Baumeister (2000), the need to feel connected to a group is of great importance for students' motivation. The need to create relationships can mean that attitudes, values, and behaviours are internalised, and that students learn things that they are not really interested in, but that are important for them to be involved in the social context.

By meeting the three basic needs of autonomy, a sense of competence, and social cohesion, the degree of motivation to solve tasks can gradually increase from external motivation to internal autonomous motivation, whereby a task eventually becomes internalised and part of a person's values (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

Previous research

Studies show that motivation is more important than intelligence when it comes to succeeding in studying mathematics (Murayama et al., 2013). As described above, there are a number of factors that can affect students' motivation. Previous research shows that both the working methods and the environment in which the teaching is carried out can be important for motivation. For example, Fägerstam (2013) conducted a study with secondary-school students which showed that outdoor education can have a positive impact on students' internal motivation for mathematics. Samuelsson (2008) has also done a study in secondary school where he compared different teaching methods in mathematics teaching and concludes that work with problem solving where students are given the opportunity to discuss solutions to problems in pairs or in groups increases students' interest in mathematics compared to traditional teaching taught from the chalkboard and individual problem solving. Petersen (2011) has studied methods for mathematics teaching in upper secondary school and shows that students' motivation for mathematics can increase by the teaching based on stories where mathematics is placed in a context that students recognise. As a result, the students showed both better results and increased motivation for mathematics, but despite this, the teachers describe a stress of introducing new ways of working that means that the students do not have time to do all the tasks in the mathematics book.

Previous studies of vocational students' motivation profiles indicate that many students may have motivation problems, which can be an obstacle to building a successful professional career (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2019). Problems with motivation can also be a reason why students drop out of upper secondary education. Gidlund (2020) has studied how dropouts can be prevented through relational pedagogy. Her study shows that a good relationship with the teacher influences a student's attitude to the subject of teaching and promotes the student's learning and school attendance. Schmid et al. (2021) studied how vocational students who are particularly at risk of failing in their studies due to their social background can be kept on the 'right track'. They conclude that good relationships with teachers are crucial, as well as expectations being at the right level so that students are given the opportunity to succeed with schoolwork. Their study also shows that it is especially important for students' motivation that teachers show the relevance of schoolwork to students' lives and professional work.

Motivation for mathematics in vocational education and training

Swahn (2006), who has studied upper secondary school students' influence on teaching, states that the goals for mathematics in upper secondary education are largely motivated by the fact that students should be eligible for higher studies. This may motivate students who have planned to study further at university, but

does not make the subject meaningful for those who do not have such plans (Swahn, 2006). Larsson (2014) shows that those students who choose a VET upper secondary school programme have a more negative attitude towards mathematics than those who choose a university preparatory programme. Like Schmid et al.'s (2021) study, several studies of mathematics in VET show that teaching needs to be organised so that students understand the purpose of schoolwork, because otherwise they risk becoming unmotivated to learn the subject (cf. Högborg, 2011; Lindberg, 2010). Previous research results show that a link between mathematics and vocational subjects leads to a more positive attitude among vocational students and gives them important insights into the role of mathematics in their future profession (e.g. Dalby & Noyes, 2015; Frejd & Muhrman, 2022; Muhrman, 2016).

One way to increase vocational students' interest in mathematics can therefore be to integrate mathematics with students' vocational subjects. Arguments that support a subject-integrated approach include that this can give students a deeper understanding when they can see how subjects are connected (cf. Lindberg, 2003; Lindberg, 2010; Muhrman, 2016). Research studies have also shown how a weak connection between school mathematics and vocational mathematics often makes it difficult for students to transform their mathematical knowledge from the school context to the working life context, because they have difficulties seeing a connection between them (cf. Gahamanyi, 2010; Wake, 2014). Several research studies indicate that if mathematics is taught separately from working life contexts, there is a risk of developing different 'worlds' where mathematics teaching is one world and the use of mathematics in working life is another. This can lead to students not meeting working life's demands for mathematical knowledge after their vocational education (see e.g. Bellander et al., 2017; Dalby & Noyes, 2015; FitzSimons & Boistrup, 2017; Hoyles et al., 2010; Muhrman, 2016).

In other studies of teaching within VET, however, it has emerged that many teachers in subjects such as mathematics, Swedish, and English are hesitant about subject-integrated working methods, as they believe that the subject is distorted if it is changed to a less academic orientation (cf. Muhrman, 2016). Hoachlander (1997) who has studied integration between education and work, as well as curricula, has however concluded that integrated or work life-oriented mathematics does not conflict with the high mathematical standard sought by mathematics teachers and demanded by universities. He believes that working life's expectations of employees' mathematical knowledge are often greater than many mathematics educators have realised, and that there is therefore no reason to simplify upper secondary school mathematics to suit the needs of working life. He sees great benefits in linking mathematics teaching to working life through various forms of integration; not, in the first place, for students to develop mathematical

knowledge for a specific professional context, but to make mathematics more understandable and thereby increase overall mathematics learning. Vocational-integrated mathematics is thus seen by Hoachlander as a good basis for those who want to go directly into working life, as well as for those who choose to study further at university.

Previous research on mathematics in vocational education shows that students' interest in the subject can increase through subject-integrated teaching. However, research on factors that can increase vocational students' motivation for mathematics are sparse and few studies have had a direct focus on analysing vocational students' motivation-factors based on a motivation theory. This means that the results presented in this article can contribute new knowledge to the field of mathematics teaching in vocational education.

Method

This article uses data from two studies. From the first study conducted in 2012–2016, data from group interviews with 40 students (eight groups) and individual interviews with 11 mathematics teachers are used. The students and teachers come from eight different agricultural schools spread across Sweden. The interviews were of a semi-structured nature and focused on how vocational students develop the mathematical knowledge they need in relation to the profession they are training for. All the interviewed students and 67 other students also had to answer a questionnaire with questions corresponding to the interview questions, in order to see how the students answered individually and thus verify the interview answers because students can be influenced by each other when they are interviewed in groups. Like the interviews, the questionnaires were of a qualitative nature. The answers were transcribed and analysed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) model for qualitative thematic analysis.

The second study, conducted in 2016–2018, is a continuation of the first study in which the results from the first study were implemented and tested through interventions consisting of vocational-integrated mathematics tasks conducted in different contexts. The interventions were developed by mathematics teachers and vocational teachers jointly, and were carried out partly in vocational classrooms (e.g. hairdressing salons) and partly in ordinary mathematics classrooms. The outcomes of the interventions were examined through both participatory observations when the interventions were carried out, and pre- and post-interviews with teachers and students. This article uses data from the observations made during interventions for hairdressing students, during which they worked with tasks and problem solving related to cost calculations for shampooing and running a hair salon.

The purpose of the intervention study was to investigate how mathematics teachers can design vocational-integrated mathematics teaching that contributes

to students' learning in mathematics and prepares them for the calculations and problem solving to be carried out in vocational life. The study also examined the significance of the learning environment for the outcome of subject-integrated mathematics teaching. Both a mathematics teacher and a vocational teacher participated in the subject-integrated lessons. During the observations, notes were taken about what was seen, with a special focus on certain points according to an observation schedule designed to include the design of the subject-integrated lessons, teachers' and students' cooperation, mathematical content, teaching methods, and students' commitment, motivation, and understanding. The observation notes were rewritten and analysed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, with six steps that can be briefly described, the researcher first gets to know the data properly by reading through transcripts several times. The data are then organised accordingly in initial codes. Based on the codes, patterns are sought that capture phenomena, in relation to the study's purpose and questions, and themes are created. The themes are then developed and refined by reviewing the data again and identifying the essence of what each theme is about. Using this method, three main themes were created from the thematic analysis of the two sub-studies, these themes were then jointly analysed on the basis of SDT, which developed the content of each theme and led to the creation of four sub-themes.

Different results from both studies have previously been published in a doctoral dissertation (Muhrman, 2016) and in two articles (Frejd & Muhrman, 2022; Muhrman & Frejd, 2018). However, data from the two studies have not previously been analysed together, and none of the previous publications have focused on using SDT to analyse factors that may increase students' motivation to learn mathematics, which is why this article contributes new aspects to the results from the previous publications. The data used in this article have been collected over a long period of time, and some data are a few years old. However, the author of the article has continued to conduct interviews with teachers, students, and professionals in VET in other projects, and kept up to date on the results from other research projects on mathematics in vocational education, so the data used here has been verified repeatedly and is still current.

Results

This section presents the results from the thematic analysis of the two studies, with a focus on motivational factors for vocational students to learn mathematics. The thematic analysis shows that working methods, the design of the tasks, the learning environment, and the national tests can affect vocational students' motivation to learn mathematics, which is reported under different themes. To illustrate the findings, interview quotations from the first study are interwoven with observational data from the second study.

When analysing the interview results from both the first study and the continuation study, it becomes apparent that many vocational students are unmotivated to learn mathematics. The students express in different ways that they find mathematics boring and that they have no interest in the subject, although many of them also say they understand that the subject is necessary for their future profession. According to most students, the reasons for their lack of motivation for mathematics are monotonous working methods and tasks for which they see no relevance. Most say that their mathematics teaching is dominated by individual solving of tasks in the mathematics book preceded by a lecture at the board. Several students describe the mathematics book tasks as meaningless, that they learn very little, and that they find it difficult to transform the knowledge they gain from working through the book to the calculations and problem solving carried out in the profession.

Tasks and learning environments that can give a sense of competence and create internal motivation

The relevance of the mathematical tasks is a motivating factor

According to motivation theories, the motivation to learn something is affected by the value the students see in the knowledge. It is clear from the students' interview responses that they are motivated by working with tasks for which they see relevance. For the tasks to feel more meaningful and to help the students learn the calculations and problem solving for the vocation, many students – like those in the interview quotation below – express a desire to work more with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks instead of the tasks in the maths book.

Erik: It was mostly the book or booklets we had to work from.

Interviewer: Would you have liked the maths to have been more focused on your future vocation?

All students: Yes!

Erik: It would have been easier to get involved and be motivated.

Anna: If you know why you should learn it.

Erik: Then you know that I will have a use for this.

Other students have had the opportunity to work with vocational-integrated mathematics to a relatively large extent. These students say that tasks they see are relevant, mean that 'they learn more, remember more and gain a better understanding of mathematics'. They also say that by working with mathematical tasks that are applied in real contexts, they can more easily use their mathematical knowledge in contexts outside school, for example in a vocational context.

Interviewer: Do you think it is good to calculate such applied mathematics?

All students: Yes!!

Filip: It's the best maths we've done!

Johanna: It's much better!

Interviewer: In what way is it good, then?

How can students in vocational education be motivated to learn mathematics?

Adam: It's much easier to do when you know it's something you can use in real life, because it's something you'll have to do later too.

Johanna: You get more motivation. It's, like, not just a case of having to learn this because you should only know it, but it's more that you should learn this so that you can know your work later.

Varied working methods and learning environments that create motivation

In order to become more motivated, the interviewed students call not only for vocational-integrated mathematical tasks as a variation from the problems in the mathematics book, but also for working methods in mathematics other than the 'traditional' individual work with tasks in the mathematics book. Most of all, students also want at least some of the mathematics lessons to be located in a practical vocational setting (e.g. a vocational classroom) instead of the mathematics classroom. The students in the quotations below have sometimes had the opportunity to have their mathematics lessons in a vocational classroom, which they would like to do more often and makes them more motivated.

Amanda: If you think it's fun then you get involved instead of looking at a piece of paper, and write that I'll be here when the lesson is over. Then you just think that it will end. When you are out doing things, then you think it's fun and then you learn. I do it anyway.

Julia: Because then you can't sit and sleep in your seat, but then you have to be involved.

Similar examples of how students' motivation and interest in mathematics increase when they work with mathematics in real contexts are described by several mathematics teachers. According to mathematics teacher Kristoffer, working with applied tasks can make students achieve better results in mathematics, by becoming more motivated and working harder.

Kristoffer: They become interested in maths and therefore work more and therefore achieve a better result, I think. Because if I had not had such tasks, then maybe they wouldn't have done anything and then they wouldn't have achieved the result.

Students also describe how classmates who have previously shown very low motivation for mathematics suddenly become interested in the subject and start working when they are given tasks that they see are relevant to their future profession.

Johanna: You notice that in the maths lessons also if you get an agriculture-related task, the boys, yes they are often boys, they are completely silent and just work, those who usually do not work.

Vocational-integrated mathematics tasks can give a sense of competence

Teachers who work with tasks applied in contexts that feel relevant to the vocational students describe how this can be of great importance for some students' ability to achieve the goals in mathematics. When the tasks are applied in a context that the students recognise, their sense of competence seems to increase, and they can solve even complicated maths tasks which they have never managed

before. In addition, students' motivation increases when they see value in solving the tasks. Below, the mathematics teacher Mikael describes the significance for students' learning and motivation when they are allowed to work with tasks that are relevant to the vocation they are training for.

Mikael: There I see the advantages very strongly, I remember very clearly a guy from last year, he didn't get many right in many of the tests. But he did this with passion and desire, he got a good grade for such a project. And what he did was he got some extra tasks to work out. [...] And then he calculated both equations and geometry in this, which he almost did not realise he was doing. So you can trick them into calculations just because they want to solve this practical task. Some students have such poor self-esteem in the subject of mathematics, but they can calculate in reality.

Similar results to those described in the quotation above were observed in the follow-up study, in which we compared interventions with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks in different environments. In one intervention, two of the lessons were about calculations and problem solving related to costs for various services in the hairdressing profession and the total cost of running a hairdressing salon. One lesson was conducted in the hairdressing salon. The students first had to carry out a practical task in which they shampooed each other's hair and measured the amount of shampoo used, as well as the time required, followed by calculations of the cost of shampooing in relation to running a salon. The second lesson, which was conducted in a regular classroom, included a lecture on carrying out calculations for the costs of running a hairdressing salon, followed by the students' own cost calculations for working as a self-employed hairdresser. Both lessons were given by a mathematics teacher and a vocational teacher together. When the tasks were carried out in the vocational classroom, the students took a leadership role in relation to the mathematics teacher and explained many of the vocational elements to the teacher. The students showed self-confidence that they also applied to the calculations performed after the practical task. Suddenly, they were able to make complex calculations of costs for running a hairdressing salon, including calculating hourly rates in different ways, and adding and deducting VAT in a way that they had not been able to do in previous lessons. In the post-interview discussions with the hairdressing students, they said that they especially appreciated the subject-integrated lessons in the hairdressing salon because they felt that in these lessons it was easy to see the relevance of mathematics and the mathematical knowledge they needed for their future vocation. They did not find the vocational-integrated mathematics teaching in the ordinary classroom as rewarding, as they felt that it was more difficult to understand and relate to their vocation.

Social participation in vocational-integrated mathematics can increase motivation

The observations and interviews also show that the motivational factor of social inclusion has a connection to the working methods and the environment in which

the teaching is carried out. Many of the working life tasks take place in a social context, where professionals work together to solve tasks. The results of the observations in the follow-up study showed that when the mathematics lesson was held in a vocational classroom, the students collaborated in a way that reflects working life when solving the mathematics tasks. Without any encouragement from the teachers, the groups began to compare their answers with each other and discussed how and why they had solved the task in different ways. The mathematical level of the discussions was high, and the students undertook relatively advanced and complex calculations with seemingly high levels of motivation and self-confidence. During the vocational-integrated lesson in the mathematics classroom, the students' activity level was considerably lower. Few or no discussions took place between the students, and several students used their mobile phones instead of working on the task. When the students got stuck and did not understand, they sat for a long time with their hands raised, waiting for help from the mathematics teacher, instead of discussing solutions with each other.

The social inclusion and cohesion between the students were apparently much higher when the learning environment invited collaborations in which students were given the opportunity to discuss mathematical problems and get tips from both classmates and the teacher, which seemed to have a positive effect on students' motivation to work with maths tasks.

