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Community Engagement: Impacts of community perceptions on community service participation

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by

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Abstract

This study will identify the attitudes of high school seniors regarding their community and participation in community service activities to determine what relationship exists between community attitudes and motivation to engage in the community. The study will address this relationship within the context of functional theory relating to motivations behind service involvement. The study was conducted at a suburban area high school in the western United States that currently incorporates a mandatory community service requirement into the American Government curriculum. A survey was administered to all senior government students who consented to participation in the study after they had completed the mandatory community service requirement for the year. The data results were then analyzed and compared to determine if student perceptions of their community impact or correlate to perceptions of community service and desire to participate in community service activities.

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Introduction

The process of socialization which emphasizes the moral and political development of youth is one of the central objectives within societies in order to perpetuate a set of accepted norms and values (Yates, 1999). Historically, approaches emphasized communication of what adults knew about society through a series of processes and circumstances that would result in the expectation of youth to internalize the information (Yates, 1999). Much of these processes would occur within the family and accepted institutions that would reinforce accepted norms, values, and behavior. The public school became one of the primary avenues by which youth received information and saw it reinforced. In recent decades, there has been increasing pressure on schools to address perceptions of youth who seem to be increasingly politically apathetic and morally without direction (Yates & Youniss, 1997). As a result, there has been a significant shift toward various programs that aim to increase community and civic engagement within public schools to address these concerns.

More recently, public schools have embraced the importance of creating a citizenry that actively engages in meaningful ways within the community. Schools also pursue civic engagement opportunities in order to foster positive political and moral development and a sense of personal identity that reflects a concern for others and community. When Congress passed the *National and Community Service Act* in 1990 and the *National and Community Service Trust Act* in 1993, it became clear that there was growing support for the increase of community service participation by youth (Corporation for National Service, 1999). During the last decade of the twentieth century

data outcomes seem to indicate a dramatic increase in the number of schools that offer some type of community service experience (Kleiner & Chapman, 2000). Despite an increase in the number of schools providing service opportunities, data indicate that the number of students who have participated in service activities has remained relatively stable from the mid 1970's through the early 1990's (Yates & Youniss, 1997).

Though types of community service experiences and definitions of community service and service learning vary greatly, there appears to be consensus that involvement in such activities emphasizes the importance of community participation and democratic values (Kleiner & Chapman, 2000). Arguably, the functioning of a participatory democracy relies upon the notion that citizens will actively participate. This participation requires both the desire and the ability to engage in civic activities that enhance the community and maintain the health of the democracy (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Though many educators recognize this, schools are still struggling to develop curricula that fulfill this goal. In many of our schools, civic education and the emphasis on developing citizenship characteristics that foster a desire to participate in community engagement activities have not been successful. Rahima Wade (1997) argues that, "most efforts at teaching citizenship in the schools fall on the shoulders of narrowly conceived social studies courses that in most cases have failed to engender student interest, involvement, or competence in political life (p. 127). Interestingly, many of the civic education models in place emphasize individualistic values rather than community engagement and interaction (Wade, 1997).

Educators have struggled to incorporate citizenship education that extends beyond the individual to incorporate a focus on the community. A variety of models and interventions have been used to address the desire for increased levels of youth civic engagement including civic education curricula, community service programs, and service learning (Pritzker & McBride, 2006). These three examples indicate an evolution of approaches to civic education and fostering engagement. Despite a variety of approaches, one of the most frequently implemented types of programs that aim to meet this objective requires students to complete mandatory minimum amounts of community service activities. These mandatory programs are often individual requirements that students complete outside of class time. The goal of such programs is to have the students engage in direct participation in order to develop civic attitudes that will lead to a civic disposition (Wade, 1997). However, debate persists as to whether or not such programs are truly effective at positively impacting student perceptions of their communities and their desire to participate in community service activities (Wade, 1997).

Opponents of such programs argue that they reduce the intrinsic motivating factors that drive students to participate in community service. This theory described by Robert Bringle (2003) is the functional theory which identifies six primary motives of involvement in volunteer opportunities. The theory argues that ultimately some combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are essential for engagement. Community attitudes may reflect both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that fit within the context of the functional theory.

The goal of this study is to further the work of Bringle and explore what impact

attitudes and perceptions of one's community have on motivation to participate in service activities within that community. More specifically, the theory helps provide a scaffold for the question of how do student attitudes regarding their communities impact their attitude and desire to engage in service participation?

As a result of the increased interest in participation in community service activities and the increasing prevalence of such activities in public schools today, it is critical that educators not simply require participation, but address the motivations behind participation (Reich, 2005). Educators have recognized the need to foster civic attitudes and increase community engagement among young people. Educators also need to be aware of what factors contribute to the desire to participate. The most common type of community service program seen in high schools today requires students to complete a minimum number of community service hours and submit verification of participation at the end of the grading period. Rarely do such programs encourage or require reflection about the community service participation (Wade, 1997). Though educators hope these types of programs benefit both the participant and recipient, they generally are intended to benefit or favor the recipient or community organization that is receiving the service from the students (Furco, 2002). The goal is that these individual activities may form a foundation that will lead to the development of civic attitudes (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 163).

Statement and Importance of the Problem

The challenge for educators is how to effectively foster civic attitudes that become habitual and ongoing as youth move out of the public school environment into

their roles as adult citizens. Part of identifying factors that contribute to the development of habitual community and political engagement in youth is to identify indicators of the desire and motivation to participate in community service experience in order to increase the prevalence of these indicators or thereby increasing desire to participate. The need for educators is to use this case to build a stronger rationale for community involvement in high schools. The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the correlation between how youth perceive their communities and the impact that this has on their desire to participate in the community. The goal is to determine if there is a relationship between perceptions and attitudes of community and the desire to participate in community service activities.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the correlation between how youth perceive their communities and the impact that this has on their desire to engage in community service activities. The goal is to determine if there is a relationship between perceptions and attitudes of community and the desire to participate in community service activities. In order to address that question, I asked the following questions:

- How do youth attitudes toward their community influence their motivation for community engagement?

- How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

- How does one's motivation to engage in community service increase with engagement?

