

A Study on Sense of Calling among Academicians with a High Sense of Calling and Vocation in Ethiopian Civil Service University

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Abstract

The concept and practice of calling and vocation did not get enough attention in Ethiopia as one of a leadership and organizational behaviors like job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, job engagement and job performance in various public organizations. The purpose of this study is to explore the process how academicians discovered their calling in their career and life. In line with this, it also assesses the advantages of having and living with a sense of calling among senior faculty members of Ethiopian Civil Service University. The study also addressed the challenges faced by the academicians during the process of identifying and living for their calling. Sequential mixed method was chosen in order to identify academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation. Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ) was used to collect the quantitative data. The data was analyzed based on the interpretive key of the questionnaire by using SPSS version 25. The finding of the study indicates that people discover their sense of calling and vocation through various ways such as childhood exposure and opportunity, with the help of mentors, teachers, friends, books etc. Participants on this study considered their first experience as an important event of their life which helped them to pursue their future vocation and professional growth over the foundation of their sense of calling. The study recommended that education policies should be seen in the light of the concept of calling and vocation in order to produce skilled and passionate work force for the country.

Keywords: Calling, Vocation, Sense of Meaning, Sense of Purpose

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I. Introduction

Calling has been understood as a sacred religious concept which can be experienced and used only in the religious world for many years. Recently, scholars began to use it on the secular world and recognized that work and professional life also can be a vocation or calling (Xie, Zhou, Huang and Xia, 2017). Some scholars conceptualize it as a sense of destiny and pro-social duty and others generally emphasized on an inner drive and motivation toward self-fulfillment and personal happiness (Duffy and Dik, 2013).

People are motivated to search and live out their vocation and calling in their professional and other facets of life in various reasons. Since the concept of calling and vocation is a new or an emerging concept on the area of leadership, organizational behavior and human resource development, it is important to discuss about the idea behind this terms. The word vocation derived from the Latin word “vocare” which means “to call” (Garber, 2004). Calling and vocation could be seen as a passion, potential or deep demand to do something which could be manifested in job, career, leadership or occupation. Vocation is one’s response to a call from ones deepest passion or beyond oneself to use ones strengths and gifts to make the world a better place through service, creativity, and leadership (Roger Ebertz, 2015).

The source of calling and its driving factors that motivate people to discover their calling are described in three dimensions of human being. The first dimension represents the degree that the individual perceives his/her motivation within a particular life role to come from an external source (Dik J. and Duffy D, 2008). Some scholars perceive calling from multiple sources such as from inner potential, from supernatural power and from the needs of the society (Dik and Duffy 2008). The second dimension stress on the purpose and meaningfulness of individuals’ task within a particular life role and the way an individual’s effort is connected to a broader framework of life meaning and purpose. This process of discovering one’s sense of calling helps people to build up steadiness and consistency in their life (Dik J. and Duffy D, 2008). The third dimension starts from the historical meanings of calling and vocation which is perceived that the meaning and purposefulness of the work in a specific life-role was to contribute to the common good or wellbeing of the society both directly and indirectly (Dik J. and Duffy D, 2008). In this dimension, living one’s life attached with the common good of the society through hard work is summed-up as the driving motivation on people’s life and the dimension also clearly indicated that calling can be followed within any life-role not only job or employment.

This study contributes important information such as the meaning and purpose one can attach with his/her work or life for the understanding of the role of sense of calling in the life and work of academicians. It also provided possible recommendations on how to deal with the challenges in searching and responding to one’s

calling by investigating the challenges of research participants in the process of discovering their calling and responding to it. In addition, the study can set a new discussion on the area of sense of calling and vocation in relation to organizational behavior. It also paves the way to the understanding of peoples' calling and brings a crucial point which allows people to view their job, leadership role and life in the light of their sense of calling to live a life that fulfills its purpose. Furthermore, it provides ways on how the concepts of organizational behavior can be seen in the light of sense of calling and vocation. The study can also shows ways on how people discover and respond to their inner potential or vocational calling.

Problem Definition

People can have low work motivation, job engagement, performance and satisfaction because of various reasons. Lack of motivation, engagement and satisfaction in turn highly affect the performance of organizations. It will be worse when it comes to academic institutions since teaching, research, consultancy and other areas demand a high level of commitment, engagement, motivation and interest to accomplish the purpose of the work in hand. So investigating how various academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation discovered their calling and the advantages that they are experiencing is crucial to address the challenges mentioned above.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the tripartite definition of calling as a theoretical ground. Tripartite definition of calling was developed by Bryan Dik and Ryan Duffy in order to develop and validate calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ) and brief calling scale (BCS). Tripartite definition of calling is a three part definition or conceptualization of calling. This conceptualization of calling is described as "a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation"

This three understanding of calling can be summarized as first; people can be called by the supernatural power, second, by the needs of the society and third, by a person's own inner potential or passion.

The tripartite definition of calling as a theoretical guide has a critical contribution to the development and validation of a multidimensional instrument to measure calling. The assessment of presence of and search for calling in transcendent summons, purposeful work and pro-social orientations of calling provides two major advantages to the measurement approach. First it provides conceptual clarity by the clearly articulating the definition of calling and second, it allows the exploration of more sophisticated research questions by assessing the multi-dimensional construct of calling using unidimensional measures of calling. The three detailed analysis or the tripartite conceptualization of calling through the lens of search and presence of calling and vocation is used as a theoretical guide for this study.

