



Employment Readiness Programs for Persons with Disabilities: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in employment readiness programs, particularly their transition from vocational training to sustainable employment. Guided by Hollis' Person-in-Environment Theory (1964), the study examined the skills developed during training, available job opportunities after training, challenges encountered in landing a job, coping strategies, and recommendations for improving future programs. A qualitative multiple case study design was used, involving participants who are blind and participants with mobility impairment. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with PWD participants and trainer providers. The findings revealed that training helped PWDs develop independent living skills, vocational skills, self-confidence, and spiritual faith. Job opportunities after training included massage therapy, professional recognition through certification and licensing, media and advocacy work, and livelihood activities. However, they still experienced psychological challenges, workplace discrimination, accessibility barriers, and transportation difficulties. They coped through self-motivation, spiritual motivation, social support, and adaptability. The study concludes that employment readiness programs are helpful but not sufficient by themselves to ensure sustainable employment. Effective programs should be holistic, accessible, disability-responsive, and strongly connected to job placement, livelihood support, employer partnerships, and continuous follow-up.

Keywords: Employment Readiness Programs, Persons with Disabilities, Vocational Training, Sustainable Employment, Person-In-Environment Theory

Introduction Background of the Study

Employment remains one of the most important pathways for persons with

disabilities (PWDs) to achieve independence, dignity, and social participation. In the Philippines, national laws such as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons or Republic Act 7277 ensure that PWDs should not experience discrimination in job application, hiring, promotion, or training (Absolor, 2023). Despite these protections, many working-age adults with disabilities face significant employment challenges. The National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) defines PWDs as individuals whose long-term physical, mental, sensory, or intellectual conditions, when combined with environmental barriers, can hinder their full and equal participation in society. Barriers such as stigma, low self-esteem, and limited employer accommodations often prevent them from securing meaningful employment (Lindsay et al., 2017).

Zamboanga Del Sur has attempted to solve these challenges through local initiatives, such as the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO) which has created various skills training and support initiatives aimed at improving employment readiness. These initiatives comprise the provision of prosthetic limbs, assistive devices, training in livelihood skills, IT and the IT Challenge, and other capacity-building activities to help PWDs acclimate to real work settings. For blind participants, services such as Free Eye Check-Ups, the provision of Reading Glasses, and the Distribution of assistive devices promote independence and the ability to function in the workplace. For deaf and mute participants, Programs such as Home Visits & Kumustahan and Livelihood Programs address their communication needs and provide them with employment opportunities. Participants with mobility impairments are assisted by Free PDAO Transportation and Massage Services in accessing training sites, medical follow-ups, and employment-related activities.

What usually happens is Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) obtain these training programs and services through referrals, community-based registration and direct coordination with the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO). Registrants with a PWD ID, or with endorsement from the barangay officials and social workers, are given access to the programs. PDAO, as a result, was able to consider the registrant's specific needs as shaped by his/her disability, set of skills, and employment aspirations. This is to ensure that training is targeted to the concerned disability and the individual's specific needs and functional limitations.

Regarding training and job placement, these initiatives have gaps. Employment is not a certainty after training. Insufficient employer engagement, limited access to workplaces, and lack of adequate post-training support are contributing factors (Rudstam et al., 2023). Most employers have knowledge of disability rights, but apply it inconsistently, leading to a "knowing-doing gap." PWDs face weak self-advocacy, low confidence, limited mobility, and difficulty in asking for accommodations.

In addition, research indicates that training programs offer PWDs opportunities to develop basic competencies but these often do not meet the actual requirements of the job

(Mudde et al., (2025). Without adequate follow-up support and job matching, opportunities for employment remain reserved for many PWDs. Norms of the job market, the psychosocial environment, and emotional discouragement, stress, and self-doubt that make coping strategies and psychosocial supports necessary are often encountered while job seeking, and PDAO's Stress Debriefing & Counseling, Home Visits & Kumustahan Program, and ongoing monitoring programs attempt to address these issues. However, the impact of these supports on closing the gap between training and employment has not been studied.

Given these gaps, research is needed to understand PWDs (person/s with disabilities) experiences with employment readiness training and how they apply these skills in actual job situations. Equally important is research on the employment opportunities accessible to PWDs (person/s with disabilities), the obstacles they encounter in the employment application process, how they manage these obstacles, and what improvements they want to training programs. This research focuses on young adult PWDs (person/s with disabilities) including young adults who are blind, deaf and mute, and those who have mobility impairments as they transition from training to job placement. The inquiry intends to develop practical, evidence-based solutions to assist training organizations, and social and employment service providers, and employers in constructing inclusive and responsive employment readiness programs for PWDs (person/s with disabilities).

Theoretical Framework

The research is grounded in Hollis' (1964) Person-in-Environment (PIE) Theory. The theory posits that one's experiences and behaviors are a result of a constant transaction with the social environment. Challenges, therefore, are not only of a personal nature, but are consequences of the social, physical, and institutional environments that comprise the social support, and opportunities, or lack thereof, that are available. Considering the internal and the external systems that impact a person's situation is crucial in understanding and responding to that person's situation.

The Person-in-Environment (PIE) framework focuses on the relationship of the skills and confidence attained from participating in employment readiness programs and the environmental factors that pertain to job placement concerns for persons with disabilities (PWDs). It signifies that employment result is a factor of personal skills and competencies as well as the positive and accommodating situational factors like the attitudes of employers, the accessibility of the workplace, and the enforcement of policies. Rogge and Cox (2008) argued that the PIE perspective takes on the most holistic view of the individuals in their social systems and, therefore, provides the most complete understanding of adaptation and thriving. In the same vein, Jahiel and Scherer (2010)

argued the experience of disability is the result of a person and changing environmental factors; removing barriers in the environment is the primary means of fostering participation and inclusion.

This theory accurately applies to the current research problem as it validates the fact that supporting persons with disabilities to become job ready goes beyond just imparting training. It emphasizes the need for a supportive environment that is inclusive and equitable to all in the workplace. Holloway (2017) indicated that PWDs who are in a stimulating environment that supports them, feel more positive and are able to take up opportunities and fight discrimination. Further, Mackelprang and Clute (2009) stated that the design of a workplace to be inclusive increases accessibility and reduces barriers to employment. This study focuses on employment readiness programs within the context of the framework, and how they can enhance personal skills and supportive environmental systems, and thus close the gap between training and job placement for PWDs.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to explore the experiences of persons with disabilities (PWDs) aged 18 to 59 who have participated in employment readiness programs. Specifically, it examines how they apply the skills they acquired during training, how they navigate available job opportunities, and what challenges they face when transitioning from training to actual employment. Through this multiple case study, the research aims to understand the practical gaps and barriers that influence their employment outcome.

The central question that guides the inquiry is: How do Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) describe their experiences regarding the practical gaps and barriers encountered during the transition from vocational training to securing sustainable employment?

To address this, the study seeks to answer the following specific questions:

1. What specific skills are developed by the persons with disabilities during the training?
2. What are job opportunities available for persons with disabilities after completing the training?
3. How do persons with disabilities utilize the job opportunities they receive from the training?
4. What challenges do persons with disabilities encounter when applying for jobs?
5. How do they cope with the challenges they face during job searching and application?
6. What recommendations do the participants have for training providers and social welfare agencies to improve future training programs?

Research Design

This study will use a qualitative case study design as exemplified by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). A qualitative case study is characterized by its unit of analysis which is the case, and not by the study's topic or focus. Because of this, it is usually used in conjunction with some other qualitative methods such as, ethnography, grounded theory, or narrative research. Here, the "cases" will be the employment readiness programs for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Zamboanga Del Sur and how such programs bridge the gap between training and actual employment.

A multiple case studies approach will be used, meaning several cases will be looked at for the purpose of gathering and analyzing data. This helps in providing different perspectives and credibility to the findings, as well as understanding how employment readiness programs operate in varying contexts.

However, case studies have some disadvantages. They have been criticized for the lack of generalizations since the outcomes will be context dependent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). They also may be subject to researcher bias while interpreting data as it can be based on subjective reasoning (Yin, 2018). Even with the aforementioned weaknesses, the case study tackling social problems in detail is a strength that is not possible with quantitative approaches.

In this particular research, a qualitative multiple case study design is most suitable as it gives an opportunity to gain a detailed understanding of stakeholder gaps and the experiences of PWDs focusing on psychosocial, structural, and systemic barriers related to employment readiness and job placements. The employment readiness programs in Zamboanga Del Sur will be the primary bounded case of analysis, specifically examining how they aid in the attainment of sustainable employment for persons with disabilities.