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study is a result of the variety of different communities in which the students live. The socioeconomic status of the communities that feed the high school varies dramatically and may impact student perceptions of their communities differently. Unfortunately, this data was not collected as part of the instrumentation. Additionally, because of the difference in communities and the access to and availability of community service activities, students may have very different experiences depending on where they live. Therefore, while this study may be generalized to the larger school population it likely should not be generalized to larger populations dissimilar from the high school where the study was conducted.

Secondly, the data collected in the study were self-reported by the students who were samples of convenience and this feature could reflect bias. Students were not required to respond to the survey and those who did complete the survey, volunteered their responses. This volunteerism could indicate significantly different perceptions regarding their community and community service than non-volunteers.   Additionally, the self-reporting could result in students being less candid and selecting responses that adhere to other societal norms that exist regarding concepts of community service rather than genuine self perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, the influence of social desirability may have reduced the validity of the study.

Definition of Terms

Active Citizenship. Emphasizing the development of the democratic character through a focus on identification of and tackling of community problems (Enloe, 2009). This term

has evolved from the more commonly used term service learning.

Citizenship. It is defined as both membership in a political community with certain duties, rights, and privileges and how a person chooses to participate in a community (Youniss and Yates, 1997).

Civic Attitude. A sense of responsibility associated with democratic participation within a society (Youniss and Yates, 1997).

Civic Engagement. Working to improve the quality of life in a community through political and non-political means and/or making a difference in the civic life of our communities (Erchlich, 2000).

Community Engagement. Making meaningful connections within your community with the end goal of benefiting and improving the community (Gottlieb, 2006).

Community Service. Services that are conducted individually or within an organization with the goal of benefiting the community; volunteerism (Wade, 1997).

Direct Participation. An essential component of civic education that refers to involvement in activities within the community. This participation allows for the opportunity to develop and practice civic behaviors and characteristics (Wade, 1997).

Functional Theory. A functional approach to understanding motivations for community engagement that emphasizes both altruistic and egoistic factors and organizes them into six behavior functions (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998).

Participatory Democracy. This emphasizes active involvement by citizens in political and social institutions (Lisman, 1998).

Service Learning. Academically-based community service that emphasizes learning

objectives and incorporates a reflection process that enhances learning goals (Lisman,

1998). Service learning programs can be explorative or activist in nature based on the

learning goals (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2007).

Volunteerism.   To participate and act voluntarily for the benefit of the community

(Wade, 1997).

Review of Literature

Background and Historical Roots of Civic Engagement Education

Since the 1990's there has been a resurgence of interest in community service

evident at the federal, state, and local levels. This resurgence has manifested itself in

different forms and has evolved to include a more recent emphasis on service learning:

connecting community service experiences with learning outcomes. The roots of what is

commonly known as service learning are most often traced to the 1960's; however, the

conceptual framework that contributed to the development of service learning can be seen

in community action and involvement efforts that date back to the middle of the 19th

century (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Arguably, the promotion of community

involvement and volunteerism was even prevalent in the founding spirit of the nation as

evidence in political rhetoric of the time that demonstrates the connection between the

importance of volunteerism and democracy (Yates, 1999).

The trend towards community involvement and service is apparent in the theory

behind the extensive education programs that were spurred by the emergence of the land

grants of the 1860's and becomes increasingly evident in the growing progressive era and

emphasis on progressive education (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). The significant

population shifts from rural to urban environments that occurred at the end of the

twentieth century coincides with the increased efforts of educators to foster participatory

citizenship by connecting students to the needs of the community (Yates, 1999).

According to Deborah Hecht (2003), these educators drew on the philosophies of

curriculum theorists such as John Dewey who stressed the importance of experiential learning.

In recent decades there has been increasing advocacy for greater community service and community interaction among youth. The 1990's was replete with a series of legislative actions taken to increase opportunities for youth involvement in community service. Interestingly, data show that these new opportunities may not have increased the actual amount of service participation among youths (Yates & Youniss, 1997). They do, however, highlight the growing trend toward an emphasis on the importance of youth participation in community service. Yates and Youniss (1997) argue that one of the driving theories behind this increased importance is the belief that youth today are increasingly apathetic and self-interested with little desire to engage as participants in their communities. The researchers challenge this negative approach to service and argue that service can provide important developmental opportunities for youth that emphasize identity growth, self-interest evaluation, and political and moral awareness. Though data in the field have not indicated a decline in service participation among youth, it may be too soon to rule out the existence of growing apathy and disinterest. Many still point to increased apathy in voting trends as evidence of the importance of fostering the desire for civic participation through the utilization of community service curriculums among youth.

Proponents of civics education often argue that the nation was founded on the principles of democracy aimed at protecting the rights and liberties of its citizens. In this way, citizens may be able to reach their potential and realize their individual freedom.

This concept, grounded in the natural rights doctrine, "emphasizes the role of democracy as ensuring that there are maximal opportunities for individuals to find self-fulfillment independent of government and assumes a view of the autonomous individual" (Lisman, 1998, p. 17). This view of "weak" democracy or negative freedom emphasizes the role of the individual and the, "view that individuals are the fundamental reality" (Lisman, 1998, p. 17). Within this context, the government is designed to ensure and protect the rights of the individual rather than provide opportunity and processes for all in society to reach his or her potential as seen in a "strong" democracy or a positive state.

The shift towards a "strong" democracy began in the middle of the 19th century with the emergence of the new political philosophy of history that emphasized the role of society on the development of man and the necessity of a citizenry that is civically engaged (Lisman, 1998). Over the last century, this engagement has shifted from an emphasis on the individual to a version of progressive communitarianism that developed in the early 20th century. Lisman argues that out of this approach, the tradition of true participatory democracy developed that placed emphasis on the commonwealth rather than the individual who finds fulfillment in and through society. The key to the success of our nation's democratic tradition lies in the necessity of active participation.

Complicating this discussion is the ambiguity surrounding terms such as "citizenship," "citizen," and "civic education." According to Battistoni (2006), citizenship denotes status within our society that promotes a sense of exclusivity, rather than a reference to practice and participation. Battistoni (2006) argues that a term emphasizing status rather than practice dismisses the importance of the conception of

citizens as, "individuals possessing a common identity who have responsibilities to work together to achieve common purposes" (p. 5).