Research Questions:

The study is guided by the following questions.

1. How did academicians with high calling and vocation score discover their calling?
2. What are the advantages of having a sense of calling in the academicians' life and work?
3. What are the challenges faced by academicians in the process of discovering and responding to their vocational calling?

II. Literature Survey

Introduction

Steven Garber (2014) defined calling and vocation as the whole responsibility and relationships of life not only job but also issues related with families, neighbors, citizenship locally and globally and the vocation of a person as a human being. On this paper, the understanding of calling and vocation as a person's belief that she/he is called to do a particular kind of work by the needs of society, by a person's own inner potential, by a Higher Power, etc. will be used as a guiding definition of the terms.

Findings on the Advantages of Having a Sense of Calling and Vocation

The overall findings of various studies show that calling and vocation is linked with different positive life and work outcomes such as healthy job, personal well-being and work and life satisfaction. Ryan and Duffy (2015) asserted that a person with a calling and vocation work for the satisfaction and fulfillment that the work brings; not for financial gain and career advancement. Another research conducted on research participants who viewed their career as a calling suggested that interviewees who regarded their line of work as a calling viewed their work differently than those who took their work as an income generating activity (Ryan Duffy D. et al, 2012). Moreover, having sense of vocational calling is related to work and life satisfaction, employee well-being and job motivation whereas, dissatisfied employees reported poor health condition and mental health problems (Christine Unterrainer et al., 2013).

Thus, having a sense of calling minimizes stress and maximizes healthy life. People who discovered their calling and those who attached it with their work and life can enjoy a healthy life. Attaching one's line of work with the sense of calling one has is a significant point which can lead people to well-being and motivation.

Berg and Grant put that unanswered callings to inner potential or work or professional inclination result in

stress, unpleasant feelings, dissatisfaction in work and life. They differentiated unanswered callings as missed callings and additional callings and developed five strategies that individuals can use to pursue their unanswered callings in order to help them to be satisfied on their work and life as a whole (Berg and Grant M., 2010). These strategies craft their particular work as task highlighting, work expanding, role reframing and their leisure time, as vicarious experiencing and hobby participating (Berg and Grant M., 2010). This technics are explained as a strategy to answer for missed callings and additional callings to pursue calling in line with individuals work by considering the level of enjoyment they have when performing tasks, develop their work and career, organizing roles in line with interest and experiencing work as joyous event participation. If unanswered callings result in stress, unpleasant feelings and dissatisfaction in work and the lives of people, then we can see that sense of calling has a significant advantage of being the source of fulfillment, satisfaction and life happiness.

In addition, Cardador, Dane, and Pratt (2015) revealed that people with calling orientation were connected themselves with their organization because they took it as a means for the fulfillment of their calling. It can be noted that having a sense of calling can serve as a source of motivation for organizational commitment and work engagement.

Another study found out that individuals who used 4 to 7 signature strengths (which showed the level of commitment and carefulness) at work had higher levels of calling than those who used less than 4 strengths and this demonstrated the value of having sense of calling and vocation to positive job and well-being outcome (Duffy, 2015). In a study conducted by Duffy and Sedlacek (2013), calling was strongly connected with work and life satisfaction, vocational self-clarity and comfort with one's career choice, vocational development, career commitment, work meaning, work engagement, occupational identity and career decidedness. These findings show the advantages of having sense of calling and linking it with one's line of work. So the presence of sense of calling can be manifested in sense of meaning at work, engagement, motivation, work-satisfaction, self-clarity and well-being.

Having sense of calling is also explained as a source for intrinsic motivation and intrinsic rewards. According to Bellah et al. (2017), people with a sense of calling have intrinsic goal orientation and they are motivated by intrinsic rewards such as self-fulfillment, opportunity to make a difference in society, bring new innovation etc. rather than extrinsic factors like financial gain, promotion, prestige and comfort. Based on this analysis, people who experienced high work-satisfaction on their job are people who were motivated by intrinsic rewards.

Several studies (Dik and Duffy, 2012, Berg and Grant M., 2010, Christine Unterrainer et al., 2013) uncovered that people who perceived a sense of calling in their life and work continually experienced work and life related satisfaction and general well-being in the lives and these effects are boldly noticeable or demonstrated among people who live towards their calling. In line with this, another study presented that calling precedes other kinds of satisfaction and showed calling as a subjective construct which is in line with psychological accomplishment or satisfaction and its result as an objective outcome (Hall T. and Chandler, 2005). Generally, physical and psychological wellbeing, work and life satisfaction, having a clear self-identity, motivation, engagement are some of the major advantages manifested in the lives of people with a sense of calling and vocation.

Summary

The above literature review has covered the major concepts and areas of this study paper. Concepts such as the source of motivation, the concept of calling, vocation, work and satisfaction, the advantages of having sense of vocational calling are explained briefly.