Research Environment

The research will take place in a rural area where local government units and social welfare agencies have developed and are implementing programs and services for persons with disabilities (PWDs). These are inclusive of communities and organizations that offer employment readiness and supportive services to PWDs. At the center of this ecosystem is the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO). As the principal coordinating body for PWD-related services, PDAO offers and coordinates programs such as livelihood skills and information technology (IT) training, provision of assistive devices and prosthetic limbs, transportation services, counseling, and home visitation. These services are supplemented by PDAO's partnerships with the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), various accredited training institutions, and civil society organizations to enhance the provision of services and offer the inclusive and capacity-

building programs for PWDs.

Despite the availability of services, PWDs in the province continue to experience workplace setting challenges, limited employer involvement, and training to employment opportunities. These challenges make the context suitable for the research on the PWDs and studying the employment readiness programs within a local provincial context.

Research Participants

The focus of the research study will be three primary participants, all of whom are persons with disabilities (PWDs) who have gone through employment readiness or skills training offered by social welfare agencies at the provincial level. Each of the three cases has multiple participants and the number is based on the official documentation from the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO). The participants will be blind, deaf and mute, and have case with mobility impairment. All participants will be aged 18 to 59, and are bona fide members with an official Person with Disability (PWD) identification. In addition, they must have attended at least one skills training conducted by the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO) or a partnering institution. All these attributes are to be certain that the participants have gone through training to become employment ready and have had job-seeking experience to enable them to provide insights on to the actual transition from training to employment.

Purposive sampling will be applied when selecting participants who will be able to give detailed relevant data regarding their experiences. This sampling will be justified as it enables the researchers to deliberately select participants who have the first-hand information and are actively engaged in the specific issue. Campbell et al. (2020) postulate that purposive sampling will enable the researcher to capture participants' experiences, thus the study will be able to collect relevant and valuable data.

In order to enhance the credibility and triangulation of the study's findings, the study will also incorporate at least 2 trainers or program implementers who have first-hand experience with the employment readiness or skills development activities involving PWDs. These trainers will have additional input regarding implementation of the programs, the performance of the participants, and the placement. Speaking with trainers aligns with what Yin (2018) refers to as multiple sources of evidence, which aids in enhancing the dependability and richness of qualitative case studies. Their input will help strengthen the participant's accounts and will add to the understanding regarding the employment readiness programs.

Incorporating the voices of PWD participants and trainers helps the study document the experiences of those who are in the training, and the views of those who design and execute the programs.

Research Instrument

The main tool or instrument for this study will be the researchers themselves, as they will be collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data directly from the participants. Likewise, for Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the involvement of the researcher makes it easier to engage in meaning-making, thus the researcher engagement approach is deemed most appropriate for multiple case study research for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

For the purpose of systematic and consistent data collection, the researchers will use semi-structured interview guides tailored separately for each of the two categories of participants: (1) the three PWDs from varied disability categories, and (2) the trainers or program implementers of the employment readiness programs. As for the trainers, they were also involved in implementing the vocational training programs. In this study, semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate as they allow the interviewers to be flexible in may inquired in the responses of the participants.

Interviews will be held in English and will be translated to Filipino or Bisaya, as preferred by the participants, to aid comprehension and comfort. Additional questions will be incorporated, as needed, to explain and examine responses more thoroughly. For the purpose of collecting accurate responses, all interviews will be audio recorded with the participants' consent, and field notes will be taken in order to capture any visible responses, setting details, and other contextual details to aid in the interpretation of the data. Maintaining confidentiality will be a priority in order to protect the identity and personal information of the participants. The combination of the validated interviewing instrument and the researcher acting as the primary tool guarantees the richness, reliability, and alignment with the objectives of the multiple case study regarding the data collected.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study will methodically organize the collection of data to guarantee the focus and adherence to the study's credibility and ethical standards. A request for formal permission will be obtained from the College Dean and the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) before the collection of data. This will enable the researchers to liaise with the Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO) and other pertinent disability training providers. Upon receiving the requisite approvals, the researchers will engage with PDAO focal persons to determine and assist qualified participants who fall within the prescribed inclusion criteria. These criteria will be persons with disabilities aged between 18 to 59 years, inclusive of those who are blind, and those who are deaf and mute, as well as individuals with mobility impairments who have undergone and completed at least one employment readiness or skills training program.

The researchers will arrange an orientation with all the identified participants to explain the different components regarding the purpose, Scope, and procedures of the study. Participants will be given an informed consent form to sign as part of the ethical guidelines stipulated in the Belmont Report of 1979 and in accordance with Republic Act 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Researchers will explain the informed consent processes acting as data controllers and will emphasize the confidentiality of the information declared, that participation is voluntary, that participants have the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any given time, and that personal information will be kept secure. Only those participants who willingly complete a consent form will be part of the study.

There are two target groups for data collection: (1) the three PWD cases, and (2) a minimum of two trainers or program implementers of the employment readiness programs. Each participant will be interviewed using a semi-structured format, and will use the validated interview guide for PWDs and the one for trainers. Participants will be interviewed in places that are easy and safe for them to reach. Interviews will be conducted in the language preferred by the participants, which may be English, Filipino or Bisaya, and necessary arrangements will be made, including the provision of a sign language interpreter if the participant is deaf or mute, and other communication supports as needed. To uphold data accuracy, interviews will be recorded, and interviewers will take notes to account for any non-verbal communication, the interview context and setting, and other details that may be helpful in answering the research questions. Trainer interviews will serve as a form of triangulation; trainers' perspectives will add to the inversed value of the findings by broadening the scope of employment readiness program implementation and job placement challenges.

Upon completion of the interviews the researchers will craft meticulous transcripts of the recordings and will safely store all data in password protected digital files that only the research team can access. If there are printed documents, they will be stored in sealed envelopes kept in a locked cabinet. All obtained data will be used exclusively for scholarly activities.

Data Analysis

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Ethical Consideration

Prior to the initiation of the research, the researchers adhered to particular ethical considerations, specifically to guarantee the rights and welfare of participants throughout the research study, most critically, the participants who are persons with disabilities

(PWDs) aged 18 to 59 years.

Privacy. The researchers ensured that all participants' privacy was their primary concern throughout the study. Throughout the research, all participants' responses, views, and concerns were kept confidential. Data was kept secure and was only accessible to the researchers. The researcher did not use the participants' real names. The researcher applied a coding system and referred to PWDs as participant 1 or 2. The researcher adhered to the mandates of Republic Act No. 10173, the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," as applicable to the participant's PWD's information, concerns, and skills and ensured that the PWDs's rights to privacy were upheld.

Voluntary Participation. The Belmont Report (1979) makes the researchers' obligation to safeguard the PWD's well-being and enhance their condition more explicit. The participants PWDs are the focus of the study. The PWD's research findings are expected to add value to the PWD's. The researcher is concerned with producing findings that can positively impact the PWD's employment readiness programs and job placement services.

Non-maleficence. The researcher's promise not to harm others (Resnik, 2015) was upheld. The researchers made certain that participants would not incur any physical, emotional, or psychological harm. They asked sensitive questions while being attentive, and participants were never pressured to answer any questions that would make them feel uncomfortable.

Beneficence. Although the researcher's responsibility to defend the positive contribution and/or the welfare of the individual and/or the society (Belmont Report, 1979) is considered, the positive impact of the study was to be constructive. The study aimed to contribute its positive impact of improving the employment readiness programs and job placement services for people with disabilities.

Respect for the participants of the study. The researchers made certain that the participants were treated with all the dignity and respect and the participants were free to choose to respond or not to respond to with all the respect and dignity and to remain silent. No one was in any way coerced to provide an answer, and their decision was fully accepted. The researchers, at all times, ensured that the participant's rights were not violated and the respect was maintained.

Results and Discussion

This part reports the findings and discussion of Employment Readiness Programs for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

The unit of analysis for this research is the persons with disabilities in provincial areas. Case 1 involved blind participants and was denoted as P1, P2, and P3. Case 2 involved mobility-impaired participants and was denoted as P4 and P5.

Besides, trainers or program implementers were designated as T1 and T2 and were interviewed for finding triangulation.

The categories that emerged from the study are: Skills Developed by PWDs During Training, Available Job Opportunities for PWDs After Training, Challenges Encountered by PWDs in Landing a Job, Coping Strategies in Landing a Job & Recommendations for Improving Training Programs

Skills Developed by PWDs During Training

Skills refer to the different capabilities, know-how, and positive features that people with disabilities obtained and deepened through the times they spent in training. According to the participants' answers, training equipped them with technical and livelihood-related skills, for example massage therapy, agriculture, graphic design, and social media management, but at the same time it also developed their independence, self-confidence, communication skill, perseverance, and faith. The participants' stories illustrate that getting training was one of the important ways through which they came to understand their own potential, increase their employability, and even be able to face life with a positive attitude in spite of the fact that they have disabilities.