Vocational-integrated tasks are not a motivating factor for everyone

Although most students interviewed in both the first study and the continuation study expressed a desire to work with more vocational-integrated mathematics, there were also students who said that they prefer to work individually with tasks in the mathematics book. In the interviews, it emerged that these students do not usually envisage a future vocational career in the vocation they are studying for, and see vocational education mostly as a 'more fun' way of studying upper secondary education. Their plans for the future usually involve studying further at university to work in a completely different profession. A mathematics teacher who works with students studying to become horse grooms says that these students may find it boring to work with horse-oriented mathematics tasks, and that too much vocational-integrated tasks can almost lead to the students' motivation for mathematics decreasing.

Kristina: I think it is important [to find the connection to the students' future vocation]. If they are genuinely interested in the vocation, it is easier to see a connection to their future vocation, then they will find motivation in this. But if they are not really interested in the vocation, there are always such students. Then it absolutely does not help to find connections and it is almost exactly the opposite, they just... ahh, no more horses!

Several teachers also talked about a possible resistance among the students when new vocational-integrated working methods are introduced. According to the

teachers, this resistance may be because for many students mathematics is working with tasks in a mathematics book and some students may therefore feel insecure when new working methods are introduced. Several mathematics teachers described how students can protest and find it difficult to dare to let go of the book at first. For some students, there seems to be a sense of competence in being able to tick off every task they finish in the mathematics book and these students can be stressed when faced with new ways of working that they do not know how to handle. However, those mathematics teachers who have worked with vocational-integrated mathematics for a long time, such as the teacher in the quotation below, have noticed that this is usually only a problem initially. According to the teachers, students get used to the new working methods after a while and realise that they do not have to complete all the tasks in the book to pass the mathematics course.

Interviewer: What do the students think about leaving the maths book and calculating vocationally-integrated mathematics like this?

Pernilla: Yes, it's a little different, but many students think it's more fun. And you get them to understand that yes, you do not have to do all tasks in the maths book from page 1 to 130. This remains from compulsory school that you have to go through the whole book, now I have done 20 tasks it's great! But that is not the thing, the thing is that you have understood what you have done [...]

Interviewer: What have you noticed about the benefits of working with more applied maths then?

Pernilla: They get it faster, they see relationships faster and then they work. [...] Yes, they work better, if you give them this information, they really sit down and work, they can calculate a lot! And also these students who think, uhh maths is really boring. You get them on board this way.

However, it is not just the students' uncertainty or resistance that lies behind the teachers' choice of working methods. Most of the teachers interviewed chose to work with 'traditional' mathematics teaching, which is largely based on the mathematics book, despite the fact that the students often show low motivation. The reasons given by the teachers are that they have a lack of knowledge about the students' vocational orientation, which makes them feel insecure about how they should work with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks. Some teachers also say that they have such a pressured work situation that they do not have time to plan any vocational-integrated mathematics assignments and that it is then easy to use the book. They also see a sense of security in following the content of the mathematics book to know that the students get all parts of the course so they do not risk missing something that comes up in the national tests.

National tests – a factor that can negatively affect motivation

In the interviews with mathematics teachers who work with VET, the national tests are often highlighted as a reason why they do not work with vocational-integrated mathematics. In Sweden, it is mandatory for all students studying VET at upper secondary school to complete a national test in the Mathematics 1a

course. The national test for mathematics is common to all vocational programmes, with general mathematics assignments without a connection to any vocational orientation. In the interviews with the mathematics teachers, it becomes clear that the national tests have a great impact on the design of the mathematics teaching. Several teachers experience stress in connection with the national tests, and feel compelled to let the students practise assignments that they know usually come up in the tests to be sure they will pass.

Interviewer: How do you view the national tests, do they in any way affect your choice of working methods?

Mikael: To the greatest degree! I have to teach them to handle decoded information in that way, how should I explain it now. I have to teach them to handle the questions that are put to them in exactly the way that I know they will do in the national tests.

Teachers therefore feel compelled to prioritise students' learning methods for solving specific contextless tasks assessed in the national tests, instead of learning how to use their mathematical skills to solve tasks that are relevant to their future vocation. However, despite this prioritisation, teachers describe students having difficulties understanding the contextless tasks in the national tests. The problem is not the calculations themselves, but rather the fact that the students are not able to understand what to calculate. Mathematics teacher Per says that the design of the tasks in the national tests makes some students so unmotivated that they do not even try to solve them. One year when many of his students had failed one of the major tasks in the national test, he had the students do a task with the same calculations but put it in a context that the students understood.

Per: In the national test in mathematics a few years ago, I had the vehicle training class. Then they were given a task to calculate the volume of two A4 sheets of paper depending on how you fold them, and then they would do the same thing with A3 and so on. These vehicle training students could not cope with such tasks. But in the lesson after, I said that my car needed a new muffler and then they got the dimensions of the sheet metal. Everyone could figure it out. So it is so clear that it is not so much about poor maths skills but rather about motivation for work.

Some of the interviewed mathematics teachers have worked with vocational-integrated mathematics for many years. These teachers say that in recent years the national tests have increasingly become an obstacle for them to work in a way that they think is favourable for the vocational students' mathematics learning, because there has been more and more of a focus on the results of the national test governing the grading, regardless of whether the students can transform their mathematical knowledge to the vocational context in which they are educated.

Eva: Exactly that! [...] The tasks [in the national test], they are so far from the reality of the profession that we have worked with, so it has not agreed. [...] Then I think that it is better that I work with this kind of maths that the students benefit from than that I have to work with maths that is abstract to many. [...] And then I have thought that I ignore thinking about the questions in the national test. Because if I

work like that, then they will lose interest, they don't think it's fun and then they don't care about it. I have chosen to invest in what I think they will benefit from. But now I feel that people are being questioned more and more about the results of the national tests.

It is worth adding, however, that despite the stress that many teachers feel in connection with the national tests, some teachers – such as Pernilla and Kristoffer, who are quoted above – say that their students have actually performed better in mathematics in general since they started working more with vocational-integrated mathematics. This is explained by the fact that students' motivation for mathematics has increased, which means that they work harder during the lessons, gain a deeper understanding, and learn more mathematics.

Discussion

According to self-determination theory, a sense of meaning together with the three basic needs – the opportunity for independent choices, a sense of competence, and social belonging – are decisive factors for internal motivation. When students apply to upper secondary school, they are given the opportunity to choose education that they are interested in for the first time. Based on SDT, the choice of upper secondary school could be a factor that motivates vocational students to study vocational subjects, as this is usually the reason for the choice of education. However, this choice does not include mathematics, which is a compulsory subject for all upper secondary vocational education and thus cannot be opted out from.

In order to increase motivation, most students in both studies call for more work with vocational-integrated tasks and varied working methods. Both the interviews and the observations show that working with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks can increase students' sense of competence and social participation, because these tasks invite group work and discussions more often than the maths book tasks do (cf. Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002).

According to both students and teachers, working with vocational-integrated tasks can lead to increased understanding and in-depth learning in both mathematics and vocational subjects. The observations also showed that the environment can be important for learning (cf. Fägerstam & Samuelsson, 2014). When the hairdressing students worked with mathematics in a hairdressing salon, they radiated self-confidence and competence in the tasks, and there was considerable social activity involving the students spontaneously helping each other and discussing different solutions to the tasks at a high mathematical level. Working methods whereby students are given the opportunity to discuss mathematical problems and get tips from both classmates and the teacher increase social par-

ticipation and seem to have a positive effect on both students' mathematical ability and their attitude to the subject (cf. Holden, 2001; Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Lindberg, 2003; Otis et al., 2005; Samuelsson, 2008).

However, the interviews show that working with vocational-integrated mathematics assignments does not automatically evoke a feeling of competence or internal motivation in all students. Some students become insecure when new ways of working are introduced, and a transition period may be needed to make students feel confident with the new ways of working. The interview results also show that some students do not intend to work in the profession they are training for. Students have different goals with their education, which is why the opportunity for independent choices appears to be an important motivating factor. The content of the mathematics subject is governed by the syllabus, but it includes significant free space. Within this free space, it is possible to let the selection of tasks be governed by the student's interests to some degree. For example, students can choose the extent to which they want to work with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks, depending on their goals for upper secondary studies. Working methods can also be designed so that students are given as much freedom of choice as possible. As described in the literature review, a person is often affected by both internal and external motivation that can vary over time and between different people (Taylor, 2014). The results show the continuum of internal and external motivation in students, that in different ways affect students' interest in learning mathematics (cf. Ryan & Deci, 2002). Some students think that they learn best by only working with tasks in the mathematics book. Others believe that they learn best and are more motivated if they are allowed to work with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks in the classroom or in a professional context. Some students say that they appreciate lectures and discussions with the whole class. Others say that they feel uncomfortable talking in front of the whole class and instead emphasise that they learn best and are more motivated when they work with other students in smaller groups. In order to find what motivates different students to learn mathematics, mathematics teachers therefore need to familiarise themselves with the students' perspectives and their goals for their studies, in order to give students the opportunity to make independent choices within the subject (cf. Ryan & Deci, 2002).

One factor in both studies that turned out to have a much stronger limitation on the content and design of mathematics lessons than the syllabus was the national tests. In the interviews with the mathematics teachers, it emerged that many feel compelled to work with procedure-oriented teaching with tasks similar to those in the national tests, which reduces the opportunities to work with vocational-integrated mathematics (cf. Petersen, 2012). The national tests can act as an external instrumental motivating factor for some students' learning in mathematics (cf. Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the interviews, the teachers described how students become unmotivated when working with the type of tasks that

come up in the national tests, and several teachers said that they wish they could work in a more vocational-integrated manner to increase students' motivation. However, they feel that they do not have the opportunity to do so because the national tests govern the grading so strongly (cf. Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). The national tests can thus be seen as a factor that risks reducing students' motivation for mathematics because students do not see any relevance in the tasks, while at the same time the possibility of making independent subject choices decreases (cf. Deci & Ryan, 2002; Högberg, 2011; Jungert, 2014; Lindberg, 2010; Schmid et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the need to adapt mathematics teaching to the design of the national tests can be questioned. Interviewed teachers who largely work with vocational-integrated teaching say that their students become better at mathematics because they are more motivated and work harder in the lessons, and thus deepen their learning. This can be compared with the reasoning put forward by Hoachlander (1997), who argues that many calculations made in working life are so advanced that vocational-integrated mathematics teaching can often maintain a high mathematical standard and can thus increase total mathematics learning in a way that prepares students for both professional work and further studies. In both the interviews and the observations, it also emerged that the students' motivation is of great importance for how advanced the mathematical tasks they undertake are. This can be compared to studies by Murayama et al. (2013), which show that motivation is more important than intelligence when it comes to succeeding in mathematics studies.

According to the results presented above, integrating mathematics with working life in different ways so that students see the relevance of the subject seems to be a motivating factor for vocational students' learning in mathematics. Regardless of how mathematics teaching for vocational students is organised, it is important to point out that most researchers in the field believe that mathematics teaching has a broader purpose than teaching students mathematics that is only useful in a certain vocational context. Lindberg (2010), Hoachlander (1997), Frejd and Muhrman (2022) and many other researchers discuss how students can get both the mathematical knowledge they need for their future profession and the general mathematical knowledge needed for everyday life and further studies. However, it is important to have a good balance so that the focus of vocational students' mathematics teaching is not only on mathematics for further studies, which risks reducing students' motivation to learn mathematics, (cf. Svahn, 2006).

Conclusion

Both previous studies and the results reported in this article show that many vocational students lack the motivation to learn mathematics. An important reason for this is that they do not see any relevance to the subject because they have difficulty linking it to their future profession. For many students, a motivating

factor can therefore be to work with vocational-integrated mathematics tasks, preferably in a professional environment so that the tasks are as authentic as possible. This can increase both their sense of competence and social participation, which – together with meaningfulness – are fundamental factors for internal motivation. However, teachers should be aware that all students have different goals for their education, and for students who have not imagined a future in the vocation they are training for, it is not certain that vocational-integrated tasks will be a motivating factor. It is therefore important to give students the opportunity for different choices within the framework of the subject.

Note on contributor

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Being someone or doing something: How students in municipal adult education view their future vocation

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Abstract

Being an adult, deciding what to do with your life, and trying to understand the consequences of educational choices can be difficult. Vocational education and training (VET) programmes within the Swedish municipal adult education (MAE) offer an opportunity to learn a vocation, and last 6–18 months. This study aims to explore how adult VET students perceive desirable vocational habitus and is based on 18 interviews comparing students from two vocational MAE programmes in assistant nursing and floor laying. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the beginning of the students' training and data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. The results show that choosing a VET programme is a process of choosing what you want to do for work but also who you want to be. However, whether or not students see themselves as suitable is contrasted between how they perceive their future vocation and what the vocational community expects from them, which in turn affects their learning process and development of a vocational identity. Noticing the discrepancies between students' perceptions and vocational expectations can both reduce the risk of losing students during training and reduces the risk of reproducing unequal ideals.

Keywords: adult education, vocational education and training, vocational identity, municipal adult education



Introduction

Being an adult, choosing an educational path and at the same time knowing what you will do and who you will become, can be difficult. The municipal adult education (MAE) in Sweden offers multiple opportunities to learn a vocation, allowing participants to fully enter society and/or support a family. Then again, while MAE can offer a way out of unemployment, educational choices can be limited. Furthermore, even though adult students can potentially draw upon a wide array of life experiences and translate them into useful vocational skills (Somerville, 2006), there can still be great educational challenges for students based on their gender, class, or ethnicity (Nitzler & Frykholm, 1993). Additionally, learning a vocation is also about learning a new identity, a process where students' past experiences are in constant negotiation with their hopes for the future (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000).

Also, the choice of a vocational education and training (VET) programme can carry with it the hope of a future job. However, 'vocations have a personal meaning and purposes to which individuals have to assent' (Billett, 2011, p. 59) and that choice is sometimes made without fully knowing what you are getting yourself into, regarding educational, social, and vocational challenges. Furthermore, to be accepted into a vocational community requires more than 'simply' acquiring the necessary skills you need to be able to orient yourself and redirect your thinking in line with professional expectations; i.e. developing a vocational habitus (Colley et al., 2003). In this process, potential gaps between school (or workplace) expectations and the student's conditions and abilities run the risk of students perceiving themselves as unsuitable for vocational training (Rehn & Eliasson, 2015). Some of these gaps are present even from the very beginning of training, as students can be expected to already possess skills that they hope to learn through training (Lagercrantz All, 2017).

There is a wide array of research on VET, identity formation and vocational becoming (Colley et al., 2003; Colliander, 2018; Fjellström, 2017; Kristmansson, 2016), although research that focuses on adult students and their challenges is scarce (Assarsson & Sipos-Zackrisson, 2005; Lagercrantz All, 2017; Sandberg, 2016). Adult learners who are learning a vocation and developing a vocational identity face different challenges due to differing effects on their orientation processes, and due to different life situations and life experiences (Lagercrantz All, 2017). The aim of this study is therefore to explore how adult VET students perceive a desirable vocational habitus within their future vocation. To gain a broad picture of students' perceptions this was done by interviewing one group of assistant nurse students and one group of floor layer students at the start of their VET (1–2 months after their training began). The questions underlying the interviews were:

- How do students describe an ideal worker within their respective contexts?
- How do students perceive what it means to be a worker in their vocation?
- What similarities and differences are there between the assistant nurses' and the floor layer students' perceptions?

Context of the study

Lifelong learning is critical for adults to create opportunities for employment and equality as adult education can help individuals grow both professionally and personally (OECD, 2021). The demands for new skills in a global changing society has made policy-makers to increasingly view VET as a way to solve emerging skill imbalances (Cedefop, 2022). In Sweden, one of the largest organisers of adult education is MAE which has existed since 1968 and has a threefold function: a compensatory function, a civic and democratic function, and a labour-market function. Studying within MAE is free, entitling the student to study support, and many municipalities also offer MAE to those with previous education who want to study VET to change profession. Municipalities must offer MAE to anyone over the age of 20 who has not completed compulsory school, as well as to those who want to complete their upper secondary education or to improve their grades to become eligible for higher education (Swedish National Agency of Education [SNAE], 2017).

