

INFORMAL LEARNING AND BECOMING: NARRATIVES OF RIDESHARING
YOUTH IN KATHMANDU VALLEY

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Krishna Hari Poudel* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Development Studies* presented on *13 January 2026*, entitled *Informal Learning and Becoming: Narratives of Ridesharing Youth in Kathmandu Valley*.

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Ridesharing youths in Kathmandu are learning various skills informally and shaping their identities while working on the streets. The existing literature in this field appears to focus on the financial, technological, and environmental aspects of ridesharing rather than on its learning and development dimension. This dissertation aimed to highlight these dimensions based on the experiences of the five young ridesharers in the city. Through a series of in-depth interviews, the study inquired how participants explained their informal learning experiences and how they navigated ridesharing to shape their positionality in the city.

As a research methodology, the researcher employed narrative inquiry, designing open-ended questions for the in-depth interviews and observing their activities in the street. Grounded on an interpretive paradigm, the ontological stance of this study was individual relativism. Epistemologically, the study applied Deleuzian constructivism, while its axiological stance was value-laden. The skills learned informally and the becoming dimension of the participants were figured out based on the thick descriptions of the narratives. A thematic analysis was conducted to derive meaning from the themes identified in the stories. Additionally, the researcher's reflections were incorporated when presenting the study's findings. In brief, the study identified eight major themes, four related to learning and four to the becoming dimension of ridesharing. Driving adaptation, technology integration, customer satisfaction and financial literacy were the themes on the learning

dimension while self-confidence, self-employment, pleasure riding and ridesharing in transition were on their becoming dimensions. The study found that the youth learned to adapt technology in urban mobility, satisfy their customers while ridesharing, and become financially literate. Meanwhile, they were shaping their identity as self-confident and self-employed ridesharers in the city, enhancing their positionality through the capacity to enjoy, grow, develop and even exit the ridesharing industry.

To conclude, the study presents the living and learning conditions of urban youth, exploring their lived experiences while ridesharing and becoming a self-dependent urban youth in the city. This dissertation explored the contexts they encountered, the hardships and challenges of ridesharing they faced in extreme conditions, and their individual, deeply personal narratives of living by and learning through ridesharing. I hope the study's findings will contribute to institutionalizing the emerging tech-based youth initiatives in Nepal, such as ridesharing, particularly by identifying the learning and becoming dimensions associated with them.

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13 January 2026

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शोध सार

विकास अध्ययनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि कृष्णहरि पौडेलको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक "काठमाण्डौ उपत्यकामा राइडशेयरिङ् गर्ने युवाहरूको संकथन :अनौपचारिक रुपमा सिक्ने र बन्ने प्रक्रिया" मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो। २०८२ पौष २९

.....
उप प्रापीएचडी ,सुरेश गौतम .

शोध निर्देशक

काठमाण्डौमा राइडशेयरिङ् गर्ने युवाहरूले सडकमा राइडशेयरिङ् गर्ने क्रममा अनौपचारिक रुपमा धेरै सीपहरू सिकेर आफ्नो परिचय बनाइरहेका छन्। यस क्षेत्रमा विद्यमान साहित्यले राइडशेयरिङ्को माध्यमबाट प्राप्त हुने अनौपचारिक सिकाई र पहिचान निर्माणको आयामलाई भन्दा पनि यसको वित्तीय , प्राविधिक र वातावरणीय पक्षहरूलाई बढी जोड दिएको देखिन्छ। यो शोधपत्रले शहरमा राइडशेयरिङ् गर्ने पाँच जना युवाहरूको अनुभवमा आधारित रहेर त्यस्ता आयामहरूमाथि प्रकाश पार्ने उद्देश्य राखेको थियो। गम्भीर अन्तर्वार्ताका श्रृंखलाहरूसँगै प्रस्तुत शोधपत्रले उनीहरूले कसरी राइडशेयरिङ्बाट प्राप्त अनौपचारिक सिकाइका अनुभवहरूको ब्याख्या गर्छन र आफ्नो परिचय वा हैसियत निर्माण गर्ने प्रक्रियालाई यसमा जोड्छन् भन्ने कुराहरूको खोजी गरेको थियो।

अनुसन्धान पद्धतिको रुपमाअन्त प्रश्नहरू -अनुसन्धानकर्ताबाट गम्भीर अन्तर्वार्ताको लागि खुला , सहित संकथन विधिको प्रयोग गर्दै उनीहरूको गतिविधिलाई अवलोकन गर्ने काम भएको थियो। व्याख्यात्मक प्रतिमानमा आधारित प्रस्तुत अध्ययनको सत्य मिमांशा व्यक्तिगत सापेक्षतावादमा आधारित रहेको थियो भने ज्ञान मिमांशाको दृष्टिले डेल्युजको संचरनाबाद र मूल्य मिमांशाको हिसाबले मूल्य भरिएको थियो। अनौपचारिक रुपमा सिकेका सीपहरू र व्यक्ति बन्ने आयामलाई सहभागीहरूको संकथनहरूको स्थुल बर्णनको आधारमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो। संकथनहरूमार्फत प्राप्त विषयहरूको विषयगत विश्लेषण गरी अर्थ निकाल्ने काम भएको थियो। यसबाहेक अध्ययनको नतिजा प्रस्तुत गर्ने क्रममा अनुसन्धानकर्ताको व्यक्तिगत विचारहरूको समेत भूमिका रहेको थियो।

संक्षेपमा भन्नुपर्दा प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले अनौपचारिक सिकाइ र व्यक्तिको बन्ने प्रक्रियाको सन्दर्भमा चार चार वटा गरी जम्मा आठवटा विषय पहिचान गरेको थियो। अनौपचारिक सिकाइको सन्दर्भमा ड्राइभिङ् अनुकूलनग्राहक सन्तुष्टि र वित्तीय साक्षरता जस्ता विषयहरू ,प्रविधि एकीकरण ,ुको पहिचान गरिएको थियो भने व्यक्ति बन्ने प्रक्रियाको रुपमा आत्मविश्वासगि सवारी चलाउने कार्य खुशी हुनको ला ,स्वरोजगार क्षमता , र राइडशेयरिङ्मा संक्रमण जस्ता विषयहरूको पहिचान गरेको थियो। प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले युवाहरूले शहरी ग् ,सवारी आवागमनमा प्रविधिको प्रयोग गर्नराहकरहरूलाई सन्तुष्ट राख्नवित्तीय रुपमा साक्षर बन्न सिके भन्ने ,

परिचय बनाउने क्रममा आत्मविश्वास र स्वरोजगा पत्ता लगायो। त्यसैगरी उनीहरूले आफ्नोर बन्दै , विकसित हुँदै र यसबाट सहजै बहिर्गमन हुने क्षमता समेत ,हुर्कदै ,राइडशेयरिङमा रमाउँदैआर्जन गर्दै आफ्नो हैसियतमा अभिवृद्धि गरे भन्ने पत्ता लगाएको थियो।

अन्त्यमा प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले राइडशेयरिङ गर्दै आत्मनिर्भर बन्ने क्रममा रहेका शहरी युवाहरूको दैनिक अनुभवहरूको सम्भाव्य अन्वेषणसँगै उनीहरूको बाँच्ने र सिक्ने अवस्थालाई चित्रण गरेको छ। यो शोधपत्रले राइडशेयरिङको माध्यमद्वारा युवाहरूको बाँच्ने र सिक्ने गहीरा कथाहरू कठिन अवस्थामा , चुनौती र उनीहरूले सामना गरेका विविध सन्दर्भहरूको अन्वेषण गरेको छ। म ,उनीहरूले भोगेका दुःख आशा गर्छु कि प्रस्तुत अध्ययनका निष्कर्षहरूले राइडशेयरिङ जस्ता उदीयमान प्रविधिमा आधारित युवा पहलकदमीहरूको सन्दर्भमा यसको सिकाइ र परिचय निर्माणका आयामहरूलाई समेट्दै यसलाई संस्थागत गर्ने कार्यमा योगदान दिनेछ।

२९ पौष २०८२

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all those youth who have left their home in search of better future - those who are striving hard in the city, yet have smiles in their faces.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Accelerator, Brakes and Clutch
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
CCTV	Closed- Circuit Television
COP	Community of Practice
DC	Deleuzian Constructivism
EPS-TOPIC	Employment Permit System Test of Proficiency in Korean
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILT	Informal Learning Theory
IPO	Initial Public Offering
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
LBD	Learning by Driving
LBR	Learning by Ridesharing
LLL	Life Long Learning
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoICS	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies
PCL	Proficiency Certificate Level
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SLT	Situational Learning Theory
TA	Thematic Analysis
TIA	Tribhuvan International Airport
TLT	Transformational Learning Theory
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I introduce the key concepts of my dissertation titled “Informal Learning and Becoming: Narratives of Young Ridesharers in Kathmandu Valley.” I explored the emerging trend of youth culture in ridesharing as a new urban phenomenon in the context of Nepal, particularly in Kathmandu. I argue that youth in cities adopted ridesharing not solely for a financial reason, but also to acquire various skills and develop a self-sustaining character. In this dissertation, I integrated my personal experiences, gained as both a researcher and a customer of the ridesharing platforms, into the research process. In this chapter, I introduce the key concepts of ridesharing, presenting the statement of the problem, rationale for the study, the purpose of the study, the research questions, chapter summary, and the structure of the dissertation in this chapter. I begin with my interest in studying ridesharing which I perceive as a part of urban living these days.

My Interest in Studying Ridesharing

I was intrigued by the untold stories of young ridesharers in Kathmandu as I believe that learning is possible anywhere and anytime. Young ridesharers have been so common in the streets of Kathmandu since the last few years that it has created both learning and earning space for them involving in this endeavor. The availability of smartphone in budget price, comparatively reliable data access in the urban area and the mushrooming ridesharing apps have enabled them to become familiar with the various routes and inner junctions of the city. The availability of such ridesharing apps has enabled them to connect with customers in real-time. The deal is technology-assisted, and the time customers must wait has been significantly reduced.

I envision that the relationship established between the customer and the youth involved in ridesharing can lead to social and cultural assimilation for both parties. During this process, the ridesharers do not only learn about the urban culture and technology but also shape their identity as ridesharer in the city. They can learn entrepreneurship development skills through ridesharing (Denes et al., 2024) which is a positive aspect of this field in my perception. I argue that becoming a ridesharer in the city for the young people is a wonderful journey of learning and shaping their positionality.

My Upbringing with Two-Wheelers

Insofar as that my own journey of riding a two-wheeler is concerned, I rode on a motorcycle for the first time as a pillion rider when I was in Grade 8. I had travelled from my home to a local market which was almost a ten-minute ride. It was an RX-100 motorbike, a popular two-wheeler during that time which was bought by one of my neighbors. Though having a motorcycle was a luxury but people used to have bicycles as their primary mode of local transportation on those days. I also had my own bicycle, which I used until I completed my first university degree from a local college in my hometown. Although bicycling was not my personal passion or a sport I enjoyed, it was a necessity in my locality during that time, serving as the primary mode of transportation for the locals. Ridesharing on bicycles during those days was a common social practice, which was all free of cost in my locality.

I recall I purchased a motorcycle in 2006. Ridesharing as a profession was beyond imagination at that time. However, co-riding with friends and colleagues was common, with some people even riding a motorbike with three others, although it was the violation of the traffic rules. Currently, I have chosen this topic because ridesharing has become a new and emerging urban trend among the youth of Kathmandu, where I have been living for the last fifteen years. As learning is not restricted to schools, colleges or universities, I anticipated studying how informal learning and becoming were possible on the road through ridesharing. Due to my interest in exploring the stories of youth, urban culture, learning cities, and sharing economy, I selected this topic for my dissertation.

Ridesharing as a Part of Urban Living

The overall travel behavior in cities of developing countries is influenced by various factors, including transportation infrastructure, standards of living, cultural norms, and demographies (Shah et al., 2024). I believe ridesharing is a new, tech-based, local transportation alternative to the conventional system, which is currently exclusively occupied by either route-based buses or meter-based taxis in Kathmandu city. On the other hand, there were some common practices of sharing a ride in a motorbike or in a car as a casual service (hitchhiking), where there was no transaction of money, but as a part of our culture, particularly among acquaintances. In this context, the professional ridesharing in Nepal was first started with Tootle in 2017 (Mishra & Kumar, 2022).

Currently several platform-based ridesharing apps which are popular in major cities in Nepal, particularly in Kathmandu city. Examples of such platform-based ridesharing apps include Pathao, InDrive, Sajilo, Taximandu, eDrive Nepal, JumJum, and Yango. Among these, Pathao and InDrive are comparatively more popular ridesharing apps (Tandulkar, 2024) in Kathmandu city. My inquiry concerns youth, who were active users of ridesharing apps, who were learning and forming their identities through ridesharing, and those who were shaping their life-worlds around ridesharing embracing its potential benefits and challenges. Ridesharing and the urban living, in this way, have a part whole relationship in my study.

I assume ridesharing apps, service providers, and customers are all increasing in number these days, as the competition in this sector is high. Among the growing numbers of apps, Pathao is perhaps the most popular platform which has optimized the system more sophisticatedly than other platforms (Malla, 2023). It is so common, that I have experienced it myself; people requesting any ridesharing service generally initiate the conversation with a common question, “*Pathao ho?*” [meaning whether the rider provides the ridesharing service or not.] I know that customers do not necessarily need to rely on a particular ridesharing app to reach their destination. However, the word has been so popular among the people that all other platforms are synonymously referred to as Pathao in the city.

I believe that ridesharing youths are not only earning money with these apps while sharing rides using their motorbikes or taxis, but they also can learn informally about various fields particularly in the context of ridesharing and city life. For example, some ridesharers were successful in developing their interpersonal and communication skills while interacting with their customers. Some of them upgraded their knowledge about the local geography, culture, and environmental issues while ridesharing in the city. Almost all of them grasped the integration of digital technology into the urban transportation system, which was not possible in conventional driving.

Ridesharing as a Learning Platform

While learning is often taken for granted in several studies with a formal approach, particularly in the context of adult and continuing educational discourse, my research situates learning as an integral part of everyday life context. This is the process of developing self, identity and claiming existences. I view lifelong learning as a continuous and supportive process that stimulates and empowers individuals to

acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their lives (Davies, 1993). It helps them apply with confidence, creativity and enjoyment, in all roles' circumstances, and environments (Watson, 2003). I envision that the young ridesharers of Kathmandu city are continually learning and making their selves every day in the ridesharing context.

As a learning platform, ridesharing can also contribute to the development of a knowledge society. A knowledge society is one in which the acquisition, creation and application of knowledge predominate (Sinanovic & Basirovic, 2016). In 1969, the concept of knowledge society was first introduced. I assume ridesharing platforms provide the youth with a wonderful space to build a knowledge society around their lifeworld. Presenting urban culture as a challenge to promote social interaction, El-Bardisy (2024) argues that public spaces should serve as a platform for expressing and shaping the community's mindset. I acknowledge that the ridesharing community, which is active in both the physical and virtual worlds, can serve as a catalyst for the development of a knowledge society.

It is noteworthy that the engagement in ridesharing activities fosters learning and personal growth among the youth, thereby creating an environment conducive to the development of the four pillars of education. Describing learning as a lifelong activity, the four pillars of education for the future are learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and with others, and learning to be (Delors', 1996, as cited in Sinanovic & Becirovic, 2016). These all four pillars of education, when compared to the lives of the ridesharers, shape their learning and becoming journey. I anticipate that even more pillars can be explored as new findings in this field.

Finally, I support the notion that a sustainable future can only be realized when education aligns with the practical and everyday life behaviors of individuals (Gautam & Syangtan, 2020). The ridesharers of Kathmandu are the informal learners, and their involvement in ridesharing not only creates a learning space, but also shapes the future of learning. Outside the walls of schools and universities, they are learning numerous skills, ideas and values through their daily lives. I envision that the formal system of education, as we know it, may face challenges in the future due to the rise of tech-assisted informal learning and the emergence of new learning spaces.

Becoming a Ridesharer in the City

I believe that becoming is a process that is never fixed or static; instead, it's a fluid and evolving process. There are three levels of becoming; becoming intense,

becoming animal and becoming imperceptible (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Becoming intense is the first level which affects the individuals deeply creating a spark of change. Becoming an animal, unlike its literal meaning, is becoming the 'other' that keeps the individual detached from the social obligations. Becoming imperceptible is the ultimate level that transforms the individual into an inseparable part of the world they inhabit.

In the context of young ridesharers, they have come a long way, gaining valuable experiences and establishing themselves as ridesharers in the city. Completing the long journey with all three levels of becoming as a novice ridesharer, an experienced ridesharer and a professional ridesharer respectively, they develop their worldviews and form their identity, continuing to rideshare in the city. Becoming a ridesharer in the city, in this way, is a dynamic process that involves several fluctuations, and this overall experience helps them shape their positionality and worldview in their own lives and within the community they live in.

Statement of the Problem

With an interest in revealing the unheard, hidden, and in-depth stories of ridesharing youth, I planned to create a new knowledge in this field rooted in the lifeworld of the ridesharers. Research studies made in this field have so far perceived ridesharing as an exclusively financial activity rather than acknowledging it as a learning platform (Alam, 2022; Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2021; Khanal & Khanal, 2024). I realize that youth involvement in ridesharing platforms is not simply a means to generate income, but also a way to acquire hard and soft skills, such as communication skills, techno-mechanical skills, and customer care skills. I believe the content of learning and the social model selected for the learning pattern should be reviewed (Manuti et al., 2015). I assume that these skills and learning approaches of youth gradually shape their worldviews, enabling them to interact effectively with people and manage their finances. As a result, it fills the gap of using ridesharing not as merely an economic platform but also to promote the learning space of youth in their situatedness within the urban context.

I envision that the ridesharing youth adopted the urban culture to live and sustain themselves in the city, despite having formal academic degrees and opportunities to work. As urban culture develops new forms of social organizations and relations (Serbulo, 2022), it is crucial to study how the youth adopt the emerging cultural trends and develop their identity and learning. I recognize their social

positionalities as the part-timers, ridesharing enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, and even college students. Despite their diverse backgrounds based on their language, region, community, and socio-economic status, I hope they were constantly learning something new whether it's a skill, a piece of information, or a moment of realization and are gradually becoming better versions of themselves within their community. I visualize their self-confidence, opportunities, challenges, dreams, and aspirations while ridesharing in the city which helps craft a broad picture of how they learn and shape their identities within the urban eco-system.

I believe the relevance of learning depends on the learner's understanding what they learn and how they apply it to the critical situations in their lives later. In this context, I realize that the youth, who engaged in any course of action, whether they undertake it for their livelihood purposes or for any other reason, can learn through the instabilities, scarcities, challenges, and opportunities associated with ridesharing. In Nepalese society, there is a famous quote - *Ki padhera janinchha, ki parera janinchha* [people gain knowledge either through study or through experience], which is also relevant in the context of ridesharing youth. This is why I support the ridesharing community struggling in the city. As a member of the ridesharing community, I can learn through the process, which can be termed as the informal and situated learning. Hence, unlike the general perception of the people, the ridesharing youth are not the unemployed, semi-educated or money-minded gig workers. Instead, they are self-employed, curious, hard-working, techno-friendly and identity-conscious members of the urban community.

Finally, learning is not restricted to how it has been interpreted in the formal settings, nor to hard and soft skills or a set of ideas to tackle a particular problem. From my perspective, learning is the means by which we gain experience through a specific course of action, such as ridesharing in the city, and the process of becoming and crafting an identity while engaging in such activities. In this context, there is a gap in the recognition of informal learning as an inevitable form of learning due to its power relation associated with it (Golding et al., 2009). I realize that the informal learning and becoming dimensions of the youth are the underrated paradigms in education; hence, they require optimal priorities. To sum up, evolving tech-based activities, such as ridesharing, can serve as a space for creating of new avenues of learning and growth in the city.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to delve into the untold stories of young ridesharers in Kathmandu city, particularly focusing on their informal learning, becoming and shaping positionality in relation to their lifeworld. Additionally, the study aims to reconceptualize informal learning and investigate how emerging tech-based urban initiatives, such as ridesharing, can create a space for informal learning and becoming.

Research Questions

1. How do the young ridesharers of Kathmandu explain their informal learning experiences while involving in ridesharing activities in the city?
2. How do they relate ridesharing to becoming and shaping their positionality in the city?