This is compounded by debate over what constitutes good citizenship or positive civic participation. Individuals often have very different ideas of what is good citizenship. This idea can range from voting in an election to volunteering for an after school program at an elementary school. Additionally, citizenship often evokes a sense of conformity and assimilation into a specific group, and ultimately the individual's role within that group (Battistoni, 2006). The term "civic engagement" does not have a precise definition that is uniformly accepted as evidenced in the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement study (CIRCLE) conducted by Keeter, Zukin, Andolina and Jenkins (2002) which drew a distinction between political engagement and civic engagement (Battistoni, 2006). This relates directly to the challenge of designing curriculum that aims at fostering and developing a desire for civic engagement among youth. There is a lack of consistency as to what positive civic engagement actually looks like and a corresponding lack of consistency among educators about how to increase civic engagement among youth in public schools

Common Models of Civic Education

Within the framework of most civic education curricula that exist is the emphasis on individualistic values rather than on public engagement and community involvement and interaction (Wade, 1997). Arguably, it is difficult to cultivate a sense of community within many of the school environments that exist. Schools face the challenge of teaching the principles of democracy and the value of community when many of them are

not very democratic institutions that rarely help students connect to one another and

interact as a community. The youth have little reason to become interested in civics

(Wade, 1997) if they do not see it valued in their schools. Another issue could be if

civics is taught as an isolated subject in perhaps a social studies class, but never fostered

and encouraged once students leave the classroom. Additionally, the lack of consensus

on the nature of what it means to be a good citizen inhibits the development of a

comprehensive curriculum and approach to instruction.

There are three primary approaches to teaching civic education: a focus on civics

curricula in class; incorporation of community service; and the use of service learning.

Despite challenges, it is possible to develop a curriculum that incorporates essential

components of civic education and fosters civic participation within all three of those

approaches. Rahima Wade (1997) outlines four necessary aspects to civic education that

must be present in order for students to fully understand their role as citizens and not only

how to become actively engaged in their communities, but to possess the desire to

become actively engaged. The three primary curriculum approaches are discussed within

the framework of the four essential components that Wade believes are crucial to

developing effective civic education interventions for youth.

The first of these components is referred to as "intellectual understanding." Wade

(1997) defines this as a basic knowledge of civics. This component is included in the

majority of high school curriculums, but for some of those schools it is the only aspect of

civic education to which students are really exposed. In most cases this basic knowledge

is taught in mandatory social studies courses despite the argument that" approaching civic

education through an integrated curriculum is vital" (Wade, 1997, p. 12). Generally, required American Government courses provide the context in which this first component is transferred to students. This approach incorporates the transfer of basic understandings about civic institutions including the branches of government and the rights conferred to citizens in the Constitution. In such classes, there is often little emphasis on applying that knowledge to real life situations. Students who receive only this first component of civic education undoubtedly lack the ability to use this knowledge effectively to engage in their communities. In such circumstances it is likely that it would be difficult to move beyond an understanding of citizenship as a status to the realization of the participatory role of citizenship that would factor into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for community engagement.

Some of those schools that incorporate the first component essential to civic education also aim to include the second, "skills for participation" (Wade, 1997, p. 12). These skills are what, "citizens need to participate effectively in public life" (Wade, 1997, p. 12). These skills include the ability to think critically, communicate effectively both verbally and nonverbally, analyze outcomes, and compromise (Battistoni, 1985). Commonly the practice of these skills is found within the social studies curriculum, but is also often found across school curriculum in different subjects such as science, language arts, and mathematics. As a result, this aspect of civic education is commonly incorporated into many school curriculums. This second component is essential to the ability to actively participate in the community and to understand the role the individual plays in the context of society and government.

This component is also critical to the development of motivation to participate and volunteer as described in the functional theory of volunteerism. It may be that a cognitive understanding of the basic tenets of democracy and civic institutions correlates to increased motives identified by the theory such as understanding, values, and social motives (Bringle, 2003). One's understanding of the individual's role and the potential impact of participation on society may enhance motivation. Regardless of whether that motive is altruistic or selfish, an understanding of the impact of volunteerism and community engagement through the ability to critically analyze one's role and ability to affect outcomes, is essential to fostering increased community participation.

The last two essential parts to civic education are far less likely to appear in schools on a regular basis. The first of these two is the development of "civic attitudes." This third critical component is understood as the, "will to act in the public sphere" (Wade, 1997, p. 12). This component is essential for community participation because it requires not only the motivation to participate, but also the willingness to act on those motivations. In addition to the will to engage in civic activities, the idea of civic attitudes can be described as the development of a civic disposition (Pratte, 1988). Ideally, students will become aware of the broader community and develop a sense of tolerance and empathy for others with whom they interact. Rather than an individualized view of the world, students will balance that individualism with care and respect for others (Pratte, 1988). Arguably, this third component is challenging to incorporate without the inclusion of the fourth component of direct participation. Without giving students the opportunity to connect with the community through research and participatory

interventions it is less conceivable that they will develop an awareness of community and a will to engage in their community. This poses a challenge for educators who are reluctant or lack training in developing curriculum that incorporates community service participation effectively. For this reason, it is far less likely to see schools incorporate the third and fourth components of Wade's model or to incorporate them in meaningful ways that foster the development of civic attitudes.

The final component that Wade argues that is essential to civic education is direct participation. This is the least likely component of civic education to be found in schools because it requires, "opportunities to practice civic behaviors" that extend beyond efforts of community awareness (Wade, 1997, p. 13). Direct participation has long been advocated by progressives such as John Dewey who saw community engagement as essential to the development of the citizen and the development of a functional society. Wade contends that, "involvement in the community can reap rich rewards for civic learning" (p. 13). It is within the context of direct participation that young persons have the opportunity to practice civic behaviors and really understand what these are and why they are so important and ultimately vital to a successfully functioning participatory democracy. This phase of civic education goes beyond community awareness to emphasize the role of the individual in the community and how the individual can shape and affect his or her community.

