

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO COMMUNITY SERVICE INVOLVEMENT: INPUTS FOR STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY EXTENSION SERVICE

*John Mark R. Asio

**Dante P. Sardina

***Judy Ann O. Olaguir

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Corresponding Author: John Mark R. Asio; Email: johnmark.asio@email.lcup.edu.ph; doi:10.46360/globus.edu.220231009

Abstract

This study aims to determine the students' attitudes to community service involvement at a local higher education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. The study used a descriptive-correlation research design with the online google form as the primary data-gathering tool. One hundred one (101) students voluntarily answered the online survey using a convenience sampling technique. The data gathering occurred in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. This study also used an adopted and modified instrument validated by experts and subjected it to a reliability test. As for the data analysis, the data analyst used mean, t-test, and Pearson-r moment of correlation. The result shows that students "highly consider" most of the reasons mentioned in the survey for participating in community services. In addition, the top three interests for students in joining community services were education, safety and security, and conservation. As for the skills, the top three include teaching, typing, and cooking. Inferential statistics show no significant difference in student attitudes when grouped according to gender. However, there was a significant association between the reasons for involvement, interest, and skills beneficial to the student's community service. The study shared some important implications intended for the promotion of community service involvement of students.

Keywords: Community Service, Students' Attitude, Student Participation, Community Extension, Local Higher Education Institution.

Introduction

As one of the trifocal functions of higher education institutions, community extension/ community service is equally essential. This particular function applies not only to faculty but also to students of the institution. In a previous article, an author remarked that higher education institutions in the Philippines must intensify community engagement through extension activities (Medina, 2018 [18]). This idea also includes the faculty as well as the students. In the point of view of Loso (2021) [17] and Tijsma et al. (2020) [25], institutions' curricular programs should align their community extension services with the needs of their adopted communities. This idea is accurate since the true essence of community service is unique and sometimes misunderstood by others. Omblerio (2020) [20] and Tijsma et al. (2020) [25] also emphasized the importance of community extension services wherein the academe provides and benefits the country's welfare. This perspective strongly agrees with the statement of Assefa et al. (2019) [2], whom they considered that the community is a critical player in the success of the implementation of community programs.

Doing community service is an activity intended for society. It is a way of giving back to what society has done for its constituents. Based on the context of Borbon et al. (2022) [4], community service is an activity that institutions perform to aid certain societies in which help is comfort for their everyday living. These activities include livelihood projects where beneficiaries, faculty, and students positively impact one another (Borbon & Ylagan, 2021 [5]). Additionally, Rubio et al. (2016) [23] specified that conducting community service is about establishing a relationship to build communities. Moreover, Ling (2018) [16] did a study regarding volunteering and participation in community service among students. At the end of the study, the author emphasized the essence of social workers for planning, organizing, executing, and evaluating service programs.

It is, therefore, crucial for students to understand the reality of doing community service. Tijsma et al.

*Research Director, Gordon College, Olongapo City Philippines & Graduate School Student, La Consolacion University Philippines, Malolos City, Bulacan, Philippines.

**Community Extension Service Unit Coordinator, Gordon College, Olongapo City, Philippines.

***Publication Unit Coordinator, Gordon College, Olongapo City, Philippines.

(2020) also added the essence of providing appropriate measures, format, and definition of reflection and evaluation strategies in community service. Moreover, Kerr et al. (2018) [14] showed the essence of extension through the engagement of campus-based colleges, colleagues, and students and the delivery of youth development programs to communities. Furthermore, Huml et al. (2017) [13] stated that community service is an essential part of the academic experience among college students and is a frequent source of activity. That is why, in the article of George et al. (2017) [10], they reiterated that participation in community-based research could provide students with the necessary experience in research and service learning. Besides, Heo (2016) [12] publicized that students with community service experience showed higher satisfaction and academic achievement.