The subcategories that emerged from this category are: *Independent Living Skills, Spiritual Skills, Vocational Skills, and Social Skills*, *Independent Living Skills*. In this context, it intends to show how the participants had learned to be more independent, move around by themselves, and stop being at home all the time even if they have a disability.

Case 1

"Before ma'am, when I became blind, I would just be at home, it felt like being imprisoned in darkness... But when we conducted the training at PDAO, even if you are blind, you can really be able to go around anywhere". -P1

The remark of P1 reveals that after the training, the participant was no longer at a loss as to what to do. The statement further suggests that training helped the participant to gain self-confidence in going out, moving independently, and interacting in the community. Training, therefore, not only provided the skills necessary for employment but also helped to restore daily life autonomy. This view is in line with WHO's explanation that rehabilitation is a process that enables a person to become as independent as possible in daily activities and facilitates participation in education, work, and other meaningful life roles (WHO, 2023).

This is further supported by one of the trainers/program implementers who said:

"This is one of the things I have noticed in them, ma'am, how through the training they were able to develop their skills. The training is a great source of skill to PWDs. So

even if they are on their own, they can still make a living if they have the skills". -T1

"You can literally see their changes...they are so earnest with the training that they rehearse what they have learned even when the trainer is not there". -T2

They trainers' testimonies corroborate the participant's perspective on the training program as the main contributor to the PWDs' acquisition of skills that enhanced their capability for independent living. For instance, T1 recalled, "My observation of them starting from unskilled to skilled is that the main source is the training because it greatly imparts skills to the PWD... even when they are alone as long as they have skill, they can live." This is an indication that the training was a catalyst for the PWDs to transition from having very minimal skills to being independent and capable. Along the same line, T2 remarked, "You can see their improvement... They are so dedicated that even in the absence of trainer they still practice what they learned."

This encapsulates the trainees' progress, their discipline, and determination in practicing the lessons even without the presence of a trainer. Such reflections offer further support to the idea that through training, the participants were equipped with independent living skills as they exhibited enhanced ability, discipline, and reduced reliance in performing tasks. The results imply that the independent living skills development was a significant by-product of training as it not only led the blind participant to increased self-reliance, mobility, and functioning outside the home but also served as an essential groundwork for employment readiness.

Spiritual skills. Besides learning new skills, participants also talked about spiritual skills that helped them to keep their spirits up. They said that what kept them going were the qualities of perseverance, positive attitude, humility, and faith in God.

Case 1

"If a person strives, God will not abandon them. One must really pray while putting in effort... prayer is the best medicine". - P2

P2's comment reflects that being trained was identified with acquiring positive values and spiritual faith. The participant highlighted persistence, prayer, and reliance on God whilst maintaining a strong work ethic. It is inferred from this that faith was not just passive reliance but rather was a source of encouragement and meaning that enabled perseverance. Studies also reveal that disability-related spiritual experiences and issues can be a major source of hope, identity, and coping, and spirituality may be the key factor in how individuals with a disability view their life situations and challenges (Hodge & Reynolds, 2019).

The responses of the cases indicate that training enhanced both practical skills and personal readiness. The participants in Case 1 who were visually impaired focused on how

the training had helped them to become self-reliant, learn massage as a vocational skill, boost their confidence despite the challenges that come with the disability, and how they had to depend on their faith and determination to keep on striving. The disabled participant in Case 2 emphasized the acquisition of communication skills, socialization, social media handling, graphic design, and TESDA-related competencies.

All in all, the cases reveal that the skills gained during the training were comprehensive since they covered independent living, vocational competence, self-confidence, and spiritual strength.

That is, the training enabled the participants not only to be ready for employment but also to enhance their ability to function, interact with others, and perceive themselves as capable persons despite their disabilities.

The category, by the way, strongly supports the Person-in-Environment point of view as it indicates that a person's potential is greatly enhanced when the environment around them is supportive. The participants shifted from being dependent, timid, and unprepared for work to being more self-reliant, skilled, confident, and hopeful because their training environment met their requirements.

In line with the literature, inclusive skills development and rehabilitation can enhance the participation, independence, and work readiness of persons with disabilities (ILO, 2017; WHO, 2023). Hence, skills acquired through training should be regarded as comprehensive results influenced by both the individual and the surroundings.

What this discovery points to is that employment preparation initiatives for, PWDs should not just concentrate on technical or livelihood education only. Training facilitators, PDAO, TESDA, DICT, and other collaborating agencies need to come up with programs that not only impart skills but also promote independent living, communication, self-confidence, values formation, and actual practice of such skills. Blind trainees, for example, might require mobility assistance and massage-related training while those with mobility impairment could be given communication, digital skills training, and inclusive learning sessions.

Moreover, the study's outcomes suggest that program evaluation should not limit itself to whether participants completed the training or not. Trainers and organizers should also determine whether PWDs became more independent, confident, communicative, and ready to apply their skills in actual work and life situations. In other words, training sessions should be comprehensive, disability-sensitive, and enable PWDs to use their newly developed skills as a basis for long-term employment and livelihood.

Vocational Skills. Participants acquired practical livelihood skills such as massage therapy, agriculture, graphic design, and social media management, which prepared them for employment or income generation.

Case 1

“Pwede diay manginabuhì pinaagi sa pagbansay-bansay sa among abilidad...

pinaagi sa massage therapy.” [It turns out that we can make a living by developing and practicing our abilities... through massage therapy.] -P1

Case 2

“Naka apil kog training sa DICT pod nga social media manager, sa graphic design dayun sa TESDA pod naa pod mga NC2 daghan kaayo kog nakat-unan.” [I was also able to join training at DICT as a social media manager, and in graphic design, and at TESDA as well—I obtained NC II certifications. I really learned a lot.] -P4

These remarks indicate that training gave participants access to practical vocational skills that serve as either employment or livelihood tools. P1 saw massage therapy as a channel for income generation. P4's technical knowledge and employability were increased through training in social media management, graphic design, and TESDA certification. Collectively, these stories imply that the training programs developed competencies that were not only marketable and oriented toward real-world application but also did not solely rely on abstract knowledge. This understanding is corroborated by the ILO policy brief on inclusive TVET, which points out that mainstream skills systems can enhance the labor-market position of persons with disabilities provided they develop relevant and usable competencies (ILO, 2017).

A more specific study on visually impaired trainees also found that vocational training improved quality of life and supported life and career reconstruction, indicating that technical training can enhance both practical skill and overall functioning among visually impaired persons (Chu & Chan, 2024).

This finding is supported by the statement of one of the program trainers/program implementers, who affirmed that the training was designed to help PWD participants improve skills that could be used for employment. As T1 stated, “Ang purpose gud ana is to help them for employment... importante nga ma improve nila ilang skill ug magamit nila ilang trabaho.” This supports the participants’ narratives by showing that the purpose of the training was not only to teach skills but also to ensure that these skills could be applied in actual work. The trainer’s statement triangulates the finding by confirming that vocational skill acquisition was both experienced by the participants and intentionally pursued by the training providers. The findings suggest that the acquisition of vocational skills was a major outcome of training because participants gained practical abilities such as massage therapy, social media management, and graphic design, which could support employment or livelihood. This indicates that the training programs helped transform personal ability into work-related competence.

Social Skills. Training helped participants build confidence, courage, and resilience, allowing them to overcome shyness, discrimination, and self-doubt.

Case 1.

"You really have to strengthen yourself because in everything you do here, especially if you have a disability, there are truly many challenges". -P1

Case 2

"My communication skills have improved because I used to be very shy and not good at socializing.] -P4

These remarks also show that the training helped the respondents develop self-confidence and a sense of personal power.

P1 stressed the necessity of becoming emotionally resilient to the disability-related problems, and P4 narrated how the skills in communication have helped in reducing shyness. It implies that training not only provided external skills but also an inner sense of confidence, bravery, and willingness for social interaction. Support for this understanding comes from recent studies which have demonstrated the importance of resilience and self-efficacy for the persons with disabilities in maintaining a good quality of life and their adjustment especially when they are confronted with social discrimination and employment barriers (Sive et al., 2025).