Community Involvement

Direct participation by students can come in many different forms across a broad

spectrum of activities. Direct participation can occur within the school community through activities that aim to improve the school such as recycling programs, school spirit activities, and involvement in student government. This form of direct participation is one of the most common in public schools. Arguably, because it involves the least amount of logistical planning and it is therefore a community of convenience to some degree. However, it should not be discounted as an opportunity to foster attitudes and develop skills that will translate to participation in the larger community beyond the school. Perhaps for that reason such programs provide a unique training ground within schools that is appropriate and less intimidating to students who are just beginning to learn about the impact of involvement in community service activities.

According to Wade (1997), even though students sometimes have opportunities to practice democracy in their school, community involvement at the local level can offer far greater and richer experiences. She argues that "when students work on complex community problems, they have the potential to learn not only the skills and knowledge necessary for civic action, but also democratic attitudes – the will to participate and the ability to care for others." (Wade, 1997, p. 13) According to the intergroup contact theory of service-learning, experiences that allow students opportunities to interact with disenfranchised groups different than their own can have a positive effect on their understanding of diverse groups in society (Bringle, 2003). Students may be forced to face prejudices and stereotypes which require them to think critically about attitudes and beliefs that may change as a result of intergroup experiences. This may relate to increased desire and motivation to participate in the community for the benefit of such

groups.

According to Alice Terry and Jann Bohnenberger (2007), there are various

degrees of community involvement that can take place in school curriculums to develop

civic-minded young people and that fall under the category of service learning.

Generally speaking these types of activities fall into two main categories of community

involvement that are found within school curriculums that emphasize direct participation

(Furco, 2002). The first type of participation based service learning can be described as

volunteerism (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2007) where students are expected to participate in

community service activities and are often given a specified number of service hours to

complete. These types of community service based programs are primarily intended to

benefit the recipient of the service activity (Furco, 2002). According to equity theory, an

inequitable relationship between the helper and those receiving help can have detrimental

results. Robert Bringle (2003) argues that this type of inequity can cause and/or

perpetuate strained relations between disenfranchised groups within the community and

those offering the help. He contends that ultimately this may result in an adverse effect

on intergroup relations that community participation and involvement aims to address

and improve.

These types of programs may be important, "building blocks in establishing a

foundation on which to build the skills necessary for students to eventually advance to

higher levels of service learning" (Lisman, 1998, p. 19). They do not, however, fully

develop the civic attitudes and behaviors that true service learning programs emphasize.

Additionally, the majority of such programs hold students accountable for participation

through extrinsic rewards such as credit and grades. The self-determination theory

addresses the role and importance of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. This theory

argues that it may be necessary to provide unmotivated students with extrinsic

motivation, but that this then doesn't foster growth of the target behavior, rather a

demonstration that the student can produce behavioral compliance (Bringle, 2003). In all

likelihood this would not translate then to an increased desire to continue community

involvement and participation once the extrinsic motivations are removed.

According to Lisman (1998), "service learning, or academically based community

service, is a form of learning in which students engage in community service as part of

academic course work … that is connected with the learning outcomes of the course …

and provide the opportunity for teacher-guided reflection on the service experience (p.

23). It is pedagogy of learning through service that emphasizes the use of cognitive skills

developed across the curriculum in conjunction with public service (Stanton, Giles, &

Cruz, 1999). Service learning is rooted in the experiential learning theories of Dewey

that saw a resurgence of importance in the late 1960's that continues in education today.

Terry and Bohnenberger (2007) separate service learning into two phases:

community exploration and community action. Each of these phases goes beyond the

volunteer based community service level and encourages a greater level of engagement

by the students. The goal during the exploration level is to connect classroom learning to

real life situations so that these situations can be explored at a more authentic level (Terry

& Bohnenberger, 2007). What this requires is that the service activity is tied to specific

learning goals and content so that students can be given the chance to think critically

about their experiences and apply their acquired knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. This community exploration phase creates an opportunity for increased community awareness and knowledge of current problems and efforts at addressing those problems. This phase is a critical component of all service-learning programs as it provides vital connections between the student and the community and instills a sense of empowerment and ownership once the student has identified a focus area of need within their community that they want to pursue.

The second phase of service learning is referred to as community action which, "involves the youth not only becoming aware of, exploring, and becoming engaged in their community but also making a positive impact on their community and becoming empowered to make a difference in the real world" (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2007, p. 58). What this level of service learning requires is the students engaging in their communities to first identify an area of need as noted in the exploratory phase, then developing an action plan to address that need, and finally providing the service. One of the primary benefits of this type of program is that fosters interaction between both the students and community members, creating an environment where both become, "learners and recipients of the service experience" (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2007, p. 59). Ultimately this type of program aims to foster the proactive, empathetic, civic-minded citizen that is so vital to the health of our democratic system.

Recent trends in literature are increasingly referring to service-learning as "active citizenship" in which students are connected to their communities through the identification of certain learning goals and then developing projects in the community to

meet those goals (Enloe, 2009). This is essentially how service-learning advocates have defined their objectives, however the newer term "active citizenship" places an emphasis on the goal of such programs rather than the process. Battsitoni (2006) identifies the growing use of the term that focuses on six primary components including; awareness that extends beyond knowledge, motivation that includes the genuine interest to take action, skills necessary to take action in an informed way, action within the community, coalition or community building to address defined problems, and reflection to assess the process and review outcomes. The final two steps identified in "active citizenship" are extensions to Rahima Wade's four essential components of civic education. Proponents of "active citizenship" would argue that volunteerism and community service required in mandatory participation programs are rooted in an understanding or awareness of community nor do they incorporate genuine interest or reflection of outcomes. As a result, such programs often fall incredibly short of intended goals.