Rationale of the Study

As ridesharing is an emerging trend in the Nepalese context, the study of the learning and becoming of the young ridesharers can be relevant for anyone interested in this field (Timilsena et al., 2025). In other words, ridesharing is an uncultivated area of research in relation to creating learning and becoming spaces in the city. As a ridesharing app is a platform that connects technology, people, and the economy, young ridesharers can learn various knowledge and skills related to urban living and its consequences. I assume it has its own characteristic features, which are not simply part of the sharing economy but are deeply connected to the learning and becoming of the people involved in it.

In this study, I collected the diverse experiences of young ridesharers and analyzed them based on the themes derived from their narratives. Hence, the rationale of the study lies in the explaining the experiences of ridesharing youth and their transition into a lifeworld, which has yet to be explored in contemporary studies. As Galvin (2017) claims, becoming a taxi driver in London is about knowing London; I consider becoming a ridesharer in Kathmandu to be about ‘knowing Kathmandu better’. And, it’s not just a learning space, but also as a living space in its own right.

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) incorporates the concepts of youth involvement, community learning activities, and reducing the digital divide as the strategies to achieve its vision: lifelong learning for all (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2025). I believe the study of ridesharing among youth from a learning and becoming perspective is also relevant in the context of lifelong learning as well. In short, the

rationale of the study is to reveal the stories of youth learning and becoming while they are ridesharing in an urban context, so that a new avenue of learning and becoming in the city can be identified.

Finally, I realize the enactment of ridesharing with a special focus on its informal learning and becoming dimension is inevitable. If so happens, other tech-based urban initiatives including ridesharing can be linked to the national policy of education and development. As learning is never restricted to formal setting, it can be linked to informal, workplace and professional fields; and the study of ridesharing is rational to meet this strategy.

Chapter Summary

To begin the chapter, I disclosed my interest to study ridesharing as a field of study. I recalled my childhood and the undergraduate years in which there was the meaning of having a bicycle or motorcycle for carrying another person at the pillion seat was a common practice during those days. I perceived ridesharing as a part of urban living currently with a special focus on its informal learning and becoming dimensions. Apart from its impact on the gig economy, I delved into its aspect of identity formation associated with ridesharing. Designing a couple of research questions, I sought rationale of the study behind its enactment, incorporation and reconceptualization as a new field of study.

Structure of the Dissertation

There are seven chapters in this dissertation. The first chapter introduces the introduction of the topic, presents problem statement, outlines purpose of the study, explains rationale behind the study, and poses the research questions. The second chapter addresses a literature review, primarily focusing on thematic, theoretical, empirical, policy review and research gaps in this field. The third chapter encompasses philosophical considerations, research paradigms, narrative inquiry as a research methodology, the meaning making process, ethical considerations, and quality standards.

Similarly, the fourth chapter introduces the participants and their stories, which are based on in-depth interviews and observations of the participants, as well as my own reflections. The fifth and the sixth chapters address the themes and discussions on the informal learning and becoming dimensions of ridesharing respectively. Finally, the seventh chapter includes a summary, conclusion,

implications of the study, and a brief note on my research journey related to this dissertation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I presented a literature review that encompassed thematic, theoretical, empirical, and policy analysis in relation to ridesharing and its learning and becoming dimensions. I gathered the ideas from both peer-reviewed articles and the grey literature available through various platforms. Such platforms included online databases, such as Google Scholar, ERIC, SAGE Journals, ProQuest, and ResearchGate. The keywords used to search for the articles were 'ridesharing youth', 'learning and becoming', 'informal learning' 'situated learning', and 'ridesharing in Nepal'.

I explored the concept of ridesharing, examining its lexical and connotative meanings across different contexts. I described the concept of ridesharing in both global and local contexts. I reviewed informal learning theories, particularly situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Parallel to this, I presented the becoming dimension of young ridesharers as a perspective for viewing how they shape their positionalities in the city. Finally, I concluded the chapter by presenting empirical reviews, policy reviews, and research gaps.

Thematic Review

In this section, I explored into the concept of ridesharing examining its brief history, and its applications in global, national and local contexts. In addition, I discussed ridesharing and urban youth, as well as learning and becoming through ridesharing, as the thematic area of the study.

The Concept of Ridesharing

Defining the term 'ridesharing' is slightly puzzling as it encompasses multiple meanings depending upon its chronological and spatial contexts. During the critical period, induced by the unofficial blockade in Nepal in 2015, a voluntary practice of ridesharing emerged in Kathmandu undertaken to conserve fuel. Later, the corporate ridesharing culture was established in Nepal with the arrival of various ridesharing apps. To obtain the definitions, I consulted digital resources and some physical libraries, primarily using the keyword 'ridesharing'. In doing so, I found that United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) (1987) has defined ridesharing in a comprehensive way:

Ridesharing is essentially the act of two or more persons traveling by any mode of transportation, including but not limited to: carpooling, vanpooling, bus pooling, and public transit. In its most familiar form, ridesharing refers to commuting trips; however, ridesharing for non-work trips, such as travel to recreational and shopping areas, is also becoming increasingly common. Its benefits are many--less traffic congestion, less air pollution, reduced parking demand, energy savings, etc. (p. 1-2)

While exploring the history of ridesharing, I found it can be traced back to the history of World War II. As an instance, Chan and Shaheen (2011) reveal that ridesharing emerged during World War II through car clubs or car sharing clubs. Those clubs were established to conserve resources for the war effort as a powerful strategy that could reduce congestion, emissions, and fossil fuel dependence during wartime. They also highlighted the resurgence of ridesharing during the late 1960s and 1970s, a period marked by initiatives aimed at conserving fuel through policy measures that encouraged higher vehicle occupancy.

I find ridesharing, in some contexts, is synonymously understood as carpooling or vanpooling. However, Chan and Shaheen (2011) distinguish these two terms. Carpooling involves grouping travelers into a private automobile, while vanpooling involves individuals sharing a ride in a van. Ridesharing, on the other hand, is more unique, such as casual carpooling. Regarding the various types of ridesharing, Islam (2022) defines slugging as casual carpooling, which is essentially a variation of ride-share commuting and hitchhiking, involving the formation of informal carpools for commuting purposes. Other forms of ridesharing include flexible carpooling, real-time ridesharing, car clubs and car sharing, hitchhiking, peer-to-peer car sharing, casual carpooling, dynamic ridesharing, and so on.

Based on these ideas, I conclude that not all bike riders and taxi drivers are the ridesharers, but those who use an internet-based platform to facilitate the transportation of people from one location to another, with a pre-agreement upon fare can be termed as ridesharers. In this way, the above-mentioned concepts are insufficient as global history, country and/or context-based concepts and perceptions of ridesharing can vary. I will discuss the concept of ridesharing in both a global and a national context in the upcoming sections.

Ridesharing in the Global Context

As I mentioned earlier, the history of ridesharing goes back to World War II when carpooling was used to transport foods to the soldiers (Chan & Shaheen, 2011). The first known use of the word ‘ridesharing’ was in 1942 as indicated in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. What I found from the literature was that ridesharing boomed globally after 2000. One of the reasons behind its boom in Asia was the significant growth of internet users, which increased from 14 million people to 2 billion, accounting for more than 50 per cent of the population in this region (Vayouphack, 2020). As urban living has been a global issue, I assume ridesharing has been a globally widespread part of the urban lifestyle.

Ridesharing has become an integral component of the gig economy, arguably the most prominent sharing economy in the global landscape (Vayouphack, 2020). The ridesharing platforms have flourished widely; for example, most shared economy participants in the US are Uber drivers, who constitute around one per cent of the labor force, while a small number of others work on similar platforms (Vayouphack, 2020). Similarly, market-oriented ridesharing mode were increasingly popular in China providing way to achieve sustainability in addition to governmental efforts (Yu et al., 2017). Some of the China’s 240 million vehicles and congested roads have attracted many ridesharing start-ups over the past five years (Islam, 2022). These all demonstrate that ridesharing wasn’t a sudden experiment but rather evolved from a long history.

I believe technology plays a significant role in the rapid growth of the ridesharing culture. Tech-based ridesharing services offer greater reliability compared to traditional taxi-based services due to their lower costs and shorter wait times (Weng et al., 2017, as cited in Islam, 2022). In India, numerous mobile applications for ridesharing are available. OlaShare, Bla Bla Car, ORahi, Ibibo Ryde, Zify, Pool Circle in Hyderabad, LiftO in Mumbai and Pickup in Guragaon are some examples (Manzini et al., 2011, as cited in Islam, 2022). In 2019, the national government of India proposed new guidelines offering a ‘no-profit-no-loss’ model, in which drivers were supposed to consider ridesharing a part-time job only. Colombo hosted Uber’s official launch in 2012, following a period of increasing demand for the ridesharing service in the country (Islam, 2022). Nepal, being situated between the two giant economies, India and China, cannot remain aloof from this kind of platform-based service.

Ridesharing in the Context of Nepal

I acknowledge that ridesharing is a new and emerging industry in Nepal. The history of ridesharing in Nepal goes back to the public release of the Tootle App in 2017. Now there are dozens of ridesharing platforms including the pioneer app, Tootle. Some popular ridesharing apps in Nepal include Pathao, InDrive, Sajilo, Taximandu, JumJum, and Yango. Among all these, Pathao is the most popular in Kathmandu city, and people often use it as synonym for all ridesharing platforms (although it's only an app). Similarly, the ridesharing app – InDrive is popular among customers who seek the service at a competitive price. The new platform, Yango has been generating hype in the market.

Figure 1

An Illustration of Ridesharing



(Subedi, 2021)

Pathao has been operating in Nepal since 2018. It was optimized in such a way that both riders and customers find it convenient and user-friendly. When Tootle as a single platform, it was not well-optimized in those days (Malla, 2023); hence, riders were unable to pick up customers from the nearest location. In those days, finding potential customers in the right locations was a challenging task for ridesharing companies. The entry of Pathao solved this problem with its sophisticated, well-optimized and comparatively more user-friendly interface. This was the reason why Pathao captured the market initially and has been established itself as a leading platform in Nepal.

Before the advent of ridesharing, waiting for customers near bus parks, outside hospitals, hotels, and at airports was common activity. In today's world, ridesharing services have undergone significant changes, and the younger generation now prefers to book taxis and bikes online, eliminating the hassle of waiting in person. In Nepal, ridesharing has revolutionized urban mobility (Bhul, 2025) with the service now also available other major cities, such as Pokhara and Chitwan. I often book an InDrive when I visit my hometown in Chitwan. It has gained popularity outside the Kathmandu Valley, surpassing its status as a mere global entity.

Ridesharing and the Urban Youth

As I considered studying how people learn while engaging in ridesharing activities, I chose urban ridesharing youth as my participants. Why did I choose the youth? Who are the youth? There can be various parameters to define a particular age group as the youth of a specific population, as it depends on the defining agencies. In this context, the World Bank defines youth as individuals aged between sixteen and thirty-four years overlapping the official definition of youth in Nepal, which ranges from sixteen to forty years (Raju & Rajbhandary, 2018). In this dissertation, I interviewed youths aged between twenty-one and thirty years.

As youth are increasingly interested in tech-based works, I explored how they thrive as ridesharers in the city. Youth also develop entrepreneurial skills through ridesharing, although there is a debate on whether ridesharing constitutes entrepreneurship or employment. Youth social entrepreneurship has the potential to mobilize young people as agents of change (United Nations [UN], 2020). The report notes that it represents an opportunity to disseminate and scale up technological solutions that can improve global welfare while also developing the largely untapped potential of young people.

I observe that ridesharing has gained popularity among urban youth in Nepal. Not only do ridesharing services appeal to customers in Kathmandu city, but they also prefer them over traditional means of transportation due to their ready-to-go system. Ridesharing has paved the way for young people to become self-sufficient and define their positionality in urban settings. Akom et al. (2008) introduce the term 'youthtopia' as a traditional and non-traditional educational space where young people rely on each other's skills, perspectives, and experiential knowledge to create original, multi-textual cultural products that critique oppression, seek social justice, and empower communities. From my perspective, ridesharing creates a similar space for learning and becoming, while engaging in such activities in the city.

The concept further states that youth need a learning space to become truly cultured members of their community. I chose the youth as my participants because I believe they are more open to sharing their experiences. Besides, they are more interested in technology, and I believe that the knowledge they acquired can be analyzed in the context of situatedness and becoming. In conclusion, ridesharing has become an integral part of urban living, and the urban youth play a pivotal role in keeping the cycle of learning and becoming alive through it.

Learning and Becoming through Ridesharing

I support the idea that people can learn from anything, anywhere, in any situation, as ridesharing is ridesharing for the youth involved in it. Ridesharers do not simply exploit the ridesharing apps; instead, they parallelly use multiple social media platforms, which can help them connect with their community and become active members of it. Degner et al. (2022) find that digital media can promote and support motivational and cognitive learning processes, particularly in relation to knowledge acquisition, interest, collaboration, and social interaction. In my opinion, ridesharers also acquire various skills and accumulate useful knowledge through digital technology in their informal learning environment.

I assume that becoming is a continuous process of development or the evolution of something. It is not fixed but 'fluid' in nature. The young ridesharers of Kathmandu as they learned to drive or ride in the city, became confident ridesharers over time. This is a process of transformation or a metamorphosis into their lives. As transformational learning is far ahead of informational learning, it's an art of living and loving in the present (Baumgartner, 2001), the ridesharers become professionals from their initial learning status. Becoming a ridesharer can be a lengthy process, and so is learning in an urban environment.

I realize that becoming is a continuous transformation that never stops until the individual continues to engage in a particular course of action. Cho et al. (2024) investigated how undergraduate medical students acquired knowledge and gained experience during their clinical clerkship. Their professional identity and sub-identities, namely values, functionality, career decision, sociality, and situating were revealed through their study. Unlike their finding, over-participation does not lead to less learning in the context of ridesharers from my perspective.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that becoming is the journey of life-in-itself. Individuals' paths are not always predetermined, as they are influenced by a multitude of internal and external factors that shape their becoming. The concept of becoming fluid does not necessitate a state of staticness (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). I understand that youth become ridesharers, switching their role over time. They are uninterruptedly learning skills associated with ridesharing, which results in their becoming. I will discuss further ideas in this regard in the upcoming sections.

The Offline Riding Practice

While inquiring with participants, I found that offline ridesharing was indeed in practice in the ridesharing market, promoted by both ridesharers and their customers. Although offline ridesharing is legally prohibited, I accepted it as ‘a regular activity’ since my purpose of the study was inclined to informal learning and becoming rather than advocating legal standards. In my personal experience, I encountered instances where ridesharers attempted to cancel my booking right before the pick-up. If I had accepted their proposal, the concerned companies would have eliminated the payment of certain charges to their respective ridesharers.

As the offline practice of ridesharing is an unethical and unlawful activity, I noticed it created several problems like cheating, misbehaving and sometimes even serious crimes like looting the ornaments of female customers and even sexual harassment. This is why offline ridesharing is strictly prohibited for the safety of customers; hence, the company also warns the ridesharers against engaging in such activities. If the ridesharers are found to be involved in such activities, they are also suspended by the company (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). I realize that learning matters in the context of safe riding as well. I do not claim that all offline riders are inevitably bad, because some youth may have practiced ridesharing as freelancers in the absence of strict policy and legal provisions.

Theoretical Review

I have briefly described two main theories under this theoretical review section. The first theory is the informal learning theory, and the second is the situated learning theory. I expect these theories are relevant as the learning and becoming of the ridesharers is profoundly based on informal contexts. I preferred the situated learning theory as more relevant while analyzing the learning that incorporates the concept of legitimate peripheral participation as a precondition for learning and identity formation. Parallel to these theories, I presented the dimension of becoming as a major perspective throughout this research.

Informal Learning Theory

Learning on the road while using the ridesharing platform is a solid example of informal learning, and it has a direct connection to the process of becoming a ‘ridesharer’ in the context of urban ridesharing among youth in Nepal. The key perspective of learning in this context can be gained through the interaction between ridesharer and their customers. However, will such an interaction ever exist where

learning occurs? How far has digital technology affected the chance of getting involved in such interaction? These were the questions to be discussed among my participants. Based on my insider positionality, such interactions can be optional, depending on the interest of the ridesharer and their customers. The congestion of vehicles, their speed, and the noise on the street can be some disturbing aspects of such interaction. However, common questions like “Where to go?” and “What’s the job?” can break the ice and start a conversation.

I believe informal learning occurs through various activities, such as family, workplaces, community and leisure activities, and the daily lives of individuals (Golding et al., 2009). The informal conversation, in the context of ridesharing, is a gateway to unfold the potential of learning. Through such interaction, one can learn about society, culture, and the environment. In this context, the journey from the customer’s location to their destination can create a space or ‘a spatial turn’ (Larsen & Beech, 2014) for the ridesharers to be acquainted with new culture, language and other social and natural environments. For example, the ridesharers of Kathmandu city can learn about different temples, ponds, and cultural heritage while sharing rides around them. They can learn the language that customers speak, including their dialects and ways of communication as well as the gestures and nuances. As informal learning is heavily situation-dependent (Johnson & Majewska, 2022), ridesharing experiences in the city significantly influence the ridesharers, who learn informally through these situations.

I suppose another major area of learning can be technological knowhow in relation to transportation systems and their benefits to service delivery, including internalization of precision, accuracy, speed, and documentation in service. For example, the ridesharers can learn how to use the Global Positioning System (GPS) App to explore a location, stay updated on road traffic condition, and calculate the distance covered while ridesharing, among other features. Moreover, they can gain valuable experience in ridesharing, learning the essential mechanical dimensions of the vehicles along the way. The basic skills, such as using a seat belt while driving a taxi, wearing a good helmet while riding a motorcycle, fuel saving tricks, timely servicing, changing engine oil, checking brakes, fuel, and water levels etc. may sound simple but are highly recommended for ridesharers. The Bluetooth technology integrated in both their smartphones and vehicles can also enrich their experience.

Finally, I view ridesharing as a space in which the service provider and the service recipient meet and interact in a specific context, and informal learning inevitably occurs. As Eraut (2004) depicts, two triangles are used to describe the factors affecting informal learning: learning factors and context factors. From an informal learning perspective, the contextual factors play a more prominent role in my evaluation. The content is self-learned and mastered over time, but the contexts require careful analysis.

Situated Learning Theory

I employed the Situated Learning Theory (SLT) as one of my major theoretical frameworks to examine learning and becoming dimensions of ridesharing. I believe this learning theory closely aligns with the concept of becoming, as it spotlights context-based learning. I recall my school teacher teaching me the word 'lamp' by turning on a lighter and holding it against the blackboard's picture. Although it was a formal class, an informal or situated learning environment was created there.

I understand that situated learning theory focuses on the context of learning rather than the content being learned. As there is no activity that is not situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991), ridesharing is also a peculiar context in which the riders have immense potential for learning on the road. They also highlight the role of legitimate peripheral participation. They state:

We should emphasize, therefore, that legitimate peripheral participation is not itself an educational form, much less a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique. It represents an analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning. We hope to make it clear as we proceed that learning through legitimate peripheral participation takes place no matter which educational form provides a context for learning, or whether there is any intentional educational form at all (P 40).

Perceiving learning as a Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) posits that learning is not merely a prerequisite for membership but is, in fact, an evolving form of membership. (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As they view learning as a legitimate peripheral participation, the young ridesharers of Kathmandu can be considered informal learners as they grow and learn to adapt to the urban living and culture. They learn the core concepts of urban lifestyle by engaging in minor activities and sub-activities related to ridesharing.

I believe the context or situation is the prime concern in situated learning theory. Anderson et al. (1996) claim that action is grounded in the concrete situation in which it occurs. They exemplified that Brazilian street children were unable to perform well in a school context, but they were skilled at making sales on the streets. They were poor in classroom arithmetic but sharp at roadside calculation. Similarly, Godden and Baddeley (1975) found that divers, when under water, experienced difficulties recalling what they learned on land, and vice versa. This is what contextual learning entails, and the same is true for situational learning theory.

I realize that a mentor can play a role in learning by situating it. Anderson et al. (1996) also claim that instruction needs to be conducted in a complex, social environment. As learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world, Lave and Wenger (1991) exemplify the learning of a tax accountant who does not need to learn to master the tax codes and use a calculator simultaneously while interacting with the clients; instead, it is better to learn such skills in advance.