This finding agrees with what one of the program trainers/program implementers said who pointed out that readiness is a significant factor in the acquisition of skills and the path to a decent livelihood. T1 mentioned, "If they really have the willingness... their skills will really be strengthened, they will also have a big income, they will have a living that is decent." She/he goes on to comment that willingness, confidence, and skill development together lead to income generation and ultimately stable means of living. The trainer's words reiterate the point that self-empowerment is a major component of how training is a tool of meaningfulness and effectiveness for PWD participants. The evidence above shows that one of the key outcomes of training was the enhancement of self-esteem and personal empowerment, as it enabled the trainees to be brave, express themselves, and be mentally geared up to tackle their disabilities and work-related challenges. Therefore, apart from technical readiness, the training also aimed at nurturance of one's personality and character

Employment Opportunities for PWDs Following Training

Mean the job and means of living that become available to people with disabilities after completing the training programs. The participants' answers showed that the training gave them many ways to do income-producing activities and professional jobs. For a few blind participants, the training made it possible for them to become massage therapists and get recognition as professional practitioners through NCII certification, for example. On the other hand, participants with mobility impairment found that they could take part in opportunities in the fields of radio broadcasting, office work, and advocacy-related

activities. These opportunities gave them a platform to use their training skills, and at the same time, they showed that persons with disabilities can be a dynamic part of the workforce.

Types of jobs that participants pursuing training in massage therapy could get through the training.

Training provided a means for participants to get official certification and recognition as professionals in their field.

The participants were given opportunities in mass media and were involved in advocacy work.

Available Job Opportunities for PWDs After Training

The word massage therapy jobs is the most notable ones which become a major employment opportunity for graduates of the training. The blind people that the research participators were several of them reported that the training made it possible for them to become a massage therapists and therefore that this enabled them to have a source of income as well as serve their client. Some of them were able to work in the massage areas which are exclusively for the blind whereas others are going to the homes of their customers.

The subcategories that emerged from this category are: *Massage Therapy Opportunities, Professional Recognition Opportunities, Media and Advocacy Opportunities, and Livelihood Opportunities.*

Massage Therapy Opportunities. One of the most prominent job opportunities available participants after completing the training employment in massage therapy. Several blind participants reported that the training equipped them with the skills needed to work as massage therapists, enabling them to earn income and serve clients. Some participants were able to work in massage areas designated for them, while others provided home service to their customers.

Case 1

"The job opportunity that I have now, ma'am, is what I became, a massage therapist". -P1

" Now, ma'am, we already have our massage area here at Plaza Luz... it was provided by the mayor because we didn't have a proper area yet for our organization". - P2

The utterances of P1 and P2 depict that massage therapy signifies a tangible, direct employment opportunity that can be accessed immediately after training. P1 pointed out massage therapy as his current work opportunity, while P2 pointed out the existence of a

particular physical location where they can offer their services. Through these utterances, it can be inferred that the training turned productive when it was related to a genuine work environment where the trainees could practice their skills. This explanation aligns well with the notion that inclusive TVET and skills development systems should facilitate improvement in the labor market condition of persons with disabilities, primarily by connecting training to real job pathways (ILO, 2017).

This is a clear illustration from the trainers/program implementers who attested that training was linked to livelihood opportunities and conducted follow-up support. T1 observed, "Pag human nilag training eh evaluate gud sila permanente adtoon namo sa field kung unsa may status sa ilang livelihood kung ila bang ginagamit." This means that the participants after the training were perpetually checked to see if they had used the training skills in their livelihood. On the other hand, T2 noted that "Mostly sa job opportunities nga makuha nila sa training diri kanang for services example massage therapy." This confirms and supports the participant's narratives that massage therapy is one of the most common service-related job opportunities made available after the training. Trainers' statements highlight that the training was not considered as a single event but as an ongoing process connected to real work usage, livelihood application, and follow-up support.

The findings indicate massage therapy was a practical and well-suited job opportunity for blind persons after training. With assistance from training providers and local communities, participants got the chance to demonstrate their competencies in a live service setting. Hence, massage therapy turned out to be a vocational accomplishment and a good way of employment participation.

Professional Certification and Recognition. Another opportunity for the participants available after completing the training was professional certification and recognition, which helped them get jobs. According to one participant, having an NCII certification led to being recognized as professional massage therapists increasing their skills visibility and chances of employment. This refers to the possibility of acquiring official documents such as NC II and licenses which enhance one's ability to get a job and at the same time, it bolsters one's identity as a professional.

Case 1

"We were given NC II so we could be legally called professionals...also, through the help of the province, we were given licenses, so it wouldn't be difficult where we will go to apply for work". -P3

The message of P3 shows that certification and licensing were not only seen as documents, but as the recognition that made job application easier. The participant associated NC II and licensing to professional identity and better preparedness to look for work in different places. This points to the fact that recognized credentials helped lower the barriers by giving participants the proof of skills and authenticity. The interpretation is

in line with that of the ILO which states that inclusive skills systems should result in recognized qualifications which help persons with disabilities in accessing the labor market (ILO, 2017).

This supports the wider research on the labor market which reveals that individuals with disabilities are still facing very large gaps in employment and how policies, skills systems and recognized pathways to work are essential in improving inclusion (OECD, 2022).

The results imply that professional certification and recognition opened up more employment opportunities by acknowledging the proficiency of the participants and consequently increasing their acceptability in the labor market. For a participant in this study, certification of NC II and licensing was a source of confidence and a decrease in the difficulties of applying for work.

Media and Advocacy Opportunities. Participants with mobility impairment also found opportunities in media and advocacy after their training. One participant revealed that by working for a radio station, they not only promoted advocacy for persons with disabilities but also made their own experience through the communication to the public. That is what this discussion refers to the roles of participants after training which are connected with performing communication, representing and engaging the public, rather than only a traditional service or manual work. This has been confirmed in Case 2 (persons with mobility impairment).

Case 2

"The first thing I did after the training was work at a radio station, I became an anchor and provided advocacy for PWDs on air". -P4

"It's very clear that I am here because of my own effort... and I am able to use my skills here". -P5

These quotes indicate that employment opportunities following training were not confined solely to massage therapy or other conventional livelihood activities. For instance, the story of P4 reveals that training could lead to unexpected roles in media and public advocacy, through which a participant might employ his or her communication skills and be a voice for disability issues in the community. P5's comment, on the other hand, points out that a participant could use the skills they have learned from training in real work situations that bring significance and recognition to their endeavors. That is why it is believed that the doors opened for persons with disabilities can also be non-conventional and based in the community, especially when they undergo training that fits their skills and talents. Besides that, the OECD points out that labor market inclusion should not be limited to entry only but should also focus on meaningful participation and social engagement (OECD, 2022).

One of the program trainers/program implementers backed up this discovery with a supporting quote. She remarked that often, post-training opportunities depend on the participant's condition, strengths, and suitable skills.

Though T2 was talking about blind participants only, the expression still backs up the notion that the job opportunities given to the trainees should be in line with their abilities and potential. Therefore, the media and advocacy opportunities discovered in Case 2 can also be seen as roles fitting the participant's skills, strengths, and condition. The results show that those with physical disabilities were granted access to media, advocacy, and community work after training. These opportunities gave them a platform to display their skills, raise their voices as well as help in making the community understand disability issues. Hence, it could be said that post-training opportunities for PWDs should go beyond conventional jobs and include socially meaningful roles as well.

Livelihood Opportunities. Besides getting jobs, the participants also talked about different ways of making money through their own livelihood efforts. A handful of them have been giving massage sessions to their clients either through home service or personal contacts. Such opportunities have enabled them to take care of their families and improve their economic situations.

Basically, it is about the chances given to the participants to use the skills they got to earn for themselves and be able to take care of their needs.

Case 1

"I am really using this, ma'm... not only to treat the customers' ailments ... but it is also very much a source of a livelihood". -P1

Case 2

"It did help me financially, and it was also a significant help for me as a person with a disability it proved that disability is not a hindrance to one's endeavor". -P4

Participants were able to continue to appreciate the statements made as the statements reflect that the opportunities made available to them after the training were instrumental in aiding them, especially in their generation of income. P1 pointed out that the skill had a great effect on the livelihood, while P4 mentioned both the monetary benefit and the self-fulfillment of demonstrating that disability is no hindrance to one's efforts and economic participation. This would indicate that the newly created opportunities through training not only became valuable for employment status but also for one's financial survival and self-worth. The recent literature also acknowledges that entrepreneurship and flexible income-generating activities can be a source of work for persons with disabilities though access and support are still key (Tiasakul et al., 2024).

The case studies responses indicate that the training brought about different opportunities for participants depending on their disability, skill-set, and extent of support

available. For Case 1, the blind individuals, for example, mostly gained access to the massage therapy field, earned NC II certification, got licensed, and engaged in livelihood activities that allowed them to interact with clients and generate income. Case 2 featured persons with mobility impairments who found roles such as radio hosts, advocates, office workers, and other income-generating activities based on their communication and technical skills. Whereas the opportunities were not the same across different cases, a common point is that training was most impactful when linked to actual work, certification, livelihood support, and venues where PWDs could demonstrate their capabilities.

