

Involvement of Students in Community Action: An Input to a Stronger Students' Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the level of students' involvement in community action as an input to stronger students' community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship. Mixed method research design was employed in this study. Most of the students highly considered their reasons for prospective involvement in a community action, while in terms of their skills beneficial in conducting a prospective involvement in a community action, they were moderately skilled. Based on the results of the interviewed conducted in terms of identifying the differences and similarities on community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship. In terms of differences, most of them said that community engagement was helping the community, some of them said it's a relationship in the community. The researchers concluded that the students' involvement in community action in terms of their reasons is highly considered and in terms of their interest in community action, they are interested in involving in a community action, but in terms of their skills beneficial in conducting community action, moderately skilled is not enough to involve in community action. It was also concluded that most of the students were less knowledgeable about community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship. Based on the results of this study, the researchers recommended that there's a need to have a consistent community involvement and engagement at all levels of the school for the students grasp the importance and real essence of community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship.

Keywords: Students' Community involvement, Community Action, Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship

1. INTRODUCTION

Community Engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, state/regional, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity, (Marion, R.D., Ph.D., 2007).

Participating in volunteer, service learning, community-based research or other community engagement activities can expose students to real world challenges that affect our diverse community. These hands-on experiences can teach you how to think critically about the wide impacts of these issues while working alongside and learning from community and industry experts. Working with community members, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, will help students build resumes, become more familiar with industries or areas of personal interest, and become better prepared with the interpersonal, technical, and professional skills to achieve success in the modern day workforce, (<http://www.ccsu.edu>).

Families are bound together in love and solidarity. Every individual family is called to be a rich expression of that love and solidarity and a witness of the same to the world. Furthermore, the human person participates in the broader human family by his own nature. Our humanity is shared, and our

reality as persons immediately and irrevocably links us to the rest of the human community. Yet, for participation to be most meaningful, it must be consciously practiced and chosen. The willingness to practice participation while striving for social justice is the social virtue of solidarity. It is, therefore, the acceptance of our social nature and the affirmation of the bonds we share with all our brothers and sisters. Solidarity creates an environment in which mutual service is encouraged. It also the social conditions in which human rights can be respected and nurtured. The ability to recognize and accept the whole range of corresponding duties and obligations that are embedded in our social nature can occur only in an atmosphere enlivened by solidarity, (Rev. Robert A. Sirico, 2000).

Community citizenship refers to the possession by members of a community of a range of social and cultural rights and responsibilities by virtue of their membership of that community and as a distinct element of their national citizenship rights, (Y. Berman, & D. Phillips, 2010).

According to a recent policy brief from the National Education Association (NEA), “when schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher level programs”. With these important benefits in mind, it’s clear that a focus on increasing community involvement programs and opportunities should be a consistent goal for your school.

According to Indiana University Bloomington, students who are engaged in campus and community activities such as student government, volunteering, and community service ironically devote more time and energy to academics, spend more time on campus, while participating actively in student organizations, and having more positive interactions with faculty and staff. All of this leads to a more productive educational environment that benefits every part of the institution. In addition, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service, a growing body of research over the past two decades indicates that engaging in community and campus activities provides individual health benefits in addition to social ones.

2. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It was shown in Figure 1, the conceptual framework of this study is the Input, Process, and Output (IPO), wherein the input is the students’ community engagement consist of consideration of reasons of involving in community action, interest of involving in community action, and skills beneficial of

involving in community action, while the process consist of distribution of survey questionnaire, conduct of interview, data gathering, analysis and interpretation of data, and for the output is the Action Plan to Strengthen the Students’ Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship .questionnaire, conduct of interview, data gathering, analysis and interpretation of data, and for the output is the Action Plan to Strengthen the Students’ Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship .

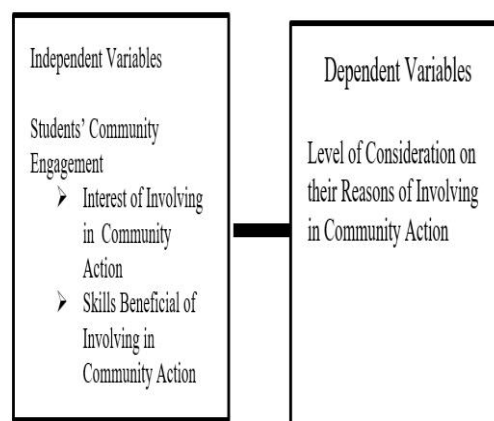


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Mixed method research design was employed in this study.

The term “mixed methods” refers to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or “mixing,” of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, (Jennifer Wisdom, Ph.D., 2013).

The respondents of the study were the 5 male and 7 female Grade 12 students under the discipline, “Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship of College of Teacher Education ,Laguna State Polytechnic University, Los Baños Campus, Los Baños, Laguna.

The instrument of this study is a survey questionnaires consist of students’ profile, and twelve (12) indicators for level of consideration of students’ reasons of involvement in community action, eleven (11) indicators each for interest and skills beneficial of students’ involvement in

community action adopted from a compendium of daily lesson plans and resource materials in community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship during the mass training of Senior High School Teachers last May 4 – 24, 2017 at San Fernando City, Pampanga.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results in table 1 shows the students' level of consideration on their reasons of involving in community action.