Since 2016, Swedish for immigrants (SFI) has been a part of MAE, which has meant that there is a larger number of students in MAE than in upper secondary school. As of 2021, MAE included 413,590 students (SNAE, 2022). Today, one-third of those who study in MAE at the upper secondary level, which includes vocational education, are foreign-born. In many cases, vocational MAE plays a significant role in integration and many students combine SFI studies with vocational education, which is expected to reduce the time needed to become established in the labour market (Andersson & Muhrman, 2019). The organisation of MAE also have difficulties since policy is decided on a national level where the individual needs of students are challenged by local practice, seeking to solve challenges regarding labour market and integration (Muhrman & Andersson, 2022).

MAE courses at the upper secondary level have the same syllabus as the courses taught in upper secondary school. VET in upper secondary school is usually organised into three-year programmes with 'classic school courses' (languages, maths, social sciences, etc.) mixed in with VET. MAE courses can, however, be organised as different course packages similar to programmes in upper secondary school, tailored to specific occupations though usually without 'classic school courses' and lasting roughly 6–18 months (SNAE, 2021). For the purpose

of simplification, MAE course packages will henceforth be referred to as ‘programmes’.

VET within MAE

To meet the shortage of assistant nurses (AN), almost all municipalities that conduct MAE in Sweden offer AN training. Because of this, eight of the ten MAE courses with the largest numbers of participants at the national level are courses that are included in different AN programmes. MAE students, as a group, are heterogeneous and many of those who start studying drop out before the end of the course. However, of the five most frequently-completed courses within MAE, all are included in programmes resulting in an AN degree (SNAE, 2018). Between 2008 and 2013, MAE accounted for about half of those who trained within the framework of care and nursing (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2015). As with AN, floor laying (FL) training is described as an occupation with a shortage of workers and good job opportunities for those who complete the training, although fewer municipalities offer FL training.

Both programmes can be provided as ‘regular’ programmes where a large part of the training takes place in school, and a minor part is work-based learning (usually at least 15%). They can also be offered as apprenticeship programmes where a major part of their training (at least 70%) is in the form of work-based learning.

Developing a vocational identity: Analytical framework

Identity

In this article, the concept of identity plays a central role in students’ vocational development. Identity, in this context, is defined as *how and what individuals identify themselves with*, as well as what they *wish* to be identified with (Billett, 2010). For this, the student’s view of what a vocation entails and represents is paramount. Like Wenger (1998) points out, identity can be viewed as a ‘multi-membership’, which stresses that individuals belong to many different communities, being full members of some and more peripheral members of others. All these communities contribute to the construction of a person’s full identity in one way or another and when interacting with different practices students’ identities are in constant change. Though some individuals’ identity and their *preferred sense of self* may not be a key concern at all (Alvesson & Robertson, 2015), interaction with practices could take the form of developing knowledge, skills, language, etc., that are valued within different communities, which helps the person to move from peripheral to increasingly central participation. When participating in different communities, individuals reveal different parts of their identities, behave differently, and take on different perspectives as a way of coordinating their identity.

Moreover, even an ambivalent entry in an occupational practice through happenchance can create strong vocational identities (Chan, 2019). Different parts of individuals' identities also affect each other and participating in different communities can also be seen as a process where one might exercise one's sense of self (or one's subjective disposition) within a practice (Billett & Pavlova, 2005); e.g., to assert a vocational identity as a rhetorical tool to increase credibility.

A vocational identity is in constant negotiation, in which the student's previous experiences and hopes for the future are set against one another (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2010). This implies that learning is not only about acquiring new knowledge, but it can also be a process of developing vocational language and behaviours, which stands in contrast to the individual's history and how they saw themselves. It should be noted that even though identity can be analysed from an individual's almost spiritual or existential perspective, all identities are social identities since identification is, in one way or another, a matter of meaning and interaction (Jenkins, 2008).

Communities of practice and vocational habitus

Lave and Wenger (1991) write that an 'analysis of school learning as situated requires a multi-layered view of how knowing and learning are part of a social practice' (p. 40). The focus of Communities of Practice (CoP) is in itself more on informal learning rather than formal learning in education (Wenger, 2010). However, the CoP perspective fails to acknowledge what newcomers bring to a specific community, especially when the newcomers themselves are adults and might be considered 'old-timers' in another context (Fuller et al., 2005). Furthermore, individuals develop and modify their whole person by participating in a new CoP, something that neither Lave and Wenger (1991) nor Wenger (1998) recognised in a satisfactory way, according to Fuller et al. (2005). One such aspect is students' habitus, which influences both their image of their (possible) future vocation and their ability to complete their training.

By using the term 'vocational habitus' and placing the students' vocational views in relation to a wider social structure, their educational prerequisites are nuanced in a way that is otherwise more difficult for CoP, especially regarding different aspects of socioeconomic power and inequalities. The concept of habitus originates from Bourdieu and is admittedly geared towards social practices rather than vocations, but it is still well suited to studying vocations (Carlhed, 2011). Social structures in the form of principles generate and organise practices and can be adopted by individuals even without a conscious goal of adopting a habitus (Bourdieu, 1992). As a concept, habitus can be used to examine how collective experiences are embodied in individuals by, for example, analysing what individuals notice and what is appreciated (Bourdieu, 1984). Or, as Broady (1998) writes:

The individuals (or groups) bring with them a system of dispositions, a habitus, that allows them to generate, on the basis of a limited number of principles, their ways of acting, thinking, perceiving and valuing what is required in specific social contexts. Their actions, thoughts, perceptions and values are not direct imprints of external relations, but a result of the encounter between people's habitus and the social context in which they develop. (Broady, 1998, p. 18) [my translation]

In a strict Bourdieusian perspective, habitus is durable and difficult to change, in this article, the term vocational habitus is used similarly to Colley et al. (2003), who studied class, gender, and the role of vocational habitus in VET. They believe that students who aim to enter a vocational community will be transformed in accordance with the vocational or educational culture of their chosen profession. Rehn and Eliasson (2015), who studied health and social care teachers' conceptions of vocational knowledge, also use vocational habitus to illuminate 'health and social care teachers' conceptions of desirable vocational knowledge, not the actual habitus of individuals' (p. 564). When we add vocational habitus to the CoP perspective, students' past experiences are nuanced by capturing underlying structures. This is especially important to consider because this study focuses on adult individuals who have different life experiences at the beginning of their training.

The learning process that students face, however, is about more than learning new things to solve tasks and fit into a CoP. As Lensjø (2020), who studied plumbing apprentices, notes, becoming a craftsman has more to do with the 'individual's embodied perceptions of things' (p. 163) than imitation. The learning process is also an active process of restructuring one's thinking and more about adopting a, or orienting one's, vocational habitus to be in line with vocational requirements, than it is about developing a new habitus. Furthermore, the image of a desirable vocational habitus must be something that students think they can manage:

The vocational habitus must be a 'choosable' identity for the individual, one that falls within their 'horizons for action'. Students must have social and family backgrounds, individual preferences and life experiences that predispose them to orientate to the vocational habitus and become 'right for the job' [...] However, although such predisposition is *necessary*, it is not *sufficient*, and much identity-work still remains to be done. (Colley et al., 2003, p. 488)

Thus, having the right background is not everything. In addition, Hågerström (2004) describes how students' attitudes toward education are influenced by their class background, in combination with aspects such as gender and ethnicity. It is also not necessarily the case that there is *one* vocational habitus that applies to the entire vocation. Klope (2015), who studied the professional life of upper secondary vocational students as hairdressers exemplifies this by the fact that different hairdressing habitus is expected between an old hairdresser salon, a trendy inner-city salon, and the school itself.

Initially, the students' backgrounds and habitus may differ slightly, but they will either undergo a form of mental homogenisation during their training or risk being 'weeded out' (Nitzler & Frykholm, 1993). In school they may also find that teachers' demands on them extends to their attitudes, which is not always evident in the curricula (Hvitved, 2014). Becoming the right person for the job is also a process fraught with contradictions, and Colley et al. (2003) point out that a student will encounter two images of desirable habitus, an idealised (and unattainable) habitus and a realised habitus, and realise that there is a constant tug-of-war between them. They exemplify how an image of a realised habitus is constructed through the practice of care, where a certain amount of 'harshness' is needed, which is set against the idealised habitus of 'loving care' in caring professions. They believe that students must reconcile these two images and not choose one over the other, as an overly-idealised image can result in students not being able to do the job and an overly-realised one makes them appear harsh. This is also pointed out by Thunborg (1999), who, in a study about learning in occupational identities in healthcare and medical services, writes that the ideal images of vocational identities – which are constantly set against the demands and logic of everyday activities – are difficult to live up to.

Learning the right ideals

Orienting oneself toward a vocational habitus can be likened to learning a vocational identity or trying to comply with vocational ideals. However, what these ideals are, and their places of origin can be complicated. In VET, ideals also become closely linked to specific practices within vocations and can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint. Thunborg (1999) shows that vocational identities have different characteristics in different branches of healthcare. For example, at an anaesthesia clinic, readiness for action may be more prominent, while patience predominates at a health centre. The ideals that make up a vocational habitus can be fairly abstract attributes, such as respectability, which Huppertz (2010) highlights in a study about normality, morality, impression management, and esteem in nursing and social work. Or they could consist of more concrete traits like empathy, communication skills, and having a good attitude (Rehn & Eliasson, 2015). As Carter (2014), who studied altruism in nursing, pointed out, desirable ideals can also be linked to motives, such as being motivated by altruistic reasons.

The perception of what counts as important knowledge, what ideals should be achieved or what is 'right' are influenced by aspects such as gender, class, and ethnicity (Carter, 2014; Huppertz, 2010; Rehn & Eliasson, 2015). For example, Huppertz (2010) stresses that respectability is both feminised and classed. In addition, Huppertz and Goodwin (2013), who studied gender capital and masculinised and feminised jobs, show that both men and women contribute to feminising and masculinising vocations because femininity and masculinity can be perceived as necessary resources in different vocations. This also means that both

men and women continue to reproduce societal structures, even though they are unequal. This can be compared to the work of Skeggs (1997), who studied formations of class and gender and suggests that those who define the ideal image, such as 'old-timers' in a CoP context, also become objects of their own classification, which in turn creates a self-replicating culture within the vocation. The fact that professionals themselves control their ideals can also result in the exploitation of those who aspire to a specific vocational ideal; for example, by being expected to do unpaid work in order to live up to said vocational ideals.

The right habitus

What the right habitus is and how someone learns it can be difficult to define even within a specific CoP. The students in Skeggs' (1997) study pursued a vocational ideal, the caring self, which was framed as 'a caring self is a practical, not an academic self' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 59). In other words, developing the *right* vocational habitus, according to these students, is something that happens in action, not by reading books. This can certainly be seen as a strategy to overcome past negative educational experiences (Skeggs, 1997). However, Somerville (2006) concluded that different types of learning take place within VET for workers in elderly care and that knowledge acquired within the educational context could come into conflict with that of experienced professionals within the vocational CoP. This is also noted by Klope (2015), who argues that the vocational expectations conveyed in school differ from those expected from professionals. Similar to this is Ferm (2021), who studies vocational students' thoughts about knowledge in relation to vocational identity formation and draws attention to a divide between theoretical and practical knowledge, or academic and vocational knowledge. According to Ferm (2021) students valued practical/vocational knowledge, and their identity formation was more inclined to align with norms within the workplace than school. Furthermore, as Lensjø (2020) notes, the theoretical/practical divide can lead to misunderstandings and a lack of coherent learning, although misunderstandings can be solved through practice (as in through performing in everyday work).

Regarding the potential gap between school and vocational expectations, teachers play an important role, and Rehn and Eliasson (2015) believe that there may be a problem with the ideals conveyed within VET. For example, many AN students are foreign-born with a working-class background, while their teachers (who are more likely to have a background as nurses) represent a feminine middle-class ideal. In addition, since AN's identities are oriented towards patients and nursing, while those of nurses turn towards multifunctionality and coordination (Thunborg, 1999), there is also a risk that the ideals conveyed consist of nurses' perception of the AN vocation, rather than those of teachers originating from AN as a vocation (Rehn & Eliasson, 2015).

The teachers in Rehn and Eliasson's (2015) study highlight empathy, communication, and a pleasant attitude as important knowledge, and some even highlight that the *right* vocational habitus is something you carry with you rather than something you can learn. Lagercrantz All (2017), who studied adult learners' experiences of health and social care education in MAE, also mentions that personal competencies, such as empathy and social agility, are crucial for determining whether or not students complete their studies. The students' perception of the *right* vocational habitus is also positioned in relation to the image they have of themselves. Rehn and Eliasson (2015) note that too big a step between a student's habitus and the expected vocational habitus can make the student perceive it as unsuitable, or see themselves as unsuitable. This is also noted by Wenger (2010), who argues that when learning is at its best, the distance between students' experiences and new skills must not be perceived as either too great or too small. However, since orienting personal habitus toward vocational habitus is a process, it is also important to note how these ideals are conveyed; in particular, whether the process of vocational socialisation is prioritised over skills development (Nitzler & Frykholm, 1993). In addition, within VET that focuses on skills acquisition, Chan (2014), who studied bakers' apprenticeships, noted the importance of including students' attainment of a sense of craftsmanship within VET and that a craftsmanship ideal can be conceptualised when students engage in vocational activities or meet teachers.

When starting VET, some students face greater challenges than others regarding their vocational development, based on their individual habitus. As Lagercrantz All (2017) points out, skills that students expect to learn may be things that they are expected to already possess. On the other hand, Assarsson and Sipos-Zackrisson (2005), who studied how identities are created in adult education, point out that different identities are related to both individuals' life situations and their studies and that students demonstrate different social repertoires in relation to their studies, such as making a living, learning, earning credits, and self-realisation. This means that adults, compared to students in upper secondary education, generally have access to other repertoires that can be useful in a VET context. Being older also generally comes with more experience, both positive and negative. On this point, Somerville (2006) argues that trainees understand their life experiences in terms of skills that are in line with care work, which means that even seemingly negative life experiences can have positive uses.

Through combining CoP and vocational habitus, this study's contribution springs from shedding light on adult students' perceptions of their future vocation at the beginning of their training. Since they face a shorter period of time to develop a vocational identity compared to students in upper secondary school (1.5–2 years shorter), this study broadens the understanding of how adult stu-

dents' perceived desirable vocational habitus affects their vocational identity development. The aim of this study is to explore how adult VET students perceive a desirable vocational habitus within their future vocation. As shown, previous research on formal VET often focuses on upper secondary school which means that adult learning experiences and adults' prerequisites (such as having different experiences, life situations, and thoughts about the future than, for example, upper secondary school students) could have been missed, which this study draws attention to. The concept of habitus also allows for a more nuanced focus on learning a vocational identity within the CoP perspective. It can draw attention to potential challenges in 'learning a new vocational identity' that can be seen as a process of realigning one's own identity. In addition, learning skills can also be discussed in relation to learning different ideals in different vocational contexts.

Method

The aim of this study is to explore how adult VET students perceive a desirable vocational habitus and the data is based on qualitative interviews with adult AN and FL students (from two different schools) at the beginning of their education within the MAE. The students in this study are a mixed group in terms of vocational, educational, and life experiences and the two schools were selected based mainly on accessibility. To get a broad perspective on VET within MAE the programmes were chosen based on pedagogical structures and whether the programme was female- or male-dominated, assistant nursing being female-dominated, and floor laying being largely dominated by men. Structurally, AN training is relatively theoretical in character, spanning 1.5 years and students spend a lot of time in traditional classrooms (though with some work-based learning spread across the three semesters of the programme). The FL training lasts a little over one year and is structured more like an apprenticeship with a lot of school-based activities occurring in a workshop and students crossing over to work-based learning when the teacher deems them ready.

Interviews were conducted at the beginning of the training programmes; in spring 2019 for AN students and autumn 2019 for FL students. A total of 18 initial interviews were conducted, ten from a group of AN students that were interested in participating in the study (eight women, two men); and eight students from the FL programme (all men), which comprised the entire class. All interviews were conducted with students at their respective schools. The interviews were semi-structured, with relatively open questions that offered informants a chance to develop their answers during the interview and varied between 20 and 50 minutes in length. The interview guide consisted of 14 questions distributed between five themes, covering questions about the informant, routes into MAE, educational goals, vocational competence, and vocational identity.