Some studies have shown exciting results, conveying essential changes in how community service works with students' participation and engagement. For instance, in the Philippines, the study by Guiron et al. in 2019 provided essential information on the student's level of participation in community extension service and revealed a high response rate. This idea supported the findings of Li and Frieze (2016) [15]. Their path model showed that community service participation affected students' interests. From a state university perspective in the Philippines, Perez et al. (2020) [21] also added the association between entrepreneurial competencies and readiness for extension and community service among students. The previous study by Shaka and Senbeto (2018) [24] also found that 72.2 % of the students have an encouraging attitude towards community-based education. In addition, the paper of Pesigan et al. (2017) [22] also showed that students were willing

to help other people without expecting any in return. This concept is a good principle that students learn in their participation in community service. Conversely, in another research by Evans et al. (2018) [7], the group exposed that residential students strongly associate with civic engagement. The type of student participation also conveyed exciting results, like the study of Boatman and Long in 2016, wherein student scholars were more likely to join community service activities.

We decided to create our investigation from the above discussion and interpolate the other literature that focused on community service participation and engagement among higher education students. Our study focuses on our institution's community service and students' attitudes towards participating in such activities. From previous literature, none focused on the lens of a local college in Central Luzon, Philippines. Thus, our team created this study to provide a glimpse of the different community services our institution provides. This study aims to present and analyze the students' attitudes to community service regarding reasons, interests, and available skills that may contribute to the activity's success. We employed descriptive and inferential statistics to present a vivid picture of our students' actual perspectives and attitudes when they engage in community service.

The result of this investigation is also helpful to researchers and the academic community in sustaining the trifocal function of the institution as mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Furthermore, the result can become a basis for developing future policies and sustainable programs indicated for the adopted community of the institution.

Conceptual Framework

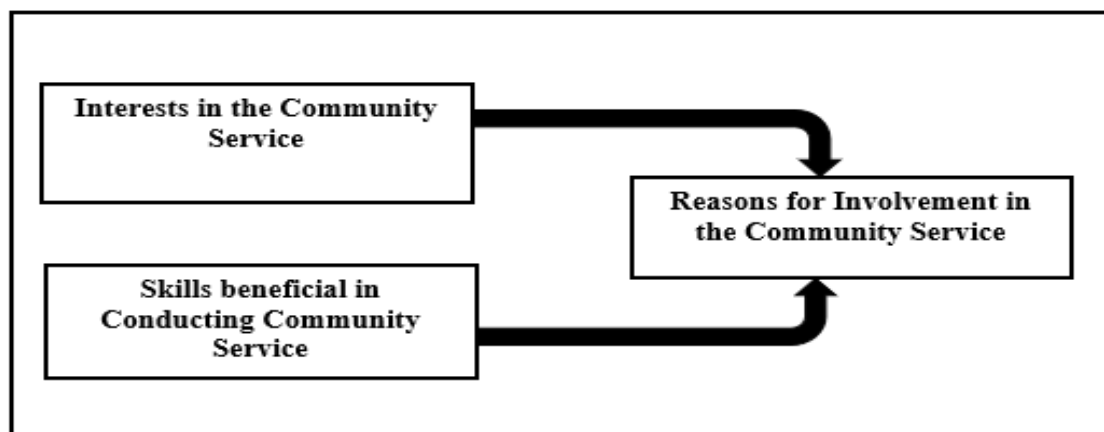


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

As presented in the Conceptual Model of the Study, it posited the positive reinforcement for the Grade 8 students in different forms like praise, tangible reward, and caring behavior and how these affect the students' classroom behavior which involves making noise, cheating, tardiness, disobedience, and rudeness and students' classroom values which includes performance task and submission of deadlines.

Statement of the Problem

This study intends to analyze the students' attitudes towards community service. The result of the study will become inputs for strengthening the community extension service of an institution. Specifically, this study intends to sought answers for the following questions:

1. How are the reasons for involvement of students in community service be described?
2. What are the different interests that students relative to community service?
3. What are the students' skills that are beneficial in conducting community service?
4. Is there a significant difference in the students' attitudes to community service involvement when grouped according to sex?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the reason for involvement, interests, and skills beneficial in conducting community service? based from the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation

This research paper focuses on the students' attitudes towards community service from a local higher education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. Using a convenience sampling technique, the data collection came from students (regardless of year level) who participated in the different community services of the institution in the academic year of 2021-2022. The research only focused on three major variables namely, the reasons for involvement, interest and the skills beneficial in the conduct of community service. This paper did not cover those students who were not willing to join the survey and do not have interest in community service. It is also limited to the students of the local higher education institution only for the sole purpose of establishing a baseline data for the institution. Other students outside and not in the same institution as where the study focused were not within the scope of the research. The collection of data is via google form and collected in a period of one month. From the result of the survey, the researchers can determine the implications and provide essential inputs to strengthen the community extension services of the said institution.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive-correlation design with the online survey as the primary data gathering tool. We used descriptive research since the study intends to describe a particular phenomenon or characteristic in a population. In this case, we try to analyze the students' attitudes to community service involvement. We also used a correlation design to assess the underlying association among the different variables involved in the study. Thus, using such a design in this study is appropriate and applicable.