Hence the types of jobs after training were not confined to certain jobs only, but also included service work, professional recognition, advocacy, and livelihood participation. According to the Person-in-Environment Theory, the results under Available Job Opportunities for PWDs After Training highlight that access to job opportunities was facilitated by the connection of a person's skills to the support systems and the work environment. For Case 1, the blind participants could access the massage therapy industry, earn NC II and licensing recognition, serve clients as well as use livelihood opportunities as their training was coupled with certification, the help of the local government, and a special massage area. In Case 2, the persons with mobility impairments engaged in roles related to media, advocacy, office, and generation of income as their communication and technical skills happened to be in line with the available opportunities.

In this regard, job opportunities were not a direct result of training but the outcome of the interplay between newly acquired skills, recognition, local support, and work pathways that are accessible. In this light, training alone does not generate employment opportunities but rather these opportunities are a product of the interaction between acquired skills, recognition, local support, and work pathways that are accessible.

The findings support the Person-in-Environment perspective because they show that employment opportunity depends on the fit between the person and the environment. The participants had abilities, but those abilities became useful only when there were work settings, certifications, organizations, and community structures that allowed them to apply what they learned. This is consistent with literature emphasizing that inclusive employment requires skills development, recognized qualifications, and pathways that connect persons with disabilities to the labor market (ILO, 2017; OECD, 2022). Thus, post-training opportunities must be viewed as environmentally shaped and institutionally supported.

The practical implication is that training providers and social welfare agencies should strengthen the opportunity-building component of employment readiness programs. This includes helping PWDs obtain certifications and licenses, creating referrals to employers, establishing partnerships with local businesses, and providing community-based livelihood spaces where trained participants can immediately practice their skills. For example, massage therapy opportunities for blind participants should be supported by accessible service areas, while media, advocacy, and office-related opportunities should be

explored for PWDs whose strengths are communication and digital skills.

The findings also imply that opportunities should be matched with the abilities, disability-related needs, and interests of each participant. Programs should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and instead create varied pathways such as service work, digital work, advocacy roles, office work, and livelihood activities. In practical terms, effective training programs should include job linkage, employer partnership, certification assistance, and livelihood placement so that training outcomes lead to actual opportunities.

Challenges Encountered by PWDs in Landing a Job

This means the different problems that persons with disabilities face when searching or applying for jobs. The participants admitted that they were still facing a number of barriers, which affected their job getting and retention, even though they had undergone training and learned skills. Some of their challenges were lack of confidence, workplace discrimination, inaccessible application processes, and transport-related issues. The participants' testimonies show that the way society sees disabled people, the physical barriers in the environment, and even personal issues can greatly affect the employment path of persons with disabilities.

A few recent studies also reveal that people with disabilities are still facing many obstacles when it comes to employment such as being left out of the work they want, getting a raw deal by the system, and not having fair access to the labor market (ILO, 2024; OECD, 2022).

The subcategories that emerged from this category are: *Discrimination-Related Barriers*, *Psychological Barriers*, *Accessibility Barriers*, and *Transportation Barriers*.

Discrimination-Related Barriers. This describes the discrimination, suspicion, and disbelief that participants have felt due to their being disabled. E.g. the situations where employers or other people questioned their skills or disqualified them because of their disability rather than registering their actual skills.

Case 1

"When you submit your application, ma'am, the discrimination is there... they doubt whether a blind person is capable of doing massage". -P1

Case 2

"It seems like they have a preconception that PWDs are incomplete... the moment they see the disability, they just decline them automatically." -P4

The quotes of both P1 and P4 reveal that they encountered discriminatory acts when they applied for a job and even when their applications were being considered for employment. For instance, P1's Case 1 illustrated the disbelief of the people that a blind

person could actually do massage therapy despite the participant having the requisite training and skills. Contrarily, in Case 2, P4 pointed out how the employer(s) appeared to consider the PWDs as incomplete and therefore, they would decline them automatically after a simple glance at the person's disability. Consequently, these quotations prove that the participants were frequently evaluated first and foremost on the basis of their disability and not on the basis of their ability.

The study findings indicate that the discrimination experienced by the participants was a significant factor that contributed to the problem of not being able to find a job as most of the times the employer and other individuals focused on the disability rather than the skills. This situation denied the trainees even the most basic thing the opportunity to get a job. Furthermore, the literature on ableism and employment elucidates that disability-related bias is not only a problem in the making of hiring decisions but it can also have a negative impact on the ability of disabled job seekers to be granted an equal employment opportunity (Kattari et al., 2025).

Psychological Barriers. Refer to emotional and mental issues leading to anxiety, fear, and low self-confidence affecting the ability to enter or adjust to a job environment. These may be examples of situations experienced by individuals in the job market:

Case 1

"I've been through a lot, ma'am... anxiety and depression are definitely some of the challenges... and self-confidence is also one of the difficulties". -P1

Case 2

"The very first thing when I was about to get into work was the fear... what are the commands that you need to learn". -P5

The above quotations of P1 and P5 reveal that psychological difficulties played a part in the participants' subsequent employment-related activities after training. In Case 1, along with other psychological issues, P1 grapples with self-doubt, showing that searching for work may be a painful experience in the case of the blind participant. Case 2 picks up from P5 who articulates that fear was his very first emotional reaction to a new job especially when there was uncertainty about the tasks to be learned. The answers indicate that for a blind PWD's case, even having the right skills at the moment is only one side of the coin. The other side is emotional readiness that supports them in coping with work situations.

As per the survey results, psychological difficulties were such a big barrier for participants to find a job that they were scared, anxious, depressed and full of self-doubt at the same time. The implication is that preparation for employment is not just the equipping people with skills but also making them confident, emotionally strong as well as capable and ready to face a real work environment. The most recent evidence supports that

psychological factors such as self-stigma, low self-efficacy and decreased confidence have... KHALIFA ET AL, 2025)

Accessibility Barriers. This is about the various problems the participants faced in terms of accessing the job application processes, work requisites, workplaces, and appropriate work arrangements. These issues indicate that some employment systems and procedures were not fully adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Case 1

"And the inconvenience there, ma'am is the movement of the paperwork... even the searching of the place where you can work." -P1

Case 2

"The legislation is unfair... some enter with double automatically equal sharing, in my case if I only get one client then I am not included." -P3

P1 and P3's statements demonstrate that difficulties in accessibility not only affected the participant's application for work but also the participation in work experience.

P1 highlighted difficulty in handling documents and finding potential work places which indicates that employment procedures can be challenging to a blind participant. In contrast, P3 narrated an unfair work deal where sharing equally was not the participant's case. These comments give us an idea that accessibility is more than just physical access; it also includes fair systems, clear procedures, and inclusive workplace arrangements.

The results imply that accessibility problems made it more difficult for participants to get and keep a job because some job application procedures and working practices were not fully fair, clear, or disability-responsive. This implies that barriers to employment are not just in a person's condition but also in systems that PWDs are not properly accommodated. A recent study carried out by us also confirms that PWDs face employment barriers at different stages, such as job searching, preparing applications, and entering workplaces (McDonnall et al., 2024).

Transportation Barriers. This is about the difficulties that the participants faced in their commuting, such as the issues in accessing the modes of public transportation and the lack of proper assistance or accommodation when they were traveling to work or during job-related activities. In fact, these problems hindered them from going to work or carrying out employment opportunities properly and safely.

Case 1

"Not only is it a problem for you to have no way of someone stopping for you, but ironically, some drivers are really good and they just won't stop for you even if their vehicle is not full". -P1

Case 2

"There are seats reserved for PWDs, but the ones who sat there are non-PWD... I

had to change and find another seat for myself”. -P4

The expressions of P1 and P4 demonstrate that the challenges in transportation caused the generation of a layer of barriers in accessing employment. P1's account of the case shows the problem of being unrecognized or ignored by the drivers even when there is a need for them to give transportation. P4 in Case 2 recounted how PWD's seats were relegated to the unprivileged, forcing the participant to be displaced. Hence, these two cases reveal that transportation barriers are multifaceted since not only are there physical ones, but also social ones. It is further noted that the respective actions of the drivers as well as the passengers' attitudes shape the ability of PWDs to move around freely.

Such results hint that the access to employment was indeed hampered as a result of transportation challenges as the respondents were faced with not only inaccessible transportation but also with things like lack of assistance and even lack of respect for the provisions made for PWDs. Thus, the figure is that despite the existence of employment opportunities, PWDs will still have difficulties in gaining access due to non-inclusiveness of transportation systems and public behavior. Also, according to the most recent research work, it is the role of transportation that employment of PWDs gets sustained as a result of which commuting barriers become weak links in access to work opportunities (Meyer et al., 2024).