Written approval from all informants was collected, and informants received both written and oral information about the purpose of the study, confirming that all data would be confidential and that they had the right to end their participation in the study at any time. Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone, anonymised, and transferred to a joint storage server, in accordance with guidelines for information security at Linköping University.

Interviews were transcribed in their entirety and then analysed independently using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2016; Clarke & Braun, 2017). Each interview was given equal attention and the coding process sought to identify how adult VET students perceive desirable vocational habitus within their future vocation. Empirical data were processed and subsequently categorised and then rearranged in order to elicit distinct themes and visualise different phenomena regarding how students perceive their future vocations. These themes were interpreted and described in text supported by quotations and compilations from the interviews. A CoP perspective and a vocational habitus perspective were afterwards used together with previous research in order to discuss and analyse the results in the discussion section.

Results

In this section I will discuss the results under the following themes. The first theme is *who are you supposed to be*, where students' responses have been interpreted in relation to a sense of belonging and whether their vocation is perceived as something 'that you are' or if it is something that 'you do'. *Students' image of society's perception of their vocation* is a theme focused on how students experience how society views their vocation. The third theme is *what you are supposed to do*, where I explore students' views on general tasks and knowledge that they have perceived are important for their chosen vocation. These results do not claim to show that all AN or FL students think the same way. To this end, individuals' statements are not necessarily represented in all themes, nor is it the case that all themes can be attributed to all students.

Who are you supposed to be?

Students have an idea of the expectations that will be placed on them, in that they have an image of what (or who) they will become. This includes notions as to how they should think and act, as is the case for Amir, who perceives the AN vocation as something for healthy people. Amir explains:

- Interviewer: Then I wonder, do you feel like an assistant nurse?
Amir: No, not right now. First you have to stop smoking. The other thing is, like, you kind of have to be healthy, that's not me.

Students from both programmes describe the images of their vocation in terms of who to be and what to do; however, certain differences emerge. The image of AN is broad and multifaceted, and is described in terms of social, moral, and almost virtuous ideals. This is in stark contrast to the more instrumental image of FL which is narrower and collected into a production-oriented and aesthetic focus. However, what applies to both student groups is that there are students who identify with the vocation from the start of the course and that they already have a sense of vocational belonging; especially those AN students with prior work experience as ANs. But the feeling of belonging can also be seen among FL students. As Filip puts it:

Well, when I put my pants on, maybe I feel like a floor layer, otherwise not quite so much... I probably wouldn't be so cocky that I go and ask someone if I should lay their floor, but more and more I feel like a floor layer.

The assistant nurse: Something you are

According to the students' image of the AN vocation, the AN should be nice, want to help people, be caring, attentive, sympathetic, responsible, helpful, kind and honest. The AN's work is based on emotions, they should be able to help people with everyday chores and must be resistant to stress, because there is a lot to be done in a short time. The AN cannot say 'that's not my job' and must be able to assume responsibility and perform basic medical examinations in order to report to doctors or nurses. The AN helps people with their lives and that means they should get a lot of respect, and where they work does not matter.

Anna stressed that being an AN means doing what is right, even if the rules are sometimes bent. She also mentioned that the AN vocation is tough, both physically and mentally, and that one should have an 'unpretentious' relationship with oneself and one's abilities. Abena also expressed the following:

Maybe they don't want help from me? Then, maybe, I have to change my perspective, or ask myself 'why don't they want help from me?' Is it because of my language skills, or how I approach them? I have to find out and if that's difficult, I will ask my colleagues if there's anyone better than me.

At a more down-to-earth level, there are other aspects that are expected of ANs and expressed in different forms of approaches, attitudes, or patterns of action. Students pointed out different kinds of expectations in the form of rules; e.g., that an AN is expected to greet people, speak with kindness, and not use their phone at work (to show you are socially present). The AN must also be socially engaged, with all that this entails; it is not a task that can be carried out mechanically. Amir says that 'to become a good nurse, AN, or doctor, one must listen to the patient. Not because it's your job but because you want to help others.' The students pointed out that you can learn social attitudes, rules, behaviours, or communicative methods, but if you lack an interest in the social context, it will be difficult.

The floor layer: Something you do

Students stressed that the main thing with FL is that a FL should primarily be knowledgeable about what they do, that is, lay floors. In general, the ideal FL was described in two major categories; being a good floor layer and a good colleague; and being able to do your job in a careful way. In addition to this, floor laying is established in relation to the larger vocational group of craftsmen. Being an FL is about laying floors, but 'a good craftsman' follows a more aesthetic ideal and performs careful work. Florim also stresses:

A good craftsman is someone who can do a proper job, it doesn't have to be someone who needs to be quick, perhaps, the fastest is not always the best job, but it must always be correct, there are those who take time but still do an excellent job.

Another aspect that was pointed out was that a good colleague should not be too 'serious' about being late, which can be contrasted with other students' opinions on the importance of arriving on time. As a good colleague, the ideal FL should be able to cooperate because they usually work together with someone else; a FL should be good company, easy-going and fun, and smile readily. In relation to characteristics, a good colleague should offer help to those who need it without feeling uneasy or stressed, but one should not be so proud that help is rejected when offered. The students also pointed out that they want to be able to stand on their own two feet in their professional role; they want to be able to be independent and not be a burden in the workplace. They have to be competent enough to be able to work without help and also to be able to work together with someone else. To achieve this, one should have a humble relationship with one's own and one's colleagues' shortcomings. As Fatos expressed it:

Help the others if they need help, if they say 'no I don't have to', then you're not being annoying. If someone says to me 'you can't do that or that', if that person wants to help, just tell him. Don't be mean to the other one or say, as I've heard in this group, 'you're not my teacher, get out of here, you can't help me' or something. If you do, you're not a good colleague.

In addition, there were many students who cited the teacher as an example when describing what the FL vocation requires. As Freidoon explained 'you listen to the teacher and come [to school] every day and try to do it yourself.' Florim also describes what characterises good knowledge:

Well, it's knowing what you're talking about, like, knowing the different things. You notice that with the teacher, he knows what he's talking about. It's not like he's only saying that he knows, he can do it as well, it's not just theoretical, you know, everything he talked about, he did in practice.

The teacher is thus in a unique position and, according to the students, it is the teacher who guides students along the path towards both knowledge and the CoP.

Students' image of society's perception of their vocation

When asked how they think people in general view their future vocation, students' responses differed considerably. All the AN students had an idea of what the AN vocation entails before they applied for vocational training, and some had prior experience in health and social care. The FL vocation, on the other hand, is a relatively isolated vocation and most students had encountered it for the first time at a local MAE fair.

How AN students perceived the public's view of their profession can be divided into two broad categories, a positive image or a negative image; i.e., that people in general view AN as a vocation with either high or low status. Amanda mentions:

I think people see it as very lame, it's very low [status], there's nurses and doctors and there's a lot above... I know for myself, before I wanted to be an AN, I thought AN was a very... lame profession, that's, like, not much more than, ah, wiping the elderly.

Amanda, as well as other students, was aware of the hierarchy in healthcare and that the AN is a long way down the proverbial ladder. However, some argued that the AN profession is viewed with high regard since an AN is knowledgeable, helpful, kind, and nice. On the other hand, wiping poop was a recurring theme; it should also be added that Fatos chose FL instead of AN because he did not want work that entailed 'wiping poop'.

Since FL was something new to students, most of their images of society's perception of the vocation were close to what their own image had been a few months earlier. Filip pointed out that since he had had no direct idea of what FL was, it is probably the same for people in general. Regarding status, Firash thought that FL has just the right amount of status; not too high and not too low, and he compared FL to high-level jobs:

I called my mother and told her I wanted to be a floor layer, and she said, 'no you have to study, you have to become a doctor' and stuff. But in Sweden, it's not like that, in Sweden you can do anything you want. Parents just want you to get a university degree, those who [do] make good money.

In the eyes of the students, FL seems to have an intermediate societal position. On the one hand, there are those who look down on floor layers because of their 'dirty clothes', but on the other hand there are those who see FL as an important vocation because they must undergo training. There are also aspects of unclear boundaries between FL and other vocations within building and construction; for example, Florim, who believes that the reason people do not have any particular ideas regarding FL is because they are generally lumped together with carpenters or 'people who work in building and construction'.

What you are supposed to do

In relation to their future working life, students had an idea of what tasks are performed and what knowledge is expected. Students from both programmes described 'practical tasks'; in the sense of working with their hands or with people and not, for example, sitting at a computer. However, FL students had a clearer position, stating that they had chosen a practical programme, not a theoretical one, while AN students had chosen a vocation in which they would help people. In addition, among students (of both groups) who were not raised in Sweden, language was highlighted as one of the most important skills to learn in school, in relation to both their vocation and their education. Being able to communicate well in Swedish was also related to social contexts in both school and working life and in their social life in general.

What the AN vocation entails is exemplified in a quote from Abena, who says that ANs should 'help others who can't take care of themselves'. Many students just pointed out 'helping with everyday chores', which could be described at a more general level, but it was difficult for students to pinpoint exactly what this meant. Abas summed this up by saying 'it's a difficult question... to do everything right', but also that not everyone does everything right. Furthermore, when students described how to perform different tasks, various aspects of 'helping the elderly' emerged, connected to personal attributes like *being kind* or the importance of language and communication. However, when describing what was most important about their education, they aligned more closely with the content of the courses they were studying than with AN tasks. When asked about what they thought of the teacher's opinion as important knowledge, Abas said:

When we have medicine class, we talk about the body and how it works, what organs we have and their tasks. In psychology, we talk about the psyche and nerves, that you learn so you don't get scared. In health and social care, it's about how you work, what you do, when to change clothes, when to change gloves, when you shower, when you wash your hands.

The FL students described the FL vocation as an easy and fun type of job. They emphasised that anyone can become a floor layer because FL is 'practical work' where 'practical knowledge' is important and the main focus is on coping with tasks, framed by preparatory work and the end product of floor laying; i.e., sealing, grinding, gluing, attaching, welding, etc. Practical knowledge was described as working with the body, which was set against sitting still and reading books, as Florim puts it: 'It's a craftsmanship vocation, so it's like any other craftsmanship vocation, a bit more practical, not so much of just sitting around'. Being able to work with your hands and being able to move around when working was strongly linked to what these students considered a fun job. But it is also fun to learn new skills, a sentiment expressed by Filip:

It's been fun, educational and fun. On Sundays, in some weird way I almost can't wait for Monday. It's a kind of feeling I've never felt before, really! At least not at my last job and not at school either, but now I'm going to think like this, 'damn it's going to be fun to come here tomorrow and spackle or polish'; basically, I've learned, it's been fun, and I've learned to do a lot more than I could before I arrived.

Along the same lines, Firash argued that anyone can become a floor layer and also argued that it is an easy job because you do not have to 'read and write a lot of things'. The students do not, however, mention whether FL work is fun because it is easy or whether FL work is easy because it is fun. However, activities are divided in such a way that practice is fun, and theory is something that is harder to cope with. Firash mentions:

We don't have a lot of theory and I don't have to read a book; I'm tired of reading books, I did four years of language introduction and every day we needed to write short stories and stuff; I can't take it anymore, writing.

However, theoretical knowledge, as derived from foundational subjects within upper secondary education (such as mathematics and Swedish), are attributed valuable because they have vocational importance. Florim even described mathematics as the most valuable knowledge he gained during his FL training.

Discussion

The aim of this study is to explore how adult VET students perceive desirable vocational habitus. Through a thematic analysis of how adult students describe their vocational expectations, desirable knowledge, and what relevant tasks are performed, a discussion about vocational habitus can be brought into relationship with students' habitus. Within the MAE context, students' perceptions of their vocation become particularly interesting because adult individuals have a myriad of life experiences and identity belongings, or 'multi-memberships' in different CoPs (Wenger, 1998). One key result shows that students' development of vocational identities was in transition, even though they were only at the beginning of their training. Because they are adults, they have life experiences that can help them in their vocational becoming in ways that upper secondary school students do not. However, they also face educational or vocational expectations that can prove difficult. Unlike previous studies with a focus on upper secondary VET (e.g., Ferm, 2021; Klope, 2015), this study contributes a focus on adults in adult education. The results show that the process of vocational identity formation among adults is affected by factors other than what young people are affected by, such as the breadth of various life situations, life experiences, and work experience.

Again, students are at the beginning of their training, and they exist in the periphery rather than being fully situated in the vocational CoP (Lave & Wenger,

1991; Wenger, 1998). The fact that students were at the beginning of their programme would argue against the idea that they had already been shaped by their training. On the other hand, since habitus can be seen as embodied collective experiences within individuals (Bourdieu, 1992), what students define as right and proper for their vocation are examples of how social structures in the field have been reproduced (Carlhed, 2011). In addition, different identity belongings affect each other (Billett & Pavlova, 2005) and as the results show, students' lives and previous professional experiences had already given them an idea of the ideals they were expected to achieve. In this article, within the framework of AN training, this is discussed in relation to a 'caring' ideal, and concerning FL training, it is discussed in relation to a 'craftsmanship' ideal; or in terms of learning ideals as creating a caring/craftsman subject.

Another noticeable difference in the results is that the AN vocation is more about being, while FL is more about doing. AN students in this study described the image of the ideal AN as someone who should both be and act in the right way. For example, you should not have to reason your way to the conclusion that you should act morally; you should be moral and moral actions should come naturally. AN students also related to vocational expectations in the form of social engagement, interest, and being kind. FL students instead described FL work in terms of doing, you should do things in a certain way and your relationship to the doing of things is less important. This is in line with how previous research has described a feminised gendered subject; the idealised, altruistic version of the self-sacrificing caring woman who is 'fit' for care work (Carter, 2014; Rehn & Eliasson, 2015; Somerville, 2006). However, these ideals arrive at different levels of abstraction, which run the risk of reproducing ideals that allow for exploitation; often in the form of being expected to do unpaid work in order to live up to them (Hvitved, 2014; Skeggs, 1997; Thunborg, 1999). In the form of abstract ideals, vocational expectations can also be seen among the FL students, but here in terms of 'being a good colleague.' The ideals connected to 'being a good colleague' are, however, described more in the form of action patterns than instinctive approaches, which shifts the focus towards more masculine-gendered subjectivities.

Orient yourself or be filtered out

That students in this study have varied backgrounds regarding vocational, educational, and life experiences is advantageous, as adult learners' life experiences can be translated into useful vocational skills (Somerville, 2006). There is, however, a risk that students will fail to orient themselves towards desirable vocational habitus (Nitzler & Frykholm, 1993). Especially since there can be vocational skills that students are expected to already possess when they start training (Lagercrantz All, 2017). The results show that both AN and FL students are not

blank sheets, ready to be filled with knowledge in a straight trajectory from training through permanent employment. Instead, they already have an idea of what their vocation entails from their first day, even if the scope differs between AN and FL students. Regarding this, Colley et al. (2003) argue that a vocational habitus must be a 'choosable' identity, based on the student's circumstances; and the students in this study have, to some degree, already chosen a vocational identity, in the sense that they have chosen a VET programme associated with that identity. However, the process of developing a vocational identity is in constant negotiation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000) where past experiences stand in relation to future expectations. Furthermore, even though having the 'right' background and individual preferences creates the conditions for students to begin their orientations towards vocational habitus, it will not be enough to develop a full vocational identity (Colley et al., 2003). As Wenger (2010) argues, the best type of learning occurs when the distance between the students' previous experiences and their perception of what is to be learned is just right. Therefore, due to the risk of exclusion, the students' image of a desirable vocational habitus plays a particularly important role in pedagogical activities.