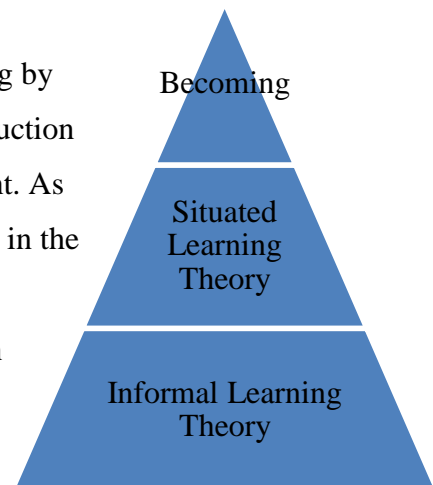
In this way, I fixed situated learning theory as my major theoretical tool, in the sense that ridesharers undertake a special context where they need to participate in a certain activity (ridesharing), construct their identity (ridesharer) and remain engaged in the activity (practice). As participation, identity, and practice are the core concepts of situated learning within a community of practice in where individuals learn new values, norms, relationship and identities appropriate to the community (Handley et al., 2006), they acquire the new values, skills and make identity in ridesharing context.

The Dimension of Becoming

In addition to the afore-mentioned theories, I also employed the concept of becoming throughout this study. As informal learning is self-initiated, unexpected and unregulated learning, the concept of becoming is inherently connected with this kind of learning in my evaluation. To put another way, informal learning theory exhibits a greater interconnectedness with the becoming dimension, as it facilitates the learner's transition from Individual A to Individual B in during the learning procedure.

Figure 2

The Intersecting IL Theories and the Becoming Dimension

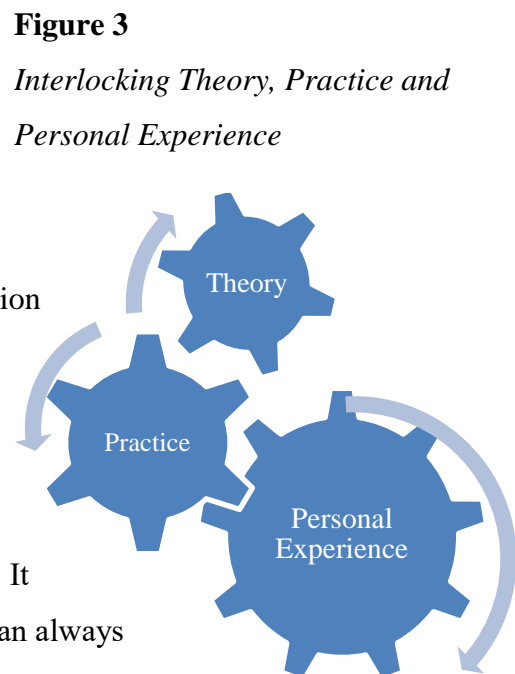


I accept that there is no comprehensive theory of ‘becoming’ that can be used as an exclusive theoretical framework. However, I envisaged the ideas shared by some scholars who contributed to the conceptualization of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) state ‘what becoming is not’ before they shed light on what it is. To know what becoming is, it is necessary to know what it is not as well. In this regard, they utter that:

Becoming is not a similarity between relations, not resemblance, not imitation, not identification, evolution by descent or filiation, not a progress or regress along a series, and not something that occurs in the imagination...The becoming-animal of human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if that something other it becomes is not (p. 238).

This indicates that the nature of becoming is fluid, dynamic, and never-static. Becoming is not the natural progress that happens as the time passes through a procedure, and it is simply a continuous process which may not be real for all the time. As becoming intense, animal and perceptible are the three levels of becoming, all the identities or positionalities of individuals go through these levels, and so is the case of ridesharing youth as well

The concept of becoming, as advocated by Heraclitus in his metaphysical position, is a classical perception. Heraclitus revealed the key myths: static identity, the multiplicity of truth, and human nature distinction (Deckor, 2021). In essence, Heraclitus posited the existence of dynamism, multiple truths, and the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature. Plato’s famous quote, “You cannot step into the same river twice” is relevant here. It implies that while we can’t alter our past, we can always learn from it and progress forward. In my own experience, there is nothing static in my identity and explanations of the world which makes me a man of becoming. In the context of ridesharers, their becoming, as it can rapidly fluctuate, makes the dimension of becoming a noteworthy aspect.



(Kim, 2015)

Finally, I followed Kim (2015) in exploring the role of theory in qualitative research, particularly the interlocking relationship between theory and practice with my personal experience serving as the lubricant into the gears. Despite the theories mentioned in this section, I reiterate that the theory has yet to be propounded; I reserve these theories for review purposes only.

Empirical Review

To review ridesharing and learning empirically, I sought the available literature in both physical and virtual libraries. As it is a new area of research in the context of Nepal, limited resources were available in the academia, but there are sufficient articles published in the grey literature. Since qualitative studies on ridesharing that focused on learning and becoming dimension were inadequate in both global and local contexts, I relied on quantitative studies while reviewing the empirical evidence.

Examining the youth's intention to use shared mobility, Maharjan et al. (2025) find that subjective norms influence intentions to use shared vehicles. The study reveals that youth face multiple difficulties while ridesharing, which inspired me to gather stories from field. Similarly, assessing the case of mobile app-based vehicle services in relation to customer satisfaction in Kathmandu, Sharma (2024) concludes that price, comfort, reliability, promotion, and coupon redemption have a positive impact on customer satisfaction, with being the most influential factor, followed by comfort.

I believe the users perception of the user regarding ridesharing plays a significant role in its flourishing it in the city. Bhat et al. (2024) investigate the user perception and satisfaction level with Pathao services in Nepal, revealing that young adults between eighteen and twenty-four are more aware of ridesharing; hence, they adopt the service more readily. Likewise, studying the taxi management in Kathmandu, Devkota et al. (2021) unveil that government policies, online platform and parking are the major challenges for conventional taxi drivers. In my opinion, these are the grounds on which the ridesharers learn the skills and transform themselves to professional ridesharers.

Based on the ridesharing context, the youth learn to appropriate values, norms, and ways to deal with people. Goddard (2021) examines the situated practice of organized ridesharing which elucidates the learning experiences of ridesharers in relation to their socialization, safety, route adjustment, and negotiating skills, among

other factors. Despite all these works, the narratives of the young ridesharers in the context of learning and becoming were yet to be explored. I attempted to focus on and zoom in the experiences of the young ridesharers in Kathmandu throughout this dissertation.

Policy Review

In the context of Nepal, the platform-based economy is relatively novel, as it is a by-product of the ongoing internet revolution in the country. Tootle and Pathao, which emerged in 2016 and 2018, respectively, became contemporary instances of platform-based ridesharing services in Kathmandu's local transportation market of Kathmandu (Hamal, 2019). There are dozens of ridesharing platforms available nowadays; however, a governing policy has yet to be established to regulate them all.

Like other issues in the city, I consider ridesharing, despite its multiple benefits to the urban dwellers, has some unresolved issues. For example, the security concerns in this sector are one of the such unresolved issues. Sometimes, ridesharers and, even the customers, are reportedly involved in criminal activities like looting, sexual harassment, and so on. The Cyber Bureau of the Nepal Police has been investigating the cases as reported by the victims, who were once customers or service providers on such platforms. The learning process through ridesharing should be specifically targeted in this area.

I also believe that the safety issue, as described above, is less risky in

Figure 4

Ridesharing Being Legalized



(Business News, 2025)

comparison to the 'politics' in ridesharing (Feeney, 2015). In this context, Nepal witnessed a clear struggle between traditional taxi drivers and new platform-based ridesharing services. Traditional taxi drivers argue that ridesharing companies have collapsed their market. On the other hand, the ridesharing companies claim that they are just using the platform-based system which is the demand of today's youth. Becoming experienced in the system-led

transportation, they were happy to adopt the platforms. One of the ridesharers revealed me, with a sense of apology, that he had charged additional amount to the

passenger. Before the arrival of platform-based services, there was a bargaining culture prevalent, in which customers would engage in lengthy negotiations over fares. The meter-based taxis were neither ready to use the meter nor did they implement standard fare rate list, in my own experience. Thanks to all the technological and industrial efforts that have contributed to institutionalization of ridesharing services in Nepal.

I notice that the Government of Nepal amended the Industrial Enterprises Act 2076 (2020), and included ridesharing as a service-oriented industry while working on its formalization and legalization (Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies [MoICS], 2020). The gazette was published on 1st February 2024, and it provided the ridesharing companies with a legal status, seven years after they started services in Nepal (Tandulkar, 2024). Coincidentally, I was also deployed as an officer in the Ministry of Commerce, Imports and Supplies while drafting the act. Despite the amendment, I believe a comprehensive policy is necessary to address the various associated with issues of ridesharing in Nepal.

Later, the Bagmati Province also drafted a set of rules to sanction app-based ride-hailing companies (Nepal Desk, 2024). Meanwhile, public transport operators protested when the Gandaki Province drafted a bill to legalize ridesharing in 2024. The protesters demanded the continuation traditional taxi-driving and the restriction of the private number plates being used as ridesharing vehicles in Pokhara (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). From my perspective, before drafting an immediate policy to institutionalize the ridesharing industry in Nepal, there was an urgency to incorporate its lessons and make it a dimension of education and employment through comprehensive and sectoral policies.

As an educational input, I conclude that learning and becoming dimension of youth outside the formal education system have rarely been integrated in our National Education Policy. The only provision incorporated into the National Education Policy, 2019 is the strategy to link literacy, informal education and lifelong education with professions, business, social life, and participation (National Education Policy, 2019). In my personal observation, there is a huge gap between the statement of the policy and the practice in the real field. I believe that such a policy has to address the needs of the time, the interests of the youth, and the changes that technology drives in society.

Overall, the concept of ridesharing can be traced back to the unique practice of providing paid transportation services to the public, whether it is can be with a traditional taxi or a motorbike (which was previously used exclusively as a private commuter). The use of ridesharing apps is mandatory, and the companies responsible for operating such apps create the platform that joins the ridesharing customers and service providers. The offline practice is an unauthorized version of ridesharing, which is discouraged by the companies, the police, and even those who advocate for the institutionalization of ridesharing in Nepal.

Research Gap

Ridesharing, a multi-faceted endeavor in Nepal, has been predominantly viewed as an economic activity, overlooking its potential to foster learning and personal growth for both ridesharers and customers. On the other hand, there is a substantial body of literature, both scholarly and non-scholarly, on the its legal, financial, and technological dimensions. However, the learning and becoming aspect has been largely neglected in those works. In my opinion, there is a theoretical gap in the sense that informal learning has been not been considered as a part of the education system to date. Besides, there is an empirical gap not only in the case of ridesharing but also in the studies of several other fields, which can create the space for informal learning and identity formation. Finally, there is an explicit policy gap in this sector, both in the enactment of ridesharing, and in the incorporation of the informal sector including ridesharing into the broader educational and developmental policies. All these resources and the insights I gained from them, as well as from the practice, motivated me to inquire in this field. By reviewing the literature, based on the thematic, theoretical, empirical and policy review, I believe that I can justify the research gap.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I begin by exploring the concept of ridesharing, its lexical meaning, and definitions examining various dichotomies. Then, I emphasized the overall learning experiences of the ridesharers in the context of informal and situated learning. Additionally, I presented the legal and formal dimensions of ridesharing in both global and national contexts. Eventually, I identified the issue with some theoretical frameworks, particularly, the informal learning theory, situational learning theory including the becoming dimension of ridesharing. As a research gap, I

highlighted the essence of institutionalizing ridesharing and linking it to the learning and development of urban youth through policy intervention.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I shed light on methodology in this chapter which comprises philosophical considerations, research paradigm, research method, research design, generating stories from the participants, meaning-making process, quality standards and ethical considerations. I also described the relevant ideas and my techniques for pursuing the research on ridesharing, particularly in the context of learning and becoming perspective.

Philosophical Considerations

I described the three main bases of philosophical considerations in this section, i.e., ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These are the philosophical foundations upon which my research is based. As Wahyuni (2012) states that ontology, epistemology and axiology are the views on how one perceives the reality, the beliefs on how to generate, understand, and use the knowledge deemed to be acceptable and the value bond respectively. This section describes my ontological, epistemological and axiological stances.

Ontological Stance

In this study, I adopted individual relativism as my ontological stance, which posits that reality is subjective and can only be partially understood through individual interpretations (Pretorius, 2024). For me, the reality is based on the individual interpretation, informed by my participants' lived experiences and co-constructed through my own reflections. Simons (2008) defines ontology as the philosophical study of being in general, or of what applies neutrally to everything that is real. It encompasses such questions such as what is required for something to exist, what categories and relations are most fundamental, and whether reality is fundamentally mind-independent or mind-dependent. I believe the nature of knowledge is based on the lifeworld of the participants, which is socially constructed, subjective, and close to truth, and this is how relativism is my ontological posture. The reality for me is what my participants understand largely based on the thick description of their narratives rather than what is pre-established or pre-occupied in the third person's mindset.

Epistemological Stance

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief (Steup, 2020). The branch of philosophy that explores the nature of knowledge and its acquisition is known as epistemology. I applied the Deleuzian Theory of Education which claims learning is not ‘knowing’, but ‘becoming’. People learn what they need, rather than what is proposed to them, as there are two ways of reading: reading the inner texts of the book and realizing or contextualizing the book with the outer world (St. Pierre, 2004). I believe the co-construction of meaning based on the participants experiences and my own reflection outside the texts. Using the narrative inquiry method, I conducted in-depth interviews with my participants, employing techniques, such as making field notes, thematic analysis, and generating the meaning, which provided me with a strong epistemological foundation. Epistemologically, my dissertation leans towards Deleuzian constructivism. In other words, I co-constructed the knowledge based on the Deleuzian constructivism.

Axiological Stance

My axiological stance in this research is value-laden (Creswell, 2002). I respect my participants as the active learners on the road with the belief that they can acquire various skills and acquire knowledge that will help them a become better version of themselves. Their experiences of informal learning and becoming, as they narrated to me, whatever they faced while ridesharing, were my axiological standpoint, a value-laden premise. I understand that axiology is the philosophical study of value which includes questions about the knowledge system that we value in our research. As interpretivist researchers adopt an emic or insider perspective (Wahyuni, 2012), I also accepted the social realities from my participants’ perspective. In conclusion, my participants held certain value systems that I accepted and incorporated my own values creating a strong value-laden knowledge system.

Research Paradigm

As a qualitative research methodology, I exploited interpretivism as my research paradigm in this dissertation. As Creswell (2002) defines qualitative research as a philosophical tool that studies the people as they explore their experiences on a particular issue or problem, I accept that the researcher has the responsibility to explain of the problem through the rich descriptions of social constructs (Wahyuni, 2012). I integrated my own reflection to construct the meaning (Taylor & Medina, 2011); however, I deliberately remained on the periphery. Data analysis was

conducted, ranging from the specific details of the problem being studied to the broader generalizations. My research also incorporated the firsthand stories of the ridesharers highlighting their informal learning and procedures. I interpreted the themes based on their daily experiences. As an interpretivist researcher, I believe that truth and reality are created, not discovered (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). As the study aimed to explore the learning and becoming experiences of young ridesharers in Kathmandu city, I incorporated the multiple realities constructed by the participants.

Narrative Inquiry as Research Method

As a qualitative researcher, I employed narrative inquiry as the methodological design in my research to collect the participants' experiences and gather their descriptions. I employed an interpretive paradigm to express such experiences through their stories. Polkinghorne (1995) defines narrative inquiry as a method that is heavily based on the stories told by the participants to describe their thought and action. It is used in qualitative research design, where multiple methods can be employed.

In my study, I selected the youth involved in ridesharing activities as the informal learners on the street, who shared their common positionalities, including being male, urban, young and ridesharing. They differed in age, experience, the purpose of ridesharing, their involvement beyond ridesharing, and their plans. I utilized the raw narratives, allowing the interviewees' words to reflect their interactions, so that the readers could draw their own conclusion before seeing others' interpretations (Lemley & Mitchell, 2011). I concentrated on the critical events of my participants rather than on their life history.

I collected the data through interviews, observations, and the document analysis. I inductively identified the recurring patterns or commonalities that crossed across the stories. I thematically analyzed the richly descriptive data (Merriam, 2002) constructed by the individuals to generate a socially co-constructed meaning from it. Furthermore, I have portrayed some poems and figures that can support the ideas being discussed throughout this dissertation. I expect they contribute to facilitating the meaning-making process by supporting the ideas shared during the write-up.

I assert that narrative inquiry challenges the notion that a single truth exists (Lapan et al., 2011). It is the first and oldest form of inquiry, also known as storytelling. Narrative researchers gather multiple forms of information, including interviews, observations, letters, journals, newspaper articles, photographs, and videos

(Creswell, 2002). There can be a meaningful silence, nuances that ultimately illustrate a critical event. The process of narrative inquiry involves engaging with participants in the field, creating field texts, and writing both interim and final research texts (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). I synthesized the participants' experiences into my reflections as proceeded with the narrative inquiry.

Designing the Research

This section provides a concise overview of the research process, including the selection of a suitable research site, participant recruitment, fieldwork conducted, and the in-depth interviews carried out. I was inspired by the idea of learning to think narratively (Kim, 2015) in which I invested myself as part of the inquiry.

Selecting the Research Site

To pursue the research, I selected five youths from ridesharing services as my final participants. The rationale behind selecting only five was that simply for I focused on their in-depth stories as the purpose of the study was to explore the informal learning and becoming of ridesharers. To maintain the purposeful sampling and saturation of data in qualitative research (Bouncken et al., 2025), I selected only five participants. The participants held multiple identities in the city, including those of students, dropouts, job seekers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. I met them time and again along the busy roads, particularly at junctions, mostly pretending to be a customer. I interviewed them, in series, mostly using open-ended questions, during my travels with them.

My research site was Kathmandu city, particularly the Ring Road and its outskirts, including New Baneshwor, Surya Binayak, Balaju, Gaushala, Kalanki, Budhanilkantha and the junctions around the Ring Road. Sitting down at their pillion seat (motorbike) and front seat next to the driver (taxi) with my participants, I talked to them around the city. I also met some of them in tea shops, restaurants, and parks, where we would often interact as a common hangout for both parties. I have repeatedly used the term 'city' after Kathmandu (in place of valley or district) as city represents the entire urban territory inside Kathmandu valley regardless of the administrative map that divides the valley into three districts -Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur.

Introducing the Participants in Brief

I presented the stories of the selected participants based on the interviews. I assigned them pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of their introduction. Bimal,

being my first participant, was learning, unlearning, and relearning in the city. He was learning to follow the traffic rules, interact with people, and adapt to new technology. As he was an ambulance driver before entering the ridesharing sector, he had to unlearn to drive at high speed and to violate the traffic rules. Becoming a man of aspiration, skilled and matured, he enjoyed ridesharing with a different story. Similarly, my second participant, Manoj was a wonderful person in the sense that he shared his passion for was ridesharing. As a part-timer ridesharer, he preferred offline requests as he had no intention of becoming a full-time ridesharer. My third participant, Prakash, was a unique person as he dared to be a ridesharer in the city despite his extreme health condition. He was one of those individuals who seemed genuinely content with becoming a ridesharer in the city.

Similarly, my fourth participant, Sandeep, was an adorable boy who was a true caretaker for his impoverished family, earning the money through ridesharing. Engaging in ridesharing all day long, he learned to earn more by working hard, taking responsibility, treating his sick father, and educating his siblings. Finally, my last participant, Dinesh, was a Gulf-returnee who had a dream to extend his 'business' in his own words and become an entrepreneur. He switched from biking to taking a taxi and gained a deeper experience of ridesharing in the city. In a sentence, there were many commonalities among them and many differences as well. Initially, they were simple riders or drivers. However, they transformed themselves into proficient ridesharers, diligently learning and growing in the city.

Although my focus of the study was on their learning and becoming, I believe the cultural factor unquestionably shapes the research design (Bukamal, 2022), which may not appear due to my outsider positionality. This is why I engaged them as 'fit-for-all' researcher rather than being aware of my pre-occupied mindset and positionality.