Theoretical Perspectives

As Jane David (2009) argues, current research supports the theory that when young people are exposed to community service opportunities they are more likely to develop civic dispositions and a long-term desire to become civically engaged. As a result, public schools across the nation have begun developing and implementing programs aimed at helping students develop into civically aware and inclined individuals, capable of participating in the public sphere. According to Jeffrey Moser (2005), curricula that integrate community engagement opportunities help to challenge students and empower them to become more involved in their communities. A longitudinal study of the effects

of voluntary and school-required community service in high school on adult voting was conducted by Daniel Hart, Thomas Donnelly, James Youniss, and Robert Atkins (2007). Their study produced results that showed such programs were strong predictors of future voting and volunteering (Hart, et. al, 2007). However, debate still continues regarding the benefit of service programs that do not provide substantial support and reflection (Bennett, 2009). Another longitudinal study that utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods reported that benefits associated with community service were strongest when tied to academic outcomes and a reflection process rather than preformed in isolation (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). It is likely that not all of the programs being used are effective at achieving this goal and perhaps are making it less likely that students will become civically engaged citizens. According to research on motivational indicators of volunteerism, programs that emphasize extrinsic motivators such as grades and academic credit could have an undermining effect on students who were initially more intrinsically motivated (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998).

According to Cecil Smith (2008), service learning programs in public schools are becoming increasingly prevalent and do show some effective results in fostering civic responsibility and civic dispositions. Yet, many of the programs being implemented in schools are not true examples of service learning, but rather are simply programs that require students to complete service individually outside of class time. Yet, according to Jane David (2009), the most beneficial programs emphasize the development of active citizenship rather than individual character building and that although community service activities can begin to build the necessary foundation for civic engagement, without a

connection to the school curriculum students are less likely to enhance or alter their perceptions of community and service (David, 2009).

Service learning is supported by theories of cognitive growth, and moral and psychosocial development in adult development substantiating the importance of incorporating such programs into school curriculums. Kitzrow argues that prosocial behaviors are primarily learned behaviors that occur in a series of developmental stages (Kitzrow, 1998). According to Kitzrow (1998), Piaget was one of the earliest developmental theorists who paved the way for later theorists such as Kohlberg to expand upon this developmental theory. These stages begin with cognitive development that enables the capacity to develop moral reasoning and awareness including empathy. The three-stage model of moral development begins with motivation by fear or reward, followed by motivation by conformity to social norms or laws, and lastly, motivation by individual principles.

Clary, Snyder, and Stukas (1998), developed the functional theory of motivation as an approach to understand psychological and social motivations for volunteerism and to assess the role of altruism in motivation. They identified six motivations or functions that lead to volunteer efforts: understanding (to learn, practice skills), career (to gain experience to enhance job prospects), values (humanitarian values), social (to gain social approval), protective (to reduce guilt), and enhancement (to increase self-worth or acceptance). They argue in their study that motivations are neither selfless nor selfish, but rather are often guided by some combination of the two. As a result, it is often necessary for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to play a role in volunteerism. The

functional theory supports the idea that prosocial behaviors are best established after service and action and therefore it is often necessary to provide some level of extrinsic motivation in order to promote intrinsic motivation after participation in service activities (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998). When intrinsic motivations are lacking it may become necessary to provide the extrinsic motivators

Understanding motivation for community engagement is crucial for the development of curricula that aims to foster positive civic attitudes through service learning programs. Attitudes regarding one's community may play a role in increasing or decreasing the desire to participate in community service activities. This makes the study of the relationship between community attitudes and community engagement important to furthering the discussion on theories of motivation.

Methodology

The study was designed to gather data in order to understand motivations for engagement in community service activities and specifically what role do attitudes about community play in driving engagement in community service more clearly. It is hypothesized that community attitudes play a role in determining one's motivation regarding engagement. Additionally, it is hypothesized that engagement in one's community will strengthens one's connection to his or her community and that motivation to participate in community service will increase through continued engagement. This leads to the questions that guide the study.

Research Questions

This study will identify the attitudes of high school seniors regarding their community and participation in community service activities to determine what relationship exists between community attitudes and motivation to engage in the community.

- Question #1: How do youth attitudes toward their community influence their motivation for community engagement?

- Question #2: How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

- Question #3: How does one's motivation to engage in community service increase with engagement?

Research Design

This study was a single case study that was guided by a quantitative design. The

data consisted of a one-page survey administered to high school students in order to

measure community perceptions and attitudes. The instrument consisted of fourteen

questions on perceptions and attitudes (see Appendix A). The researcher administered

the survey during class time determined by the classroom teacher. The researcher was

present during the administering of the survey. Institutional Review Board (IRB)

approval was obtained for this study prior to administration on March 29, 2011. Students

were given an information sheet detailing the purpose of the research study, the risks and

benefits of participation in the study, and the process of consent. The students who

elected to participate were given a copy of the survey and asked to complete the survey

individually in an effort to limit peer coercion. Students were informed during the

consent process that their responses would remain anonymous and that responses would

not be linked back to them. Students were instructed that they were not obligated to

participate and that they could skip any question on the survey or withdraw from the

survey at any time. After completing the survey, students were instructed to place them

in an envelope at the front of the room. The researcher then collected all study materials

before leaving the classroom.

Sample

A sample of 386 students was targeted for this study. Of the targeted sample, 352

students actually participated in the study. This was a high response rate of 91.2%. All

of the students were seniors enrolled in the American Government course at a suburban

high school in the western United States. Students who participated in the study were

considered samples of convenience as they attended the high school where the researcher

worked. All four government teachers at the high school were asked to allow their

students the opportunity to participate in the research study. All senior students enrolled

in American Government, present on the day the survey was administered, had the

opportunity to participate in the study. Students who were not in the regular classroom

environment, such as students with special needs and those with limited English

proficiency, were not included in the targeted sample. These students are not currently

required to participate in the mandatory community service program required of all other

senior students in the regular American Government classes.

Instrumentation and Materials

The goal of the fourteen-question survey was to gain a better understanding of

student perceptions and attitudes about their community and community service and to

explore the relationship between attitudes about one's community and desire to engage in

community service activities. Much of the survey was designed using a Likert-scale and

the results were converted to numerical values for data analysis. These questions were

designed for choice on a five point Likert-scale that included strongly agree (5), agree

(4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The corresponding numerical

values ranged in decreasing value from 5 to 1. Other questions asked students to

differentiate between types of community service activities in order to evaluate their

understanding of community service.   Additionally, some questions were reduced to a

smaller two-point dummy variable in which students either agreed or disagreed.