This study is unique in investigating the process how academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation came to identify their sense of calling and vocation in their life and career. The study also addressed the challenges faced by these academicians in the process of discovering and living for their calling. Furthermore, the benefits of having and living with a sense of calling in life and work is assessed by the in-depth interview made with the selected academicians.

III. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the process how academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation discovered their calling in their career and life. In line with this, the study also assesses the advantages of having and living with a sense of calling among senior faculty members of Ethiopian Civil Service University. The study also addresses the challenges faced by the academicians during the process of identifying and living for their calling.

In order to meet this purpose, mixed research method was selected for the study. Mixed research method is a study which comprised quantitative method, which is designed to collect numerical data and qualitative method, designed to collect an in-depth data (John W. Creswell and Clark, 2011).

3.1 Rationale for Mixed Research Approach

Mixed method is focused on mixing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Sequential research is a type of mixed research method that stress on how to priorities the collection and analysis of quantitative and

qualitative data. Sequential strategy can be divided as explanatory strategy, exploratory strategy, transformative strategy, concurrent triangulation strategy, concurrent nested strategy and concurrent transformative strategy (Creswell C., 2009). Among these, sequential explanatory strategy was selected for this study which is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data.

In addition, sequential mixed method is chosen for the study in order to identify academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation, to investigate the process of identifying sense of calling, to deeply explore the challenges faced by academicians in the process of discovering and responding to their calling and to assess the advantage of having and living with a sense of calling. Here the issue of sequence and priority to choose a mixed strategy inquiry is observed. Sequential mixed method is used when a particular researcher wants to elaborate or expand on the findings of one method with another method (Creswell C., 2009).

3.2 Sampling

There are 289 full time academic employees in ECSU who work in different titles and departments of the university. Among these, assistant lecturers and academic employees who are not directly engaged in the academic work were excluded from the sample because the study demands ample experience and active professional engagement from the academicians in order to assess the struggle they faced in the process of finding their calling and vocation.

Based on this, 31 of the academic employees who were not directly engaged on the academic work were excluded from the sample. The rest academic staff was 258 and 78 (30%) of them were selected to participate in the quantitative part of the study. In order to select 78 academicians from each group, (professors, lecturers, researchers and consultants) from the whole population, stratified sampling was used (Catherine Dawson, 2007).

Stratified sampling is a sampling strategy which divide members of the research population into homogeneous groups called strata before sampling and sampling is made separately within each stratum (Dawson, 2007). The researcher used this strategy in order to take only senior academicians and to select proportional numbers of academicians from each departments and levels. A printed list of the academic staff was used in the sampling process.

Purposive sampling is used for the qualitative inquiry to enable the researcher to decide in order to interview five academicians with the highest calling and vocation (CVQ) score. Seven academicians brought a very close score on the top and five of them were selected and interviewed by considering the diversity of the departments which they belong.

3.3 Instrumentation

The instruments employed for the study was a questionnaire for the quantitative inquiry. The questionnaire that is selected for the quantitative study is a multidimensional calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ) and the brief calling and vocation scale (BCS) which is developed by Dik et al. based on the tripartite theoretical conceptualization of calling and vocation as indicated in the theoretical framework of this study (Dik Bryan J. et al., 2012).

Interview guide questions was developed and used by the researcher for the qualitative part of the study. Interview guide question is a set of questions designed to keep and lead the interview in line with the purpose of the study (C.K. Sharma & M.K. Jain, 2013). According to Dawson, a list of clear interview guide questions is needed for in-depth, structured and semi-structured interviews (Dawson, 2007). Interview guide questions provide guidance and help the researcher to know how and what to ask, how to follow up and in what sequence should the interview follow.

The calling and vocation measure has two parts. The first part has 23 items and the second part has 4 items which address the search for a calling and the presence of calling. There are 4 response scales for each item in part one and 5 response scale for part two.

Totally, the questionnaire has 6 sub scales for presence of calling and search for a calling. These are transcendent summons for presence, transcendent summons for search, purposeful work for presence, purposeful work for search, prosocial orientation for presence and prosocial orientation for search. The questionnaire included one reverse score or negatively constructed question.

3.4 Data collection

The quantitative data was collected through calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ) which was filled by the faculty members. The questionnaire was distributed to 78 senior academic staff members in person and collected back from 3 up to 5 working days.

The qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interview from the purposefully selected academicians with a high calling and vocation questionnaire. The interview was conducted face-to-face with each interviewee. Face-to-face and one to one interview allows the researcher control over the line of questioning to be directly in line with the study (Creswell C., 2009). Before the interview begins, the researcher clarified the purpose of the study, the concept of calling and vocation and asked the willingness of the participants to take handwritten notes

and to tape-record the interview. The researcher used semi-structured interview approach and audiotaped the whole interview (Creswell C., 2009). The researcher took additional written notes during the interview. Creswell claimed that a researcher should take notes during the event of interview in addition to audiotaping or videotaping in order to gain more information (Creswell C., 2009).

First, the quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Then, based on the analysis of the quantitative study, five faculty members with a high calling and vocation score were identified and interviewed by using an in-depth interview guide questions.