Engaging in the Fieldwork

I, first, thoroughly reviewed the available literature extensively and prepared the background for the fieldwork. Secondly, I selected participants who were active in ridesharing in and around Kathmandu city. I obtained a verbal consent from my supervisor before I approached them. I designed open-ended questions, starting with major questions and followed by follow-up questions later. I believe the first question may suffice for the entire interview if stories emerge (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29). The preparatory questions were about their educational background, experiences sharing

rides in Kathmandu, and learning achievements during work hours. The intention behind my preparation at this stage was to collect the various experiences of the young ridesharers regarding their achievements, lessons learned and learning through ridesharing which I later transcribed into stories.

After that, I maintained contact with my participants both virtually and in person. I travelled with them so that they felt free to tell me the stories of their lives focusing on the critical events. They narrated the stories before and after they joined ridesharing during their travel. To conduct the thematic analysis, I was guided by the research questions, but not limited to predetermined ones (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In other words, although my emphasis was on the learning and becoming process, I allowed them to reveal their stories on any topic they had initially exposed in the beginning. I kept on recording the incidents whatever they described to me, and subsequently developed them into their individual stories.

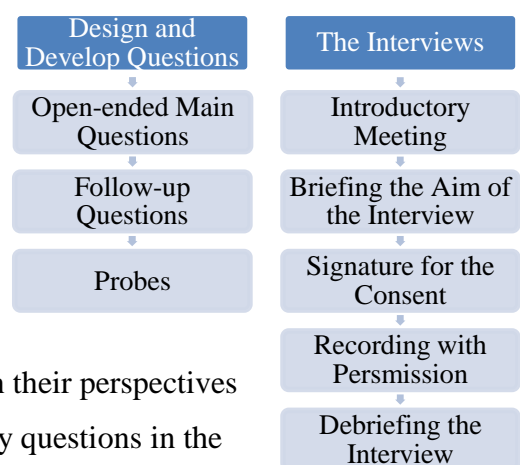
Conducting the In-depth Interviews

I believe that, in narrative research, in-depth interviews yield a confidential and secure conversation between an interviewer and participants. It ensures that the information is gathered from the participants' deep experiences. I adopted the procedure of conducting semi-structured interviews as proposed by Wahyuni (2012) in which the two phases - designing and developing interview questions and starting off the interview follow a series of actions.

I used this method by asking them with the crucial and more focused questions to meet the research aim. To gather the information, I employed techniques that involved clarifying the participants' thoughts regarding the problem being inquired. I adopted the structure of the Responsive Interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to administer the interview schedule. I assume this approach is more effective in obtaining the necessary data as it allowed me to directly engage with the participants and obtain their perspectives more explicitly. I asked them some introductory questions in the beginning. Subsequently, they recounted their narratives without soliciting any inquiries, when

Figure 5

Structuring the Responsive Interview



(Rubin & Rubin, 2005)

they were confident that I would inquire about their learning and becoming experiences. I realize the spontaneity they exhibited during our conversation encouraged me to learn about the critical events in their lives.

Generating the Stories through the Narratives

I conducted techniques of in-depth interview with the participants as the primary source of information. I took the in-depth interview with open-ended questions to collect the lived experiences of the participants. I observed their activities so minutely, and kept the records, which I later developed into texts. While interviewing with the participants, I prepared the field notes, which I later used to develop stories. I analyzed the texts, developing them into patterns, from patterns to codes, from codes to categories, and from categories to themes (Kim, 2015). I also noted down the interesting lines printed on the rear side of the taxi and bike, which encapsulate the discourse prevalent among ridesharing youth in the city.

Figure 6

A Taxi Literature

युक्रेन ध्वस्त रुसले,
नेपाल ध्वस्त घुसले

Sense Trans:

*Ukraine was destroyed by Russia
and Nepal was destroyed by
corruption.*

Making Meaning Procedure

After presenting of the ridesharing experiences of the participants starting with from their homes and families, and their decisions to join ridesharing as service provider, I began gathering their multi-faceted exposure to ridesharing. I collected their experiences that they learned and earned concurrently while involved in ridesharing activities, through the in-depth interviews. I collected the raw data, which were initially in the form of field notes. Then, I gave them a reflective look and drafted the stories based on the notes. I believe a researcher's position influences the understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon (Bayeck, 2022). While reflecting on my ideas, I followed both outsider and insider researcher positionality. As a customer and a city dweller, I was an insider; but as a university student and a public servant, I was an outsider to them.

I recorded their narratives on my phone, which I later transcribed onto paper. Then, I started coding the data based on the words and ideas that can be generated through the words or expressions. I categorized the codes based on similar ideas which ultimately proved useful in deriving derive the themes. I also followed the oral coding technique proposed by Bernauer (2015) when coding the rough data. The

themes were the major ideas, in the form of a phrase or a short sentence. Finally, I made meaning through the themes with relevant theorization.

Quality Standards

I established authenticity, trustworthiness, temporality, spatiality, credibility, and transferability as the fundamental quality standards for my research. These standards possess unique value and are simultaneously also interconnected as well.

Authenticity

The authenticity criterion is related to the ethics of the researcher's relationship by the researcher with the concerned participants. Lincoln, (2009), as cited in Mertens, (2011) expands the first sub-criterion under authenticity is fairness, which assesses whether informants are fairly represented throughout the study. The second sub-criterion, being the ontological authenticity, represents the mental awakening, even to the researchers. The third sub-criterion, educative authenticity, aims to determine whether the participants benefitted from learning about their social world or not. The fourth sub-criterion, catalytic authenticity, examines whether the participants benefitted by identifying problems associated with their social world and the final sub-criterion tactical checks whether the research empowered the participants to improve their social situation. I also maintained an optimum level of authenticity and trustworthiness in my work with the participants. I tried to present a balanced and fair view of all perspectives throughout my research.

Trustworthiness

I understand trustworthiness and authenticity that are distinctly different but 'parallel to' the validity, reliability and objectivity standards of positivism (Taylor & Medina, 2011). The trustworthiness criterion can be subdivided into four sub-criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233). The first one is credibility, which examines whether the researcher undertakes enough immersion in the field or not. It also checks the interpretations with the informants and displays a learning procedure. To maintain credibility, I met the participants frequently during my fieldwork. I remained in my

Figure 7

Top Ridesharing Apps in Nepal



(Tandulkar, 2024)

research setting, taking notes, recording narratives, and attempting to minimize my personal biases.

The second one is dependability which examines whether the researcher is involved in open-ended or emergent inquiry. The third one is transferability which compares whether there is a rich description of the research that is relevant to the reader's own social context. I was aware of the stories told by my participants about their transferability in their other contexts. I assume that whatever they told me about themselves and their learning and becoming would be the same if the stories were retold by them in another context.

Finally, confirmability assures whether the research data can be tracked to their source or not (Taylor & Medina, 2011). I tried to maintain all these criteria while interviewing my participants. I maintained an optimum level of confirmability by keeping the records of the stories and the field notes, along with some photographs of the research site.

Temporality and Spatiality

Similarly, I maintained temporality, sociality and place as the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, in press). I confined my research to a certain time interval which constantly changes, bounded to a particular location. The feelings, hopes, desires of the participants which build up sociality mattered in my study. I started my field work after July 2024 and continued it until September 2025. During the period, my participants narrated the stories that I collected. On the other hand, I met them in and around Kathmandu city, where they provided me with ridesharing services, and told their stories of learning and becoming experiences in the city,

Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research refers to the principles and guidelines that govern the conduct of researchers, ensuring that their work is conducted with integrity, respect and responsibility. I believe ethical considerations are crucial in keeping the trustworthiness of the research and safeguarding the rights and well-being of participants. As Clandinin and Huber (in press) highlighted the importance of 'do no harm' and 'fidelity to participants', I made a concerted effort to uphold those two principles while interacting with my participants.

I was aware on that my participants should feel free and be interested in sharing their learning and becoming experiences with me. Clandinin and Caine (2013)

provide a detailed discussion on ethical issues that the research should balance between the voice, signature and audience while conducting narrative inquiry. I informed all the participants about the nature, purpose and potential impact of my study. They were voluntarily requested to participate in the interviews, which were held in a cozy and informal environment. Meanwhile, I maintained confidentiality and anonymity to protect their personal right to secrecy. No physical, emotional, or psychological harm was inflicted on them during and after the study. I tried my best to maintain integrity and honesty avoiding falsification, fabrication, and misinterpretation of the information collected.

I ensured that the participants did not experience any inconvenience during the study. I grounded the notion of informed consent, personal autonomy, and confidentiality (Kim, 2015). Finally, I made an effort to keep my work as transparent as possible to them, and I was fully accountable for all the actions I took on their behalf.

Chapter Summary

The chapter outlines the methodology of the research design, presenting an interpretive paradigm as the research paradigm. Under this approach, the research focused on individual stories, collecting participant's overall learning experiences were collected through interviews and observations. I also discussed the research procedure, data collection tools, the research site, and the participants in this chapter. I established a quality standard through two main criteria: trustworthiness and authenticity. Trustworthiness encompasses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, whereas authenticity encompasses fairness, educative, catalytic, and tactical criteria.

CHAPTER IV

GENERATING STORIES FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

This section introduces the participants, providing brief details about their life histories, education, upbringing, migration to the city, and involvement in ridesharing activities. The stories told by the participant (pseudonyms) have been retold and reflected by the researcher in this chapter. Additionally, their learning and becoming experiences while engaging in ridesharing activities have been described as they share their stories.

Personalized Stories of the Ridesharers

The study was conducted from September 2024 to October 2025. The research sites were the streets of Kathmandu city where I met the participants, particularly in New Baneshwor, Surya Binayak, Balaju, Gaushala, Kalanki, Budhanilkantha and around the Ring Road. I begin with the story of Bimal (Pseudonym) in this chapter.

Bimal: the ‘Korean’ Dreamer

Bimal has been ridesharing in Kathmandu for the last four years. He was a young boy, a Grade 12-passed rural but ambitious individual who loved smoking cigarettes, engaging in mobile conversations, and playing online games during his free time. He was living in Kathmandu during the time I met him, with some occasional visits to his village in Dolakha. His dream of working in Korea had not come true until our conversation, as he had not passed the EPS- TOPIK, a mandatory language test required for employment in Korea. He had various experiences in life as a footballer, an ambulance driver, a Korean language student, and, then, a ridesharer in the city. He asserted that he had known what he wanted to do in life, but he faced numerous constraints, particularly financial ones. He perceived himself as ‘a man of dreams’ and sometimes regrets for not being able to materialize those dreams.

I met him on the way when I was waiting for a rider in *Pepsi Cola*. He asked me whether I needed his taxi. I started with the casual introductory questions. He told me his name, address and his introduction as a platform-based taxi-driver. I wanted to know how he learned to drive before asking him about his ridesharing experiences. “I was terribly in need of a job,” he described to me about his arrival in Kathmandu. He added:

I did not have any skills till that time. My uncle was one of the ward chairpersons of our Rural Municipality in Dolakha. He advised me to learn drive as it was the surest way to secure employment. I tried to learn the vehicle with the help of my neighboring brothers who were also drivers. I followed them wherever they taught me, the ABC of the vehicle. ABC stands for Accelerator, Brake and Clutch. Mastery over it was mandatory for driving which I did. For me, using the back gear was the most challenging aspect of learning back then.

He informed me that he had previously worked as an ambulance driver before entering the ridesharing sector in the city. I asked him why he had given up the job of ambulance driver. He explained:

Being an ambulance driver is a challenging job. There is no time that can be planned for personal use. At any time, you will receive a call, and you can sleep in ready-to-go position to receive the patient. You know, there is no speed limit for ambulances, no need to stop at a red light, and you can drive one way. However, the job is too tedious for those who cannot work under pressure. Once I mistakenly killed a little dog on the road, and had to compensate for the loss.

“What’s the benefit of being a ridesharer in the city?” I asked him on the next day, “Have you just earned for your livelihoods or learned something more important than your earnings?”, I asked him. He replied:

I have learned several things in this field. First, I learned to drive in the city. Previously, I used to drive in rural areas. Driving a vehicle in a village, along the highway, and in the city are completely different works. Anyone who can drive in the city may not be equally expert in the village. Driving along the highway is the easiest but also the most dangerous. One Miss, Game Finish. Driving in Kathmandu is challenging, as we must adhere to strict traffic rules and contend with the congestion, especially during peak hours.

I used to take driving as a universal skill, but Bimal’s explanation clarified to me how the same skill can be different in different contexts. I can drive easily in the city, but I lack confidence in off-road driving. Becoming a ridesharer in the city, Bimal learned how to drive safely, confidently, and more skillfully in the city. About learning to drive in the city, Bimal expressed the following statements.

Driving in the city is quite different from driving in hilly roads. I could not drive along the highway at first. Driving in Kathmandu City was a tough experience for me back then. I remember I used to follow another vehicle while driving along the city. Driving in traffic jams was the most boring part of this job. Traffic rules are being changed frequently, which creates a problem...not all traffic police are cooperative with drivers.

I asked him again, “Do you have any other involvement apart from ridesharing?” He told me that he had dreamed of flying to Europe. Realizing the financial burden, he abandoned the plan and opted for South Korea as an alternative destination. Working in Korea was his lifelong dream, following his decision to leave his job of as an ambulance driver. “Are you learning the Korean language as well?” I asked him. He responded, “Nowadays, I am practicing how to speak Korean language. Last year, I joined an institute in Koteshwor; however, I was unable to pass the exam. Let’s see, this year, I shall nail it...My dream to work in Korea will come true one day!”

Driving a taxi in Kathmandu and learning the Korean language implied that he had not taken ridesharing as his last resort. In other words, ridesharing was a short-term plan for him which he had used as a stepping stone to reach the next plan in his life.

“What are the challenges of this sector?” I wanted to learn about the issues with ridesharing on the next day. He said, “There are so many challenges. The main challenge is the high competition in this sector.” He further explained that the competition was worsened by offline bike riders and their *bhokmari* [Meaning: 'starvation' used as a slang here] attitude. “Anybody with a second-hand *bhatbhate* [Meaning: Motorcycle] can be a ridesharer now,” he continued, “they prefer riding offline, which is ‘good for pocket’ but not for the passenger.”

By the extract, he seemed to be doubtful about the future of ridesharing. As ridesharing is legally accepted but practically in a dilemma in Nepal, young ridesharers like Bimal are not optimistic about its future.

To my question on how people reacted to him while ridesharing in the city, he replied:

I have been learning how people react to the ridesharers in Kathmandu. This is not a decent job at all. You know people call me ‘Pathaowala’ even if they know my name. Even some of my friends who work in other private offices and in shopping centres call me ‘pathaowala’. I think it is a kind of insult, though

the fact is that I am just a ridesharer. The most irritating part of my work is that traffic police often do 'lyanglyang' [a word used as slang meaning 'unnecessary delay in making deals'] whenever I find a customer.

Bimal had a negative impression of the city's traffic police. First, he was not satisfied with the offline ridesharing services in which the police remained indifferent. Secondly, in his perception, the traffic police are the ones who disliked the ridesharers in the city. It implied that he wished that he had a decent job in ridesharing in the city, but it had often been challenged by various reasons. Such challenges included the behavior of offline riders, traffic police and monotonous traffic congestion.

Manoj: The Free Rider

Manoj was my second participant whom I inquired about his unique experiences of ridesharing time and again. He was a young boy from Sindhupalchwok district. He had been involved in ridesharing in Kathmandu city for the last three years. He had a poultry farm in the village, which his brother managed. He managed the farm from the city by supplying the feeds and medicine to the farm. He used to visit the hotels and restaurants in the city during day to supply them live chicken, which he brought directly from the farm. He involved in ridesharing exclusively during the morning and evening hours, as he claimed to be a part-timer. Ridesharing was a part-time endeavor for him, which he enjoys as a leisure activity.

It was a chilling Saturday in December. I was on my regular morning walk to Surya Binayak on that day. I heard an unclear voice coming from somewhere nearby, who was asking me to do something. I looked back and saw a boy on a motorbike who was inquiring me whether I was seeking for a ridesharing service. I could have thanked him and left the place in no time, but I didn't. Instead, I was curious to know about the boy, his bike, and his experience in ridesharing on that morning. I, suddenly, accepted his offer.

"Where to go?" He kicked on his motorbike. I had no answer. I said, "Wherever you take me." Frowning his eyes, he was a bit louder this time, "Where do you need to go?" I requested him to take me to *Sushila Bhairab*, a temple located nearby. "How much should I pay?" I asked him. He replied, "Two hundred rupees." I rode on his bike, and he took me towards my unplanned destination. It was chillingly cold, but I had forgotten to put on gloves on my hand. At least, I had a woolen cap on my head. "Can you drive a bit slower, brother?" I requested him.

He changed the gear from four to three, I guessed.

“How long have you been riding in this city, brother?” I started the conversation. “Since the last two years.” He was quick in response. “Which app do you use mostly to receive the orders?” I wanted to know about the ridesharing platform that he exploited. Surprisingly, he replied, “I do not prefer using any of them nowadays.” He explained:

I am a free-rider. I have tried all of them in the past. None of them were beneficiary for us. You know the most popular applications belong to foreign companies. They are taking away our money across the border... You can call me a free-rider. I'm doing this work to keep myself busy and feel good.

I realized his narrative for why he did not exploit any ridesharing app there. After asking him some introductory questions, I asked, “Is it exciting to be involved in ridesharing?”. Being tactful, he replied that it was both interesting and boring.

“Boring, why?” I asked again. He was ready with the answer, “There is no work exclusively interesting or boring, sir. Not all the passengers are similar in nature”. He accepted my proposal to be one of my participants on that day. I selected him because he had a different reason to start ridesharing.

“What did you use to do before joining this work?” I wanted to know about his past in the next meeting. “As a contractor, I have worked for five years.” He replied. He revealed that he used to sign the contracts for minor constructional works in the village. He had the experience as a mason and a carpenter in the past. He discontinued the work because he was not being paid on time by the parties, and a severe labor shortage existed.

I also wanted to know about his educational background. “What is your educational qualification?” I asked him. He felt slightly uncomfortable answering this question, “There was no school in close distance after grade eight. Crossing the Indrawati River, I could not join secondary level”.

He explained that he could not continue his studies after grade eight. There was no bridge to reach the Seti Devi School where he had joined. He also realized that there was no awareness about the implications of education in his community at that time.

“I am not a full-time ridesharer, as I have my own business in the village.” I was surprised when he revealed the secret. “What sort of business do you have there?” I guessed that he might be involved in local agricultural enterprises. He explained:

I have a poultry farm in the village where I had kept one thousand fowls. My brother is taking responsibility for the farm. I send the feeds and medicine from here. My brother sends me the live chicken from the village. I receive them here and sell them in the market, mainly to hotels and restaurants. I could have lived in the village and worked together. However, networking this way from urban areas to remote villages is more beneficial for us. Only in free hours, I use ridesharing like this.

I could hardly imagine that a young boy was such a good manager. He was primarily focused on his business, and involvement in ridesharing was simply part-time work for him. I was slightly confused when he told me that he rarely used the ridesharing app at the beginning of our conversation. I knew why he was becoming so casual and behaving as if he were a free-rider. Offline riding is illegal and unethical; however, he had the reasons behind what he was doing there. His ideas were matured, somewhat subjective, but practical to certain extent.

“What have you learned about the city life? Have you noticed any differences in this city, and in yourself, since you started ridesharing?” I asked this question to know his learning experiences in the urban context. He replied:

I learned to interact with the people of all kinds, including the females. Before, I was shy on talking about a girl, but nowadays, I can talk to any girl regardless of her status. You know even celebrities choose ridesharing services for short distances. But it's quite dangerous sometimes to be close to them, you know. Some of them continue to bargain for the fare, despite my services provided free of cost, many times due to their attitudes.

“Do you also have some memorable experiences of ridesharing?” I asked him. He laughed, “Innumerable”. I requested him to explain one of such experiences. He explained:

I was waiting for the customer at my regular junction. A request appeared on my phone. I accepted it and went to receive the customer. A lady with a handbag rode on my bike. There was no problem until the traffic jam at Kaushaltar. Then after, she suddenly started quarrelling with me. I asked her what the problem was. Surprisingly, she blamed me for my misconduct and warned me to report to the police. I was shocked to listen to her. I had used the brakes suddenly when the red traffic light appeared. She might have

thought that I deliberately did it to take advantage of her. I was accused of giving her a bad touch. She dropped there and moved away in no time.