After the survey was administered, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted in

order to test the interitem reliability of the instrument. The results of the reliability test

indicate an alpha score of .78. This score fell into a range of reliable (Morgan, Reichert, & Harrison, 2002). As a result, it is fairly reliable that a student who scores high or strongly agree on one question will score high on other questions.

Effort was made to present clear, straightforward statements that aimed to get the students to think about their community and the concept of service. Perceptions and attitudes are inherently difficult to measure and as a result could potentially decrease the validity of the survey, which may not fully capture the perceptions and attitudes of the students. The instrument questions were derived from analysis of possible components of community attitudes thereby increasing the content validity of the instrument. Loyalty toward the community, awareness of and/or friendship with others in the community, and level of safety are all components of community attitudes that target a holistic view or perception of one's community. Effort was made to create a comprehensive attitude scale in order to get a holistic view of student attitudes regarding their community in order to more accurately measure the impact that those attitudes had on community service participation. Additionally, questions six and seven of part three were designed to target questions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation regarding engagement.

No significant threats to internal validity were determined. This research was designed as a case-study in which a post test was given to all senior American Government students after completing community service activities. Therefore standard threats to internal validity such as maturation, changes in instrumentation, and selection bias are not relevant. The lack of selection bias also reduced threats to external validity because students were not selected for participation. Rather, all students who fit the

criteria were given the opportunity to participate, thereby increasing the ability to generalize to the whole student population. Additionally, the survey was administered under natural and familiar conditions in the students' regular classroom setting limiting any reactive effects that may have occurred as the result of changes to the students' normal and familiar setting.

Variables in the Study

The independent variable in the study is the community engagement activities that students were required to participate in as a component of their American Government class. The dependent variable measured in the study was the perceptions and attitudes regarding community and engagement in community service activities. It is believed that the dependent variable was being measured would impact the independent variable and demonstrate a strong relationship between the two variables.

Data Analysis of Question #1: How do youth attitudes toward their community influence their motivation for community engagement?

The first four dependent variables measuring community attitudes included 1) I enjoy living in my community; 2) I feel a sense of loyalty toward my community; 3) I know a lot of people in my community; and 4) I feel safe in my community. These correspond to questions one, two, four, and five of part two on the survey. The fifth dependent variable measured student attitudes regarding participation in community service activities and corresponds to the first question on part three of the survey.

The student responses were collapsed into three categories: positive approval, neutral, and negative approval. The responses for strongly agree and agree were

combined into positive approval. The responses for neutral were kept as neutral. The responses for strongly disagree and disagree were combined into negative approval. Descriptive statistics including mean scores and frequency distributions were compiled to determine general trends. Finally, a Pearson's correlation test was completed to compare the first five questions to the first question on part three of the survey to determine if correlations between attitudes about one's community and engagement in community service activities exist.

Data Analysis Question #2: How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

Question two looked specifically at the impact of engagement in community service activities on one's connection to his or her community. In order to evaluate the hypothesis to this question, the collapsed responses from question number one on part three of the survey regarding engagement in community service activities were compared to question number seven on part three of the survey regarding connection to one's community. Means and frequencies were calculated in order to make general comparisons of trends. A second Pearson's correlation test was run to compare the relationship between attitudes about community service participation and attitudes regarding a sense of connection to one's community.

Data Analysis Question #3: How does one's motivation to engage in community service increase with engagement?

To determine whether or not one's motivation to engage in community service activities increases with engagement, survey question number one on part three of the

survey regarding attitudes toward community engagement was again used. Comparisons between this question and question number six on part three of the survey were made in order to determine the if the hypothesis was true. Again, means and frequencies were calculated in order to make general comparisons regarding trends. Finally, a Pearson's correlation test was conducted to assess whether or not increased engagement corresponded to higher levels of motivation and enthusiasm to engagement and vice versa.

Results

This study was designed to gain a better understanding of motivations for engagement in community service activities. The study focused on the relationship between community attitudes and motivations to engage in community service activities. The following study questions were addressed:

- Question #1: How do youth attitudes toward their community influence their motivation for community engagement?

- Question #2: How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

- Question #3: How does one's motivation to engage in community service increase with engagement?

Data were gathered from the results of a survey administered to high school seniors enrolled in American Government. The results were analyzed to look for general trends and themes to better understand the relationship between community attitudes and engagement.

Question #1: How do youth attitudes toward their community influence their motivation for community engagement?

The hypothesis for question one states that there is a relationship between attitudes toward community and engagement in community activities. Based on the analysis of the results, the hypothesis is not fully accepted.

To analyze question one, data from the first five questions of part two of the survey and question one of part three were collapsed into three categories: positive

approval, neutral, and negative approval. The data were then analyzed to provide

descriptive statistics regarding mean and frequency so that general trends could be

identified (Table 1). A Pearson's correlation test was run to evaluate the hypothesis and

significance of the correlation between community attitudes and community engagement

(Table 2).

To address the first study question, respondents were asked questions regarding

community attitudes and perceptions and one specific question regarding feelings about

community service engagement. Responses were indicated on a five point Likert-scale

that was collapsed for analysis. The first survey question asked if respondents really

enjoyed living in their community. Of the respondents, 65% indicated a positive

response; 28.5% were neutral; and 6.5% indicated a negative response. The second

survey question asked if the respondent felt a sense of loyalty toward their community.

A positive response was indicated by 34%; 51% remained neutral; and 15% indicated a

negative response. The third survey question was not included in this analysis section.

The negative phrasing of the question created inverse responses compared to the other

questions and would have skewed the data results. In the fourth survey question,

respondents were asked if they knew a lot of people in their community. Positive

responses were given by 54.5%; 22.5% were neutral; and 23% selected a negative

response. The fifth question asked respondents if they felt safe in their community. A

large 69% of respondents indicated that they did feel safe in their community; 22%

remained neutral; and 9% responded negatively. Respondents were then asked how they

felt about participation in community service activities in order to compare this with

community attitudes. A positive response was given by 55% of respondents; 32% were neutral; and 13% indicated a negative response. On average, respondents indicated a positive response regarding both their community and participation in community service activities (Table I).   This initial comparison of frequencies indicates that it is possible a relationship may exist. However, further correlation analysis seems to largely dispute this.