3.5 Data Analysis

Inferential statistics of quantitative data analysis method particularly the value of mean is used in the study. The data was analyzed based on the interpretative key of the calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ) which is designed to measure the search for and the presence of calling and vocation. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. The mean value of the whole data was used to identify academicians with a high calling and vocation score. Each questionnaire was coded by number in order to identify academicians with a high calling and vocation score finally. The code of each questionnaire is coded in line with the sequence of the SPSS during the data entry.

After the quantitative data was being analyzed and lecturers with a high calling and vocation score were identified, then the qualitative data was collected through face to face in-depth interview.

The qualitative data analysis of this study followed the six generic steps of qualitative data analysis presented by Creswell. The first step is organizing and preparing the data for analysis. The tape-recorded data from the interview was transcribed into a written document first.

The second step is reading through all the data (Creswell C., 2009). The researcher went through the written document to grasp the general sense, tone and meaning of the information provided by the participants.

The third step is coding the data. Coding refers to the process of organizing a material or information into chunks before driving meaning out of the chunks (Creswell C., 2009). The transcribed data was coded into an organized sections based on the major thematic area of the study.

Step four is describing the organized data (Creswell C., 2009). Thematically organized data was described or rendered in the light of the participants' background and experience.

Step five focuses on the advanced representation of the description and the theme (Creswell C., 2009). The thematically organized data was transferred into findings of the analysis. The researcher discussed and interconnected the major themes of the study.

The final step is interpretation of the data (Creswell C., 2009). The researcher generated meaning and lessons learned from the data which was being analyzed. The interview guide question and the purpose of the study were served to clearly articulate the thematic area of the study.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the process how academicians with a high sense of calling and vocation discovered their calling in their career and life. The study also assesses the advantages of having and living with a sense of calling among senior faculty members of Ethiopian Civil Service University.

Participants of the Quantitative Study

Table 1: Response Rate of the Participants

Total number of Academicians in ECSU	Sampled Academicians from each departments	Distributed Questionnaires	Returned	Percentage of population
263	78	78	61	78.2%

A total of 78 questionnaires were distributed to academicians who work in different departments of the university. A total of 61 fully filled-out questionnaires were returned back. Form the sampled population, 78% of the participants returned back the questionnaires which is satisfactory for the purpose of this study.

Demographic Profile of the Participants

a. Gender of the Respondents

The participation of men and women in the study is presented as follows. The proportion of male participants in the study is 63.9% while 36.1% of the participants are female. It can be observed that the percentage of women is less than men participants, but it is fair when it is compared with the whole female academic staff of the university.

Table 2: Gender of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	39	63.9	63.9	63.9
Valid Female	22	36.1	36.1	100.0
Total	61	100.0	100.0	

b. Academic Position

The participants are engaged in different position of academics in the university. The majority of respondents in

this study are lecturers and consultants. As can be observed from the table below, 47.5% of them are lecturers and 44.3% of them are consultants. Assistant and associate professors follow with 6.6% and 1.6% respectively. That means the largest figure, 91.8% of the response came from lecturers and consultants. This gap does not affect the result of the study negatively because the aim of the questionnaire is to identify academicians with a high sense of calling rather than generalizing it as a representative figure for the university.

Table 3: Academic Position of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Consultant	27	44.3	44.3
Lecturer	29	47.5	47.5
Valid Assistant Professor	4	6.6	6.6
Associate professor	1	1.6	1.6
Total	61	100.0	100.0

c. Age of the Respondents

The age range of the participants categorized in each eight years in order to see the issue of the study in terms of the experience the respondents may have taking eight years as a one generation or a significant course of life which may result in huge change. As it is indicated on the table below, the majority of participants on the study (45.9%) are participants who are aged from 25 to 32. The second largest age category of the participants (31.1%) is aged from 33 to 40. Age groups from 41 to 49 are 19.7% and participants from 50 to 59 are 3.3%. There is no any respondent aged above 60. From this data we can understand that the academic activity of the university is mostly occupied by the young and middle aged professionals.

Table 4: Age range of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 25-32	28	45.9
33-40	19	31.1
41-49	12	19.7
50-59	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

d. Work Experience of the Respondents

The work experience of the respondents is classified into four. These are academicians who worked in the particular profession for less than 5 years, from 6 to 10 years, from 11 to 20 years and above 21 years of experience. The range of the experience is classified by considering the common patterns of professional and academic development. Based on this, the majority of the respondents are found in less than 5 years (39%) and from 6 to 10 years (36.1%) categories. Participants who worked from 11 to 20 years are 16.4% and 8.2% of them worked for more than 21 years on the career which they belong currently. The detail is described in the table below. This shows that the largest number of the academic staff in the sample is experienced less than 10 years.

Table 5: Work Experience of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Valid <5	24	39.3
6-10	22	36.1
11-20	10	16.4
>21	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

e. Educational Background of the Participants

Table 6 shows the educational level of the respondents of the quantitative study. As it is indicated on the table below, the majority of the respondents (91.8%) hold master's degree and the rest 8.2% of the participants hold doctorate on their particular fields of study.