This is echoed in the words of a MHPSS trainer/ program implementer, one of the program trainers/program implementers who said mobility limitations and the need for assistance are the two most significant factors that discourage PWDs from commuting. T2 said, "Maglisud gyud siya tulak kung mag sakay siya, assist gyud siya sa pag sakay." This is strong corroborating evidence to the participants' descriptions as it reveals that the participants' difficulties in walking and boarding transportation were not only firsthand experiences but also the program implementer's observations. The trainer is confirming that transport difficulties seriously hinder people with disability from getting work by the fact that their voice supports the participants' stories.

Judging from the interview data, the participants had a lot of personal and physical issues that prevented them from getting those jobs. For example, in Case 1, the blind participants were troubled with anxiety, depression, loss of confidence, and they also suffered from discrimination as people did not believe that they can do massage. Besides that, they also got confused while doing paperwork or when finding locations of workplace. They were deprived of their rights to get fair job and there were situations when the drivers of transport vehicles purposely do not stop for them. In Case 2, the persons with physical disabilities suffered from the same issue of fear of going to work, they experienced not only being rejected immediately but also being judged negatively by the employers, they came to know that the seats designated for PWDs are not respected, and they were also forced to do several adjustments to the inaccessible situations around them. When these

two cases are combined, one can clearly see that it is not only the disability that leads to the difficulties of an individual to find a job. It is the combination of one's emotions, discriminatory attitudes, lack of accessibility, unfair practices, and at the same the individuals' own constraints due to their PWD status commuting issues that make one's road to employment difficult. In other words, being prepared to be employed is not only about having trained PWDs but also involving inclusive employers, accessible procedures, and supportive community systems.

The segment supports the Person-in-Environment viewpoint because it shows that there is a possibility that PWDs who are trained and willing to work might still face hardships as the environment around them does not offer fair accessibility, reasonable accommodations, and respectful treatment. The participants' mental health breakdowns were associated with the repeated nature of being doubted, rejected, put through inaccessible procedures, and challenged with transportation issues. This aligns with the works that have been cited as when persons with disabilities face education-, employment-, and income-related inequalities, there exist a number of barriers, including attitudinal, physical, informational, and institutional ones (OECD, 2022; ILO, 2024). Therefore, it is also the issue of workplaces and communities being ready to accept and include PWDs besides the PWDs themselves being ready (Kattari et al., 2025).

Simply upgrading the training components may not suffice for the enhancement of job prospects of persons with disabilities. In addition to the training component, the different stakeholders like training providers, PDAO, employers, and local government units must also consider aspects such as discrimination, hiring procedures that are inaccessible, transportation problems, unfair work practices, and lack of accommodation. Employers should be made aware that PWD applicants need to be evaluated in terms of skills and competencies rather than disability, while agencies should assist in making application procedures simpler, clearer, and more accessible.

This, again, brings out the protein shift potential for psychosocial and transition support at all points of the employment journey before, during, and after job placement. As several of the emotional aspects of fear, anxiety, depression, and low self-confidence were specified as bringing-down factors; plans for PWD should not only contain activities elevating self-esteem, guiding, and counseling but also include mock interviews, workplace tour, and mentoring. On a ground level, disability employment programs should be upwardly mobile as they need to prepare the person with a disability as well as enhance the environment which will be receiving the PWD.

Coping Strategies in Landing a Job

This category illustrates how persons with disabilities adapt their behavior, reaction, and mindset to manage the challenges they encounter in the process of seeking

employment. Although that the participants are facing the barriers of discrimination, lack of self-confidence, inaccessibility, and transportation difficulties, they, nevertheless, showed resilience and determination in their efforts to overcome the obstacles. Their accounts indicate that they dealt with the difficulties by self-motivation, trust in God, reliance on family and support groups, and personal perseverance. These coping mechanisms made it possible for them to keep their hope alive, to regularly submit their job applications, and to make constant efforts in securing employment, notwithstanding the problems they faced.

The subcategories that emerged from this category are: *Personal Motivation*, *Spiritual Motivation*, *Situational Adaptation*, and *Support Utilization*.

Personal Motivation. referring to the participants' inner determination, resilience, and strong will not to give up on their employment goals. It is showing how the participants used their muscle thinking to keep going even when faced with discouragement, hardships, and emotional pain.

Case 1

"I didn't even make it a problem for myself... I just kept on trying and even then didn't let it get to me instead of surrendering." -P2

"I just humble myself, endure whatever hardships they give... so I can provide for the needs at home." -P3

P2 and P3's statements illustrate how personal motivation was instrumental in giving them a push to continue, despite the difficulties they kept on encountering in the line of their job/employment. To P2 not letting problems get to "him" and going for the option of keeping on trying instead of giving up was stressed. To P3 it was humility and endurance that were pointed out as the means to survive the hardship and at the same time to provide for the needs of the family. The thought behind these answers is that the participants, by strengthening their internal motivation and concentrating on their duty of working and earning, were able to cope with the employment challenges.

To sum up, the results indicate that personal motivation was a valuable tactic as it helped the respondents to persist even when their spirits were broken, circumstances were harsh, and treatment was unfair. In this context, coping also involved a conscious, moral decision to continue, endure, and stay focused on one's work and livelihood objectives, besides just avoidance of problems.

Spiritual Motivation. Deals with participants' turning to their faith, prayer, and reliance on God as sources of power and hope when they encountered employment problems. It revealed how being spiritually aligned gave them the courage to stay motivated even in the face of uncertainty, rejection, and difficulties.

Case 1

“One of my motivations to keep going, ma'am, is that since God has given me this opportunity, maybe this truly is a divine opportunity for me”. -P1

"For me, ma'am, through faith alone in God, that He will help us and that we will not be left". -P2

The excerpts from P1 and P2 reflect that spiritual motivation made it possible for the participants to gain a sense of purpose or encouragement throughout their employment. P1 considered the chance as a gift from God which, therefore, was a reason for carrying on. P2 focused on faith in God and a conviction that they will never be forsaken. These answers imply that a person's faith was a source of hope, power, and drive when the participants were struggling to get or keep jobs.

These indicate that spiritual motivation was indeed a significant weapon since it supported participants to stay hopeful and decided even in the face of uncertainties and hardships.

After all, what the participants had was only faith as a motivator; that made faith a driving force behind their persistence in searching for job and livelihood opportunities.

Situational Adaptation. This relates to the participants' competency to fit in the work environment, work with the co-workers, and come up with realistic methods of dealing to work-related challenges. It portrays how persons with disabilities confronted hardships by demonstrating flexibility, undergoing learning in phases, and asking for the help of programs or resources available.

Case 2

“Little by little, I was able to adjust as an individual... the main thing is to adjust and communicate properly so that there are no misunderstandings.” -P4

"I made inquiries about the government programs, such as livelihood programs, that could be a source of support for us." -P5

These quotes of P4 and P5 indicate that by situational adaptation, the participants were able to come up with the employment-related problem solutions in their responses. P4 laid stress on progressing adjustment and appropriate communication as ways to avoid workplace or work-related setting misunderstanding. By his short comment, P5 demonstrated problem-solving skill by seeking government livelihood programs as sources of support for them. The above-mentioned answers indicate that the participants not only battled challenges by enduring them but also by regulating their behavior, communication skills, and resource-seeking.

Adaptation to the situation was a considerable element of the strategy because it assisted the participants to encounter their work-related problems via flexibility,

interaction, and realistic measures. Hence, coping entails learning both how to adapt to a situation and to identify support systems and avenues that would aid the participants in going forward with seeking employment and earning a living.

The examples reveal that the participants relied on internal strength and support from outside to handle work challenges. In the first case, the blind persons were able to motivate themselves not to give up, to stay humble and patient despite difficulties, to trust God, to get inspired by the family and to count on the support of the organization which helped them find work. In the second case, the persons with mobility impairment got help and comfort from their family, slowly got used to the changes, interacted with others, displayed creativity in finding solutions and looking for government livelihood programs. Overall, coping in these scenarios was not just a matter of one's resilience but also leveling faith, receiving family encouragement, getting help from the organization and being flexible, and practical actions. This further implies that people with disabilities (PWD) can tolerate rejection, discrimination and work-related difficulties better when their inner willpower is harmonized by meaningful relationships and community resources which are accessible.

In the category Coping Strategies in Landing a Job, the Person-in-Environment Theory is implemented since it characterizes the extent of the participants' coping mechanisms with the combination of internal resources and external support systems. e.g. The blind persons in the first case resorted to self-motivation, humbleness, endurance, faith in God, family encouragement, and assistance from the organization. While, the persons with mobility impairments in the second case got the strongest by family support, gradual adjustment, communication, problem-solving, and government livelihood programs. In sum, they confirmed that coping was not just the brunt of the individual but also a strengthened process resulting from relationships, beliefs, community resources, and services as well.