Table 1

Means and frequencies of community attitudes and perceptions (n=352).

Survey Questions	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree/ Agree 3	Neutral 2	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree 1
Enjoy	2.59	.61	65%	28.5%	6.5%
Loyalty	2.19	.67	43%	51%	15%
Know People	2.31	.82	54.5%	22.5%	23%
Feel Safe	2.60	.62	69%	22%	9%
Service	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results were collapsed from a five point Likert-scale to a three point scale for analysis.

A Pearson's correlation was calculated to test the hypothesis of the first study question regarding the relationship between the independent variable, service participation attitudes, and the dependent variable, community attitudes (Table 2). The hypothesis stated that there would be a relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

The results of the Pearson correlation test failed to fully support the hypothesis. The correlation test indicated mixed results regarding the existence of a relationship between community attitudes and engagement. Enjoyment of living in a community appears to have some correlation to desire to engage in community service activities, r $(351) = .24$, $p < .001$. Loyalty toward community had a more significant correlation, r $(351) = .34$, $p < .001$. However, knowing a lot of people in one's community and safety both demonstrated little to no correlation, $r(351) = .12$, $p < .0227$ and $r(351) = .14$, p $< .0082$. Based on the correlation calculations it appears that while some attitudes such as enjoyment of living in a community and a sense of loyalty toward one's community do correlate to engagement in community, other attitudes regarding knowing many people and feeling safe in a community may not play a role in engagement.

Table 2

Pearson's correlation between community attitudes and engagement

	Enjoy	Loyalty	People	Safe
Loyalty	0.37 (<0.001)			
People	0.24 (<0.001)	0.29 (<0.001)		
Feel Safe	0.35 (<0.001)	0.27 (<0.001)	0.16 (0.0019)	
Service	0.24 (<0.001)	0.34 (<0.001)	0.12 (0.0227)	0.14 (0.0082)

Notes: (N=352). Higher numbers mean a greater correlation.

Question #2: How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

It was hypothesized that engagement in community service activities would in fact strengthen one's connection to their community. Assessment of this hypothesis began with the collection and analysis of the means and frequencies of the data from questions one and seven on part three of the survey (Table 3). Next, a Pearson's correlation test was conducted to determine whether the hypothesis was true (Table 4). Data analysis indicates that the hypothesis was accepted.

As noted in the analysis of the first study question, data for question one that asked respondents how they felt about participation in community service activities revealed a positive response of 55%; a neutral response of 32%; and a negative response of 13%. When respondents were asked about feeling an increased sense of connection to their community after participation in community service activities; 56% responded positively; 34% provided a neutral response; and 10% responded negatively. Generally, those who responded positively to participation in community service activities also responded feeling an increased sense of connection to their community.

Table 3

Means and frequencies of service participation and connections to community (n=352).

Survey Questions	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree/ Agree 3	Neutral 2	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree 1
Connection	2.46	.67	56%	34%	10%
Service Attitude	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results for service participation were collapsed from a five point to a three point scale for analysis.

A Pearson's correlation test was also conducted in order to test the hypothesis of study question two and determine whether or not there was a correlation between community engagement and a connection to one's community. The hypothesis is accepted, r (351) = .62, p <0.0001. This result indicated a very strong correlation between engagement in community service activities and feeling a sense of connection to the community. There is in fact a significant relationship between the two.

Question #3: How does one's motivation to engage in community service impact desire for increased engagement?

In order to address study question three, survey question one from part three was again used to make comparisons. It was compared to the responses from survey question six which asked students if they would return to participate in community service activities. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between motivation and desire to seek engagement opportunities. The goal of this comparison was to assess the relationship between motivation for community engagement based on

indications of attitude regarding engagement and desire to continue to pursue more engagement opportunities.

As mentioned before, question one of part three on the survey elicited a positive response of 55; a neutral response of 32%; and a negative response of 13%. This compares to question six which elicited a 46% positive response rate; a 40% neutral response rate; and a 14% negative response rate. On average, percentages were relatively similar. The largest difference appears to be the decrease of 9% in positive responses regarding desire to participate in community activities. However, it is important to note that those respondents who switched from a positive response, likely responded neutrally rather than negatively.

Table 4

Means and frequencies of service participation and continued participation (n=352).

Survey Questions	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree/ Agree 3	Neutral 2	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree 1
Continued	2.32	.71	46%	40%	14%
Service Attitude	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results for Service Attitude were collapsed from a five point Likert-scale to a three point scale for analysis.

As in the hypothesis analysis of the previous two study questions, a Pearson's correlation test was also used to test the relationship between these two variables. The hypothesis stated that there would be a relationship between motivation or attitudes toward community service and the increase in engagement. The hypothesis is accepted, *r*

(351) = .69, p <0.0001. There is a strong correlation between motivation regarding

community engagement and increased engagement.

Discussion

This study aimed to identify the attitudes of high school seniors regarding their

community and community engagement in order to explore the relationship between

community attitudes and motivation to participate in community service activities. The

results of this study were mixed. Correlation tests for the first question indicated that

some attitudes appeared to correlate to motivation to participate, while others clearly did

not. Interestingly, data tested for questions two and three showed strong correlations

though between engagement and connection to one's community and increased

motivation for engagement. Discussion regarding the results of each of the three

questions follows.

Summary of Results for Question #1: How do youth attitudes toward their community
influence their motivation for community engagement?

The results for study question one were somewhat mixed. Though the means

seemed to indicate that on average those with positive community attitudes would also

have positive attitudes about community engagement, the correlation test indicates

inconclusive results. As a result, the hypothesis could neither be rejected nor accepted in

full. It appears that while some attitudes regarding community do play a role in

influencing motivation for community engagement, others may not. According to the

functional theory, this may be because certain motivating factors may be more intrinsic or

extrinsic in nature and, generally, community engagement motivation is based on a

balanced combination of the two (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998). Attitudes towards

one's community may not incorporate an extrinsic motivation. Additionally, there may

not be enough intrinsic motivation to compensate, leaving little motivation to engage

based on positive community attitudes alone.