Table 6: Educational Background of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Master's Degree	56	91.8
Doctorate	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

The Result of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire

The mean value of the quantitative data is used to identify academicians with a high calling and vocation score. The questionnaire of each respondent is coded during the data collection time and interred into SPSS accordingly. This helps the researcher to identify academicians with a high score of sense of calling and vocation for the in-depth interview or qualitative part of the study. The mean result of the quantitative data gathered by using the

calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ) is presented below in table 7. From the table we can see that 14 (22.9%) of the participants scored above 3. Among these, the researcher considered work experience, academic position, age and gender composition in order to select the 5 interviewees. Based on these criteria, among the top seven individuals, the 4th and the 6th scorer were omitted because of demographic homogeneity. Then, the 1st, 2nd, 3th, 5th and the 7th high scorers were deeply interviewed. From table 7, we can understand that 21 people or 34.4% of the respondents scored 2.5 and above. This indicates that there are several academicians with a sense of calling and vocation presence.

Table 7: The Result of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire

S. No.	Respondents' Code	CVQ Mean	S. No.	Respondents' Code	CVQ Mean
1	21	3.75	32	16	2
2	23	3.75	33	29	2
3	38	3.75	34	46	2
4	19	3.67	35	59	2
5	30	3.67	36	20	1.92
6	1	3.42	37	44	1.92
7	13	3.33	38	55	1.92
8	27	3.33	39	60	1.92
9	15	3.25	40	53	1.83
10	22	3.25	41	4	1.75
11	14	3.17	42	12	1.75
12	25	3.08	43	37	1.75
13	33	3.08	44	58	1.75
14	36	3	45	61	1.75
15	17	2.92	46	5	1.67
16	26	2.92	47	41	1.67
17	28	2.92	48	47	1.67
18	32	2.83	49	56	1.67
19	11	2.75	50	43	1.58
20	18	2.75	51	3	1.5
21	51	2.58	52	6	1.5
22	10	2.42	53	7	1.5
23	35	2.42	54	40	1.5
24	52	2.42	55	8	1.42
25	31	2.33	56	9	1.42
26	34	2.33	57	42	1.42
27	48	2.25	58	45	1.42
28	50	2.17	59	2	1.33
29	24	2.08	60	49	1.33
30	39	2.08	61	54	1.33
31	57	2.08			

Background of the Interview Participants

Research participants for the qualitative inquiry were selected based on the result of the quantitative study through calling and vocation questionnaire (CVQ). Five academicians with a high calling and vocation presence were selected and interviewed deeply by using semi-structured interview approach. These five academicians work in different departments of the university and have a diverse educational and professional experience. According to the consent made with the participants, the researcher endeavored to keep their names anonymous. The names of the interviewees represented as "participant 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5". Some of the demographic information of these

participants is presented below.

Table 8: Demographic Information of the Interviewees

No		Gender	Age	Experience
1.	Participant 1	F	25-32	6-10 years
2.	Participant 2	F	41-49	Above 21 years
3.	Participant 3	M	33-40	6-10 years
4.	Participant 4	M	25-32	Below 5 years
5.	Participant 5	M	41-49	Above 21 years

The study described common themes among the five participants of the interview about the process on how they discovered their sense of calling, the challenges they faced and the benefits of living and working with a sense of calling and vocation. Each theme classified with some sub-themes in order to clearly present the major areas of the study.

The Process of Discovering Calling and Vocation

The process of discovering calling and vocation refers to the ways how the participants with a high sense of calling and vocation become aware of their calling and clearly identified their particular calling and vocation. The participants presented different life events, childhood ambitions, environment, peer role, education, job opportunities and the impact of family and teachers as a means of discovering their calling and vocation.

All of the interviewees reported that they have a sense of calling, meaning and purpose in their life as well as in their present line of work or career. Nevertheless, each of them described a unique journey and experience of identifying their calling. In order to describe these ideas clearly, this section is divided into 3 sub themes organized based on the major areas which are addressed by all participants. These are the prior experience of sense of calling among the participants, the influencing factors in the process of discovering calling and vocation, the meaning and purpose that participants attached with their work and career change experience in order to follow a calling are included.

a. The First Experience

First experience of a sense of calling refers to the individual's first insight or notice about his or her inner potential, a passion to satisfy the needs of the society or supernatural calling. All of the participants pointed out their first experience of noticing and identifying their sense of calling and vocation. For example, interviewee 4 stated:

For the first time in my life, I started to see and observe my inner potential when I was in grade 9. Before that, I don't have any sense about my interest or what I have inside of me and why I am living in this world. I was just going to school normally like everybody does. My teachers and friends told me that I was a good speaker and convincer when I was in grade 9. Then, I started to think independently and started to see and observed my inner being about my real potential and interest. My friends, my teachers and peers kept telling me how I was a good communicator and negotiator. Since then, I always wanted to be a lawyer and pictured myself as a judge. I was convinced that I am the best communicator and social person in addition to my convincing skill. Eventually, my heart inclined more towards teaching rather than studying law. Being a lawyer seemed more painful when I picture myself as a judge because, I am more inclined to socialization, understanding the emotion, feeling and problems of people and responding to solve their social and other problems not by using the rigid legal framework. So I choose teaching as my first field of study in the university and I studied education. After graduating in education, I went back to university to study sociology to develop my career in line with my deepest passion.

