



## Student's Community Service Involvement: Implications for a Sustainable Community Extension Service

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the student's community service involvement at a local higher education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. We used a descriptive-correlation design to 101 students who responded to the online survey during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The result shows that students "highly consider" most of the reasons mentioned in participating to 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. There was no significant difference in the student's involvement 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. We shared some implications intended to sustain of community service involvement among students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Community extension or community service is equally vital as one of the trifocal functions of higher education institutions. This specific 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). This idea also includes the faculty as well as the students. From the point of view of Loso (2021) and Tijisma et al. (2020), 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. Omblero (2020) and Tijisma et al. (2020) 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), 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), 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). Additionally, Rubio et al. (2016) specified that conducting community service is about establishing a relationship to build communities. Moreover, Ling (2018) 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. Tijisma et al. (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) 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) 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), they reiterated that participation in community-based research could provide students with the necessary experience in research and service learning. Besides, Heo (2016) 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). Their path model showed that community service participation affected students' interests. From a state university perspective in the Philippines, Perez et al. (2020) also added the association between entrepreneurial competencies and readiness for extension and community service among students. The previous study by Shaka and Senbeto (2018) 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) 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), 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. Previous literature focused on something other than the lens of a local college in Central Luzon, Philippines. Thus, our team created this study to glimpse 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' 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.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS**

### *Research Design*

The proponents 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 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 partook 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, c) actively participated/ participating to the institution's community services and d) capable of answering the online survey. Exclusion criteria, on the other hand, include students who were not enrolled or studying in the said local college and have yet to experience or participate in a community extension service.

### *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 interest 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. Then we analyze the Cronbach's Alpha result of the items involved in the survey. The instrument 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 from the obtained data to be interpreted by the investigators. The study used mean for the student's answer to evaluate their community service involvement. Then, an independent *t*-test and Pearson-r Moment of Correlation were used for the inferential statistics. To achieve this, we sought the help of IBM SPSS version 23 for the data computation.

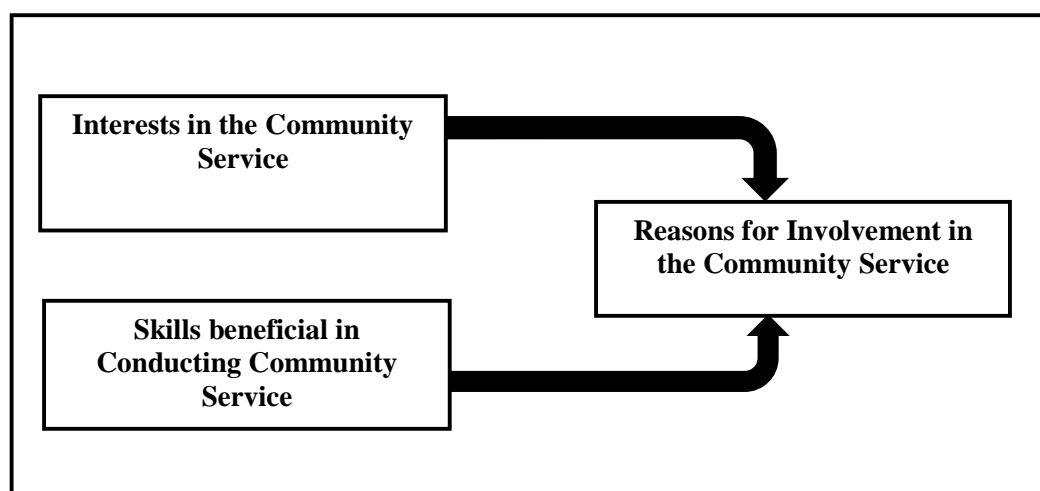


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

## RESULTS

This study aims to determine our students' involvement in community service. 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	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
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>Highly Considered</b>

*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

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>Highly Interested</b>

*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." This result shows 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

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>Skilled</b>

*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 sets 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' 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		

Note:  $df= 99$

We perform a t-test for a significant difference in table 4 to see variations in the students' 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 a 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 skills ( $r = .443$ ) and a high relationship with interests ( $r = .634$ ). Furthermore, skills generated a moderate relationship between 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.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of this study was to analyze the students' involvement in partaking in community service. The results of the study will become basis for sustaining some community extension services provided by the institution. Based on the results that the study obtained and generated, the students were knowledgeable and actively participated 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). Moreover, Heo (2016) 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) 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. 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), in their previous investigation, demonstrated a reduction in fear, a rise in empathy, and a profound understanding of professional role advocacy. Furthermore, Acero (2018) 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) also exposed that students expect the benefits of community extension to help 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) disagreed with the current result of the study. They believed that female students have a more favourable attitude towards community involvement. Regarding association among the variables, the reason for involvement in community service revealed a moderate to high association with the study's other two variables (interest and skills). This result contradicted the previous study by Meyer et al. (2019). They publicized no participation effects on the students' self-efficacy, generalized trust, empathic concern, and attribution for poverty factors. Nonetheless, Czekanski and Brown (2015) 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.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

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.

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