“Do you think that you have unknowingly misbehaved her?” I wanted to know his clarification. He accepted it could have been a natural touch of his back part to her chest which is a common phenomenon in ridesharing, “I never plan to take the benefit that way.” He continued:

Without the customers, the ride-sharers cannot sustain themselves in the city. You know I am the part-timer, and for me there is no problem, even if this business is sustained or not in the future... I think the lady was cunning. Maybe her destination was in the point where she started quarrelling for nothing. To escape the fare, she might have pretended that I had abused her. You know, it's a motorcycle, there are humps across the roads, the traffic lights, etc.

The story that he told me about the girl was unpleasant. However, I was sure that he learned something from the incident that the ridesharer had to be careful while providing ridesharing services. At least, they should be extra cautious while using the emergency brakes, not simply to respect the customer, but to avoid the chances of possibility of accidents and other misfortunes.

“How do you describe the customers' behavior?” I asked him while we were having coffee at a café. As he lit the cigarette, he told me that the customers' behavior cannot be described in a single word. He explained:

Some of the customers, mostly those seeking offline rides, start bargaining even if they are aware of the distance and the price. Those who prefer online deals do not need to bargain for price, but they sometimes request to drive up to the next junction instead of dropping off at their previously agreed destination. Some even offer some tips if they are satisfied with the service.

He further added, when I requested him to give an example if any:

I recall that last time, I had a customer who gave me an extra 500 rupees. He had initially planned to hire a taxi in the beginning. I did not notice why he came to me, and he asked me to go to the airport. He seemed very anxious, looked as though he was waiting impatiently for someone. I dropped him off at the airport. He gave a thousand-rupee note. I returned five hundred, but he insisted that I take it back.

“Do you have a plan to buy a taxi?” I changed the topic. He replied, “No, I shall operate my own fresh house in the future. Had I owned a fresh house till this time, I could have sold the readymade chicken straight from my shop”.

The conversation implied that he had no more plans to continue ridesharing as he had a dream to operate his own fresh house in the future. This also indicated that he had taken the ridesharing venture as a part-time or free-time utilization strategy.

Prakash: The Cardio Survivor

My third participant was Prakash, a 30-year-old young man, who had been driving a taxi in Kathmandu city for the last seven years. Being an active user of the ridesharing apps - Pathao and In-Drive, he was based in Surya Binayak. He narrated the stories of his life in the context of ridesharing and learning, and sharing his experiences in his own words. Despite being a cardio survivor, he had continued to engage in ridesharing and learning in the city.

I started the conversation without providing any background information at the time, “How long have you been driving a taxi in this city, brother?”

He replied easily, “For the last seven years.”

I wrote ‘seven years’ in my diary, and immediately asked him, “Do you use ridesharing platforms, I mean Pathao, In-Drive, Tootle, etc.?”

He understood me, “Surely, without them, taxi-driving is almost impossible nowadays.”

I looked at his face, “Do you take an offline trip as well?”

He told me the truth, “Yes, when offline requests are available, but I get very few offline rides these days.”

He informed me that there was an advantage for the taxi-driver if offline trips were found, but people were so techno-savvy that they rarely made offline requests.

“Can you tell me something about your educational qualifications, brother?” I asked him.

He responded, “I studied in the village until I passed my secondary level exam.” He explained. When I mentioned his schooling, he was not much interested in describing it. I guessed that he had not enjoyed the questions regarding formal education.

“Do you sometimes feel that you could have continued your studies?” I continued to inquire about him. He agreed and raised his head, “Definitely, I could

have been in a different place.” He said, “I did not continue my studies after the SEE examination since I could not pass the secondary level exam.”

Being a literate person, he learned to drive and kept working in Kathmandu. It was a what happened in his life; however, I doubt on why he did not plan to go abroad.

“Why didn’t you plan to go for the foreign employment?”, I wanted to know the reason behind his decision to work here. I asked this question as foreign employment has almost become a growing trend in Nepal.

“There is a reason behind it.” He said patiently, “I shall explain to you soon.”

“I used to drive a mini truck in the village before I came to Kathmandu.” He informed me about his career as a driver. “I did not have any driving license during those days. I was driving a mini truck to learn and become a driver in the future.” He continued, “There was no traffic to check the license in the village.” Later, he obtained his driving license with the help of a relative, which paved the way for him to travel to Kathmandu.

“Now, I am thirty years old.” He remembered the year, “I came to Kathmandu after the earthquake of 2015.” He stated that he had been taxi-driving in Kathmandu continuously since 2016.

Next time, he told me about his open-heart surgery which took place many years ago (when he was in class 9). One of the valves of his heart was transformed. “Being a patient of heart, it’s like my second birth,” he continued, “There was no hope on my parents’ part that I could come back from the deathbed.”

The most important part of our conversation was about what he told me regarding his open-heart surgery in his childhood. Being a patient of the heart, he never gave up taxi driving in Kathmandu city. I thought that it could be a lesson for other youth who are not engaged in any kind of profession, although they are physically, academically and financially fit for any kind of entrepreneurship.

“And where do you live in now?” I wanted to know his current address.

“In Kamal Binayak”, he replied in no time. “I live in a rented room. Buying a house in Kathmandu is beyond imagination for common taxi-drivers like me.” He clarified, “Earning some money, I can just maintain the settlement cost in the city. You know here, everything is expensive. I must buy each and everything including the drinking water. Paying school fees, room fare, medicines, all are expensive nowadays.” He finished describing all his responsibilities in a single breath.

“So, you live along with your family here?” I wanted to confirm it.

He smiled, “Yes, I have my wife and a four-year-old daughter.” He also stated that his spouse had got a job in a ‘Thangka’ factory. He continued, “She used to earn a good amount of money till last year.” He continued, “Now the market of ‘Thangka’ is in crisis.” As a taxi driver, he had also secured employment for his wife as a factory worker, which was why he had knowledge of the Thangka market in the city.

“Buying a new taxi is very expensive in Nepal. Obtaining the ‘black plate’ is not easy, as there is no system to import new taxis as the public vehicles. The old number can be used, but it was not easily available.” He responded to my inquiry about his interest in buying a new taxi, “I have no plan to buy a new taxi for it’s good for me.” He gave me a logic:

I look at other taxi-drivers like myself who are using the taxis on a rental basis. For an electric taxi, one must invest approximately forty lakh rupees. To hire the EV, three thousand per day, and to hire a petrol taxi, two thousand and four hundred is the average rate I have one and it’s enough for me; I have no plans to upgrade at all.

“What do you do apart from taxi-driving?” I wanted to know about his additional engagement if any.

“Besides taxi-driving, I can cook some Nepali and Indian food items. I had worked as a kitchen assistant before driving a taxi in Kathmandu for about a year”.

“Ridesharing seems to be an easy job, but in fact, it’s a boring one!” This was what he told me in a low tone on that evening. I recalled how he had looked at my face during the conversation. He narrated to me the whole story of how he was taken to police custody when he unknowingly committed a mistake:

A few weeks ago, once I had to spend a night in police custody. It happened not because of my fault. The reason was that a customer requested me to go to Balaju. He looked as though he were drunk as he spoke with some difficulty. When we reached the destination, he pretended that he had lost his purse somewhere on the way. Instead, he asked me to hold onto his phone for the day, assuring me he’d give the taxi fare the following day. I believed him and took his phone.

He added:

After an hour, I got a call on his phone. When the call was repeated, I answered it and found out it was from the police station. The police asked my

location and arrived promptly. They told me that the phone belonged to a criminal who had disappeared after committing a murder case. I explained what had happened in my case, including the unusual customer, his doubtful behavior and the story behind holding the phone.

I asked him, “What was your mistake according to the police?”

“They said that I should not have accepted the mobile phone as a pledge,” he replied.

“And what happened the next day? I was keen on knowing how he managed the trouble.

The next day, the police rode in my taxi and started searching the customer. Luckily, he was caught in a restaurant, and I regained custody. I had never imagined that I would spend a night in police custody. That night was a tough night for me. From that day on, I began observing the behavior of my customers while driving my taxi. If I find anything doubtful, I stop my taxi and report it to the police station.

Nowadays, in Kathmandu City, we can see the ANPR Cameras installed at various points along the ring road. From my perspective, it has helped the police to control crime to some extent. I know that sufficient CCTV Cameras have been set up in advance at almost all major junctions in Kathmandu city.

Such equipment has not only helped the ridesharers to drive safely, but it is also beneficial from the passenger’s safety perspective. Additionally, the apps used for ridesharing purposes can also collect passengers’ details. The maps used while travelling from the customer’s location to their destination help the stakeholders contribute to the ridesharing culture in the city.

The phone numbers and the call details can also be used to determine or rectify any issues between customer and ridesharer. The traditional taxi-hailing service is gradually being replaced by technology-assisted ridesharing services in urban areas in this way.

Sandeep: The Breadwinner

Among the five participants that I interviewed during the research period, Sandeep was the youngest one. He was merely a twenty-one-year-old guy who used to rideshare with a second-hand bike in Kathmandu city. I first met him at the domestic lounge of Tribhuvan International Airport.

He was from Dhading, but was living in Kapan during the interview sessions. He completed the higher secondary level examination, but was unable to join the university due to some domestic problems. His father was a severely ill patient with advanced kidney disease. He informed me that he had to earn two thousand rupees a day at any cost to look after his family. He purchased a second-hand bike that he had been using as his ridesharing vehicle. He exclusively used the InDrive app to receive orders from his customers. He had successfully completed three years of ridesharing in the city.

“Which ridesharing app do you prefer among the ridesharing apps available in Nepal, brother?” I continued when I was sitting as his pillion rider. He replied, “I’ve not used any other app apart from InDrive on these days. Hence, I do not have the experience of other apps.” It was an unexpected answer to me. I asked him again, “Why do you prefer InDrive?” He explained:

InDrive is faster to find the customer than other applications. I also had used the Pathao in the past. Now I am suspended from that company. There are various kinds of penalties, ranging from one day suspension, one-week suspension to a lifetime suspension. I had repeatedly cancelled some orders to save the twenty percent commission with the help of my customer. Nevertheless, the company noticed what I was doing and took action against me. Then, I shifted towards InDrive.

I was listening to him, although it wasn’t easily audible while I was seated as a pillion rider. I simply changed the topic of discussion, “Do you have a driving license for a taxi as well?” He replied that he had not gotten that kind of license till that time. We left the Ring Road and headed to Bhaktapur. There was heavy congestion on the road as it was a rush hour for office workers.

I asked him, “How much do you earn on average?” He responded:

I generally collect two thousand rupees per day. One of my friends earned about Rs. 3000 last month. I’m making a good income, but I need to dedicate all my time to ridesharing. I get up early in the morning, and am ready for ridesharing. All day long, I rode this bike along the roads. Sometimes, I receive orders late at night, which can make my pockets heavier, but my body feels worn out.

I also inquired with him whether he had learned anything after being suspended from Pathao. He realized that it was unethical and illegal to carry the

customers in offline mode. Despite the realization, he had some genuine arguments about the percentage of commission that he had to pay to the company. He commented that the companies were imposing more commission for the ridesharers. He reported to me that the ridesharing companies had operated the apps, kept some staff, but earned a huge amount, which, in his words, was not fair. I found him becoming a bit critical at that time.

“What is the most boring part of your job?” I wanted to know about the complications of ridesharing. He thought for a while and said, “The traffic jam. It kills the time for both, the customer and ridesharers.”

“Whom do you live with here in the city?” I asked him to know about his family life. He explained:

I live in Kapan with my family. I have my parents; a brother and a sister, both younger than me. My father was a retired police constable. Both of his kidneys are damaged and now we must take him to hospital twice a week. As a retired policeman, we have got the free dialysis service at the police hospital. However, we encountered a major financial crisis when we took him to Bhaktapur Hospital last year. I had slept several nights on the cold floor when he was admitted there.

I had some sympathy for him as he told me his heart-touching story. I inquired him, “Is your family fully dependent on your ridesharing income or do you have some other sources of income as well?” He replied:

We used to have a small, fresh house (meat shop) in Kapan, but it's been closed since last year. Till my father was healthy, he used to run it well. I couldn't continue in the same way because we lost hope when my father fell sick. Later, I joined ridesharing as it could give me a quicker return than the fresh house. My brother and sister go to a public school, and my mother is often busy in taking care of my father.

“Do you have any other skills apart from ridesharing?” I asked him, to know if he had some other skills, the next day. He was initially interested in discussing this, but later revealed that he planned to acquire some new skills in the future. I also asked him about his school education. He informed me that he had passed the Twelfth Grade Examination in the village and then discontinued his studies.

“Where is your village?” I asked him a quick question. He responded, “Dhading”. I asked him again, “When did you first arrive in Kathmandu?” He replied

that he came here as a child to visit, but he had been living here continuously since he finished his plus Twelfth Grade Examination. I also inquired him if he had found any difference as a ridesharer in the city, before and after. He replied:

Now the traffic is heavier than it was before. Two-wheelers are increasing day by day. The internet is getting a little more dependable these days. The roads have been widened but not enough during the peak hours. New restaurants and shops are being established even outside the main city. However, customers are not increasing at the same rate as the urbanization has progressed.

“What about ridesharing? Do you need to wait for your customers, or can you pick them up in time?” He replied, “As I’m a motorbike rider based on the InDrive app, I get the orders faster than those who use other apps.” He added, “You know the passenger can fix their price in this app.” I agreed with him.

“Do you think you will keep on ridesharing or shifting to other work in the future?” I wanted to know his further plan if any. He informed me that he had a dream of migrating to the Europe (specifically Romania) in the future. He also disclosed his secret plan to learn barista course before the departure.

Sandeep, a young ridesharer of Kathmandu, had experienced both joys and sorrows. I asked him, “Do you have any moment while ridesharing that taught you a lesson to grow better?” He took a moment to recall something. Then, he shared a story that happened to him:

About a month ago, one of my friends who got into an accident in Bouddha called me at about 7:30 in the evening. I cancelled my customer’s request and went to the police station where he called me. He was being questioned by the police because he had stuck his bike on a car that day. There were no injuries on either side, but the motorbike was severely damaged. The car owner was demanding money claiming that my friend was on the wrong side.

He continued:

The traffic police were also supporting the car owner, and my friend was helpless. I requested that the police to show the CCTV footage as I believed that there was no mistake committed by my friend. However, the police drew a sketch of the road, car and bike and made me everything clear. My friend was slightly on the wrong side when the accident took place. I signed the paper, and the police relieved us on that night.

Sandeep was unaware of the mistake, despite having witnessed the CCTV footage at the beginning. Later, when the traffic police sketched the positions of the vehicles causing the accident, he learned how his friend had violated the traffic rule. Realizing the idea shared by the police, he told me that he gained new knowledge and skills to ride more safely on that day.

“And what’s your most distressful moment till now?” He linked it to his father’s severe health condition. When there was nobody to help him with his treatment, he himself took his father to the hospital. He was nearly hopeless during the dreadful days he spent in the hospital. He described:

I used to go to the pharmacy to buy medicine as prescribed by the doctor. Sometimes, I used to have a little money in my purse. I had to wait all day to burrow some money from our relatives. I used to go outside the hospital premises and watch the blind people singling a song and collecting some money. Even some patients used to be there begging for money for their treatment.

“Can you describe in brief how you were inspired by the taxi-driver?” I asked him as he disclosed to me that he was inspired by a taxi driver to start ridesharing in the city. He said:

We were going to the police hospital in that taxi. I was sitting on the front seat beside the driver. My mother was sitting behind me with my father, who had slept with his head on her lap. The taxi driver asked me about my father. I told him all that had happened in our family. He suggested me to join ridesharing. I asked him about the possible earnings, and difficulties of ridesharing. Finally, I followed his suggestion, and decided to join ridesharing, at least, to support the family in crisis.

I asked him about what he had learned on the road. He described that dealing with people while ridesharing was also a learning experience. Some of his customers inquired him about his home and family. Some of them provided him with extra money as a tip. Last time, one of the customers gave him a dark chocolate which he tasted for the first time in his life.

He accepted that he had transformed himself in the city, particularly in his food habits, spoken behavior, and taking on family responsibility. He used to think that the restaurant and bakery provided the best foods in the world. He came to realize that they are not only expensive to buy but also sometimes harmful to the health of the

long-time workers like himself. He informed me that he had started taking his meals only at home, and for snacks, he had switched to Roti and Curry instead of Mo-Mo and Noodles. He used to drink beer in the past but then he preferred glasses of lossy in summer and a hot lemon in winter.

As the eldest son of the family, he was responsible for managing the financial obligations. The ridesharing platform unexpectedly provided a solution to the family's struggles with poverty, health problems, and unemployment. Being a young boy from a poor family, he had no problem in a sense for he was earning more than two thousand rupees daily.

About learning and becoming on the road, he explained:

I am an ordinary young boy who has suffered a lot in life. Not only poverty and helplessness troubled me in life, but the poor health of my father has been a challenge. However, I'm earning some money through ridesharing, and it has given me a level of confidence. In the future, I've a plan to go abroad if possible. I have been learning about the complexities of urban life and have a zeal to progress more in my own life.

Dinesh: The Returnee Ridesharer

My final participant, Dinesh, was originally from Kubinde, Khotang District, and a permanent resident of Chandrapur Municipality in Bara District. He had been ridesharing in Kathmandu for the last fifteen months. He was a factory worker in Saudi Arabia before joining ridesharing industry. For more than five years, he worked as an unskilled factory worker in the Gulf. He left

Is this my city?

*Is this the city
Where I am living in
My own city?*

*I think "Yes"
Because I live here
I not only have
the dreams here,
I have nowhere to go
Leaving this divine city.*

*I think "No"
Because I've nothing
Except my naked body
In this beautiful city,
Living in this city,
Sometimes, I ask myself
"Who are you, man?"*

*I learned
to live in this city
And still
I'm learning to live
Becoming somebody
Is my dream
and still
I'm becoming a 'stranger'
I'm in dilemma,
Oh, my friend!*

*Is this the city
Where I'm living in
My own city?*

his job of factory as a factory worker when he decided to return Nepal and started ridesharing in Kathmandu. It was interesting to learn why he returned from the Gulf. “Why did you give up the job?” I asked him when he told me that he had quit his job as a factory worker. He narrated:

I have been working in the factory for more than five years. I could not see any progress in terms of skill development there. I was obliged to work as an unskilled laborer throughout my whole career. The most boring part of my job was that there was a three-day salary deduction for a single day's absence as per the company's rule. Meanwhile, I used to have homesickness because I was far from my family. Finally, I decided to quit the job, and returned home.

He informed me that he had bought a second-hand taxi in twenty-four lakh rupees. “Had it been the private one, it would cost only one third of the price,” he added, “to buy a new taxi is almost a dream for the working-class person like me in Nepal.” He also informed me that he had already paid the 15th instalment of the loan, “I have to pay sixteen more instalments to pay off the loan for this vehicle.”

What I realized from him was that ridesharing is not simply about the taxi-drivers hiring taxis from others, but it can also involve the taxi-drivers who had owned their vehicles. Becoming a taxi driver, he was also a self-employed ridesharer in the city.

I had seen his new mobile phone, and wanted to know his interest in it. “How often do you change your mobile?” He replied to me that he has been using the same phone that he bought from abroad. However, after joining ridesharing platforms, he had learned the software upgradation skills and developed a preference for using multiple apps.

Previously I had problems even while using minor applications on my phone; now I can easily download, install, and update the apps. This all happened after I started using ridesharing services. I used to think updating a mobile phone was a waste of time, but now I can do it myself while I'm asleep!

“How are your daily earnings now?” I asked him about the gross income of a taxi. He replied, “I save three to four thousand rupees daily which I have to utilize in paying the instalment.” Meanwhile, he described to me why he shifted from bike to taxi:

I used to rideshare on a motorbike before I bought this taxi. For about a month, I served the customers using my bike. The reason behind upgrading

from a bike to a taxi was my health issue. I cannot tolerate masks on my face as they create a kind of suffocation. I was also feeling unwell due to the backache I experienced while riding a bike. On the other hand, there is a safety issue with bikes. We cannot compare a bike and a taxi in terms of safety concerns.

“What about the gross collection disparity between bike and taxi?” I wanted to be clear. He thought for a while and spoke, “About two thousand rupees per day without fuel cost in a bike, and nearly a half of that will be more in a taxi.” He explained how ridesharing on a bike was challenging due to the risk it had and how weather conditions affected the income.