The results have identified different aspects of how students perceive what it means to be a member of their vocation. In terms of idealised and realised images, AN students in this study seem to have an idealised starting view of their vocation, based on the moral aspects of perceived desirable vocational habitus. In this, a potential gap may arise between their idealised image and the logic of vocational everyday activities. There also seems to be a potential risk in FL students' images, albeit one that takes a different form. As FL students describe a narrow and production-orientated image, their image seems to be more focused on the realised work of laying floors and is less focused on more idealised aspects. Besides this gap becoming a potential pedagogical problem in itself, there is also the importance of the students finding a balance between the two ideals in order to neither fail to do what is necessary nor to appear 'harsh' in the future exercise of their vocation (Colley et al., 2003).

Skills that kill

Both student groups define their vocation as a practical subject, not an academic one, as Skeggs (1997) identified. There is also a divide between theoretical and practical knowledge similar to the one identified by Ferm (2021), even though this divide may not be as noticeable in MAE VET as in upper secondary VET (since MAE VET mostly includes VET courses). This in turn allows for the development of a more practically-oriented repertoire (Assarsson & Sipos-Zackrisson, 2005). However, this is more evident among FL students, who emphasise the practical self and distance themselves from an academic self.

Among those born and raised outside Sweden, language is mentioned as one of the most important skills they have learned during their training, regarding

both their training, future vocation, and social life. Concerning the management of working life, language impairments in themselves may not be the problem, as they can instead be based more on racism or xenophobia than on language difficulties.

Both student groups stated that skills acquisition and socialisation are important for vocational development, although AN students found a balance between the two while FL students placed a predominant focus on skills acquisition. However, becoming a part of their vocational CoP implies that students move from a periphery to an increasingly central role (Wenger, 1998) and regarding this process, both groups face potential future challenges. AN students described a caring ideal from a distinctly idealised perspective and will need to nuance this with a realistic image if they intend to manage their working lives (Colley et al., 2003). On the other hand, although the FL students' teacher seemed to conceptualise a craftsmanship ideal, their straightforward idea of skills acquisition may pose a problem if they fail to grasp the social aspects of the vocation, or if they fail to develop a clear craftsmanship ideal (Chan, 2014).

Conclusion

This study shows that students can have well-developed and complex images of their future vocation at the beginning of their training. Students can thus have an idea of who they will be from their first day of training; however, these perceptions can function both as hindrances and as advantages in the development of their vocational identities. An awareness of vocational habitus in the VET programmes could open up a pedagogical discussion between VET teachers about how students' perceptions of vocational requirements and actual vocational demands can be balanced. By extension, this can also be of importance for supervisors in workplace-based learning and in a wider sense regarding how the labour market treats 'adult newcomers'. A key aspect of this is that they are adults, adults with experiences that should neither be overestimated nor underestimated. A good balance between students' expectations and the requirements of education/vocation could help create better opportunities for learning (Wenger, 2010), reduce the risk of 'weeding out' students (Nitzler & Frykholm, 1993) or of reproducing unequal ideals (Chan, 2014).

Regarding the limitations of the study, it should be emphasised that one can never make gross generalisations about qualitative research. In addition, critical reflection can be directed toward the study, in that interviews do not necessarily capture students' thinking, but rather how students choose to present their thoughts and ideas. The process of developing a vocational identity consists of countless smaller steps of change and transition, and using the concept of vocational habitus in combination with CoP allows for a more nuanced focus on the process itself. This study shows that how adult VET students perceive desirable

vocational habitus also says something about the identity they perceive themselves to be forming and developing. The image they have of their vocation can impact how they learn their vocation. By using vocational habitus this study broadens the CoP perspective and places students' images of the vocation in a larger context than their own personal history and future. Furthermore, the aspect of 'learning' in a CoP context can also be expanded as a learning process that can be seen as a process of realigning oneself in relation to a perceived ideal; a process that may be easier or more difficult depending on students' background. This can be particularly useful for studies of adults, as their backgrounds are more diverse. To enhance and expand pedagogical discussions regarding adult students' vocational identity formation, further research regarding vocational habitus and how it is developed in an educational CoP, could be useful; perhaps especially research regarding potential tensions between educational and vocational CoPs.

Note on contributor

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Selvstendige helsefagarbeidere i morgendagens helsetjeneste

Independent health care professionals in tomorrow's health service

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Abstract

Work in home nursing care is characterised by individual work and time limits and requires an independent professional. This article investigates how apprentices in the health care profession in Norway develop independence during their apprenticeship period in home nursing care. The study addresses the apprentices' perspective on their own development in the encounter with the field of practice and the patient living at home. The research question the article answers is: How do health care apprentices experience the development of independent professional practices during the apprenticeship period in home nursing care? 12 apprentices and newly qualified health care professionals were interviewed individually, with a semi-structured interview guide as a starting point. The results show that health care apprentices encounter a working day in home nursing care where the individual apprentice's independence is both a prerequisite for the work, and a consequence of high workload. The development of independence at work can be linked to the apprentices' participation in practice, gradual and adapted responsibility and to guidance and reflection in a community of practice. The study claims that development takes place in interaction with the supervisor, other colleagues and patients. When apprentices are given tasks adapted to their level of competence, they experience control and develop independence.

Keywords: apprentices, healthcare practitioner, health worker profession, workplace learning, home nursing care, independence



Innledning

Globalt vil etterspørselen etter helsepersonell være stor i fremtidens helsevesen (Beyrer et al., 2019; WHO, 2022). Behovet vil øke i takt med høyere levealder i befolkningen, flere eldre og stadig nye behandlingsmuligheter. Mangel på helsefagarbeidere er gjeldende i hele Norden, og behovet for utdannede medarbeidere i pleie- og omsorgssektoren er stigende (Johansson et al., 2018; Møller et al., 2021; Skålholt et al., 2013). I Norge er det forventet et underskudd i antall utdannede innen helse- og omsorgsfag, og estimert vil det i Norge i år 2035 mangle mer enn 30000 faglærte, rundt 18000 av dem helsefagarbeidere (Dapi et al., 2018). Helse- og oppvekstfag er det yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogrammet i norsk videregående skole med flest søkere (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021). Likevel utdannes det per i dag ikke nok kvalifisert helsepersonell. Det er et tydelig manglende samsvar mellom etterspørsel og ressurstilgang av helsepersonell til helsevesenet.

Et av lærefagene i utdanningsprogrammet helse- og oppvekstfag er helsearbeiderfaget. Helsearbeiderfaget følger 2+2-prinsippet for opplæring, det vil si to år i skole etterfulgt av to år som lærling i bedrift. I Norge inneholder skoledelen faget YFF (yrkesfaglig fordypning). YFF er et fag som åpner opp for tilgang til praksisfeltet ved at deler av opplæringen foregår i bedrift. I år to av opplæringen er dette et fag som går over 9 timer per uke, noe som gir elevene mulighet for god kjennskap til den praktiske delen av yrket. Etter fullført læretid meldes helsefagarbeiderlærlingen opp til fagprøve, som er den avsluttende prøven for opplæringsløpet. Lærlingeordningen har over tid vært en fundamental institusjon for opplæring av fagarbeidere til norsk arbeidsliv (Høst, 2008).

I tillegg til mangel på helsefagarbeidere er det også mangel på sykepleiere i den kommunale helse- og omsorgstjenesten (Hjemås et al., 2019). Dette fører til at annet personell, deriblant helsefagarbeidere, kan bli satt inn i sykepleierstillinger (Gautun et al., 2016). En slik forskyvning i kompetanseområde vil gjøre det ikke bare nødvendig å rekruttere og beholde helsefagarbeidere (Beyrer et al., 2019), men også utdanne fremtidige helsefagarbeidere som evner å arbeide selvstendig og ta et økt ansvar i yrkesutøvelsen.

Videre i artikkelen beskrives hensikt med studien, forskningsspørsmål og den teoretiske tilnærmingen.

Hensikt og forskningsspørsmål

Hensikten med denne studien var å erverve kunnskap om hvordan lærlinger i helsearbeiderfaget opplever å utvikle selvstendig yrkesutøvelse i læretiden i hjemmebasert omsorg. Denne kunnskapen er interessant når helsevesenet er i stadig endring og samtidig har et økende behov for kvalifiserte yrkesutøvere (Dapi et al., 2018; Nyen & Tønder, 2014). I hjemmebasert omsorg er helsefagarbeideren den profesjonelle hjelper som bidrar med omsorg i henhold til bru-

kerens behov, og som skal fremme delaktighet, velbefinnende og verdighet. Helsefagarbeideren skal møte det enkelte mennesket, hjemmet, rutinene og behovet for selvbestemmelse med respekt (Vabø, 2018). I tillegg er hjemmebasert omsorg preget av at fagpersonene vanligvis utfører helsehjelp i brukerens hjem alene, uten kolleger i umiddelbar nærhet (Gjevjon, 2015). Helsefagarbeideren som trygg og selvstendig yrkesutøver, er en forventning til det å være kvalifisert både i dagens og i fremtidens helsevesen. Følgende forskningsspørsmål ble stilt:

- Hvordan erfarer helsefagarbeiderlærlinger at de utvikler selvstendig yrkesutøvelse i læretiden i hjemmebasert omsorg?

Bakgrunn

Historisk sett har læring i praksis-omgivelser vært en vanlig læringsmåte og det som yrkesmessig resulterer i best varig læring (Billett, 2014). Helsefagarbeiderlærlingens læringsarena er i praksisfeltet og læring på arbeidsplassen er betydningsfullt og generelt av stor interesse i samfunnet. Noe av årsaken til interessen er at skoleopplæringen og de institusjonaliserte utdanningene har utfordringer med å følge opp de raske endringene som finner sted i et moderne arbeidsliv (Illeris, 2012).

Fra mester og lærling til praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena

De fleste helsefagarbeiderlærlingene har læretiden i en kommune (Skålholt et al., 2013). Læretiden følger for de fleste lærlingene en rulleringsordning, hvor de får prøvd ut ulike institusjoner som sykehjem, bolig for funksjonshemmede og hjemmebasert omsorg. Lærlingene får tildelt en veileder, noen ganger kalt instruktør eller fadder. Veilederen er som regel fagarbeiderutdannet og er ment å ha en tettere kontakt med lærlingen i det daglige arbeidet (Skålholt et al., 2013). Veilederen fremstår som den som mestrer fagets ferdigheter, en mester, og lærlingen som den som ikke gjør det. Metaforisk kan dette fremstå som en type mesterlære. Mesterlæretadisjonen innebærer i hovedtrekk at en mester i faget lærer opp en lærling. Mesterlære har gjennom århundrer vært den fremtredende struktur for opplæring innen håndverk (Nielsen & Kvale, 1999). Håndverksarbeid krever kompetanse, og er fagmessig og profesjonelt utført. I håndverk ligger håndlag, og et godt håndlag forventes i helse- og omsorgssammenheng (Karlussen, 2017). De gode hendene bærer med seg skjult visdom basert på bred innsikt og helhetlig kompetanse. Mesterlære er imidlertid blitt kritisert for å inneholde etterligning eller imitasjon og for at den fremmer et reproduktivt bilde av læring uten uavhengig kritisk refleksjon (Nielsen & Kvale, 1999). Ser vi på det desentererte perspektivet av mesterlære, er praksisfellesskapet det sentrale og

karakteriseres av lærlingens deltakelse i praksis. Virkeligheten i praksisfellesskapet på vaktrommet i hjemmebasert omsorg er nettopp preget av delaktighet og interaksjon i arbeidet. Forholdet lærling-mester danner grunnlag for læring, men kunnskapen ligger også i relasjonene i praksisfellesskapet (Nielsen & Kvale, 1999). I en utvidelse av de tradisjonelle betydningene som knyttet seg til mesterlære, skjedde et fokusskifte fra relasjonen lærling-mester til relasjonen mellom skiftende deltagelse og identitetsforandring i et praksisfellesskap (Wenger, 1998/2004). Læring er ikke en isolert aktivitet, men del av en sosial praksis hvor læringen inngår i det produktive arbeidet. Å være deltager i et praksisfellesskap former ikke bare hva vi gjør, men også hvem vi er og hvordan vi tolker det vi gjør (Nielsen, 2007; Wenger, 1998/2004). I tillegg har deltagelse og inkludering i praksisfellesskapet betydning for ønsket om å fortsette arbeidet i det samme praksisfellesskapet eller ikke (Louw, 2019). Praksisfellesskapets betydning er dermed unik. Virkeligheten til helsefagarbeiderlærlingene realiseres i arbeidssituasjoner, hvor de sosialt forholder seg til andre, i samhandling og i relasjon gjennom kommunikasjon med andre. Det er derfor i den direkte arbeidskonteksten at lærlinger kommer i kontakt med relevant og virkelighetsnær opplæring. På arbeidsplassen læres nettopp det som er til bruk for fellesskapet her og nå. Så er det i fellesskapets interesse at den enkeltes læring blir godt tilrettelagt, siden kvaliteten på den lærende sitt arbeid er avgjørende for praksisfellesskapets fremtid (Nielsen & Kvale, 1999).

Observasjoner, fagsamtaler og aktiv deltagelse

I tilrettelegging av læring er det viktig med åpne strukturer som bidrar til at observasjon og mulighet for deltagelse fremmes (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Videre ses nødvendigheten av en glidende overgang til å observere andre fagarbeidere sin håndtering av arbeidssituasjoner og organisering av arbeidet, samt å få tilgang til fagets fortellinger (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Novisene trenger assistanse til å se hvilke grep som er nyttige å ta i ulike arbeidssituasjoner (Billett, 2016). Likevel er det viktig at lærlingene selv er fremoverlente i sin læring, og at de engasjerer seg i aktiviteter som gjør at de konstruerer kunnskap og ferdigheter med bakgrunn i egne erfaringer (Billett, 2009). Å bli betraktet som en profesjonell deltager i et fellesskap av andre profesjonelle, er basert på en dyp forståelse og aksept av det konstante behovet for å prøve ut, feile, starte på nytt og på samme tid ha muligheten til å observere, lytte til og diskutere med andre yrkesutøvere (Lensjø, 2020). Diskusjoner og fagsamtaler med andre, og refleksjon i og over praksis, kan skape ny forståelse av praksis og muligheter for endring og utvikling finner sted. I ulik grad utfordrer imidlertid instruktør/veileder i bedrift lærlingen til kritisk refleksjon (Dahlback et al., 2011), til tross for at kritisk refleksjon er en forutsetning for å utdanne selvstendige og selvtenkende yrkesutøvere som kan stå støtt i egen yrkesutøvelse.

Det kreves selvstendighet for å arbeide alene

Arbeidslivet utvikler seg kontinuerlig, og kompleksitet og krav er stadig økende drivkrefter som skal imøtekommes av yrkesutøveren (Brinkmann, 2014). I en kontekst hvor de møter brukere med sammensatte behov skal helsefagarbeiderlærlingene utvikle selvstendig yrkesutøvelse. Selvstendig yrkesutøvelse innebærer at helsefagarbeiderlærlingen opptrer selvtenkende i valg relatert til arbeidet og i håndtering av arbeidsoppgaver. Det medfører å være i stand til å ta avgjørelser og håndtere uforutsette arbeidsoppgaver innen eget kompetanseområde, samt evne til å yte helhetlig omsorg for brukeren og brukerens behov (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022). I en praksis som hjemmebasert omsorg, er det alltid arbeidsoppgaver som skal løses og utføres, og disse utføres ofte i en-til-en situasjoner alene med brukere (Gjevjon, 2015). Det kreves selvstendighet for å arbeide alene og ta egne avgjørelser, samt for å kunne handle på nye måter i nye sammenhenger (Wahlgren, 2010). Arbeidsoppgaver og situasjoner tolkes og relasjoner utvikles, og utførelsen av oppgavene er forbundet med den samme form for kroppslig, aktiv, sosial, delikat og kompleks deltagelsesprosess (Wenger, 1998/2004). Den enkelte helsefagarbeiderlærlings sanser og handling responderer på de situasjonene de befinner seg i. Praksisfellesskapet, inkludert det sosiale og faglige samspillet som medfølger, vil ha betydning for utvikling av selvstendighet i arbeidet for helsefagarbeiderlærlinger, knyttet mot faglig støtte og fellesskapets bidrag med regulering av tilpassede arbeidsoppgaver. Arbeid som gir selvstendighet, og det å få tilpassede arbeidsoppgaver til sitt kompetansenivå, vil gi mer kontroll til den enkelte yrkesutøver, og vil også være positivt for det psykiske arbeidsmiljøet (Hvid, 2009).