Table 1. Students' Level of Consideration on their Reasons of Involving in Community Action

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Learn or develop skills	4.83	0.38	Highly Considered
Teach your skills to other	4.75	0.45	Highly Considered
Enhance your resume	4.75	0.45	Highly Considered
Gain work experience	4.75	0.45	Highly Considered
Build self-esteem and self-confidence	4.75	0.45	Highly Considered
Improve your health	4.91	0.29	Highly Considered
Meet new people	4.92	0.29	Highly Considered
Feel needed and valued	4.83	0.39	Highly Considered
Express gratitude for help you may have received in the past from an organization	4.83	0.39	Highly Considered
Communicate to others that you are ambitious, enthusiastic, and care about the community	4.83	0.39	Highly Considered
Make a difference in someone's life	4.83	0.39	Highly Considered
Improves the likelihood of being a volunteer.	4.83	0.39	Highly Considered
Composite Mean	4.83	0.34	Highly Considered

Legend:

Weighted Mean

4.21 - 5.00
3.41 - 4.20
2.61 - 3.40
1.81 - 2.60
1.00 - 1.80

Interpretation

Highly Considered
Considered
Moderately Considered
Less Considered
No Considered

The results revealed that the students highly considered their reasons of involving in community action in all of the indicators with mean range from 4.75 to 4.92 and

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe the level of students' involvement in community action.

Open-ended interview guide questionnaire was also applied to determine the students' knowledge on community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship.

composite mean of 4.83 and SD of 0.34, which shows that students really wants to get involved in their community not only for own benefits to learn or develop skills , gain work experience, build self-esteem and self-confidence , and feel needed and valued, but also to teach skills to other, and make a difference in someone's life.

Table 2 shows the level of interests for having a prospective involvement in community action.

It was revealed that most of the students were highly interested in most of the indicators while interested only in healthcare and less interested in politics.

Table 2. Students' Level of Interests for having a Prospective Involvement in Community Action

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Politics	2.33	1.23	Less Interested
2. Energy / Environment	4.42	0.51	Highly Interested
Advocacy	4.50	0.52	Highly Interested
Education	4.58	0.51	Highly Interested
Health Care	4.25	0.45	Interested
Housing / Homeless	4.67	0.49	Highly Interested
Veterans	2.17	1.19	Less Interested
Children	4.75	0.45	Highly Interested
Animals	4.50	0.52	Highly Interested
Conservation	4.42	0.51	Highly Interested
Safety and Security	4.92	0.29	Highly Interested
Composite Mean	4.10	0.61	Interested

Legend:

Weighted Mean

4.21 - 5.00
3.41 - 4.20
2.61 - 3.40
1.81 - 2.60
1.00 - 1.80

Interpretation

Highly interested
Interested
Moderately interested
Less interested
Not interested

It was revealed in table 3 that the students were highly skilled in terms of indicators such as sales, artistic, athletic, and cooking while skilled in computer literate and typing, moderately skilled in terms of teaching, and

management, while not skilled in terms of construction, proficient in sign language, and engine repair.

A mean of 3.25 determined that students' level of skills beneficial in conducting community action was moderately skilled.

Table 3. Students' Level of Skills Beneficial in Conducting Community Action

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Computer Literate	3.83	0.39	Skilled
Typing	4.17	0.39	Skilled
Sales	4.33	0.49	Highly Skilled
Construction	1.33	0.78	Not Skilled
Teaching	3.17	0.39	Moderately Skilled
Proficient in Sign Language	1.00	0.00	Not Skilled
Engine Repair	1.00	0.00	Not Skilled
Management	2.50	0.90	Moderately Skilled
Artistic	4.50	0.52	Highly Skilled
Athletic	4.58	0.51	Highly Skilled
Cooking	4.42	0.51	Highly Skilled
Composite Mean	3.25	0.45	Moderately Skilled

Legend:

Weighted Mean

4.21 - 5.00

3.41 - 4.20

2.61 - 3.40

1.81 - 2.60

1.00 - 1.80

Interpretation

Highly Skilled

Skilled

Moderately Skilled

Less Skilled

Not Skilled

Based on the results of the interviewed conducted in terms of identifying the differences and similarities on community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship. In terms of differences, most of them said that community engagement was helping the community, some of them said it's a relationship in the community, and some described it as involvement in the community, while solidarity for most of them it's cooperation, some said unity, and some said that they did not know the meaning of solidarity, and in terms of citizenship, most of them said it's the kind of people based on the country they live, and some of them said it is the status of a person based on the kind of country. In terms of similarities, most of them said that community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship are both important for the economic development of a community and some of them said that they did not know the similarities.

4.1. Conclusion and Recommendation

The researchers concluded that the students' involvement in community action in terms of their reasons is highly considered and in terms of their interest in community action, they are interested in involving in a community action, but in terms of their skills beneficial in conducting community action, moderately skilled is not enough to

involve in community action. It was also concluded that most of the students were less knowledgeable about community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommended that there is a need to conduct training workshops to elevate the students' level of interest in community engagement, and enhance the students' skills beneficial to the community action. It is also recommended that there must be a consistent community involvement and engagement at all levels of the school for the students grasp the importance and real essence of community engagement, solidarity, and citizenship.

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