“What about the customer behavior?” I asked him whether he had any memorable experiences related to customers if any. He did not initially entertain the question. Later, I modified my question, “Have you ever had a passenger who didn’t pay their fare or acted out in any way?” He replied, “It depends upon the nature of the passenger, mostly they behave well. I can cancel their booking if they continue showing their attitude.”

I also inquired him about the types of ridesharing apps and their usage. He was fully acquainted with the similarities and differences among the apps. I asked him, “Which apps do you use mostly?” He replied that he had used almost all the available apps, but the one he preferred most was the InDrive App. “I used to use the App – Pathao whenever I needed a rideshare. In this way, I expected that Pathao would be more popular than other similar apps.” He further explained:

I have used almost all the apps available including Pathao and InDrive. I also accept that Pathao has been a popular ridesharing app in Kathmandu. However, the story is different now. I mean customers prefer InDrive because they can set their own price. The price on Pathao fluctuates, depending on peak hours, traffic jam status, and other factors. InDrive is different in that it requires a prepaid service. InDrive customers can make a call to their riders free of cost.

The following week, we met on Nikosera, which was a pre-planned event. We went to a local tea shop and ordered two cups of milk tea. Having tea together, we

Figure 8

A Taxi Literature

पढ्नेलाई सधैं हतार छ,
नपढ्नेलाई साउदी कतार छ।

Sense Trans:

If you cannot study well, you can go and work in the Gulf.

continued talking “Do you have any further plans except the taxi?” I asked him. He replied, “No, not at all, right now. I must pay off all the loans first.” I asked again, “Do you think that you will continue taxi-driving forever?” He kept silent for a while, and started revealing his secret:

Perhaps, I will buy a mini pickup van in the future. I think collecting bottled water from the factory and supplying it to the home and offices. My brother is also interested in driving. Now he is sick, but he will recover soon. If we get a taxi and a pickup van, maybe our income could double.

"Do you have any expectations from the government?" I was referring to the ridesharing bill that the provincial parliament had passed in Gandaki Province. He seemed indifferent to the issue in the beginning. Later, he argued that ridesharing can help resist the trend of young people traveling abroad for foreign employment opportunities.

"Can ridesharing be a learning and becoming platform for the urban youth?" I inquired about the potential of informal learning and its prospects of becoming a profession. He conditionally accepted, "If the ridesharer can work all day long, at least 10 to 12 hours a day, it is needless to go to the Gulf, based on my experiences in both fields." He continued:

There is nothing except working hard wherever the youth go abroad. Working in Nepal can be beneficial as it provides the opportunity to live together with the family. On the other hand, it is relatively cheaper to live in Nepal as we also had to afford on our food while working in the Gulf.

The vignette mentioned above explored the possibility of learning on road, and becoming an independent ridesharer in the city, which can also be inspirational to other prospective returnee youth in Nepal.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the stories of five participants, developed from informally recorded interviews conducted during travel and informal meeting hours. I played the role of an interviewer, prompting participants to share their stories based on some critical events and their life histories. As my intention was to dig out the ways in which they learned ridesharing and became ridesharer in the city, I prioritized both dimensions -critical events and life history, but focused on the critical events to expose the learning and becoming dimensions. During the field work days, I translated their narratives from Nepali to English as they shared their stories.

CHAPTER V

THE ZEAL OF LEARNING

I categorized the themes and discussions into two broad groups as the purpose of this dissertation was to address both learning and becoming dimension of ridesharing independently. I first collected nearly 200 codes which were categorized into 95 categories. Then only, I divided the themes into two broad categories, themes from learning and becoming perspectives respectively. I begin with themes from the learning dimension hereafter.

Themes from the Learning Perspective

I identified four major themes related to informal learning from a dozen codes derived from the stories. In this chapter, I presented the themes that emerged from the learning of my participants, followed by the discussion based on the informal/situated learning theory. I entitled the themes as driving adaptation, technology integration, customer satisfaction, and financial intelligence. I commence with the driving adaptation.

Driving Adaptation

Driving adaptation is my first theme based on the learning dimension of ridesharing. This theme consisted of five codes. - difficulty in driving, no driving license, mini truck driver, learning to rides a commuter bike and driving license renewal. Indeed, my participants were not amateurs in the driving sector, but they had to adapt to the city, which was a typically new setting for them. Despite their previous skill in driving, they were almost like the ‘beginners’ in the urban context. Becoming a ridesharer in the city was challenging for them due to the heavy traffic congestion, strict lane discipline and other technical hurdles that they faced during the initial days of ridesharing.

To exemplify the driving adaptation, Bimal's story was noteworthy. He was an ambulance driver before he entered ridesharing in the city. As an ambulance driver, he learned to drive well, but he lacked experience in driving at normal speed while following the traffic rules. In other words, when he was an ambulance driver, unlike other drivers, he neither followed the traffic rules, nor he maintained the lane discipline. In this situation, there could be a regressive move (Anderson et al., 1996) unless the situatedness reinforced the learner. As a ridesharer, as he entered the city,

with no extra privileges. Initially, it was tough to drive a taxi in the city, which created anger, irritation and stress upon him; he narrated:

Driving in the city is quite different from driving along the hilly roads. I was almost unable to drive along the urban street at first. Driving in Kathmandu City was extremely challenging for me at the time. Had I not been the ambulance driver before, it would not have been so tough for me. I recall how I used to follow another vehicle while driving through the city back then. Driving in traffic jams is the most boring part of this job. Traffic rules are being changed frequently, which creates a problem for the new riders.

I consider that, following another vehicle along the road, he learned to adapt driving in the city. The experience of an ambulance driver was counterproductive for him during the initial days of ridesharing. Similarly, Manoj and Sandeep also learned to drive in the urban setting. Prakash, in the same way, said, “I used to drive a mini truck in the village before I came to Kathmandu.” He also disclosed to me that he did not have a driving license at that time. He mentioned that there used to be no traffic police and no lane discipline in the village. He further said:

When I arrived in Kathmandu, my first challenge was obtaining a driving license. Being passed in the trial exam was something I had waited for since I was a mini-truck driver in the village. The traffic police could have caught me anywhere in the city, and the fine that I had to pay could exceed my daily earnings at that time. I was advised to buy a license readily from the agent of a local driving center. However, I believed in myself, appeared in the trial exam, and succeeded on my second attempt.

I could never have imagined that Prakash would have failed the trial exam as he told me that he was experienced in driving a mini-truck long before he started taxi-driving. Despite the experience, he accepted the trial exam as a challenge since the new urban environment and a certain degree of testophobia that he had were responsible in losing confidence at the first attempt. He continued practicing for the trial exam until he succeeded, which ultimately enabled him to obtain a valid driving license holder. In this way, he became a taxi-based ridesharer in the city.

As I myself ride a motorbike in Kathmandu city, I feel confident in riding along the wide streets. However, I used to have difficulty in riding inside the narrow *gallis* [The inner narrow pavement in the city] of Asan and Patan. In most of such

crowded and narrow *gallis*, there is a one-way system, and somewhere there can be seen ‘no entry’ signal.

However, nowadays, I think I can ride easily along such narrow roads. I know that driving adaptation in my context differed from that of my participants, in that they adapted in the city drawing on their previous experience of driving outside Kathmandu city, particularly in the village. On the contrary, I have no difficulty riding in the city, but off-road riding is a tough game for me. Being able to ride or drive in the city and holding a valid driving license were pre-requisites for becoming a ridesharer in the city. In this way, my participants, including Prakash, learned to adapt the driving skill in the city and obtained the valid driving license in the city.

Technology Integration

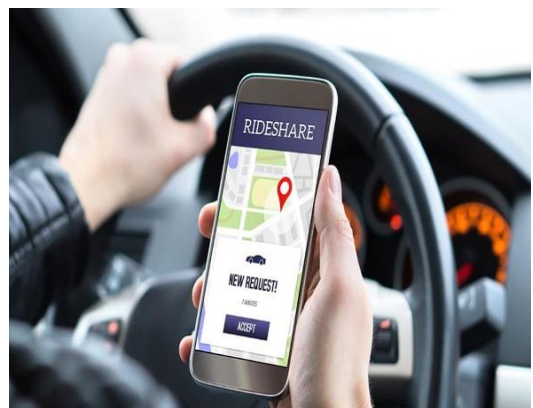
I prepared this theme – ‘Technology Integration’ with eight codes and divided it into two sub-themes. The codes included searching for customers, utilizing smartphones, using mobile technology, learning to explore locations, using Google Maps, shared mobility, self-employment and using updated apps. The two sub-themes include technology integration and shared mobility.

I firmly believe that ridesharing without any technical knowledge is practically impossible. There can exist offline ridesharing which is a misuse of online ridesharing in the sense that it breaches the code of conduct; hence, it is officially not recommended for both ridesharers and customers. For ridesharing, online apps, data availability, and a vehicle-in-condition are the primary requirements. However, the knowledge and skill to use such apps are remarkably important. In my study, the returnee ridesharer, Dinesh, was initially indifferent to the technological dimension. He explained:

Previously I had problems using minor applications on my phone; now I can easily download, install, and update the apps. This is all after I start ridesharing. I used to think updating a mobile phone was a waste of time, but now I can do it myself while I’m asleep!

Figure 9

Technology Integration in Ridesharing



(Fiscal Nepal, 2024)

Dinesh was a layman in smartphone technology in the beginning as he used his phone simply to dial and receive calls. He learned not only to use the ridesharing platforms but also started to upgrade the software of his smartphone later. I think this kind of literacy was useful for the ridesharer which was informally learned in the course of extensive ridesharing practice. Similarly, Bimal accepted that he had primarily used his smartphone to play virtual games in the past. He was almost addicted to online games, but as he started ridesharing, he learned to use digital wallets, Google Maps and other apps. He explained his experience of playing virtual games, until he entered ridesharing, in the following way:

I was fond of playing virtual games on my mobile phone. I had seen the snake and ladder that my elder sister played on her 'tuktuke' phone [an old model of a feature phone with a keypad]. When I got a smartphone from my uncle, I was cheerful as I could play lots of games on it. I downloaded more than a dozen games, including Free Fire, Ludo, Candy Crush, Angry Birds, FC, Temple Run, and others. Out of all those games, I was addicted to Candy Crush Saga at that time. It was quite a popular game. Later, I switched to online Ludo, which I enjoyed during the lockdown period. I kept playing Ludo, until I joined ridesharing in the city.

While listening to Bimal's story, it's evident that he was addicted to virtual games in the past. However, as he started using ridesharing apps in the city, his interest was shifted to other apps. Becoming a taxi-based ridesharer, he was obliged to use smartphone technology. In the following vignette, he described how his interests shifted from virtual games to some practical apps:

Besides Pathao and InDrive, I must use Google Maps for navigation which is integrated in those apps as well. I also use digital wallets like 'Esewa' and 'Khalti' while making transactions with my customers. However, I have uninstalled most of the gaming apps that I played in the past.

I understand from the stories of participants that they learned to use mobile devices while dealing with their customers. By utilizing multiple apps in the ridesharing sector, they learned to integrate technology into shared mobility. In my opinion, technology has become an indispensable part of driving, including ridesharing, in the city. While driving along the long route, I also utilize the Google Maps and Nepal Police app to get the traffic update.

I learned from them that it's not necessary to have a physical driving license in our pocket if we have registered it into the Nagarik App. In this way, the ridesharing app revolutionized this sector by enabling customers to communicate with each other and make virtual deals. I realize that integrating digital technology into shared mobility and online booking feature was innovative steps in Nepal's local transportation system of Nepal, benefitting all.

Customer Satisfaction

I believe that customer satisfaction is at the heart of ridesharing in the city, as the success of ridesharing services depends on the customers' feedback, comments, and recommendations. I know that customers can simply click the stars in order to rate the service quality, which makes ridesharers' profile strong. They can also comment and react to the service quality and write about their experience during the travel. There were ten codes exploited to construct this theme. The codes included disrespected for the job, *Pathaowala*, unnecessary bargaining, tips and extra income, police custody, mobile phone as a pledge, warm and interesting behavior, satisfied customers, gifts and chocolates, and cancellation of booking for doubtful customers.

My participants informed me that the skill to satisfying customers sounds common, but it is extremely puzzling and tough, as the types of customers vary from person to person. They also realized that it was the ridesharer's behavior determined the level of customer's satisfaction to some extent. For example, my fourth participant, Sandeep, was so amiable and humble that almost all customers liked him, and even some of them offered him some tips and gifts. Had he not performed well while dealing with the customers, there could have been disputes, which were common among other ridesharers in the city.

Bimal had both warm and cold relationships with the customers. Although he was a ridesharer, he never liked the word '*Pahaowala*' that his customer used to address him while he was driving. He added:

This is not a decent job in my perception. People call me Pathaowala instead of my name. Even some of my close friends, who work in some private offices and shopping centers, call me pathaowala. I think it is a kind of insult, though the fact is that I am nobody, but a ridesharer in this city.

I thought Bimal had to manage his emotions, and understand himself, as the word '*Pathaowala*' was simply a colloquial version of 'ridesharer' from my perspective. He interpreted it as a taboo used by them to humiliate the ridesharers in

general. Despite his dissatisfaction in this context, he learned to be frank, funny, close to the people and even helped them in trouble.

Prakash, my third participant, had a memorable story in this context. He was arrested by the local police because he took the customer's mobile phone as a pledge. He told me that the customer pretended to have lost his wallet and refused to pay the taxi fare. Prakash was arrested by the local police because the customer was a suspected of being a criminal. As he reached the police station, he had to spend a night in the custody simply because he had received the customer's phone as a pledge. He said:

I never imagined that I would spend a night in police custody. That night was a tough night for me. That day onwards, I check the customers' behavior before I start driving my taxi. If I find doubtful behavior, I cancel their booking and move away. I examine whether they are drunk or not, how they open the door, and what they talk about, before I pick them up.

I believe that customer satisfaction is not only about being able to communicate with them while ridesharing. Instead, it is the ability to judge their behavior in advance, to pacify the boredom during the travel, and not to forget to bid a 'goodbye' with a natural smile at the end. Young ridesharers learned these skills while ridesharing in the city, in my observation.

In this context, trying to satisfy the customers according to their nature is also a useful technique for dealing with them. As my participants reported, some customers were introverted, while others were more talkative. I assume it is the responsibility of the ridesharer to understand the type of customer they are dealing with and anticipate their initial behavior. Some of the satisfied customers gave their ridesharers tips, chocolates, or small gifts like a key ring, a handkerchief, or a stick of cigarette. Some participants appreciated the customers who intentionally declined to receive small refunds from the ridesharers. In a context, Sandeep praised his customers in this way:

Generally, my customers do not inquire about the chanchun [a small amount of money that the ridesharer must return to the customer] when they drop off at their locations. For a small change, most of the customers allow me to accept it as their tips. Last week, I got a customer who offered me almost two hundred rupees, which was an exceptional case. Some of them also offer their own price, which is usually higher than the standard fare.

The above extract revealed that, in addition to regular income, the ridesharers could also collect extra money, gifts, and tips, especially from the happy customers. This is also a learning experience for the young ridesharers, as they can earn, learn and acquire the techniques to satisfy the customers. If they can establish a comfortable relationship with their customers, the goal of customer satisfaction can be conveniently be achieved, which is also a learning experience. During the trip, I also maintained a warm and friendly relationship with my ridesharers, being open and honest with them, which had made the travel experience enjoyable.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy, for the ridesharers, is not simply the ability to calculate the day's gross earnings. Instead, it is the growing competence of ridesharers that enables them to plan better with their money for the future. This theme consisted of six codes: daily need fulfilment, saving money for the future, ridesharing as passion, special days and special earnings, tips and gifts and bikers as competitors. Some of my participants were successful in saving money in order to buy their own vehicle, which would have been difficult to achieve without financial intelligence.

Needless to state that ridesharing is not only a tech-based daily-life activity, but a financial activity as well. Involving in ridesharing, the youth learnt how to achieve their financial goals. For example, all my participants were ridesharing to earn money, except the second participant, who claimed that he was ridesharing for pleasure. My first participant, Bimal, had saved money to buy a second-hand taxi which implied a kind of financial commitment. Bimal supported his family by providing medicine to his parents and snacks for his cousins. The following extract reflected his financial literacy and priorities:

I am not only collecting some money to pay the down payment of a taxi that I am going to buy soon but also have fulfilled all my domestic and personal needs through it. I must pay my room fare and invest in gadgets and other belongings. I must also take the responsibility for my elderly parents, who live in the village. Sometimes, I need to buy snacks and stationery items for my cousins.

Unlike Bimal, my fourth participant, Sandeep had a different story from the others. His father was a severe patient of nephropathy, and there was no one to support him financially during the critical hours. In this pathetic situation, Sandeep

was involved in ridesharing to take care of his family members and to save the life of his father. He said:

My father is a retired police constable. His both kidneys have been damaged and now we must take him to hospital twice a week. As a retired policeman, we have got the free dialysis service from the police hospital. However, there was a great financial problem, when we took him to Bhaktapur Hospital last year; this is why, I joined ridesharing in the city.

Sandeep demonstrated exceptional proficiency in conducting financial calculations. He revealed to me that he earned from 1,500 and 2,000 NPR per day, which was 45,000-60,000 NPR per month. He had to work hard all day long for this gross collection. He said, “I collect almost 1500 to 2000 NPR per day. I must afford at least 500 NPR for fuel; the servicing of the bike is another expense. I must work almost 12 hours a day.” This shows that ridesharing has been a boon for the youth like Sandeep.

Similarly, my final participant, Dinesh, was earning and saving money to purchase a pick-up van. He intended to utilize the pickup van for the future as he had planned to sell bottled water. He narrated:

I will buy a mini pickup van in the future. I shall collect bottled water from the factory and supply it for domestic and official purposes in the city. My brother also had a deep interest in driving. Now he is sick, but he will recover soon. When we will have a taxi and a pick-up van, perhaps, the income will also double.

Becoming a ridesharer in the city, he had been able to switch from motorbike to taxi. He was not satisfied with it, even; hence, he planned to enter a new business, transporting bottled water.

Unlike Dinesh, Sandeep had not any immediate plan to buy his own vehicle. He neither aimed to upgrade himself from a two-wheeler to a four-wheeler ridesharer, nor had he any plan to reopen his meat shop, which had been closed for a year. However, he had been able to treat his father and support his mother and siblings. Becoming a ridesharer at the age of twenty and providing financial support for family members living in the city was a commendable work. I was surprised by his stories of misfortune, diligence, and recovery to a normal life, which were inspirational to other youths of the same age.

Discussion from Learning Perspective

Through a deep dive into the stories of five ridesharing youths in Kathmandu city, I identified four major themes related to their informal learning. Based on the four themes - driving adaptation, technology integration, customer satisfaction, and financial literacy, I presented the findings and discussion in this section with corresponding theories, critiques, and my reflections.

The first finding was that ridesharers learned to drive in the city as they were unfamiliar with the urban environment before entering this sector. Theoretically speaking, it was a driving adaptation on their part that resembled the *Learning Adaptation Theory* which stresses the importance of flexibility, self-awareness, and reflection in the learning process (Rachmad, 2022). I believe that learning adaptation is the process by which individuals and organizations adjust their learning methods and approaches in response to changing contexts, needs, and goals. The core concept is that learning is not just about acquiring new knowledge; it is also about applying that knowledge in different situations and adapting it to new learning environments. In the context of ridesharers, they were flexible, self-aware and reflexive in the learning process. Besides, they had a zeal to learn and change themselves while adapting their skill in the new environment.

I found that the ridesharing youth developed their driving skills in various settings, spaces, and times. Here, 'driving in the city' and 'driving in the village' are two different milestones of their driving journey, though the fundamentals of driving are similar. In this context, the condition of the road, the traffic congestion, the traffic rules and regulations create a new environment for the ridesharers. As the ridesharers had the experiences of driving exclusively on the rural roads of Nepal, they had difficulty in driving in the city due to the 'changed' environment. Despite the absence of an instructor, they continued their journey along the road, gaining valuable experience through informal learning. Luedke (2010) writes that it takes more than five years to learn the rhythm of driving in the context of Chicago taxi driving. However, my participants learned faster than expected as the ridesharing has a relatively shorter history in Nepal.