Tidligere forskning

Utviklingen i hjemmebasert omsorg, både i Norge og internasjonalt, går mot mer profesjonalisering, noe som medfører en ny oppgave- og yrkesprofil med behov for flere helsefagarbeidere og sykepleiere (Hjemås et al., 2019; Rasmussen & Vabø, 2014). Dette i tillegg til at det allerede er utfordrende å skaffe sykepleiere til sykehjem og hjemmebasert omsorg, og tjenestene har også i økende grad fått problemer med å rekruttere helsefagarbeidere (Gautun, 2020; Hjemås et al., 2019). Samtidig ønsker de fleste eldre pasientene, til tross for at de er sykere, å bo hjemme i sine egne omgivelser så lenge som mulig (Brennan, 2020; Dostálová et al., 2020). Dette resulterer i at helsefagarbeidere møter en kompleks brukergruppe, og behovet for kompetanse øker blant helsepersonell som arbeider i hjemmebasert omsorg (Bing-Jonsson et al., 2015). Kompleksiteten i arbeidet vises ved forhold som høye fysiske og psykiske belastninger, krav av kvantitativ og kvalitativ art, mangelfull bemanning og utflytende grenser mellom yrkesgrupper (Egeland & Drange, 2014). For å imøtekomme kompleksiteten er det nødvendig at helsepersonell i alle ledd kontinuerlig tilegner seg ny kompetanse (Hedlund et

al., 2021). Ansatte i hjemmebasert omsorg har en travel hverdag med rigide tidskjema, hvor den enkelte ansatte har ansvar for 10–13 brukere om dagen (Fjørtoft, 2016; Holm & Angelsen, 2014; Szebehely et al., 2017). Selv om de opplever tidspress hevder ansatte i hjemmebasert omsorg at de erfarer å ha selvstendighet og kontroll over egen arbeidshverdag (Kirckhoff, 2010).

Det eksisterer lite forskning på helsefagarbeideres kompetanseutvikling, derimot finnes det relevante både nordiske og internasjonale studier som beskriver nyutdannede sykepleieres kompetanseutvikling (Bjerkvik & Valeberg, 2021; Dougherty et al., 2018). En amerikansk studie omhandlende nyutdannede sykepleiere indikerer at utvikling av profesjonell selvtillit er en dynamisk prosess som skjer det første året i praksis (Ortiz, 2016). En norsk studie konkluderer med at utvikling av kompetanse blant nyutdannede sykepleiere primært skjer gjennom prosesser som er knyttet til praksisfellesskapet (Thidemann, 2005). Veiledningens betydning som bidrag til trygghet i yrkesrollen vises blant annet i studiene til Dyess og Parker (2012) og i Vråle (2015). Veiledning er, sammen med systematisk opplæring, et viktig tiltak for å gjøre overgangen til yrket enklere (Vråle, 2015).

Denne studien belyser hvordan helsefagarbeiderlæringer utvikler selvstendig yrkesutøvelse. For å avdekke kunnskapshull er det foretatt kunnskapssøk i bibliografiske databaser som Oria, Eric og Google Scholar. Det er også gjort håndسøk i tidsskrifter, samt gjennomgang av referanselister på identifiserte artikler. Med bakgrunn i disse søkene er det ikke funnet tidligere forskning som spesifikt undersøker hvordan helsefagarbeiderlæringer utvikler selvstendig yrkesutøvelse i hjemmebasert omsorg. En dansk review påpeker at det generelt er lite forskning omkring utdannelse til det de omtaler som "aldrepleje", hvor man gjerne kan plassere hjemmebasert omsorg (Møller et al., 2021).

Metode

Studien har et kvalitativt design, og baseres på 12 individuelle intervjuer med læringer i helsearbeiderfaget/nyutdannede helsefagarbeidere. Hensikten med intervjuene har vært å få tak i dyptgående og nyanserte beskrivelser og tilgang til deltageres "common-sense-thinking". Deretter å tolke deres erfaringer og deres sosiale verden med deres øyne som utgangspunkt (Bryman, 2016). Ambisjonene var å studere fenomenene slik de viste seg ved seg selv og la deltageres narrativer lede til teoridannelse. Denne ambisjonen ligger implisitt i slagordet "zu den Sachen selbst", å gå til saken selv (Zahavi, 2003). Ved å benytte en hermeneutisk tilnærming, som er en meddelelse av det forståtte via tale, gir studien innblikk i hvordan deltagerne opplever verden (Habermas, 1968/1969; Heidegger, 1927/1962). Deltageres opplevelse, og beskrivelse av den, bidro til forskerens forståelse av hvilken meningskontekst deltagerens utsagn eller erfaring tilhørte. Deltagerens forståelse ble tatt del i, med forskers egen teoretiske og erfaringsbaserte forforståelse – og på den måten ble selvforståelsen utvidet. I denne

konteksten ble forskeren en del av den hermeneutiske sirkel. Når forskeren veksler mellom egen og deltagerens meningshorisont, vil det etter hvert føre til en sammensmelting mellom de to tolkningsverdenene (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017).

Rekruttering, utvalg og gjennomføring

Deltagerne ble rekruttert fra forskers kontaktnett. Forsker har tidligere erfaring som sykepleier, lærerutdanner, lærer i helsearbeiderfaget og som prøvenemndsmedlem i fagopplæringen i helsearbeiderfaget. Det ble opprettet kontakt med avdelingsledere i hjemmebasert omsorg i forskers tidligere samarbeidskommuner. Deltagerne som ble rekruttert var ukjente for forskeren. De tilhørte syv ulike kommuner og tre fylker. Inklusjonskriteriene var at deltagerne skulle være siste års lærlinger i helsearbeiderfaget, eventuelt nyutdannede helsefagarbeidere med fersk erfaring fra arbeid i hjemmebasert omsorg. Fersk erfaring indikerte erfaring fra siste halvår. Fem av deltagerne var siste-års lærlinger, sju hadde nylig gjennomført fagprøve og hadde oppnådd tittelen helsefagarbeider. Det var en mann blant deltagerne, og to var minoritetsspråklige. Tabell 1 viser deltagerens tilhørende kommuner, fødselsår og jobbstatus.

Tabell 1. Deltagere i studien.

Kommune	Intervjuperson	Fødselsår	Jobbstatus
1	Kvinne, deltager A	2000	Nyutdannet sommer 2020
2	Kvinne, deltager B	2000	Nyutdannet sommer 2020
1	Kvinne, deltager C	1996	Nyutdannet sommer 2021
3	Kvinne, deltager D	2001	Nyutdannet sommer 2021
4	Kvinne, deltager E	2002	Andreårs-lærling, nyoppstartet
5	Kvinne, deltager F	2001	Andreårs-lærling, avsluttende
6	Kvinne, deltager G	2000	Nyutdannet sommer 2021
1	Kvinne, deltager H	1999	Nyutdannet vinter 2020
7	Kvinne, deltager I	2001	Nyutdannet sommer 2021
5	Mann, deltager J	2001	Andreårs-lærling, avsluttende
3	Kvinne, deltager K	2001	Andreårs-lærling, avsluttende
4	Kvinne, deltager L	2002	Andreårs-lærling, nyoppstartet

Intervjuing og analysering

En semistrukturert intervjuguide, med et eksplorativt design, dannet grunnlaget for intervjuene, som varte i 45 til 60 minutter. Spørsmålene som ble stilt var åpne, og hensikten var å finne essensen i lærlingenes opplevde erfaringer. Intervjuguiden ble benyttet under alle intervjuene, men ble ikke fulgt detaljert. Etter endt intervju var alle temaene i guiden berørt. Spørsmål omhandlet for eksempel hvilke lærings situasjoner deltagerne foretrakk, hvordan de erfarte utvikling og

progresjon i arbeidet, erfaringer med ansvar for brukere og tanker rundt veiledning.

De to første intervjuene ble gjennomført i januar 2020, resterende i perioden april til august 2021. Den pågående pandemien var årsaken til at det ble et opphold i datainnsamlingen. Deltagerne fikk velge hvor de ønsket å bli intervjuet: hjemme hos seg selv, på kontoret, hjemme hos intervjuer eller annet sted. Forskeren var refleksiv oppmerksom på at intervjustedet kunne være en påvirkningskilde for deltageren. Intervjuene ble tatt opp på lydopptager og transkribert av forsker selv. Analysen startet allerede under intervjuprosessen, hvor enkelte funn ble notert underveis og førte til oppfølgende spørsmål (Fangen, 2017; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018). Etter hvert som flere intervjuer ble gjennomført, ble allerede transkriberte intervjuer sammenlignet med nyere. Datainnsamlingen gikk dermed hånd-i-hånd med den tidlige analyseprosessen, som den første oppfattelsen av meningserfaringene (Creswell, 2018).

Tabell 2. Fra erfaringsopplevelser til kategorier.

Erfaringsopplevelse	Meningssamlinger	Kategorier
<p>"Jeg spør hva andre gjør. Så kan jeg ta det i betraktning og tenke litt over det selv, er dette også noe jeg bør gjøre? At man ikke bare må gjøre det, men tenke over det"</p> <p>"Det er ikke alltid jeg ser veilederen min heller og da spør jeg noen andre, jeg har hatt så mye hjelp fra absolutt alle"</p> <p>"... hvis det er noe du er usikker på som de (brukerne) kan for eksempel, så er det jo sånn at de kan lære oss det"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observasjon og refleksjon • Praksisfellesskapet • Brukeren som ressurs 	Praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena
<p>"I hjemmesykepleien så synes jeg det blir veldig ... du får liksom veiledning litt fortløpende, mens i andre institusjoner kan man sette seg ned og ha litt mer tid"</p> <p>"Når jeg hadde vært inne hos en bruker og veilederen kom og hentet meg, så tok vi og snakket om det, om hva jeg gjorde, om hva som skjedde"</p> <p>"Det er ikke ofte man har hatt tid til prat og refleksjon, men i hjemmetjenesten kan man få til den praten når man sitter i bilen"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veiledningskontekst • Fagsamtaler • Det spontane mulighetsrommet 	Spontane møtepunkt for veiledning
<p>"Å dra alene var veldig skummelt først, men jeg merket at jeg ble tryggere på meg selv med kommunikasjon, ved at jeg måtte holde en samtale med brukeren"</p> <p>"Når du prøver selv lærer du fortere og blir mer trygg på deg selv, så blir du også fortere kjent med brukeren din"</p> <p>"Selv om du har veileder, så er du jo lærling og må gjøre litt mer selv. Det synes jeg er fint, for da lærer jeg jo å bli selvstendig for arbeidslivet"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utvikling av trygghet • Gradvis løsrivelse fra veileder • Delaktighet og kontroll 	Tilpasset ansvar og gradvis selvstendighet

I analyseprosessen ble datamaterialet først grundig gjennomgått for å finne essensen i deltagerens erfaringer. Beskrivelsene av erfaringene ble delt inn i mindre meningssamlinger og gitt et navn, delene ble deretter plassert inn i kategorier. Denne måten å analysere på bærer preg av det Giorgi (1985) kaller empirisk fenomenologi (Postholm, 2010). For å skape vid forståelse av de uttrykte meningene, ble analyseprosessen en frem- og tilbake prosess hvor de transkriberte intervjuene ble lest og plukket fra hverandre flere ganger. Hensikten var å få en bedre forståelse av de enkelte delene som et bidrag inn mot en mer helhetlig forståelse av det samlede materialet. Dette er i tråd med den hermeneutiske sirkel (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Tabell 2 over viser eksempler på analyseprosessen.

Etiske betraktninger

Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD) godkjente studien i november 2019 (referansenummer 953937). Skriftlig informasjon om prosjektet ble presentert deltagerne og samtykke ble innhentet. Det ble informert om at deltagelse var frivillig og at det var mulig å trekke seg uten grunn. Forskers taushetsplikt ble understreket, likeens deltagerens anonymitet. Alle intervjuene er tatt opp på lydopptager. Lydfiler og transkriberte intervjuer blir oppbevart i henhold til NSD sine retningslinjer.

Resultater

Lærlingene utvikler gradvis selvstendighet i det direkte møtet med bruker, spesielt når lærlingen møter brukeren alene. Samtidig fremmer veiledning og refleksjon, sammen med veileder eller i et praksisfellesskap, trygghet og selvstendighet. Dataanalysen resulterte i tre kategorier: Praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena, Spontane møtepunkt for veiledning og Tilpasset ansvar og gradvis selvstendighet. Kategoriene presenteres fortløpende, inkludert sitater fra deltagerens erfaringsopplevelser.

Praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena

Det afrikanske uttrykket "it takes a village to raise a child" beskriver hvordan et helt samfunn av mennesker må samhandle med barna for at de skal vokse og utvikle seg i et sunt miljø. Denne studien viser at helsefagarbeiderlæringer utvikler seg i et praksisfellesskap, bestående av veiledere, kollegaer og brukere i hjemmebasert omsorg.

Å observere andres yrkesutøvelse er en strategi for læring. Observasjoner kan være en vei mot forståelse og en bevisstgjøring rundt egen yrkesutøvelse. Denne studiens resultater påpeker at spesielt i begynnelsen av læretiden var observasjoner en vanlig del av opplæringen. Observasjonssituasjoner benyttes til å selektivt velge ut det som gjenkjennes som god yrkesutøvelse hos kollegaer, og lærlingene

vurderer både det de observerer og det de selv utfører. De benytter blikket og andre sanser for å få forståelse for hva det gis et innblikk i. Gjennom refleksjon over praksisen de ser, sikrer de seg "det beste fra flere", og et valg for egen yrkesutøvelse. På spørsmålet "hva kan gjøre deg trygg på egen yrkesutøvelse", svarer Deltager K:

Jeg spør hva andre gjør. Så kan jeg ta det i betraktning og tenke litt over det selv, er dette også noe jeg bør gjøre? At man ikke bare må gjøre det, men tenke over det.

Innspill på hvordan andre håndterer situasjoner, kan være refleksjonsfremmende. Lærlingene omtalte refleksjon som "å tenke over". Å tenke over situasjoner kan føre til en oppfattelse av hvordan en oppgave kan løses, og en avveielse av hvordan selv velge å løse den. Observasjon av hvordan andre helsearbeidere møter brukere, er nyttig for å utvikle egen yrkesutøvelse. Det er imidlertid ikke åpenbart at det som observeres blir absorbert nøyaktig i form av direkte gjenspeiling, men det kan bidra til utvikling av ferdigheter hos lærlingene når de ble gitt og ser muligheten for ulike handlingsvalg.

Helsefagarbeiderlærlingens beredskap for læring og utvikling lå i hele praksisfellesskapet, ikke bare i samhandling med egen veileder. Noen ganger var det mangel på felles tilstedeværelse, fordi veileder ikke jobbet samme vakt som lærlingen. Årsaken var blant annet turnusarbeid og deltidsstillinger:

Det er ikke alltid jeg ser veilederen min og da spør jeg noen andre, jeg har hatt så mye hjelp fra absolutt alle. (Deltager E)

Vi har så mange som er så gode å snakke med her, alle er villige til å hjelpe deg videre, og da føler du deg enda mer trygg. (Deltager H)

Lærlingene ankom et praksisfellesskap hvor de ble en del av et kollegium. Viktigheten av praksisfellesskapet, og det å ha kollegaer tilgjengelig, ble karakterisert som noe som fremmet trygghet i arbeidet. Å be kollegaer om tips og råd i arbeidshverdagen, var en selvfølge, og terskelen var lav for å spørre. Samtidig krever det trygghet å be andre om hjelp. Selvfølgeligheten i å benytte seg av andres kompetanse kan tyde på at de hadde tidligere erfaringer fra praksis (via skolefaget YFF) som gjorde at dette var en lært og akseptert fremgangsmåte, samt en arbeidskultur hvor det å henvende seg til kollegaer var en sedvanlig del av arbeidshverdagen. Når dette var en mulighet, opplevde lærlingene trygghet i arbeidsmiljøet. Konsekvensen var en økende selvstendighet i å reise ut til brukere alene. Brukeren selv ble også en ressurs inn i lærlingens utvikling av selvstendighet. Den hjemmeboende brukeren kjenner oftest godt til sin egen situasjon, sin egen sykdom eller tilstand. Dette gjorde at lærlingen kunne få informasjon fra brukeren. Når lærlingen kom til en bruker som hadde en, for lærlingen, ukjent diagnose var det mulig å komplementere usikkerheten med informasjon fra bruker:

... hvis det er noe du er usikker på som de kan for eksempel, så er det jo sånn at de kan lære oss det. (Deltager K)

Brukeren bidro inn i lærlingens utvikling mot selvstendig yrkesutøvelse. Tryggheten som brukeren utviste, oppmuntrende tilbakemeldinger og støtte påvirket lærlingens opplevelse av trygghet.