His teachers and school friends told him the talent and the inclination he has. Therefore, education, teachers, friends and the whole school environment reinforced him to perceive and develop his vocational calling. Therefore, education and its surroundings are one of the ways which click the inner vocational calling of people. Participant 4 had an early understanding of calling as "an interest or a talent (*መክሊት*)¹ that a particular person receives from the creator or naturally as an inborn quality or potential inside of the individual." He explained that individuals can develop this talent through socialization, childhood observation, exposure and interests towards different activities, work, field of studies and professions.

In addition, we can observe that opportunities in the school environment such as various clubs, sport teams, laboratory assignments, project activities, group work and class presentations are very important to notice ones calling in early age. An early understanding of one's vocational calling leads to effective use of time, energy and other resources which can help people to easily follow and develop their particular sense of calling.

Participant 2 attached her first experience of sense of calling and vocation with her first exposure of teaching when she was 21 years old. At the time, she conceptualized calling as an activity or a work that brings meaning, enjoyment and happiness for her soul. She studied language without her interest towards the field of study as well as to the profession of teaching. She had no choice to pursue her own interest at the time because; the students in those days were placed into a certain departments randomly.

¹ The Amharic translation of the term 'talent' as a gift given from the creator in order to work and gain more revenue over it.

Overtime, she had developed some interest towards literature and finally graduated from a university. She was placed in the rural side of Ethiopia to teach language again without her choice. But after she went to school to teach, she became interested in her job. She explained the event as;

I fall in love with teaching and socializing with students and I ended up teaching for 20 years in that particular school that I have placed for the first time. I discovered that teaching is a profession that I am created for but deep inside, I understood that language was not my best field of study. After 20 years of teaching experience, I have got the chance to go back to school to pursue my second degree and I studied organizational development and public policy both at the same time. I came to clearly identify the field of study that I am interested in. Accordingly, I dedicated myself on academics on the area of organizational development, human resource development and public policy. Since then, I have never been interested in another career rather than academics in my entire life. I have never cared about the income or the profit I can get out of my job, no matter what the feedback of the society is about the issue of income. I am concerned about how my life and my career mattered among the community that I am serving.

She explained that she have got her sense of calling striving to fulfill the needs of the society and by her inner potential that she has to serve the society. She took this as a meaningful part of her life since the time that she noticed the potential of teaching, encouraging, advocating and mentoring people. She mentioned her inner potential as a driving factor to be committed and dedicated for her calling and vocation.

Family support, self-determination and commitment can be observed from the effort that Participant 2 made in order to follow her vocational calling. She mentioned that it is not easy to go back to school after twenty years of break. But she expressed her current feeling as a happy, self-fulfilled and successful professional.

Participant 3 also remembers his first experience of calling clearly. He involved in the education and training ministry of a church and he was exposed to teach and train children and teenagers since he was 17 years old. Side by side, he started to give tutorial classes at school voluntarily when he was a high school student. He took this event as his first experience of identifying his sense of calling. He reported his school experience as follows;

I always enjoyed giving tutorial classes for my classmates and other students in the school who are willing to take the tutorial. I used missed classes of teachers to help students with some learning limitations. Sometimes teachers also gave me the chance to brief some contents of their particular subject. The feedback of the teachers and my classmates began to inspire me to continue on my activities of helping students. This process helped me to find out my gift and sense of calling and vocation clearly. Now, I am self-fulfilled on my career and do the same to help students with some limitations and students with special need.

He presented his current clearly identified sense of calling and vocation saying that “I know in my heart that I am created to teach and train people”. He reported that he never gets tired of teaching, training and helping people. From the case of participant 3, we can see that community voluntary work, spiritual and religious activities and other social services are vital to discover one’s natural inclination and inner potential.

b. Influencing factors in the process of discovering calling and vocation

The participants mentioned the influencing power of teachers, peers, books, family and other mentors in the process of identifying their particular calling and vocation. For example, participant 2 mentioned her father as a mentor who helped her to discover her inner potential through education.

Participant 2 stated that the value of her family towards education influenced her way of searching and identifying her vocational calling highly. Particularly her father mentored her to be an outstanding student. He encouraged her even against the cultural values which were given for girls at the time. When she was a teenager, the custom and tradition of the society was so strict on girls. The life of girls was lined up for marriage, having children and caring for their husband and children. But her Dad led her against the clearly defined and known tradition of the society. She said that;

My Dad has a great role in shaping and guiding me to be a good student. He invested a lot to help me pursue my education. For example he never allowed me to go to kitchen and cook for the family. He always wanted to see me with my books working and studying. This was a deviant behavior on the setting that I grew up because girls are encouraged to do household activities rather than studying all the time. He observed my communication and teaching skill when I was a kid and encouraged me to follow that. When I was placed at the most distant university, he encouraged me to go and pursue my study even if there were some security issues at the time. Now, I realized that my dad led me on the right track when I see my life and the enjoyment I get out of my career today even if he is a little bit pushy at the time.

From the above section, we can understand the role of parents in their children’s holistic life. Besides, family expectations can serve as a motivating factor for a gradual understanding and development of inner potential, talent, skill and sense of calling in one’s life and professional engagement.