All my participants experienced a kind of dilemma while ridesharing in Kathmandu city during their initial days. I termed this phenomenon as 'driving adaptation in the city', which can be linked to the concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Based on situated learning theory, this is a

process in which the young ridesharing learners learned to drive in urban context, updating the skill they had learned previously. They learned simply by participating as a novice ridesharer in the city. Gradually, they mastered it with the given situations and became the members of the community of practice. As legitimate participants of ridesharing community, they learned the skill step by step on the street.

I assert my participants learned various skills while ridesharing in the city. In this context, 'Learning by Ridesharing' is another perspective that aligns with to the proposition of 'Learning by Driving' (Haggag et al., 2017). I believe 'Learning by Driving' is also influenced by John Dewey's theory of 'Learning by Doing' (LBD). Regarding the performance gap among the new drivers, Haggag et al. (2017) found that the new drivers in New York city learned slightly less than the experienced drivers, despite their capacity to overcome the tough situations relatively faster. My findings contradicted this argument, as the young ridesharers in Kathmandu were more steadfast and tech-savvy compared to the traditional taxi drivers in Nepal. I analyzed this micro-level of learning as 'Learning by Ridesharing' in this dissertation.

Similarly, technology integration is my second theme of the study. Based on this theme, I found that ridesharers learned to integrate digital technology into the shared mobility, in which the relationship between the ridesharer and the customer is virtually established. When the virtual deal is over, the ridesharer and the customer meet in person. In this condition, the vehicle (taxi or motorbike) becomes the medium to execute the deal. In this process, the use of ridesharing apps, the reliability of the mobile network, the technical expertise in using the GPS, and other technical skills are inevitable (Amey et al., 2011). The integration of all these digital prerequisites to the shared mobility creates the foundation of ridesharing. I found that not only the young ridesharers, but even the traditional taxi drivers in Kathmandu city, had adapted to the new technology to survive in their profession.

I observed that conventional taxi drivers gradually mastered technology integration skills as they decided to enter ridesharing sector. In this connection, Uber, the world's largest ridesharing company, was valued at over US\$ 80 billion at IPO and competed with several copycats across the globe (New York Times, 2019, as cited in Deerfield & Elert, 2022), though many American locales initially prohibited ridesharing because pre-existing taxi regulations were ill-equipped to deal with this new service (Deerfield & Elert, 2022). This information highlights the essence of integrating technology in shared mobility with more precision in the context of

ridesharing in Nepal as well. All my participants, except the second one who hardly used ridesharing apps, learned to use mobile technology in their activities.

I demonstrate that exploring the route with the help of Google Maps serves as an example of technology integration. Gossling (2017) writes that one of the most notable innovations has been Google's digitalization of the world's transport infrastructure, allowing calculations of physical distances, identifications of public transport connections, and comparison of travel times. In other words, the Google Maps show information on transport flows and movement in specific road sections in real-time. The increasing availability, convenience, and lower cost of individualized transport services offered by ride-sharing apps may boost individual transport demand or lead to a growing use of these services among previously public transport users (Gossling, 2017). I assume integrating technology, particularly Google Maps, is crucial for ridesharing platforms. This is not taught to them formally; instead, they informally learned all these skills in the given situation.

Similarly, I presented customer satisfaction as the third theme of the study. It is a specific skill that the ridesharing employees have learned while interacting with customers, both virtually and physically. I observed that the primary conversation between the customer and the ridesharer was virtually established. Later, when the ridesharer picked up the customer from their location, the virtual relationship between them transitioned into a physical one, allowing for more interaction. Normally, the conversation flows from the queries of their destination, origins, transit, traffic conditions, weather condition, service quality, and sometimes even their individual interests, based on relevance, convenience, time duration, and personality traits.

The Savage City

*I may be a poor guy for them
But for myself I am not,
An uneducated man for them
But for myself I am not.*

*I may be an unemployed guy,
For those who compare me
With their so-called
prosperity,
With their so-called education,
With their fucking business.*

*However, for me, who crossed
A long war to reach the time!
I am a self-educated, self-
employed, and a well-off
Guy of this savage city.*

Depending on all these conditions, my third finding was that the ridesharers learned to deal with the customers as a learning space was created during the trip. It also helped them become familiar with the customers' moods, create a warm relationship, and provide them with the best ridesharing experiences. Ghimire et al. (2023) concluded that safety, convenience and accessibility in the taxi services positively impact on the customers intention to use the taxi services. My finding in this context also resembles those of Lam (2012), who studied the informal learning of the frontline employees working in Macao's casino. They learned politeness, caring attitude and emotional intelligence informally while dealing with their patrons. Nevertheless, my finding was slightly different in the sense that the ridesharers were free to choose their customers and cancel their booking if required, as the platform was more sophisticated than the manual activities at the casinos.

Nowadays, ridesharing sector has been highly competitive. For instance, as a customer, I've witnessed Pathao being contested by InDrive, and InDrive being confronted by Yango. The competition was aroused by the decreasing price. However, I believe that lower prices cannot guarantee the quality of service, and the overall public impression is not always determined by price alone. In the context of Alexandria city, Abd Elmeguid et al. (2018) find that awareness or knowledge of the ridesharing service, its quality, and security level are more significant than the cost-saving offers. Unlike this finding, which I believed personally, in the context of Kathmandu, the reality was different in the sense that people tend to choose cost saving offers there. One of my participants disclosed that a ridesharing platform that offered flexible and lower prices is more popular in Nepal. Similarly, investigating consumer attitudes and intentions toward ridesharing, Cheah et al. (2023) conclude that perceived usefulness and word-of-mouth significantly influence them. I accept that these are equally important in our context, as the customers value certain apps and do not notice about others as narrated by my participants.

My fourth finding was based on the theme financial literacy. By financial literacy, I stressed on developing the skills to earn money, save, spend wisely, and invest mainly in the productive sector. From my perspective, some ridesharers have learned entrepreneurial skills as they purchased their own vehicles or committed to start their own businesses beyond ridesharing. However, there is a debate about whether ridesharers are entrepreneurs or not. Casagrande et al. (2021), while disapproving ridesharers as entrepreneurs claim a 'uberized person' as a precarious

worker with flexible facilities, linking it with ‘Taylorism and Toyotism’ for the micromanagement based on algorithm and the availability of workers just-in-time respectively. My participants acquired financial management skills and exhibited some entrepreneurial traits, such as taking risks, innovating, and gambling with the future market, as evident in their stories.

I argue that those who were not able to become entrepreneurs yet were, at least, the self-employed youth, as they had their own vehicle, eliminating the need to hire it for ridesharing. Chakravarty (2021) found that the ridesharing companies preferred to employ more ridesharers when the market was large. In other words, the companies expect to have more independent ridesharers when the market is small and vice versa. In my research, three participants, namely Manoj, Sandeep, and Dinesh, were the independent ridesharers, as they owned their own vehicles. Those who had hired the vehicle for ridesharing, namely Bimal and Prakash, also realized the benefit of purchasing their own vehicle. Bimal also planned to purchase a second-hand taxi in the following year.

I believe the ridesharing can grow as entrepreneurial venture, and there are numerous examples of this kind. Frost and Frost (2024) state that entrepreneurship and context are mutually constructive, exemplified by the development of ‘Johnson Taxi’ which evolved from a ‘wild chicken’ taxi operator to a system builder and a business leader. In this context, the ridesharers had learned the financial literacy by earning, saving and wisely spending their money, which they learned gradually acquired through ridesharing activities. Regarding the transformation from a learner to an entrepreneur, Angnakoon et al. (2025) conclude that student entrepreneurship in Thailand is a transformative learning journey characterized by self-regulated learning, experiential growth, and identity formation. In the context of young ridesharers in Kathmandu, I argue that they learned the financial literacy as a basic requirement for the entrepreneurship which they were inclined towards.

Ultimately, I believe that ridesharers developed financial literacy as they engaged in the direct financial activities associated with ridesharing. The role of informal learning here was momentous for them. Proscovia et al. (2021) studied the influence of informal financial literacy training on financial knowledge and behavior among the rural farmers of Uganda. Concluding that there were no significant differences in the financial literacy scores between the formally trained and informally proficient farmers, they found that the role of formal training was minimal.

Similar to the finding, my participants became financially literate in an informal and context-based setting.

In the light of all these ideas, I conclude that the situated learning theory is the most compatible theory to describe the themes of their learning. As they were driving, they were initially legitimate peripheral participants in the beginning, but they soon became deeply involved in the community of practice. The community comprised of the ridesharers, customers, other drivers and vehicle owners, traffic police, ridesharing service providers, virtually encountered passengers and even the pedestrians in the city. The specified situatedness was the space that provided the participants with immense learning opportunities, regardless of their explicit intention to learning.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the themes related to informal learning among the participants in the first part. The first theme related to the informal learning was driving adaptation, the second – integrating technology, the third- customer satisfaction and the last financial literacy. These are all the themes based on their learning, in which I also reflected to my personal experiences. Similarly, I discussed themes based on the corresponding theories in the second part of this chapter. I exploited the informal learning theory and the situated learning theory as my theoretical framework. Besides, I proposed the Learning by Ridesharing (LBR) perspective which was derived from the concepts of ‘Learning by Doing’ and ‘Learning by Driving.’ I believe that learning is possible everywhere and every day, and it is also present in the context of ridesharing among youth.

CHAPTER VI

THE JOURNEY OF BECOMING

The themes that I presented in the previous chapter were related to the informal learning experiences of the participants. In this chapter, I developed the themes from the becoming perspective of ridesharers. I included the themes that represent their journey of becoming self-confidence, self-employability, pleasure riding and the ridesharing-in-transition are the themes to be discussed in this chapter.

Themes from Becoming Perspective

In this section, I present the themes from the ridesharers' becoming perspective of life. As the four themes presented here with relevant theorization and discussion are confidence building, self-employability, pleasure riding and ridesharing-in transition, I begin with the first theme self-confidence.

Self-confidence

There were five codes under this theme; the codes were difficulty in driving in the city, no driving license, mini truck driver, learning to ride a commuter bike and renewed a driving license. This theme implied the fluid nature of the ridesharing youth in the context of their making their positionality as a ridesharer. They were slowly developing their confidence level and becoming more qualified in ridesharing with added exposure in this field.

I accept that being 'a ridesharer' and becoming 'a confident ridesharer' are two different milestones in their becoming journey. Riding a bike or driving a car for personal use and carrying passengers for either an earning or a learning purpose is totally different activity. The latter requires better skills and more confidence from my perspective. Among the participants, Bimal and Sandeep gained a confidence by learning to drive with extra caution along the street. Prakash and Dinesh also had the confidence gap in the beginning, as the technology was new for them. In this context, Dinesh said:

I was not good at driving a taxi in the city because I had not driven for many years. I had no valid license at the time when I decided to rideshare in Kathmandu. One of the brokers had assured me that they would provide with a valid license. However, I wanted to have it myself, and that was possible, as I

attempted the trial test. I am proud that I got the license myself appearing in the trial test.

Similarly, Sandeep became confident in riding bikes with the help of his friends. Some of his friends also owned luxurious bikes as well. He got the opportunity to boost his level of confidence as he tried each of those bikes. He said:

While riding my friend's bike, I wished I also owned a bike like that. Sometimes, to this today, I still enjoy cruising on their bikes whenever they offer me the chance. My bike was an old bike that I bought from a reconditioning house. I started riding on my old bike, which used to cause problems, sometimes even while travelling with passengers. Being experienced with this old bike, I have been confident in ridesharing.

Being a ridesharer and becoming a confident one has a remarkable difference, where my participants suffered, learned lessons and ultimately developed their own identity as ridesharers in the city. However, I assume that the journey of gaining confidence had no boundary, as it was a continuous process of becoming a better ridesharer in the city.

Self-employability

I suppose that becoming a self-employed individual is necessary for the youth in general. There are many educated individuals in society who remain unemployed. I think ridesharing has paved the way for self-employment to some extent. Those who can work hard can utilize it as a full-time job, while the part-timers can equally enjoy it. For this theme, four codes have been selected, namely, self-employment, free choice, flexibility, and entrepreneurship.

Among my participants, I believe that all of them were self-employed, involved in the ridesharing sector. However, the story of Manoj was slightly different in the sense that he was ridesharing for pleasure, as he explained. As he was a part-timer, it implied that ridesharing can provide part-time jobs for those who need to earn their pocket money or take it as a passion. I believe self-employability can be

Figure 10
Ridesharing Employment or Entrepreneurship?



(Aryal, 2024)

actualized through ridesharing as well; the story of Sandeep was interesting as he said:

I generally collect two thousand rupees per day. One of my friends earned about Rs. 3,000 last month. Our earnings are good but it is necessary to allocate all our time to ridesharing. Early in the morning, I get up and prepare for ridesharing. All day long, I ride this bike along the roads. Sometimes, I receive orders until late hours at night, which makes the wallet heavier, but my body gets exhausted.

Similarly, the story of Bimal was also noteworthy, as he had given up his job as an ambulance driver when he dreamed of going to Korea. Unfortunately, he couldn't pass the language test, and finally engaged in ridesharing. Bimal's following extract regarding his self-employment experience was interesting:

Over the last three years, I have been ridesharing in Kathmandu using the platforms - Pathao and In-Drive. I am saving money to pay for the down payment of a taxi that I am planning to purchase next year. I have also fulfilled all my domestic and personal needs through it. Had I continued in my previous job, I might have missed all these opportunities to experience and appreciate the city. Now, I can work for more hours, if I need some more money.

In this way, my participants including Bimal, as narrated in the given extracts, developed self-employability through ridesharing. They learned how to create job of their own and participate in the urban self-employment initiative.

Pleasure Riding

I know ridesharing is not limited to earning, being employed and learning various skills. In addition to all these, it can be a choice of the youth who want to enjoy their life by becoming a ridesharer. I titled this theme 'pleasure riding' which had two sub-themes: ridesharing and pleasure. The theme encompasses seven codes: virtual games, digital platforms, pastimes, exposure, visiting places, family life, mobile addiction, and gossiping.

My second participant, Manoj, claimed himself a free-rider in his own words. He neither utilized any online platform to find customers nor did he intend to make money through ridesharing. He had his own poultry farm in the village, and he was involved in ridesharing exclusively for pleasure. He was different from other participants, and had different stories regarding his passion for this field. He said:

I am a free-rider. I have tried all of them (ridesharing apps) in the past. None of them were useful to me.... You can call me a free-rider. I am involved in this work just to keep myself happy. I rideshare only during the morning and in the evening hours. I do not appear on the road all the time like other ridesharing guys. I love talking and travelling with people.

Though Manoj was riding to spend his free hours, he was not a free service provider at all. It implied that he had two reasons behind his decision to get involved in ridesharing, first for pleasure and second for extra income. Apart from him, other participants also had this kind of passion in ridesharing, in my observation. They chose this work and enjoyed the moments of ridesharing in the city. For example, Prakash was satisfied with what he was doing in the city; hence, I accepted him as a happy ridesharer. He had well-managed his family life well, involved in ridesharing, and was satisfied with getting the opportunity to work and earn in Nepal.

Manoj was different in the sense that he was not primarily riding for financial reasons. Indeed, he collected the service-charge from the customers, most of whom were offline ride-seekers as he narrated to me. He had a genuine passion for getting involved in ridesharing for several reasons. First, he got the opportunity to travel around the city, which was his interest. Secondly, he loved riding a bike, and it provided him with space to internalize his

My Old Bike

*That my old bike
Which is my favorite one*

*I love the color
I like its every look
From all sides.*

*The sound that
It makes is melodious
The vibration that
It creates is alike
My Heartbeats!*

*It never betrays me
Like an honest horse
Often carries me
Around the city
As if it were
My Best friend!*

*That my old bike
Makes me feel happy
I can hardly scrape it
Nor can sell it,
I want to keep it
In the museum of
My life!*

passion for riding a bike and talking to strangers. He left using all ridesharing platforms, though he noticed that they could have been easily downloaded and installed immediately.

Similarly, Bimal and Sandeep both were dreaming of migrating abroad which implied that ridesharing was not their last resort. Until then, they were using their free hours, not for passion like Manoj, but rather focusing on productivity. They were growing, earning some money, learning from the people and visualizing of their destination; hence, it was a productive task for them. Riding for pleasure was not exactly for all, as it was for Manoj, in my understanding.

Ridesharing-in-transition

While analyzing the narratives, I realize that ridesharing was not a hot cake that every urban youth were interested in it. Due to various reasons, ridesharing was in transition in the lives of the youth involved in it. Particularly, the indifference of the policymakers and the suspicious eyes of the traditional local transport unions were responsible to prolong its transition in Nepal in my observation. This is why, I framed the theme as ridesharing-in-transition. This theme has six codes. The codes are: Mission Korea, ridesharing as a last resort, migrating to Europe, expanding the service, learning a barista course and the returnee plan.

My participants also narrated ridesharing as transitional activity. For example, two of my participants were planning to go abroad for foreign employment; hence, ridesharing was simply a pre-departure activity in their perception. Bimal, my first participant, was an aspirant to become an employee in South Korea. He appeared twice in the Korean language test, though he did not get succeed. He said, "Nowadays, I am practicing myself how to speak Korean language. Last year, I joined an institute in Koteshwor; however, I was unable to succeed in the exam. Let's see, this year, perhaps, I shall nail it."

Similarly, my fourth participant, Sandeep, was attending a barista course as he was preparing to work in Romania. He seemed satisfied with what he was doing in the city; however, his goal was also to migrate to Europe ultimately. He narrated:

I'm earning some money through ridesharing, and it has given me a level of confidence. In the future, I've a plan to go abroad as far as possible. I have been learning about the complexities of urban life and have a desire to progress further in my life. Ridesharing is not bad job, but most of my friends have been abroad, and I am also interested to go and work in foreign land.

My final participant had planned to buy a pick-up van and start a transportation business for bottled water. It would have created a different space if he had executed it, by giving up ridesharing. Though, he had not planned to discontinue ridesharing, he had not even been solely engaged in this work. This also implies that ridesharing is in transition, and ridesharers have taken it as a ‘transitional work.’

Based on these themes, ridesharers have their own stories, nature, explanations, plans and experiences. However, building confidence, self-sustainability, pleasure riding and ridesharing-in-transition are the major themes regarding their relation to becoming and shaping a positionality in the city. In my perception, the young ridesharers were becoming matured, confident, and professional in this field, although most of them had different plans, from dreaming of flying abroad to starting their own business. It posits that ridesharing is in transition in Nepal, yet-to-be realized as the last resort of the people involved in this novel profession.

Discussions from the Becoming Perspective

In this section, I present the findings and interpretations of the research, along with the corresponding theories, similar research findings, and my personal reflections. The first finding was that the youth developed self-confidence and became proper ridesharers in the city. The second finding was that the youth became self-employed while engaging in ridesharing activities. The third finding was that some ridesharers had a primary motive for joining ridesharing was not for financial gain, but rather pleasure. Finally, the fourth finding was that ridesharers in Kathmandu perceived it as a transitional activity rather than a long-term profession.

Regarding the first finding - the youth developed self-confidence and became proficient ridesharers in the city, the successive process of becoming a ridesharer is remarkable. As there are three levels of becoming: becoming intense, becoming animal and becoming imperceptible (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987); the ridesharers experienced the three stages: first when they decided to join ridesharing, secondly when they joined and learned ridesharing, and finally when they got a level of perfection in ridesharing. In this procedure, I assume that the self-confidence resides somewhere between the first and the third levels. Out of the framework, the ridesharers, despite their individual interpretations, they were not much hopeful to becoming ridesharers for long time. In this way, they were not imperceptible in making their position as ridesharer in the city.

All my participants were initially unknown of the dimensions of ridesharing when they entered the city; however, they developed self-confidence by learning the necessary skills to become proficient in ridesharing. For example, my first participant was an ambulance driver before he started ridesharing in Kathmandu. Unlearning to drive at higher speed, following the strict traffic rules on the road, and interacting with the customers in their language, style, and interest were the preliminary challenges for him. Needless to mention that he was not confident in addressing these challenges in the beginning. Later, he learned how to address all these challenges and became a self-confident ridesharer. The stories were similar in the case of other participants.