Spontane møtepunkt for veiledning

Veiledning har betydning for å beskrive og reflektere over erfaringer knyttet til eget arbeid, og den er viktig for å løfte problemstillinger, og få respons på eget arbeid. Denne studien viser at lærlingene fikk veiledning, men det var ikke fast avsatt tid til veiledning i hjemmebasert omsorg. Veiledningen fant sted sporadisk og spontant, avhengig av arbeidshverdagens mulighetsrom. At lærling og veileder ikke hadde tid til å sette seg ned med veiledning til et fast tidspunkt, kan skyldes en travel hverdag hvor driften til enhver tid måtte opprettholdes. Dette virker å være egenartet for arbeid i hjemmebasert omsorg:

I hjemmesykepleien så synes jeg det blir veldig ... du får liksom veiledning litt fortløpende, mens i andre institusjoner kan man sette seg ned og ha litt mer tid. (Deltager F)

Brukerne kan bo både i gåavstand og mange mil unna kontoret, noe som medfører at de ansatte bruker tid på å forflytte seg mellom hjemmene. De beveger seg mellom brukernes hjem, og bil blir ofte brukt som transportmiddel. Dermed ligger det til rette for at bilen kan benyttes som veiledningsrom for lærling og veileder. Denne studien bekrefter at veiledning ofte foregår i bil, på vei til eller fra bruker, når lærlingen kjører sammen med veileder eller kollega. Stunden i bil benyttes til fagsamtaler, både før og etter et oppdrag. Å snakke om arbeidsoppgaver er av betydning for lærlingene:

Når jeg hadde vært inne hos en bruker og veilederen kom og hentet meg, så tok vi og snakket om det, om hva jeg gjorde, om hva som skjedde ... (Deltager D)

Det er ikke ofte man har hatt tid til prat og refleksjon, men i hjemmetjenesten kan man få til den praten når man sitter i bilen. For da skal man jo kjøre fra hus til hus og da har man den tiden til å snakke med veileder om hvordan og hvorfor og sånn. (Deltager L)

Veiledning gjennomføres kreativt i situasjoner der det åpner seg en mulighet for samsnakk. Det gjennomføres en uformell og utforskende fagsamtale direkte knyttet til arbeidsoppgave. Når denne fagsamtalen foregår i bil, blir den gitt på nylig utført arbeidsoppgave. Veiledning og refleksjon blir "ferskvare", noe som gir mulighet for å knytte læring til handling, og motsatt. Fagsamtalen blir en individuell veiledning, hvor lærlingen får ha veilederen helt for seg selv:

Det er jo bare oss to, man får jo mye tid til å - ja, det er ingen som kommer og forstyrrer da ... (Deltager E)

Fagsamtalen kan omhandle forberedelse til handling, fremovermeldinger og tilbakemeldinger. Den gir rom for refleksjon over egne erfaringer og egen praksis,

en utvidet forståelse for arbeidet og økt sikkerhet på egen utførelse og håndtering av situasjoner. Samtalen kan bidra til å finne løsninger på utfordringer, med økt innsikt, forståelse og kunnskap som et resultat. Refleksjon i, og over, arbeidet, løftes frem i samhandling med kollegaer, og kan fremme utvikling av trygghet og selvstendighet i yrkesutøvelsen.

Tilpasset ansvar og gradvis selvstendighet

I hjemmebasert omsorg organiserer kommunene arbeidet slik at brukere får de tjenester de skal ha i løpet av en uke, i henhold til brukerens individuelle vedtak. Hver enkelt helsearbeider i hjemmebasert omsorg har ansvar for mange ulike brukere på sin "arbeidsliste". Som et utgangspunkt er helsearbeideren forberedt på å møte brukeren alene. Denne konteksten gir lærlingene en mulighet for progredierende ansvar for brukere alene. Lærlingene i denne studien gikk sammen med veileder den første delen av læretiden, noe som innebar at de var to sammen om en bruker. Denne perioden varte fra to uker til tre måneder. En individuell vurdering lå til grunn for lengden på samkjøringen. Lærlingene fikk deretter ansvar og oppgaver tilpasset sitt mestrings- og kompetansenivå. Denne tilpasningen initierte utvikling mot trygghet i arbeidssituasjon:

Å dra alene var veldig skummelt først, men jeg merket at jeg ble tryggere på meg selv med kommunikasjon, ved at jeg måtte holde en samtale med brukeren. (Deltager K)

Når du prøver selv lærer du fortere og blir mer trygg på deg selv, så blir du også fortere kjent med brukeren din. (Deltager G)

I begynnelsen av læretiden kan lærlinger kjenne på utrygghet. Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene skal utvikle trygghet i selve yrkesutøvelsen, i møtet med brukeren, men også i de mer praktiske oppgavene som å kjøre bil, og å finne fram til brukerens bosted. Utviklingen fra novise til trygg og selvstendig yrkesutøver fremstår i denne studien som en individuell prosess. En gradvis løsrivelse fra veileder, tilpasset den enkelte lærling, og avhengig en gitt balanse mellom utfordringer og mer trygge rammer. Noen lærlinger fikk selv velge brukere de fikk ansvar for, og på den måten kunne de foretrekke enkle arbeidsoppgaver i begynnelsen og gradvis øke utfordringene utover i læretiden. Jobbtelefonen som alle hadde med seg til enhver tid, fremsto som et trygghetsmoment. Det var alltid mulig å ringe kontoret, eller andre kollegaer, med spørsmål om hjelp eller veiledning. Ved uforutsette hendelser var hjelpen kun en telefonsamtale unna. Noen lærlinger hevdet likevel at det var best å "hoppe i det" om de var usikre, for "i stedet for å gå og grue meg, så fant jeg ut at det egentlig ikke var så skummelt". Det lå en forventning hos lærlingen selv om å fungere mer og mer alene utover i læretiden:

Selv om du har veileder, så er du jo lærling og må gjøre litt mer selv. Det synes jeg er fint, for da lærer jeg jo å bli selvstendig for arbeidslivet. (Deltager J)

Arbeidsoppgaver ble lært raskere når lærlingene fikk prøve på egenhånd, etter på forhånd gitt instruksjon eller veiledning. Sammen med brukere alene tok de ansvar for situasjonen. Ansvaret fremstår dog som tosidig; lærlingen ble gitt ansvar og handlingsrom, men ansvaret måtte også tas som arbeidstaker. Slik beskriver Deltager I å være alene med brukere:

Det var litt rart i begynnelsen, siden jeg var vant til å ha noen rundt meg, men det er litt godt å være alene, egentlig, man må tenke selv, og ta sine egne valg.

Egenaktivitet og delaktighet må ligge til grunn for utvikling av selvstendig yrkesutøvelse. Selvstendighet handlet om å utføre arbeidsoppgaver selv og prøve selv for derved å oppnå trygghet. Tid alene hos brukere, ansvaret møtet medførte og den konkrete tilbakemeldingen fra bruker på hvordan arbeidsoppgaven var gjennomført, påvirket utviklingen av selvstendighet hos lærlingen.

Erfaringer med å møte brukere på egenhånd, og oppleve mestring, førte til at det ble enklere å ta på seg nye oppgaver og gå inn i nye møter med brukere. Å oppleve mestring kan kobles mot følelsen av å ha kontroll. Ansvar tilpasset eget kompetansenivå, førte til kontroll over arbeidssituasjoner. Å oppleve kontroll, overvann belastningen ved å "grue" seg.

Alene med bruker måtte lærlingen selv bidra til at kommunikasjonen fløt. De var også nødt til å håndtere arbeidsoppgaver fortløpende, noen ganger ukjente oppgaver. Når lærlingen var i en situasjon sammen med veileder, var det den med mest erfaring som tok ansvaret:

Hvis det er en annen person med meg sammen med bruker så er det ofte jeg blir stille. Når jeg er alene, så må jeg være den som holder i samtalen. (Deltager K)

Jeg har vært mye alene og blir jo ganske selvstendig, da. Må lære ting på egen hånd og ... kommer opp i situasjoner som jeg må takle selv. Er jeg med en veileder så er det jo de som tar seg av det ofte, og du står og ser på. (Deltager A).

Å få ansvar og mulighet til å jobbe selvstendig, påvirket motivasjonen til lærlingene. Tilliten som ble vist fra veileder, la grunnlag for å håndtere situasjoner selvstendig. Tillit og legitimitet førte til en opplevelse av å være betydningsfulle og verdsatte som yrkesutøvere:

Det motiverer meg at jeg skal jobbe selvstendig. (Deltager C)

Jeg føler meg så viktig når jeg må ta mange avgjørelser selv, og må stole på meg selv. (Deltager H)

Motivasjonen for arbeidet økte når ansvar ble gitt på et kompetansenivå som lærlingen mestret, og som gjorde at den enkelte følte seg som en viktig yrkesutøver.

Denne kategorien belyser at det individuelle ansvaret som lærlingene ble gitt, og tok, er både nødvendig og betydningsfullt. Ansvar som gir mestringsfølelse, genererer trygghet og selvstendighet.

Oppsummering av resultater

Helsefagarbeiderlæringer utvikler selvstendighet i et praksisfellesskap bestående av veiledere, kollegaer og brukere. Læring og utvikling skjer gjennom å gradvis utføre arbeidsoppgaver selv, etter på forhånd gitt veiledning og etter observasjon av andre yrkesutøvere. Veiledningen er spontan og skjer i bilen eller i en arbeidssituasjonskontekst. Mulighet til refleksjon over handling, skjer når arbeidsoppgaver utføres. Fagsamtaler i forkant av en oppgave kan bidra til innsikt i arbeidsoppgaver. Refleksjon løftes også frem via andre, gjerne som en forlengelse av fagsamtale etter utført arbeidsoppgave. Dette støtter lærlingen i egen utvikling og gir handlingsalternativer for videre arbeid.

Diskusjon

Hjemmebasert omsorg er preget av intens drift og den komplekse arbeidshverdagen (Hedlund et al., 2021) vil være forbundet med store individuelle utfordringer i et samfunn som til stadighet stiller stigende krav til individ så vel som organisasjoner (Qvortrup, 2006). Kompleksiteten gjør at helse- og omsorgstjenestene trenger selvstendige yrkesutøvere. Denne studien viser hvordan helsefagarbeiderlæringer erfarer å utvikle selvstendighet i denne konteksten, individuelt, men i et praksisfellesskap. Følgende forskningsspørsmål ble stilt: Hvordan erfarer helsefagarbeiderlæringer at de utvikler selvstendig yrkesutøvelse i læretiden i hjemmebasert omsorg?

Diskusjonen under følger strukturen som ble gitt i seksjonen Resultater, underordnet de tre kategoriene Praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena, Spontane møtepunkt for veiledning og Tilpasset ansvar og gradvis selvstendighet. Avslutningsvis gis en kort oppsummering, og det reflekteres over styrker og begrensninger, og studiens implikasjoner på feltet.

Praksisfellesskapet som utviklingsarena

Et helt praksisfellesskap kreves for å utvikle selvstendige helsefagarbeidere. Et praksisfellesskap kan forstås som en slags ustabil likevekt mellom en mengde opplevelser av omverdenen, der alle gir et bidrag til fellesskapets kompetanse (Wenger, 2000). Læring og utvikling skjer i praksisfellesskapet, og hjemmebasert omsorg blir en kollektiv læringsarena. Et perspektiv lærlingene hadde på utvikling av trygghet og selvstendighet, var at det alltid var kollegaer å spørre, og noen som ville hjelpe. Dette argumenterer for betydningen av åpne strukturer i praksisfellesskapet, og at alle deltar (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Samtidig er det den enkelte lærlings ståsted som er utgangspunktet, og opplæringen blir på den måten individuell. Det enkelte individ sin aktive læringsprosess bør vektlegges, og hvordan denne prosessen ivaretas i praksis kan gi andre konsekvenser enn om kun instruksjon gis utenfra (Billett, 2014). Prosessen som finner sted i helsefag-

arbeiderlærningen, er fundert felles, men blir en individuell læringsprosess (Billett, 2014). Noe av læringen som skjer er i tillegg ubevisst, og forskjellig fra hva som var intensjonene til arbeidsoppgaven (Billett, 2014).

Tenking og refleksjon skjer i arbeidstakeren konstant, og den følger arbeidskonteksten (Billett, 2001; Eraut, 2004). Hjemmebasert omsorg karakteriseres av intens drift, og det oppstår situasjoner som krever at lærningen tar raske, intuitive og selvstendige avgjørelser. Når refleksjon anvendes til å ta beslutninger rundt hvordan man handler best mulig, integreres det i en overveid handling. Denne transformasjonen omtales som reflekterte handlinger (Mezirow, 1997). Gjennom refleksjon kan handlingsrommet til lærningen utvides, på veien mot å bli en selvtenkende og selvstendig yrkesutøver. Helsefagarbeiderlærningene sier at de "tenker over" arbeidssituasjoner de er i eller har vært i. De har en refleksjon-i-handling, som innebærer å tenke over å gjøre noe, mens man gjør det (Schön, 1983/2001). Lærningene har observert andre utføre arbeidsoppgaver, noe som er en måte å oppdage den tause kunnskapen på. Når veiledere eller andre kompetente arbeidere har en viten-i-handling er den knyttet til den bestemte faglærte jobben og er i en eller annen utstrekning taus (Aarkrog, 2012). Dette innebærer at det er kun ved å bli vist en arbeidsoppgave at lærningen kan få innblikk i den tause kunnskapen. Poenget harmonerer med Lave og Wenger (1991) der de legger vekt på observasjonens betydning som tilgang til fagets fortellinger. Mye av det lærningene observerer, og lærer, innebærer nyfortolkninger. Når en opplevelse fortolkes på nytt så settes lærningen i stand til å bearbeide, differensiere og forsterke på forhånd etablerte referanserammer eller skape nye meningsskjemaer (Mezirow, 1997). I hjemmebasert omsorg er arbeidet daglig preget av nye opplevelser, fordi man møter ulike mennesker, med varierende funksjonsevne og dagsform, i ulike hjem. Erfaringer gjøres fortløpende og omstillingsevnen utfordres. Det kan da bli enda mer vesentlig for lærningen å reflektere over tidligere læring for å finne ut om det man har lært er gyldig i de rådende situasjonene (Mezirow, 1997). I hjemmebasert omsorg jobber ofte helsearbeideren alene, og arbeidet får en egen ensomhet i seg fordi man blir en og en i relasjonene. I tillegg blir mulighet og tid til samsnakk, samarbeid og hjelp begrenset (Amble, 2013). Det er da spesielt viktig å tydeliggjøre refleksjon som et kollektivt, relasjonelt begrep. Symptomene på det individuelle, ensomme arbeidet kan vises som mangel på kommunikasjon rundt arbeidsoppgaver og vegring i å be om og yte hjelp til medarbeidere (Amble, 2013). Refleksjon knyttet til arbeidsoppgaver må derfor organiseres. Arbeidshverdagen er dynamisk, siden den styres av brukernes behov og de ressursene som til enhver tid er tilgjengelige. Dermed kan organisering av refleksjon utfordres og vanskeliggjøres, og det kan være grunn for å finne alternative løsninger. Denne studien viser at refleksjon for helsefagarbeiderlærninger i hjemmebasert omsorg blir en individuell prosess, og/eller foregår i fagsamtale og i samhandling med kollega. Tidligere forskning peker på at lærninger kunne ha vært tjent med å oppleve refleksjonsgrupper, siden deltagelse i slike

grupper påvirker hvordan deltagerne håndterer fremtidige arbeidsutfordringer, i første omgang relatert til utfordringer som er løftet fram i refleksjonssituasjonen (Amble, 2013).