Population and Sampling

With the help of the convenience sampling technique, 101 students voluntarily participated in the online survey during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. In order to generate the data intended for the study, we sought and reached out for the participation of the students of a local college in Olongapo City, Philippines. In order to be part of the survey, we used the following criteria for inclusion: a) a bona fide student of the local college involved in the study, b) must be currently enrolled/ studying in the local college, and c) actively participated/ participating to the institution's community services.

Instrumentation

For the study to attain its objectives, we adopted and modified a research instrument created by Tamban et al. (2020). The instrument has three portions, namely, (1) the reasons for the involvement, (2) the respondent's interests in participating, and (3) their skills that are beneficial in conducting community service. We patterned the responses to a five-point Likert scale to measure the degree or level of their perspectives.

Prior to the actual data gathering, we did a pilot test first. We did a Cronbach's Alpha analysis of the items involved in the survey. We generated an overall Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.943, which is generally highly reliable.

Data Analysis

In this study, we used descriptive and inferential statistics to obtain the necessary data to be interpreted for the study. The study used mean and for the response of the students in the evaluation of attitudes towards community service, Analysis of Variance, and Pearson-r Moment of Correlation for the inferential statistics. To achieve this, we sought the help of IBM SPSS version 23 for the data computation.

Results and Discussion

RESULTS

This study aims to determine our students' attitudes toward community service involvement. Specifically, the succeeding tables present the survey result that focuses on the following variables, reasons for involvement, interests, and the skills

beneficial in conducting community service. In the end, we also presented inferential analysis for possible differences and relationships among the involved variables in the study.

Table 1: Reasons for Involvement

Items	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1) Learn or develop skills	4.48	Highly Considered
2) Teach you skills	4.50	Highly Considered
3) Enhance your resume	4.32	Highly Considered
4) Gain work experience	4.47	Highly Considered
5) Build self-esteem and self-confidence	4.58	Highly Considered
6) Improve your health	4.32	Highly Considered
7) Meet new people	4.52	Highly Considered
8) Feel needed and valued	4.36	Highly Considered
9) Express gratitude for the help you may have received in the past from the organization	4.52	Highly Considered
10) Communicate to others that you are ambitious, enthusiastic, and caring about the community	4.41	Highly Considered
11) Make a difference in someone's life	4.45	Highly Considered
12) Improve the likelihood of being a volunteer	4.53	Highly Considered
Overall Mean	4.45	Highly Considered

Legend: 5.00-4.21 = Highly Considered; 4.20-3.41 = Considered; 3.40-2.61 = Moderately Considered; 2.60-1.81 = Less Considered; 1.80-1.00 = Not Considered

We present in table 1 the mean result of the different reasons for involvement in the community service of students. In general, we can deduce that all of the items mentioned in the survey got a "highly considered" remark from the students. In particular, item 12, "Improve the likelihood of being a volunteer," garnered the highest mean score of 4.53. This result corresponds to a descriptive interpretation of "highly considered." On the other hand, item 3, "Enhance your resume," and item 6,

"Improve your health," obtained the lowest mean score of 4.32. This score is similar to the descriptive interpretation of "highly considered." The overall mean obtained by the study was 4.45, which also corresponds to "highly considered" in the descriptive interpretation. This result shows that students have high regard for participating in different community services provided by the institution for the community and other related or similar involvements.