The second finding on their becoming journey was that ridesharers were becoming self-employed while engaging in ridesharing activities. In general, people perceive them as ‘unemployed youth’ who choose ridesharing as their last resort. However, I observed shifting their positionality towards self-employment and steadily progressing towards the goal of entrepreneurship. Indeed, there are arguments for and against whether they are entrepreneurs or not. For example, Melak and Derbe (2022) claim that all entrepreneurs are self-employed, but the reverse is not true. From my perspective, if the ridesharers have succeeded in investing in their own vehicles, with the possible extension of their services and the creation of employment for others, they are the entrepreneurs. Contrary to this, Casagrande et al. (2021) claim that ridesharers are not entrepreneurs in any historical or theoretical sense, which I argue is not entirely accurate in all circumstances.

Unlike the argument mentioned above, I notice that ridesharing has also been described as a high-impact entrepreneurship as well (Acs, 2010, as cited in Deerfield & Elert, 2022). In the context of Nepal, the youth involved in this profession have purchased their own vehicles, thereby extending the service to other ridesharing services. From my perspective, it’s a kind of tech-assisted business; hence, it exhibits the characteristics of entrepreneurship. As Sundararajan (2016) states, digital technology has transformed the modern business landscape, and the same is true for ridesharing in Kathmandu. There was the similar situation in the context of ridesharing in Kathmandu city in my observation.

My participants became self-employed using the ridesharing platforms. Becoming a self-employed person implies that the ridesharers have succeeded in developing self-employability, a state in which they were no longer job seekers in the market. Ridesharing is a journey-to-work in itself (Amey et al., 2011). As stated

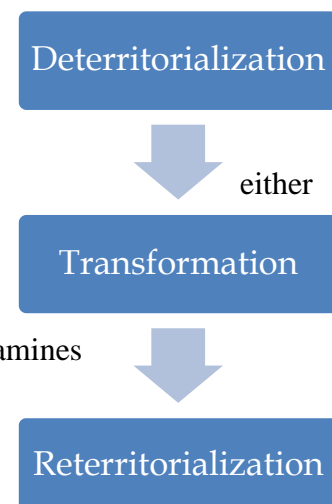
earlier, there is a debate on whether the ridesharers are workers or entrepreneurs. However, throughout my fieldwork, as they narrated to me, they never presented themselves as workers. Instead, they had their own dreams, aspirations and ambitions to grow better. At the very least, they generated the employment opportunity for themselves, which led to entrepreneurship. It was a necessary for the youth to learn self-employment skills, and they did it.

The third finding regarding their participation is that the youth involved in ridesharing did not merely do so for financial reasons; they also had a genuine passion for it. In other words, some ridesharers involved in ridesharing exclusively for pleasure. In the context of Manoj, he was the one, who was involved in ridesharing for pleasure rather than for money-making. He opined in his own word to become *bindas* [Meaning having no worries at all] was his primary motive behind his ridesharing. Theoretically, it can be linked to the concept of ‘learning for fun’ (Packer, 2006). As Manoj explained, he was involved in ridesharing to pass his free hours only, which was a form of leisure time management. Falk, (1982) as cited in Packer, (2006) uses the analogy of a window-shopper where a customer can enjoy the shopping experience even by observing the items stored in the shop. In other words, the learners can enjoy the learning process despite their primary aim of learning something. Packer (2006) concludes that learning for fun is a blend of discovery, exploration, excitement, and ultimately, a transformative experience.

All these concepts suggest that ridesharing can serve an additional, non-financial purpose, which can be internally accepted or externally declared by the ridesharer. In the context of Manoj, it was explicitly declared, and that was for the pleasure. Watkins (2000) examines the four paradigms used in studying leisure: behaviorism, cognitivism, individual constructivism and social constructivism. In my study, Manoj experienced the changes in the content and structure of the internal relations formed between his daily activities and the free hours. In this context, he was an individual constructivist. Similarly, Fielbaum and Tirachini (2021) conclude that part-timers are more satisfied than routine-based

Figure 11

Three Steps of Becoming



(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)

ridesharers. As Manoj was also a part-timer, he seemed more cheerful than others, in my observation.

My fourth finding was that ridesharing in Nepal was in transition, so ridesharers perceived it as an exclusively transitional activity, not as a long-term profession for the youth. Based on their narrative, I believe ridesharing is currently undergoing a transitional phase because it lacks a robust legal framework. Consequently, the ridesharers were unsure whether they would be able to sustain themselves in this profession or not. Two of them were dreaming of flying abroad as they were preparing for the visa requirements. For instance, my participants, Bimal and Sandeep, perceived ridesharing as a purely transitional activity. Unlike them, Prakash accepted it as a demand of the time, and he was hopeful about its future. Manoj had nothing to say about its legal dimension, as he accepted it as a merely part-time activity, while Dinesh realized its urgency, though he initially faced some challenges in its adaptation. In a sense, it indicated that ridesharing was in transition in Kathmandu city, as a station from which the ridesharers can change the course of their life-journey.

For Prakash, ridesharing represented a novel trend, a technological phenomenon that had emerged as a distinct urban culture. He was a driver in the past and then became a ridesharer. For all, there's a doubt about the uncertain future of ridesharing, as the federal government wasn't committed to practically integrating it into our transportation system. On the contrary, I also realize that provincial governments, media, court, and consumers in general were advocating for its institutionalization in Nepal. I understand the public dissatisfaction with the federal government's weak stance, and its request for the province to withdraw the proposed ridesharing bill. At the very least, by becoming a ridesharer in the city, they also learned how to create a transitional plan. It is also a form of informal learning, and a typical milestone on the journey of becoming, in my perspective. The ridesharers enjoyed this sector as a step to move forward towards their next destination. It is a continuous process of human life to experience various identities, and establish multiple becoming within a life.

I accept the continuous fluctuations in their positionality, as it creates an opportunity to become the next person with transformed responsibility. In my opinion, becoming a successful person in a particular sector, and then switching to a completely different sector, with the same enthusiasm and energy is an adventure per

se. This is why, I consider it, as a life skill that youth gain while ridesharing, a skill that helps them make transitional plans as well. By utilizing this skill, the youth can transition from Role A to Role B, if they are actively engaged to a particular sector. As the nature of becoming is never static but fluid, the youth would be better served by planning the next step in their lives. As Deterritorialization, Transformation (Zone of Becoming) and Reterritorialization (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) are the three steps of becoming, the transition helps the youth become ready for the next journey of life. Hence, on the part of the ridesharers, it's a useful and must-have skill for several reasons.

Ridesharing not only offers joys and freedom, but it also comes with numerous difficulties, confusions, worries and the 'ugly picture of living a working-class life in the city'. Nevertheless, my participants, being the youth, narrated the joyful moments, accepting the challenges as a natural part of their development. In a sense, they were the 'bosses of their own office', called their own shots, and were on the move all the time. Conversely, they were stuck in the taxi, a penal colony and a sweatshop on wheel, without any security (Luedke, 2010). I composed a poem that reflects on the positive aspects of the narratives shared by my participants, and I titled it – 'I am a taxi driver.' Becoming a taxi driver, how my participants celebrations of the moments are portrayed in the poem.

I am a taxi-driver

I am the boss of my office

I can go wherever

I decide to go

I can even sleep on my office

When there is free time.

There is nobody to control me

I can control myself

I can control my taxi

I can control my life.

If I do not like to work

*I need not plead
For a day leave.*

*Far from the village
I'd been in this city
In search of my future
I sold goods at their store
I washed plates at their café
Finally, one day, I got
A taxi on my hand
As a destiny of my life
I know that,
Not all the roads are safe
Not all the days
Have fair weather
I enjoy driving
Crossing the humps.*

*I talk to many people,
The patient who has just been
Discharged from hospital
The body-builder who is in hurry
To reach the fitness club
I talk to their children
I smile to their parents
I can share my ride,
To anybody else
Whoever is ready
To accompany my travel.*

*I learned my ABC
When I sat on the driver's seat
A for Accelerator*

B for Brakes
C for Clutch
In this way-
My first day class was over.
Being a student
At the University of Life
I learned how to navigate the maps
How to explore the roads and houses
How to deal with the people
I learned their culture
I learned their language.

A new beginning of life
I experienced when
I started ridesharing in the city.
I am a taxi-driver
I am the boss of my office
I can go wherever
I decided to go,
“Excuse me, gentleman!
Do you need a taxi?”

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the themes based on the becoming dimension of ridesharing. It comprises self-confidence, self-employability, pleasure riding and ridesharing-in-transition. These themes were derived from the stories of the participants representing their remarkable milestones in the journey of becoming ridesharer. I exploited the three levels of becoming to make meaning from the themes. My reflections were also expressed through a poem while discussing the ideas I presented.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTION

In this chapter, I summarized my dissertation highlighting its research procedure and findings. Concluding the overall study, I explored its possible implications for multiple stakeholders. In other words, the implications were not simply targeted at the ridesharing youth but also extended to policymakers and educators, who are supposed to incorporate emerging urban initiatives, such as ridesharing, into the mainstream education system. At the end of the chapter, I described my reflections and a brief note of my research journey.

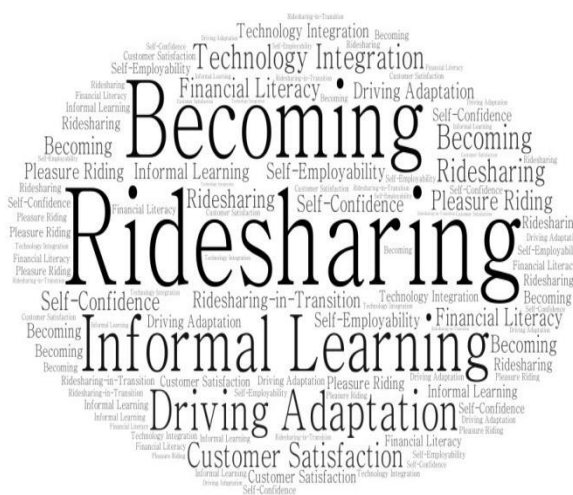
Summarizing the Research

Ridesharing has been my area of interest as a field of inquiry since its emergence in Nepal. In 2017, Tootle, a pioneering ridesharing app in Nepal, offered its service in Kathmandu city, although it was not widespread among the urban youth. I know that it was in an experimental phase at the time, and there was no certainty about whether the ridesharing culture would take off in Nepal or not. There were a small number of ridesharers, and few customers were informed on it. I acknowledge that ridesharing has flourished in Nepal beyond my imagination, which is why I pursued it as my dissertation topic.

In the first chapter, I commenced the research, expressing my interest in studying ridesharing. In the introduction section, I mentioned that ridesharing was my fascinating field of study since its emergence in Nepal. I pursued it as an integral part of urban living. It was not simply a financial activity; instead, it was a space that links the learning and becoming dimension of urban youth associated with it. Presenting the problem statement, rationale and

Figure 12

Thematic Cloud of the Study



purpose of the study, I designed the research questions concentrating on the learning and becoming experiences of the young ridesharing participants.

I covered the literature review section in the second chapter. Starting with the concept of ridesharing, I presented the thematic review on ridesharing in both global and local contexts. I highlighted the growing hype surrounding urban youth, with a special focus on its learning and becoming dimension. In this regard, I presented the informal learning theories, especially the situated learning theory, and its interconnectedness to the becoming perspective. I also presented an empirical review, a policy review, and a research gap. I highlighted the urgency of drafting a policy to incorporate the informal learning and becoming dimensions of ridesharing in our educational and developmental discourse.

In Chapter 3, I discussed on the methodological dimension of the study. I presented the ontology (relativism), epistemology (Deleuzian Constructivism), and axiology (value-laden). My research paradigm was interpretive, and I exploited the narrative inquiry as my research design. I pursued the study based on five ridesharing youths in Kathmandu city, who were active in this field, and often treated as ‘ridesharers’ in the city. I observed their activities, and conducted in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. Weaving the narratives with their unique lifeworld, collecting explanations through the field notes, I drafted the individual stories scanning the learning and becoming dimensions. Analyzing the themes based on the similar patterns, I generated codes, categories, and themes from them. While doing so, I tried to maintain authenticity, trustworthiness, temporality, spatiality, and confidentiality as the quality standards, and equally respected the ethical concerns.

In the fourth chapter, I presented the stories of my participants as they narrated them, which were based on the interviews, observations, and my reflections. The first story was about a youth who dreamt of going to Korea, but became a ridesharer in Kathmandu city as his ‘mission Korea’ failed for the time. The second story was about another youth who was a part-time ridesharer. He had his own business, so he was partially engaged in the ridesharing sector to satisfy his passion for it. He loved interacting with people and exploring the city through ridesharing. The third story was about a participant who was a cardio survivor as he underwent an open-heart surgery during his childhood. Despite his physical weakness, he had enjoyed ridesharing in the city for the last seven years. The fourth story was about a wonderful youth who underwent extreme domestic problems; hence, he worked as a ridesharer to save the

life of his seriously ill father. The final story was about a Gulf returnee who enjoyed ridesharing as a lifeworld and had several dreams to fulfil associated with it.

In chapter 5, I presented the themes and discussions from the learning dimension. I identified driving adaptation, technology integration, customer satisfaction, and financial literacy as the themes from this dimension. Similarly, in the sixth chapter, I described the themes and discussions from the becoming dimension of ridesharing. I presented self-confidence, self-employability, pleasure riding and ridesharing-in-transition as the themes from this dimension. I executed the thematic analysis technique in both chapters to derive the respective themes. I applied the informal learning theory, the situated learning theory and the dimension of becoming which intersected both theoretical frameworks. The findings were explored in the light of the discussion, theoretical considerations, and my personal reflections.

Finally, I completed the dissertation with the summary, conclusion, implications, and reflections. I expect the implications can go beyond the enactment of ridesharing, incorporating its educational and developmental dimensions. I also have left the area in which further research can be expected in this field. I concluded the entire research journey, along with my reflections describing how I pursued it and addressed the challenges that occurred during its completion.

Concluding the Study

In this dissertation, I explored the untold stories of five young ridesharers, particularly emphasizing their informal learning and becoming dimension. I adopted the narrative inquiry method to collect the stories, in which in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. I developed eight themes, four from the perspective of learning and four from the perspective of becoming, and then, I constructed meaning around them. The themes on the learning dimension were driving adaptation, technology integration, customer satisfaction and financial literacy. On the other hand, I developed the themes from the becoming dimension as self-confidence, self-employability, pleasure riding and ridesharing-in-transition. Theoretically, I proposed informal learning theory, situated learning theory and the dimension of becoming which were accompanied by connectivism, learning by ridesharing and leisure theory.

I assume that the young ridesharers are informally learning various skills and concomitantly building their positions in the urban community. As informal learning is largely unrecognized and unacknowledged by the learners (Eraut, 2004), my participants did not readily accept that they had learned so much while ridesharing.

Based on their stories, I noticed they were updated with modern communication technology, as ridesharing is a highly tech-based activity. They also learned to interact with different people as their customers, from whom they learned new languages, cultures, geographies, technologies, politics, and so on. Furthermore, they developed the ability to predict customer behavior in advance which enabled them to promptly resolve potential disputes.

Similarly, the ridesharers learned to earn, save, invest and spend money reasonably, which made them financially intelligent. Interestingly, they seemed to enjoy ridesharing as a convenient and productive endeavor and had an emotional attachment to it. Ultimately, I conclude that ridesharing is in a transitional phase in Nepal, despite the overwhelming appeal to urban youth in this field. Hence, policymakers need to consider it as a learning and development platform, while drafting national and sectoral policies, including those related to informal learning.

I realize there are more steps to be taken to institutionalize ridesharing in Nepal. Linking it with the informal learning and becoming of the youth involved in ridesharing and other similar initiatives is crucial in my observation. Ridesharing is not simply an economic activity; it is a unique space with the potential for learning and shaping positionality as a subculture of urban life. I envisage the discourse of learning and shaping positionality needs to be transformed along with the interventions of technology and youth involvement.

To conclude, I found that the ridesharing youth in Kathmandu have not only learned to adapt to the urban culture, integrate digital technology in their daily lives, and satisfy customers with their descent behavior, but also become more confident and self-employed ridesharers with the ability to enjoy the moment of ridesharing as a leisure time activity. However, ridesharing has been in transition due to the delayed enactment, and a gap between public interest and government policy.

Implications of the Study

I believe that the study of ridesharing from a learning and becoming dimension is a relatively new field of academic research. I categorized the implications targeted at three major stakeholders: the policy makers, the educators and the ridesharers themselves. First, the policy makers will get some basic insights through the findings of this study, as they institutionalize ridesharing in Nepal. I hope my dissertation will contribute, to some extent, to the drafting of a comprehensive

policy that encompasses its legal, administrative, educational, entrepreneurial, technical, and developmental facets.

I realize the legalization and formalization of ridesharing is an underestimated area in Nepal. The government at a provincial level (e.g., the Gandaki Province) surpassed the federal government in legislating the ridesharing bill. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of Nepal imposed an ordinance to legalize ridesharing in Nepal. Nevertheless, there was a dispute arose between the traditional taxi drivers and the new ridesharers in the city, particularly in Pokhara and Kathmandu. They supported either the traditional or the modern system of transportation based on their own interpretations. To settle such dispute, I hope my work will provide some fundamental guidelines to the policy makers while drafting the ridesharing-related policies in the days to come.

Secondly, for the educators, it will provide some basic insights into the essence of integrating technology, learning informally, and becoming a member of urban society. At least, I hope that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology will consider it by incorporating the concept of informal learning and adopting the Education Policy of Nepal. It will help the stakeholders undertake ridesharing as an integral part of urban living, a public demand of the time and a potential way to resolve the unemployment problem among youth. Additionally, I hope the local levels in Nepal will prioritize building the foundations of learning cities by integrating technology, work, and education.

Similarly, the ridesharers themselves will benefit from the unbounded potentials of learning and shaping their positionality as ridesharers in the city. They can learn, earn, and become ridesharers in the city accepting the challenges and opportunities embedded to this sector. In this context, Agatz et al. (2012) suggest that optimization, incentives and choice are the broad areas for the future research in this sector. For the individuals interested in ridesharing, I hope it will open a door to a new avenue of learning and making identity in the city.

To conclude, I believe that not only the educational policy will be benefitted, by exploring learning and becoming dimensions of ridesharing youth, but also the whole developmental policy, including technology development, urban development, entrepreneurship development and youth development can be linked together to form a comprehensive developmental policy. Finally, I left the following questions to be further researched in this field.

- How can the policy makers be provided with better inputs to draft policy and other legal frameworks in this sector?
- How can the educators contribute to incorporating informal learning and becoming into our education system?
- How can the ridesharers stay in this field, taking it as a decent job or as a stepping stone for entrepreneurship?

Reflecting the Entire Journey

My journey of pursuing this research on ridesharing was motivated by my frequent travel inside the Kathmandu valley using such apps. During my first semester, I used ridesharing services to commute to my office which was in Singh Durbar at that time. Finding an empty seat on a public bus during the peak hours was a wild goose chase there. During that time, my wife also preferred booking ridesharing services when she had to go on shopping. We used to expect an informal conversation with the ridesharer whenever they were booked. During the trip, I encountered several ridesharers who exhibited remarkable intelligence beyond my initial expectations. Some ridesharers had such touching stories that I could hardly forget them in my life.

When I enrolled in my MPhil degree at Kathmandu University, I had a strong desire to pursue research on ridesharing. As a customer, I travelled extensively in Kathmandu city using ridesharing services. However, as a service provider, I had no ideas about their lifeworld, perceptions and multiple realities. While interacting with the ridesharers, I enjoyed the moment of conversation as an opportunity to learn several things from them. I recalled the experiences that they shared with me and decided to link with them later.

I accept that my initial research journey was not comfortable when I entered the city to find my participants. On the very first day, I was unsuccessful in finding a single ridesharer to be my participant. I observed their activities, took some photographs, and then returned home that day. After a few days, I managed to get one of the ridesharers accepting my proposal, and got him ready to face an in-depth interview. It was practicable when I became their friend, not a spy (Kim, 2015), and travelled with them. Gradually, I met other participants in various locations, and continued to connect with them both virtually and in person. I am grateful to those

ridesharers who frequently provided me the service in the past, and supported me, being my participants later.

Finally, I realize that ridesharing is a multifaceted platform for learning various skills, and a new space for urban youth, which helped them develop their potentials. I hope that the stakeholders will consider and integrate it as a learning platform outside the formal education system. I envisage that it can also be treated as a career-centered, learning-centered and becoming-centered activity. Having the study completed, I also learned a great deal from interacting with the participants, some directly, while others were more observational, and some memorable nuances between the interactions and the meaningful silence.

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