These data give evidence of the Person-in-Environment viewpoint because they illustrate that resilience is intensified if the environment provides motivation and support. The participants kept striving to find work not only because they were determined individually but also because they had family members, organizations, faith, and government programs that provided them with hope and practical help. Such idea is in line with a number of studies which demonstrated that resilience, self-efficacy, social support, livelihood networks, and spirituality have the ability to empower persons with disabilities in overcoming work-related barriers as well as in maintaining participation (Ordway et al., 2019; Hanass-Hancock et al., 2019; Hodge & Reynolds, 2019). Therefore, coping for this work has a personal, relational, and contextual aspect.

One of the results from this discovery is that employment preparedness programs should be designed in a way so as to include coping support. The training providers should make provision for self-motivation, confidence, communication, problem-solving, and

adjustment to work environments. Besides that, they can even include mentoring, peer support, family orientation, and psychosocial encouragement so that the participants have people and resources to rely on when faced with rejection or difficulty.

More than that, the results suggest that family members, organizations, and community networks ought to be looking upon as partners helping PWDs to sustain their employment efforts. As participants counted on family pride, organizational help, and government livelihood programs, training agencies should link up with support groups, livelihood programs, and follow-up services. Being practical, in employment readiness programs, coping support should be a part of the whole package so that PWDs would not face barriers by themselves.

Support Utilization. Deals with the participants' receiving of motivation, advice, and help from family members, organizations, and support groups in overcoming employment-related problems. It reveals that participants were not only through self-reliance but can also be dependent on other people and groups who serve as their motivators.

Case 1

"What really helped me, ma'am, is my grandma... She was the one who pushed me that even if this is not your place here at home, you are allowed to go and train there". -P1

"The help from our organization in getting a job is such a huge help for us". -P3
Case 2

"My family is my support system; they are very proud of me, even though I am a PWD I am very productive". -P4

The quotes of P1, P3, and P4 imply that support utilization was one of the key factors through which participants overcame employment challenges. P1 in Case 1 got motivated by her grandmother who encouraged the participant to go to the training session; P3 recognized the role of the organization in securing her the job. P4 in Case 2 shared that it was his family's support and pride that made him feel valuable and productive despite being a PWD. These answers may be interpreted to mean that family and organizational support gave the participants the confidence, motivation, and ability to deal with the difficulties related to employment.

The results of the study indicate that support utilization was a crucial strategy as participants were able to face challenges better if they received not only emotional support but also guidance and material help from others. To put it simply, the act of coping cannot only be an individual one, but a relational one, aided by family, organizations, and the community.

This is in line with the observation made by one of the program trainers/program implementers who pointed out that a safe, comfortable, and supportive environment is what enables PWD participants to cope with challenges more effectively. In fact, T2 commented, "The environment is safe and comfortable... so you can cope with your challenges better. Both financially and emotionally I have my parents... they help me in everything." It just goes to show that just like the participants, the trainer believes emotional and financial support from intimate relationships can be of great help in adjustment, persistence, and management of employment-related difficulties. In another way, by affirming that coping is not just personal effort but the outcome of the support systems surrounding the participants, the trainer's statement also triangulates the cases. So the evidence points to the fact that turning to family, organizations, and community for support was a prominent coping strategy since participants were more capable of dealing with employment-related issues if they had received encouragement, guidance, and practical help from others. Consequently, coping was augmented not only by individual resolve but also by the presence of supportive relationships and access to collective resources.

Recommendations for Improving Training Programs

This category highlights the suggestions of persons with disabilities on how training providers and social welfare agencies can improve future training programs. The participants emphasized that while training programs have been beneficial in developing their skills and opening opportunities for employment, there are still areas that need improvement to better support persons with disabilities. Their recommendations include expanding outreach efforts to reach more PWDs, providing continuous and advanced training opportunities, ensuring accessibility of training programs, and strengthening post-training support such as job placement and livelihood assistance. These suggestions reflect the participants' desire for more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable training initiatives that will enable persons with disabilities to maximize their potential and improve their quality of life.

Advanced Skills Training. This means the suggestion that providers of training must be delivering ongoing, more heightened, and segmented training programs that actually fit the abilities as well as the preferences of the PWDs. Training, according to this, should not be limited to only basic skills but should also be aimed at aiding learners to get to a higher competence level.

Case 1

"We are really willing to undergo training in any type of massage that matches our talents. They should train us again because we want to further improve our massage skills".

-P2

The statement of P2 shows that advanced skills training is an important recommendation because participants want to continue improving the skills they already learned. P2 expressed willingness to undergo more massage-related training that matches their talent and helps them become better in their field. This response suggests that PWDs do not view training as a one-time activity but as a continuing process of learning and improvement.

The data demonstrate that advanced skills training is essential as basic training alone might not lead to sustained employment or livelihood in the long run. Participants may require refresher training, advanced modules, and special instruction so as to develop their skills and therefore remain competitive. Blind persons, for instance, may be able to improve the quality of their service, bolster their confidence, and enlarge their livelihood options through advanced massage-related training.

Accessible Learning. It means that training programs should provide inclusive learning settings, assistive technology, and disability-responsive tools. It is stressing that not only should PWDs be allowed to participate in training, but also they should be given the suitable equipment and support required for meaningful participation.

Case 2

"Hopefully, it can be made more accessible... that they allocate more slots for PWDs. For example, for the blind, they should have computers with talkback features so they can use them". -P4

It can be seen from P4's statement that accessible learning is a vital subject of the recommendation as training programs should be able to cater to the distinct needs of different disability groups. P4 stressed the importance of making more accessible slots available for PWDs and also the provision of assistive technologies like computers with a talk back feature for blind individuals. Such a response indicates that accessibility is not merely allowing PWDs to be present at training but also about providing them with usable tools, equipment, and methods of learning.

Clearly, accessible learning is important as mask the traces of training sessions will be can not only be understood by one method.

Inclusive Opportunity Building. training providers and social welfare agencies shall be suitably linked to job placements, livelihood centers, employer partnerships, and consequent support for PWDs after training. It underlines the importance of assisting PWDs in their transition from training to employment or finding a livelihood.

Case 1

" Support should be continuous, not only limited to training... government should also look for places where they can have their livelihood". -P1

Case 2

"We follow up with them to see if they have found work already". -P4

P1 and P4 statements greatly illustrate that employment linking is a very significant recommendation because support should last even after training is finished. P1 provided the example of the need for sustainable support and livelihood areas where PWDs can continue to develop their skillset and generate their income. On the other hand, P4 stressed the value of follow-up especially, when there are opportunities for employment in the case of the monitoring of the employment status of PWDs. Basically, the training becomes more beneficial and efficient when it is linked to job placement, livelihood assistance, and monitoring.

This is further corroborated by the policy-maker's confession that training is only the initial step, and linking to employment is the finishing touch. She mentioned, "Training gets us to the final hurdle of employment, but the actual linking and employment remain the completely missing aspects without that." This commentary clearly reveals the existing gap in employment support, which is one of the critical needs among the PWD sector.

The need for more employment opportunities, however, extends beyond PWDs, as several other groups share the same concern. According to a health worker, "That also happens to non-disabled young workers who are not trained or poorly trained, thus are not employable and are jobless." This statement simply refers to the unavailability of work among those who are not trained, which is also one of the main issues of the PWD sector besides discrimination. Additionally, this is in line with the issue of high youth unemployment in the country brought about by a mismatch between the available jobs and the qualifications of the youth or the lack of skills needed for the job.

Moreover, more knowledge and skills are not the only factor for securing employment or starting a business. For example, regardless of how good an entrepreneur's technical skills are, a business can be unsuccessful if he/she is ignorant of the market or has no access to the market. As one key informant stated, "Being unemployed at this period is very serious, especially for a person with a disability. There are so many factors that come into play... first, your technical skills; second, your social skills; third, your knowledge of the local market or suppliers; fourth, the language you use must be understood by your customers, especially for street vendors; and fifth, the ability to do marketing and advertising skills because that will determine success or failure of your small business." This statement somehow summarizes the various skills needed for business owners in the PWD sector, which are not only technical but include marketing and other business skills.

It also appears that they also held PWDs responsible by putting the blame on them for being "sloppy, " "not disciplined, " "lazy, " and other negative statements. In most cases, without even knowing, they were stereotyping PWDs which resulted in their negative perception towards the disabled. Although many of PWDs, as a group, are indeed affected

by stigma and discrimination, we can see from these comments that, in the perception of the community, negative attributes or behaviors of PWDs may also be contributing to the low employment levels of this group. To address the illegal forms of discrimination such as disadvantage attitude even in the limited productivity of a person with a disability, mitigation measures such as reasonable accommodation can be sought. Besides attitudes and behaviors, it is also important to determine to what extent the negative or positive perceptions of the community will have an effect on the employment opportunities of PWDs. Though past studies have mainly concentrated on identifying barriers to employment, stigma, and discrimination against PWDs, this study is aimed at addressing the attitude of the community towards PWDs consequently leading to social exclusion and marginalization, thereby reducing the possibilities of employment of PWDs.