Participant 1, 3 and 5 on the other hand reported that, books, environmental exposure, media, critical life events, peer groups and friends have a significant influence in the process of identifying calling and vocation. For

example, participant 1 explained;

Books have the greatest impact in my life especially on the way I see this world. I am inspired through books to understand my potential, to identify and believe on my talent and to search for my calling of life as a whole. Books also guided me to maximize and release my inner potential for the common good of the society. I framed my vision clearly from the knowledge I have got from books. Environmental settings like recreational sites, churches, schools and other organizations or places also influence people on the way they search for their calling, talent and inner potential. For example, a person with a calling of swimming cannot identify his/her calling in the environment without any water bodies. So, environmental settings are very important opportunities which can serve people to have a plenty of experience to look inside of themselves.

An opportunity of accessing good and inspiring books by itself may not lead to the right way of seeing inside of oneself and discovering a calling. Rather, it demands being realistic. That is one of the things which can be observed from the experience of participant 1. He dedicated himself to find out something useful and realistic about this world from books. He tried to frame his vision and personal thoughts in the light of the knowledge that he tried to search from different books. The other important thing which is mentioned by participant 1 is the importance of environmental setting and the way people discover and use the resource as a good opportunity of experience.

Participant 5 added the role of social media such as films, dramas, news and events like war, can also influence people to discover something special in their life. He mentioned that the experiences that he has so far shaped his choices of TV show, movie types and news. Consequently, those choices made him to be sharper on the areas of his passion, interest, concern and on the things that gives him sense of meaning.

c. The Meaning and Purpose of Career

The participants made points about the meaning or purpose that they attach with their current line of work. Most of them mentioned intrinsic reward as a meaning of their current line of work and intrinsic motivation as a driving factor for future work to be determined and accomplish the purpose of their life and career.

For instance, participant 2 said that “providing service for others gives me a meaning to my life thinking that I have a positive impact on the life of others”.

Similarly, participant 1 mentioned that the meaning she attached with her career is linked with her positive role or contribution on the lives of people. She said “Mostly my energy and motivation flows from what I did for the development of other people” Thus, she presented her contribution and role for the enrichment of others as a meaning and purpose she attached with her current line of work.

Participant 4 put sense of belongingness with the society, joy and satisfaction he gets out of his work as a meaning he attached with his current line of work. He said that;

“I feel like am a human being living my life’s purpose when I help organizations by consulting them with different issues. That is a true definition of humanity for me. The feeling that I have for myself as a problem solver of organizations and the society as a whole also gives me a real meaning and purpose in my career.”

Most of the participants attached their impact over others and among the society as a meaningful part of their life. Therefore, people consider the positive influence and the role they have in the lives of others and among the society as a basic source of meaning and purpose attached with their career.

Challenges Faced by the Participants

Almost all of the participants passed through various challenges and obstacles in the process of identifying their particular calling. They emphasized on the challenges which came after discovering a calling such as following one’s sense of calling, being committed and dedicated towards a calling is the major theme which was mention by most of the participants of the interview. On this regard, participant 2 said that: -

Ones I clearly, came to know my real interest and inner potential, I decided to change the job that I have been doing at the time. But things were not easy in relation to the responsibility that I had in my particular department which hindered my transfer to the academic staff. The feedback of some of my friends on my decision was also discouraging to keep on my way of following my vocational calling.

The other challenge mentioned by three of the participants is college and university placement system of the country. They emphasized that university study paves the way to expand one’s calling and vocation but, studying a random field without any interest is very painful. Three of the participants passed through this challenge. For example, participant 1, 2, and 5 were placed on a department which was not their choice and interest when they have joined a university. Participant 1 expressed her mind about university placement as follows: -

It was really painful for me to watch when I lose the field that I choose to study as my first priority. Then I was forced to study what the system provided for me. Sometimes I feel like I wasted some time of my life trying to get into the right truck. But thanks to God that I am happy and inspired with my current line of work even if it demanded a lot of my energy, time and resource to get here.

From the above testimony, we can see that the system and policy of placing students in various fields of study have a great impact on people's personal and professional life. This can also lead to produce professionals who do not have passion and energy on a particular field of study which they have graduated. So, this can be the most critical challenge that most of the participants faced in their life.

The way the society pictured some fields of studies are also the other challenges mentioned by some of the participants. On this regard, participant 2 passed through a lot of discouraging times in the university. She explained that language department was considered as an inferior department from the others and that was a continuous source of discouragement on her study.

Inaccessibility of education especially for participant 2 was the biggest challenge which hindered her from developing her vocation through further studies. She was engaged in teaching language for 20 years and she never got a chance to go back to university on those entire years.

Lack of awareness on the issue of calling and vocation among the society is the other challenge mentioned by two of the participants which hindered most people not to think, recognize and release their inner potential through their life and work. Participant 1 stressed that missing a calling and being engaged on some random line of work and life leads to a life which does not accomplish its reason of existence. She also added that the society gives more value to the works which are good at making money not about how individuals connect their interest and sense of calling towards their career and life. She stated that "it seems that money is driving peoples' way of life rather that calling or passion".

All of the participants mentioned living expense, lack of income or less payment as a challenge which discourages them in a career that they lined-up with their sense of calling and vocation.

Participant 5 described that the cost of living now a days become a stumble block from following one's calling and interest because, at least the person need something to eat, medical expense and other living demands. Furthermore, financial limitation during career change is mentioned as a major challenge by participant 5.