Det er flere aktører som er bidragsyttere inn i helsefagarbeiderlærlingens læring og utvikling, inkludert brukere av tjenesten selv. Brukere er ofte eksperter på seg selv, sin diagnose og sin tilstand, og kan være en ressurs inn i lærlingens utvikling mot selvstendig yrkesutøvelse. Brukere kan bidra med kompetanse både faglig og sosialt, og dette kan lærlingene benytte seg av. Lærlingene blir fortalt og vist hvordan arbeidsoppgaver kan løses og prosedyrer utføres, av den som selv kjenner det best, og det kan gis tilbakemelding på nylig utført arbeid. Brukeren får en annen rolle enn kun brukerrollen. Det oppstår et unikt praksisfellesskap som danner grunnlag for utvikling av trygghet og selvstendighet hos lærlingen. Relasjonen mellom lærling og bruker vil også påvirkes, siden det blir en gjensidighet i utføring av oppgavene. Brukeren på sin side får en bekreftelse på sin betydning og sin eksistens, noe som kan fremme tilfredshet og selvrespekt (Pennbrant & Karlsson, 2020).

Spontane møtepunkt for veiledning

Denne studien viser at det heller enn tid til formell veiledning, gjennomføres spontane fagsamtaler. I rapporten Helsefagarbeidernes muligheter for utvikling og bruk av kunnskaper og ferdigheter i jobben (Ingelsrud & Falkum, 2017) meddeler over 70 prosent at de i stor eller svært stor grad alt i alt er fornøyde med den veiledningen de får. Når det gjelder tid til rådighet til veiledning er lærlingene mindre fornøyde. 38 prosent hevder at veileder i svært liten, liten eller i noen grad hadde nok tid til veiledning. Hjemmebasert omsorg karakteriseres ofte med travelhet, og en utfordring i en travel hverdag er at en veiledningsøkt typisk kan velges bort (Martinsen, 2014). Denne studien viser at i hjemmebasert omsorg er det de impulsive møtepunktene og mulighetsrommene for fagsamtaler og veiledning som opprettholdes. Årsaken kan være at helsearbeiderne har tilpasset seg den hektiske hverdagen, og som følge av det ikke prioriterer å sette seg ned med en planlagt veiledningsøkt. I stedet benyttes den tiden som er til rådighet, i øyeblikket, til å diskutere utfordringer og spørsmål i arbeidet. Dette blir en form for samtaler som har potensiale som "transitt-steder" mellom veiledningens formelle og planlagte art og det daglige arbeidets uformelle og improvisatoriske art (Møller et al., 2021). Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene søker veiledning i her-og-nå-situasjoner, etter at noe plutselig har skjedd med brukere eller når det oppstår et behov for veiledning.

Denne studien viser at mye av veiledningen som finner sted, skjer i bilen, og samtalen er nettopp improvisatorisk og skjer direkte enten før eller etter et arbeidsoppdrag. Den bærer i tillegg preg av å være individuell, fordi den tar utgangspunkt i lærlingens akutte læringsbehov. Veileder og lærling som kjører sammen mellom brukere, får anledning til å samtale, og bilen får funksjon som

et veiledningsrom. I dette rommet åpnes det for utvikling av trygghet når det gis mulighet til å presentere synspunkter og tanker og lytte til hverandre. Med bakgrunn i det kan lærlingen bygge egne bidrag på andres innspill. Man samtaler om, og lærer dermed på arbeidsplassen, det som er til bruk her og nå. Transferen mellom læring og handling skjer uten hindring (Illeris, 2012), noe som innebærer at lærlingen bygger bro mellom læringsaspektet og anvendelsesaspektet. Om fagsamtalen beskrives som en formell eller uformell, strukturert eller ustrukturert veiledning er underordnet, for denne beskrivelsen gjør lite for å belyse veiledningens karakteristikk eller kvalitet (Billett, 2004). Kvaliteten på veiledningen kan oppleves god og nyttig uavhengig av om den er improvisatorisk.

En utfordring med den spontane veiledningen kan imidlertid være at det er en risiko for at læringen begrenses til kun det som er aktuelt i situasjonen, noe som kan medføre manglende overblikk for lærlingen. I tillegg mister lærlingen muligheten for en formell veiledning, med det den innebærer av forberedelser, refleksjon og læring. Lærlingene mister et "ettertankens rom", hvor praksis blir sett på i etterpåklokskapens lys, og som kjennetegnes ved tid og mulighet for å tenke sakte (Vråle, 2015). Mangel på veiledning og fagsamtaler vil kunne ha innvirkning på kvaliteten på arbeidet til lærlingen, utvikling av trygghet og selvstendighet og således påvirke praksisfellesskapet i sin helhet (Nielsen & Kvale, 1999). I tillegg viser denne studien at samkjøring gradvis avtar utover i læretiden fordi lærlingen får mer ansvar alene med bruker. Det er et paradoks at nettopp bilen som veiledningsrom da forsvinner, og med det ett av de åpenbare spontane møtepunktene.

Tilpasset ansvar og gradvis selvstendighet

Studien viser at helsefagarbeiderlærlingene går sammen med veileder de første ukene av læretiden. Deretter får de mer og mer ansvar for brukere alene, og etter hvert egne "arbeidslister". Læretiden følger dermed en naturlig progresjon, med gradvis utvidet ansvar og mulighet for å utføre arbeidsoppgaver selvstendig. Fra å inneha en observatørrolle, til å utføre sammen med andre, få instruksjoner, veiledning, reflektere og til å møte brukere og arbeidsoppgaver alene. Dette fremstår som en vanlig hverdag og rytmen i organisering av læretiden for de fleste helsefagarbeiderlærlingene. Som nyankomne i praksisfellesskapet opplever lærlingene på denne måten å få legitimitet, noe som er viktig ikke bare for lærlingen, men også for fellesskapet samlet sett (Wenger, 1998/2004). I noviseperioden vil lærlingene mest sannsynlig mangle det som praksisfellesskapet ser på som kompetent deltagelse. Men, med en viss gitt legitimitet kan deres uunngeelige feiltrinn bli en mulighet for å lære i stedet for at det fører til tilsidesettelse (Wenger, 1998/2004).

Helsefagarbeiderlærlingen utvikler selvstendighet i arbeidet gjennom å utføre arbeidsoppgaver, gjennom å prøve, gjøre feil, resette og gjennom å løse reelle utfordringer i en arbeidssituasjon – samtidig med coaching og fagsamtaler fra

veileder eller kollega. Dette kan legge grunnlaget for produksjon av solide problemløsningsarbeidere, og yrkesutøvere som tenker selv. Denne måten å utvikle ferdigheter på kan kobles både mot mesterlære og mot sosiale læringsteoretiske perspektiver (Billett, 2001; Nielsen & Kvale, 1999; Wenger, 1998/2004). Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene er engasjert i å konstruere kunnskap fra erfaringer når de er engasjerte i jobbaktiviteter (Billett, 2009). Ferdigheter utvikles som en pågående prosess via lærlingenes daglige erfaringer. Hvis vi tenker og handler, så lærer vi (Billett, 2001). Den aktive læringsprosessen ivaretas i hjemmebasert omsorg ved at lærlingene er delaktige i praksis. Instruksjoner og veiledning gis i noen grad fra praksisfellesskapet, men da knyttet opp mot aktiv handling i møte med brukere. Lærlingene får gradvis ansvar for brukere alene, og i forlengelse av det oppleves kontroll over arbeidsoppgaver som skal utføres, noe som gjør det enklere å ta fatt i nye utfordringer. Dette kan skape utviklingsmuligheter og innflytelse til yrkesutøveren, og føre til et arbeid som er mer positivt og sunt for den enkelte (Karasek, 1979). Lærlingene ble motiverte av å få selvstendige arbeidsoppgaver, og de følte seg betydningsfulle når de selv måtte ta avgjørelser. Å ha ansvar for daglige arbeidsoppgaver, og oppleve mestring i den forbindelse, gir lærlingen fornemmelse av stolthet og selvverdsetting (Høst, 2015).

Samtidig er det viktig med balanse mellom selvstendig yrkesutøvelse, samarbeid med andre og veiledning/instruksjon. Med omfattende alene-arbeid forkortes og forringes novise-perioden, samtidig som forskning hevder at lærlingen som novise trenger hjelp til å finne brukbare grep å ta i forskjellige arbeidssituasjoner (Benner, 1984; Billett, 2016). Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene må oppleve å få både støtte og utfordringer i praksisfellesskapet. Denne studien viser en dualitet i læretiden for helsefagarbeiderlærlinger i hjemmebasert omsorg. Lærlingene erfarer at de utvikler selvstendighet best ved å selv utføre, samtidig som det er forventet at de er selvstendige og tar ansvar for brukere alene. At de raskt blir utfordret til å ta alene-ansvar for brukere kan forklares med det økende behovet for kvalifiserte yrkesutøvere i det norske helsevesenet (Nyen & Tønder, 2014), og at tid er en knapphetsressurs i hjemmebasert omsorg. Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene bidrar med arbeidskraft (Skålholt et al., 2013). De blir en tilvekst til personalgruppen. Når helsefagarbeiderlærlinger tidlig får et individuelt ansvar blir selvstendig yrkesutøvelse både en forutsetning for arbeidet, og en konsekvens av det.

Gradvis tilpassede oppgaver etter mestringsnivå, gjorde at lærlingene opplevde kontroll i arbeidssituasjonen. Dette er viktig når omfanget av belastningene i arbeidet avhenger av i hvor stor grad den enkelte kan kontrollere arbeidsaktivitetene, og ikke kun er avhengig av hvor store krav som stilles (Hvid, 2009). Lærlingene erfarte at de selv kunne være med og bestemme hvilke brukere de skulle gå til, og i noen grad hvilke oppgaver de skulle utføre. Dette kan ha resultert i at de unngikk følelsen av skrustikken, som oppstår når lærlingens opple-

velse av kontroll, ressurser eller mulighet for hjelp ikke er innen rekkevidde (Amble & Gjerberg, 2003). Arbeid som utvikler selvstendighet vil gi mer kontroll til den enkelte yrkesutøver, og vil være positivt for det psykiske arbeidsmiljøet (Hvid, 2009). Med denne måten å arbeide på vil lærlingene, og tjenesten for øvrig, tjene på at lærlingene tar på seg et økende ansvar. Forbeholdt at ansvaret gir følelse av kontroll. Assosiasjonen mellom jobbkrav og tilfredshet i jobben vil være positive for lærlingene når de opplever høy grad av jobbkontroll, men negative dersom jobbkontrollen er lav (Jonge et al., 2010). At lærlingene etter endt utdanning fortsetter i yrket, er betydningsfullt når behovet for helsefagarbeidere i helse- og omsorgssektoren er stadig stigende. En balansering av ansvar med utgangspunkt i den enkelte lærlings behov og kompetansenivå er derfor nødvendig.

Oppsummerende refleksjoner

Studien har noen styrker og noen begrensninger. En styrke er tilnærmingen som ble gjort for å utforske lærlingenes egne erfaringer på læretiden. 12 lærlinger ble intervjuet individuelt. Det finnes ingen gylden standard for antall intervjupersoner (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018), men i et fenomenologisk perspektiv er det ofte vanlig å lande på konklusjoner etter å ha studert en relativt liten gruppe. I denne studien gjorde samtaler med deltagerne det mulig for forskeren å avdekke erfaringer og produsere beskrivelser ved å gå grundig til verks gjennom hele intervjuprosessen. Forskeren var opptatt av å forstå at vi ser og forstår, i kontekst – fysisk, emosjonelt, personlig, sosialt, politisk og historisk (Freeman, 2014). Deltagerne ble intervjuet enten på slutten av sin læretid, eller på begynnelsen av sitt yrkesaktive liv som helsefagarbeidere. At det var tett på reell praksis var fordelaktig når de skulle beskrive egne erfaringer. Resultatene viser ingen forskjell på om deltageren ble intervjuet i siste del av læretiden, eller i direkte etterkant. Den selekterte gruppen av deltagere har vært i praksis i løpet av skoledelen av utdanningen, og har allerede lært og utviklet seg i praksisperiodene. Deltagerne består av de som er motiverte for faget og har et utgangspunkt for talent i yrkesutøvelsen. Forskerens forforståelse er et moment for refleksjon, det samme gjelder innside- og utsideblikket. Resultatene i denne studien kan ikke hevdes å være universelle, men de kan i stedet kunne benyttes inn i en videre diskurs rundt læring og utvikling av selvstendighet i læretiden.

Denne studien har implikasjoner på helsearbeiderfagets læretid og opplæring i bedrift, og forståelsen av helsefagarbeideres kompetanse. Den kan fremme kunnskapen om faget. Økt kunnskap og forståelse kan bidra til å øke rekrutteringen, en rekruttering som helse- og omsorgstjenesten er avhengig av. I videre studier ville det vært interessant å undersøke hvordan helsefagarbeidere anvender ferdigheter i møtet med brukere og hvordan de håndterer en stadig mer kompleks brukergruppe og arbeidshverdag i hjemmebasert omsorg.

Avslutning

Hensikten med denne studien var å erverve kunnskap om hvordan lærlinger i helsearbeiderfaget opplever å utvikle selvstendig yrkesutøvelse i læretiden i hjemmebasert omsorg. Studien viser at kompleksiteten helsefagarbeiderlærlinger møter i hjemmebasert omsorg fører til at selvstendig yrkesutøvelse både blir en forutsetning for arbeidet, og en konsekvens av det. Praksisfellesskapet er av stor betydning for at helsefagarbeiderlærlinger skal utvikle selvstendighet. I møte med brukere kan det oppstå uforutsette situasjoner som lærlingene er utrygge på, da er det viktig å ha et praksisfellesskap som støtter opp om kompetanseutvikling og gir rom for å prøve og feile. Når lærlinger er trygge på at de har en kollega å kontakte, bidrar det til at de kjenner på kontroll og kan ta et gradvis økende ansvar, tilpasset sitt kompetansenivå. Helsefagarbeiderlærlingene føler seg betydningsfulle og viktige som yrkesutøvere når de får selvstendige ansvarsoppgaver som de mestrer. Et samlet praksisfellesskap, inkludert veiledere, kollegaer og brukere, bidrar inn i helsefagarbeiderlærlingers utvikling mot selvstendige yrkesutøvelse. Studien avdekker at hjemmeboende brukere bygger opp om helsefagarbeiderlærlingers utvikling av selvstendighet, gjennom oppmuntrende tilbakemeldinger, støtte og kunnskap om egen tilstand. Veiledere og kollegaer bidrar med fagsamtaler, veiledning og refleksjon, noe som fremstår som en ressurs i utviklingen mot selvstendighet. I hjemmebasert omsorg sin travle arbeidskontekst foregår veiledning i spontane møteøyeblikk og mulighetsrommene som oppstår, gjerne i bilen på vei mellom brukere.

Om forfatteren

Siw Martinsen Watz er universitetslektor og PhD-stipendiat ved OsloMet – Storbyuniversitetet, fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier. Hun har lang erfaring fra undervisning og veiledning, både i videregående skole og på universitetsnivå. Hennes forskningsinteresser er yrkesopplæring, med vekt på utdanning innen helse- og oppvekstfag, relasjonelt og emosjonelt arbeid, og veiledning og coaching.

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NJVET is published on behalf of Nordyrk, a Nordic network for vocational education and training.

Linköping University Electronic Press

ISSN: 2242-458X