Table 2: Interests of the Respondents

Items	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1) Politics	3.43	Interested
2) Energy/ Environment	4.34	Highly Interested
3) Advocacy	4.33	Highly Interested

4) Education	4.63	Highly Interested
5) Health Care	4.44	Highly Interested
6) Housing/ Homeless	4.19	Interested
7) Veterans	3.97	Interested
8) Children	4.45	Highly Interested
9) Animals	4.39	Highly Interested
10) Conservation	4.46	Highly Interested
11) Safety and Security	4.48	Highly Interested
Overall Mean	4.28	Highly Interested

Legend: 5.00-4.21 = Highly Interested; 4.20-3.41 = Interested; 3.40-2.61 = Moderately Interested; 2.60-1.81 = Less Interested; 1.80-1.00 = Not Interested

Table 2 shows the mean result of the different interests in that students may get involved. We can see from the presentation that most of the items revealed a "highly interested" response from the students. Specifically, item 4, "Education," got the highest score with 4.63, which equates to "highly interested" in the descriptive interpretation. However, item 1, "Politics," obtained the lowest mean with 3.43, which agrees with a descriptive

interpretation of "interested" in the scale. Nevertheless, the overall mean generated, which is 4.28, still provided a descriptive interpretation of "highly interested." Based on this result, we can say that students have different perspectives and interests when doing community service. As for the institution, this can be used to enhance further and develop the different community service programs done by the school.

Table 3: Skills Beneficial in Conducting Community Service

Items	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1) Computer Literate	3.97	Skilled
2) Typing	4.11	Skilled
3) Sales	3.82	Skilled
4) Construction	3.49	Skilled
5) Teaching	4.23	Highly Skilled
6) Proficient in Sign Language	3.08	Moderately Skilled
7) Engine Repair	2.56	Less Skilled
8) Management	4.01	Skilled
9) Artistic	3.68	Skilled
10) Athletic	3.38	Moderately Skilled
11) Cooking	4.06	Skilled
Overall Mean	3.67	Skilled

Legend: 5.00-4.21 = Highly Skilled; 4.20-3.41 = Skilled; 3.40-2.61 = Moderately Skilled; 2.60-1.81 = Less Skilled; 1.80-1.00 = Not Skilled

We demonstrate the mean result of different skills, which are beneficial in conducting community services in table 3. We can deduce from the table that students have a different set of skills that can be helpful in community service involvement. Explicitly, item 5, "Teaching," generated the highest mean score of 4.23, which matches the descriptive interpretation of "highly skilled" in the scale. On the other hand, item 7, "Engine repair," disclosed the

lowest mean score of 2.56, which is parallel to "less skilled" in the descriptive interpretation. The table generated an overall mean of 3.67, corresponding to a descriptive interpretation of "skilled." This result is a testament to the institution's possible skills to utilize and maximize community service. Additionally, the institution can create more programs for extension services based on students' unique skills in the future.

Table 4: Significant Difference in the Students' Attitudes to Community Service Involvement

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
Reason for Involvement	Male	35	4.55	0.538	1.374	.173
	Female	66	4.40	0.512		
Interests	Male	35	4.29	0.580	0.081	.936
	Female	66	4.28	0.493		
Skills beneficial in Conducting Community Service	Male	35	3.69	0.637	0.216	.830
	Female	66	3.66	0.672		

Overall Attitude	Male	35	4.18	0.481	0.642	.522
	Female	66	4.11	0.460		

Note: df = 99

We perform a t-test for a significant difference in table 4 to see variations in the students' attitudes toward community service involvement. As seen from the presentation, when we grouped the samples according to their sex, we did not observe any significant difference in their responses. We obtained the following results: for the reason for involvement: $t(99) = 1.374$, $p = .173$; for the interests, $t(99) = 0.081$, $p = .936$; for the skills, $t(99) = 0.216$,

$p = .830$; and for the overall attitude, $t(99) = 0.642$, $p = .522$. All p-values were higher than the alpha significance level of .05. It is safe to conclude that there was no significant difference in the students' attitudes when grouped according to their sex. This result means that regardless of their sex, they can participate, get involved, and contribute to the different community services offered by the institution.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix between Students' Reason for Involvement, Interests, and Skills Beneficial in Conducting Community Service

	1	2	3
1) Reason for Involvement	1		
2) Interests	.634*	1	
3) Skills beneficial in Conducting Community Service	.443*	.477*	1

Note: $N = 101$; $*p < .05$

Finally, we illustrate the relationships between students' attitudes toward community service involvement in table 5. The table revealed moderate to high relationships among the three variables in the study, namely, the reason for involvement, interests, and skills beneficial in conducting community service. We obtain the following results: reasons for involvement has a moderate relationship with the skills ($r = .443$) and a high relationship with interests ($r = .634$). Furthermore, skills also generated a moderate relationship to reasons for involvement ($r = .443$) and interests ($r = .447$). All of the probability values were lower than the alpha level of significance of .05. Therefore, it is safe to assume that there is a relationship in-between each variable in the attitude of students in community service involvement.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze the students' attitudes toward partaking in community service that the institution provides for the community. Based on the results that the study obtained and generated, it seems that the students were knowledgeable and participated actively in the different community service activities offered by the institution. One of the motivations for students to get involved in community service is to have a structured activity and incorporate reflective learning (Fang et al., 2022 [8]). Moreover, Heo (2016) [12] stated that the higher the students' satisfaction with community service was, the higher the students' satisfaction.