The case responses indicate that overall, the participants want to see training programs that are inclusive, ongoing, easily available and connected to getting a job. In Case 1, the blind participants suggested that there should be more focused outreach efforts to hidden PWDs, the provision of advanced/ repeated massage training, sustained support after training, provision of livelihood spaces and most importantly, encouraging PWDs to realize that life with disability is not the end of the world. In Case 2, the participants pointed out the importance of accessible training slots, provision of assistive technology like talkback computers for blind trainees, more thorough follow-ups on employment and lastly, the active grabbing of opportunities regardless of disability. The cases collectively point towards the fact that training programs must not only focus on the development of basic skills but should also entail proactive outreach, advanced skills development, provision of assistive devices, accessibility of learning environments, job placement support, livelihood assistance, and empowerment activities so that PWDs can participate fully in training and employment opportunities.

The section, Recommendations for Improving Training Programs wholly supports the Person-in-Environment Theory because the participants' ideas were aimed at changing the systems around PWDs rather than just changing PWDs themselves. In Case 1, apart from recommending mobilization of hidden PWDs and advanced massage training, the blind participants also recommendediveness, continuous support, livelihood spaces, and empowerment. In Case 2, the participants suggested accessible training slots, assistive technology such as talkback computers, stronger follow-up on employment, and active participation in opportunities. These suggestions reveal that being ready for employment is directly related to the quality of the environment that identifies, trains, equips, supports, and links PWDs to work.

The study results support the Person-in-Environment approach since they illustrate that it is not only the individual but also the environment, which needs to be improved to make training programs more effective. Participants desired programs that were inclusive, ongoing, accessible and employment-linked. This is in line with literature which highlights

that disability inclusion necessitates mainstreaming support systems for persons with disabilities in training, assistive technology provision, participation and access to the labor market (ILO, 2017; OECD, 2022; WHO, 2023). In fact, enhancing training programs equates to transforming not only the PWDs but also the whole spectrum of structures surrounding them before, during, and after training.

Practically speaking, this means that PDAO, training providers, social welfare agencies, and local government units need to collaborate in crafting training programs that offer complete support systems for PWDs. The plans should consist of barangay-level outreach to find isolated PWDs, delivery of elementary and higher-level skills training, physical infrastructure provision, assistive devices, highly qualified trainers, transport facilities, and relevant educational aids. Besides, the programs must also cater specially to the different disability types by offering, for example, well-trained blind participants in massage therapy and mobility-impaired participants engaging in digital or communication-related courses.

This is why post-training assistance should be enhanced so that completing a training program will really open the door for employment or starting a livelihood. Among the things agencies are expected to do are conducting the monitoring of their clients, placing job seekers in suitable job vacancies, establishing cooperative relations with employers, facilitating certification, providing spaces for livelihood, and organizing activities that empower and motivate PWDs to become regular participants. If expressed in a shorter way, one can say that a training program, as a rule, should not end once the participants graduate but must be continued through direct engagement with clients, the training itself, accessibility support, job linkage, livelihood assistance, and long-term monitoring.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Here are the major findings of the study based on the interview responses of the participants:

1. What skills do persons with disabilities gain from attending the training?

The study shows that persons with disabilities through training developed different skills that include living independently, vocational, social, and spiritual. They became not only more self-sufficient and also more mobile in their day-to-day life but also acquired skills for livelihood and work. Besides, they became more aware of their strengths and abilities as well as expanded and deepened their faith which is a great source of strength and resilience when life and employment challenges confront. These results suggest that apart from technical skills that the trainees acquired, their personal and psychosocial readiness for employment was also enhanced through the training preparations programs.

2. What job opportunities persons with disabilities can get after the completion of

the training?

Results depict that various forms of job opportunities such as Massage Therapy Roles, Professional Recognition, Media and Advocacy Roles, and Livelihood Opportunities were available to persons with disabilities after the completion of their training. Through these training programs, the participants were able to do service-oriented jobs like massage, get certified/recognized that led to increased employability, do advocacy and media-related activities as well as use their skills for generating income through livelihood work. Thus, the training resulted in training other competencies of persons with disabilities besides their knowledge and skills that are formal requirements for different routes to employment.

3. In what ways do persons with disabilities use the job opportunities that come to them after the training?

The results indicate that persons with disabilities' use of job opportunities after training resulted in the following: Participation in Job Application Process, Participation as Volunteer, Participation in Livelihood Activities, Participation in Support Seeking. Participants have actively pursued ways of getting jobs, they actively become volunteers to gain experience and access to better employment, they participate in or organize livelihood programs as a way of sustaining work opportunities and they also reach out their family members, organizations, and program implementers for assistance in job application areas. Thus, these results convey that the participants received benefits from job opportunities that they not only exploited effectively but also gained experiences and support-seeking behaviors, to make the most of them.

4. What problems may deaf or hearing-impaired people have when getting a job?

According to the authors of the study, deaf people and other people with impaired hearing can face many different problems when looking for a job. They may have fear, nervousness and low self-esteem, they are often discriminated against by employers, it can be difficult for them to get the documents they need and to find their way around the workplace, and finally, they may have problems with transport and other mobility issues. Therefore, the results demonstrate that difficulties in getting employment may be arising not only from the individual but the wider social, structural, and environmental factors as well.

5. How did the disabled persons adjust to the difficulties they had in getting a job?

The study, in fact, found out that the disabled persons experienced self-motivation, religious motivation, support utilization, and situation change in their coping mechanisms to the difficulties they had in getting a job. Their inner selves were sustained through personal resilience and determination, spiritually they found their hope and encouragement through their faith in God, support from family and the community was their source, and they adjusted their attitudes and behavior to meet the demands of work and daily life. These results reveal that coping was a mixture of personal drive, and supportive human connections, strengthened by faith in God and family.

6. What suggestions do the disabled persons have for the training providers and

social welfare agencies to make the training better in the future?

Participants emphasized that not only should persons with disabilities be physically accessible to training but they should also be included in the training programs. Training opportunities should also be continuous and the trainings in such cases should be made more advanced. Assistive devices and accessible learning tools should be provided. There should be strong follow-up and employment support should be the extent of support after training. The attitude of persons with disabilities towards themselves needs to be changed as well. They should continue to believe in themselves and be actively involved. These findings indicate that the attendees view employment readiness programs that effectively prepare participants for employment as ones that are inclusive, accessible, ongoing, and have a strong connection between training and employment including support in the long term.

Conclusion

The report finds that Employment readiness programs for persons with disabilities are engaging and contribute to their development, but they cannot independently ensure continuous employment. Apart from the training-induced skills and motivation of the individuals, the factors that determine the readiness of trainees to walk the path are the employer's perceptions, accessibility of the workplace, transportation systems and the existence of support and opportunities, i.e. the environment. Thus, the main cause of the personal and environmental situations of persons with disabilities who face difficulties in obtaining sustainable employment shall be attributed to a combination of the two factors. This final thought follows from the Person-in-Environment Theory that states human outcomes result from the reciprocal interaction of the person and the environment. Moreover, the report shows employment readiness of persons with disabilities as an all-encompassing process involving facets like independent living, self-confidence, coping ability, access to opportunities, as well as the technical skill and livelihood acquisition aspects. The presence of inclusive and supportive environments further enables PWDs to secure employment that they can sustain, hence the empowering of the individual is necessary but not sufficient condition to sustainable employment.

Recommendations

In light of the study findings, the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. PDAO should offer more comprehensive services post training by maintaining communication with participants, doing follow-ups, linking PWDs to job openings and tracking livelihood changes. It can also deliver more training opportunities in barangays to identify more PWDs who can be trained.

2. Training entities have to arrange for refresher courses and advanced training. They also have to make accessible learning materials and provide assistive learning devices. Moreover, they have to add job-readiness activities such as application support, work familiarization, and employment preparation.

3. Hiring has to be inclusive with PWDs being assessed for their skills and potentials only. Giving equal opportunities, providing support and offering possibilities for internships or entry-level roles are expected of employers.

4. Local government authorities could reinforce the inclusiveness of employment policies by means of providing better and accessible transportation, livelihood support, employer partnerships, and local job facilitation for trained PWDs.

5. PWDs are advised to continue their skills development, work on their self-esteem, get involved in support networks and avail themselves of training, livelihood, and employment opportunities.

6. Scholars who are thinking of furthering the study should examine the long-term impact of employment readiness programs, e.g. if PWDs after training have gained stable employment, attained a sustainable livelihood, and improved their quality of life.

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