Participant 3 agreed on the presence of financial challenge as a barrier not to follow one's calling and vocation. But, he took this challenge as a test of living and committing oneself for a true sense of calling and vocation. He mentioned that a person with a sense of calling develops a persistent personality and cannot give up on such kinds of challenges.

The Advantages of Having a Sense of Calling and Vocation

All of the participants underlined the significance of working on a particular job with a sense of calling and vocation because it serves as a continuous source of energy. All of them said that living a calling leads to success both in life and professional engagement. The participants also mentioned that working with great enthusiasm, interest and enjoyment brings endless motivation to human life. On this regard, participant 2 said that;

Even if my job demands a great effort, hard work and energy, I still love and enjoy it every day. It also helped me to use my social skill over my job and it leads me to be more successful. I never viewed my current line of work as a boring task because it always creates a new environment and opportunities to meet new people from different areas of work. Most of the time, I miss working days when I am out of office on weekends and off days.

She argued that having a calling towards a particular job brings motivation even in the presence of work-load beyond a persons' capacity. She also mentioned that living with a sense of calling and vocation decreases dissatisfaction because of lack of payment or other factors related to work place environment, it increases commitment for work, it gives meaning and reason to live in this world and it brings satisfaction for a particular person with a sense of calling and vocation.

Participant 3 indicated consistent result, work and life fulfillment, success, effectiveness, productivity and sense of ownership as the major benefit of having a sense of calling and vocation on a particular job.

Participant 1 and 5 pointed working with enjoyment, developing one's potential to the maximum, increased effectiveness, decreased stress, satisfaction and success both in life and work as the major advantages of identifying and committing oneself for a calling and vocation. Participant 4 also mentioned that having a sense of calling in one's life result a meaningful life, success, life satisfaction and sense of worthiness among the community.

Generally, people discover their sense of calling and vocation through their childhood exposure and opportunity, with the help of mentors, teachers, friends, peers, books, medias, movies etc. The first experience of noticing one's sense of calling and vocation is very crucial to build up a clear picture of one's inner potential, the need for meeting society's need and other supernatural gifts. Participants on this study considered their first experience as an important event of their life which helped them to pursue their future vocation over the foundation of their sense of calling.

On this study, the researcher did not come up with a participant who conceptualized his or her calling as from a supernatural power. But all of the participants boldly convicted that they do have a sense of calling and vocation on the early stage of their life (some on the beginning of twenties and some when they are teenagers). Most of the participants believed that they have been derived by their inner potential to discover their sense of calling and some through the deepest passion they have to fulfill the need of the society.

All of the participants agreed on the benefits of having and living for a sense of calling and vocation that a person perceive. The most mentioned benefits are sense of satisfaction in life and work, intrinsic motivation, increased energy, intrinsic reward, sense of meaning and purpose in life and work, success, fulfillment, decreased stress, sense of ownership in a particular work activities are some of them.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The findings of the study addressed the process how people with high sense of calling and vocation score came to clearly identify their calling and how they committed themselves for their vocational calling. The study also addressed the challenges encountered by the participants during the process of following their calling and vocation. The benefits of having, living and working with a sense of calling are also assessed from the experience of the participants.

The participants of the interview connected their sense of calling with their field of study and career passing through different process. They reflected education as a powerful instrument to maximize the inner potential and vocational calling of people as it is indicated on the discussion part of the study. So, education should be considered as an opportunity of leading people towards their calling so as to produce a generation who can bring change, development and transformation.

Recommendation

The study showed the importance of aligning one's sense of calling with work and career development. This has an implication for the consideration of calling and vocation in organizational concerns such as human resource development approaches which are designed to maximize productivity, educational institutions, university policies related with study line placement and for different professionals who are engaged in various careers. Education policies also should be seen in the light of the concept of calling and vocation in order to produce skilled and passionate work force for the country.

The study highlighted the process how academicians came to identify their sense of calling clearly. Based on what discussed so far, the study suggests that professionals should notice and observe and respond for their inner potential, interest, passion and skill in order to be effective and fulfilled in their life and career.

Children, teenagers and adults should be leaded to their particular calling and vocation that they have inside as an inner potential, as a deepest need to fulfill societies need or as a natural gift imposed on individuals by supernatural power. Parents play the greatest role in leading their children according to their ability, interest, skill, talent, inner potential, passion and natural inclination so that they can lead a meaningful and purposeful life that bring a difference in the world.

Awareness creation and advocacy campaigns are very crucial to bring the concept of calling and vocation in to the attention of the society, policy makers, human resource development institution and other stakeholders. Awareness creation on the society's understanding of education is also needed in order to shape the conceptualization of education from an instrument of gaining income or a living to a powerful means of exploring, developing and maximizing the potential of people and as a means of creating an empowered generation who can make a difference in various filed of studies in their country and over the whole world.

To this end, empirical studies should be conducted in Ethiopia to explore and see the relationship of sense of calling with education, the wellbeing of the society, with organizational behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior, motivation, work engagement, efficiency, job satisfaction and the like. Then, the issue of calling and vocation will come into attention so as to upsurge organizational productivity, development, change and the quality of life among the society.

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