To prove the claim, we showed that students "highly consider" most of the items involved regarding the reason for involvement. This finding strengthens the notion that students have a heart for helping others,

whatever their circumstances. The study of Pesigan et al. (2017) [22] supported the finding of our study, where the group stated that community extension activities had influenced the students in terms of values and attitude, knowledge, and skills. Additionally, community extension coordinators need to develop an appropriate community service intended for the institution to provide (Guiron et al., 2019). However, Li and Frieze (2016) also affirmed that the participation of students in community service affects their interests.

Our study also depicted students' different interests, particularly those engaged in community service. In the study, we observed that education, safety and security, and conservation were the top three highest interests that students claim to have. Unsurprisingly, education was at the top since the institution is an academic community. What is more surprising is the students' interest in safety, security, and conservation. Most probably, during exposure, our students observed such situations and felt there was a need to consider these ideas in the future. The group of Borbon (2022) reiterated the students' commitment to service, which includes an appreciation of life, realization of be-attitudes, and skills enhancement. Thus, the previous situation applies to these sets of ideas. In addition, Gardner and Emory (2018) [9], in their previous investigation, demonstrated a reduction in fear, a rise in empathy, and a profound understanding of professional role advocacy. Furthermore, Acero (2018) [1] showed that the success of community service lies in the involvement of students, who contribute to the increase in awareness among people of partner communities.

As for the skills that are beneficial for community service, we found that teaching, typing, and cooking were the top three beneficial skills. This result is not surprising since the institution has developed the students' teaching, typing, and cooking skills. Thus, community service allows the students to test and apply these skills. Borbon et al. (2022) supported this idea of students' skills enhancement since it will promote their commitment to service. On the other hand, Rubio et al. (2016) [23] also exposed that students expect the benefits of community extension in helping them grow as more productive and efficient students and members of society.

We also ran an inferential analysis of the student's attitudes toward community service involvement. No significant difference was found when we grouped the students according to gender. The article of Shaka and Senbeto (2018) [24] disagreed with the current result of the study. They believed that female students have a more favorable attitude towards community involvement. Regarding association among the variables, the reason for involvement in community service revealed a moderate to the high association with the study's other two variables (interest and skills). This result contradicted the previous study by Meyer et al. (2019) [19]. They publicized no participation effects on the students' self-efficacy, generalized trust, empathic concern, and attribution for poverty factors. Nonetheless, Czekanski and Brown (2015) [6] established that former students have a higher level of perceived organizational support than those who just attended and did not participate in community service.

This study showed interesting results that may help the development of more efficient and effective community extension programs. Furthermore, the results can also become a basis for enhancing other community services the institution provides. Finally, the study contributed essential knowledge for future consumption and references.

Conclusion

From the previous results and discussion of the study, we now conclude that our students highly consider the majority of the reasons that help them get involved in community service. In addition, our students' top three interests in community service include education, safety, security, and conservation. Finally, for the top three skills that community service will benefit, we found teaching, typing, and cooking were the top places.

In terms of significant differences, we found no variation in the students' attitudes towards involvement in community service. However, there is a moderate association between the students' reasons, interests, and skills in community service for the institution.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the study, we now present the following implications of this study:

- 1) The student organization should participate wholeheartedly in the school's different community extension programs, which align with their interests.
- 2) The different student organization should also develop their community extension program together with the institution's Community Extension Service Unit (CESU) for proper guidance and collaboration.
- 3) The students should also attend different seminars and webinars conducted by the institution about community service to gain more insights and possibilities for getting involved in community service programs in the future.
- 4) The Community Extension Service Unit (CESU) should also design community extension programs in collaboration with the different colleges parallel to the institution's programs.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors in this manuscript.

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