Interestingly, the data results showed that there was very little correlation between those who enjoyed living in their communities and a desire to participate in community service activities. The original hypothesis indicated that there would be a strong correlation, yet clearly there was not. It was previously assumed that those who enjoyed living in their community would also enjoy engaging in community service activities within that community. Perhaps that there would be an intrinsic motivation based on a personal connection to the community. However, this appears not to be entirely true. This may be perhaps a result of what some argue is a growing sense of apathy about participation. People may feel that though they enjoy living in their community there is no need to engage any further in that community. This coupled with a lack of extrinsic motivation may keep people from participating in the community. This would seem to indicate the relevance of providing extrinsic motivations.

Summary of Results for Question #2: How does engagement in community service activities strengthen one's connection to their community?

Contrary to the results of the first study question, the results of study question two clearly indicate a strong correlation between engagement in community service activities and an increased connection to one's community. The more enthusiasm and motivation a person has about participation in community service, the stronger the sense of connection they developed with their community after engaging in service activities. According to the functional theory, they may be intrinsically motivated by altruistic concerns and a desire to contribute to society, but participation may lead to increased extrinsic motivations such as increased self-confidence, expansion of one's social network, or the

opportunity to learn new skills (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998). Clary, Snyder, and

Stukas (1998) argue that the combination of self and selfless motivations that occur are

essential to increasing the likelihood of more prosocial behaviors in society.

Summary of Results for Question #3: How does one's motivation to engage in community service increase engagement?

Data analysis also strongly supported the hypothesis for the third study question.

There is a strong correlation between one's motivation to engage in community service

and increased engagement. Those who were more enthusiastic about participation

generally choose to continue participation in activities. Interestingly, the increased

feelings of connection to one's community noted previously may provide both the

intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that would be more likely to foster a reciprocal

relationship between the helper and the recipient thereby increasing the desire for

engagement. Clary, Snyder, and Stukas (1998) argue that most often prosocial behaviors

and motivations are established most effectively after engagement which may in turn lead

to more engagement, similar to a domino effect. Once someone engages in community

service participation they will continue to do so, motivated both by original motivations

and developed motivations. This is one of the arguments that functional theorists make

against mandatory community service requirements mentioned in the review of literature

earlier. They argue that such requirements, only stimulated by extrinsic motivations, may

impede the development of prosocial attitudes and increased motivation that would lead

to increased participation (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998).

Recommendations for Further Research

The results from this study indicate that assessment of student perceptions and attitudes of their community are beneficial when investigating involvement in community service. The data indicates that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives may be impacted by how a student feels about their community and engaging in participation within that community. However, this study leaves some questions still unanswered. The survey does not specifically target motives in order to make direct links regarding particular motives and participation. A lack of conclusive results from the first study question regarding a significant link between community perceptions and attitudes regarding participation indicates the need for a more comprehensive study that targets the six functional areas of motivation as indicated by Clary, Snyder, & Stukas (1998) in relation to community perceptions.

While this study aimed to measure student perceptions regarding their community and desire to engage in activities that benefited their community, it did not adequately address why these attitudes and perceptions exist. Further research that aims to understand why students have developed the perceptions and attitudes they have would be beneficial to furthering the discussion. A qualitative study that incorporates focus groups addressing the student responses from the surveys could provide beneficial data regarding the lack of a strong relationship between enjoyment of community and engagement in community.

The study may also prove useful in suggesting future research that looks more closely at variables and characteristics of gender. Data were collected on gender, but was

not an essential component of this particular study. An extension of the study may look at the relationship between gender and motivation. Additionally, a study that focuses on results based on specific communities or socioeconomic backgrounds may provide rich data regarding motivations. It may also be beneficial to broaden the scope of the study in terms of to include a larger, more diverse population. The study was conducted in a suburban school. It may be beneficial to expand the study to include additional suburban schools. It may also be valuable to look at data collected from rural and urban schools to determine if location impacts student perceptions of their community, development of civic attitudes, and motivations toward community engagement.

Finally, it may be interesting to expand this into a longitudinal study to track the development of civic attitudes among students over the four years students are enrolled at a particular high school. This type of study may be beneficial for helping a school assess their curriculums and develop more effective programs. A study that extends even further to look at civic attitudes of students post graduation would provide insight regarding the long-term impact and affect of a schools civic education and community engagement curriculum. It may also provide data useful for community development at the local level that is working to improve community desirability and foster stronger community ties.

This study provides a template for others to also study the perceptions of community service. Community engagement is an essential deposition for our youth to develop civic involvement and prepare them for adult responsibilities. Community service programs in our schools should continue to be adjusted to promote this growth.

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Tables

Table 1

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Loyalty	2.19	.67	43%	51%	15%
Know People	2.31	.82	54.5%	22.5%	23%
Feel Safe	2.60	.62	69%	22%	9%
Service	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results were collapsed from a five point Likert-scale to a three point scale for analysis

Table 2

Pearson's correlation between community attitudes and engagement

	Enjoy	Loyalty	People	Safe
Loyalty	0.37 (<0.001)			
People	0.24 (<0.001)	0.29 (<0.001)		
Feel Safe	0.35 (<0.001)	0.27 (<0.001)	0.16 (0.0019)	
Service	0.24 (<0.001)	0.34 (<0.001)	0.12 (0.0227)	0.14 (0.0082)

Notes: (N=352). Higher numbers mean a greater correlation.

Table 3

Means and frequencies of service participation and connections to community (n=352).

Survey Questions	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree/ Agree 3	Neutral 2	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree 1
Connection	2.46	.67	56%	34%	10%
Service Attitude	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results for service participation were collapsed from a five point to a three point scale for analysis.

Table 4

Means and frequencies of service participation and continued participation (n=352).

Survey Questions	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree/ Agree 3	Neutral 2	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree 1
Continued	2.32	.71	46%	40%	14%
Service Attitude	2.41	.71	55%	32%	15%

Notes: Results for Service Attitude were collapsed from a five point Likert-scale to a three point scale for analysis.

Appendix A

<u>Community Service Survey</u>

Please complete this survey. The survey is anonymous. Do not write your name.

Part I. Participant Information

1. What is your age? _____

2. Circle: Female   Male

Part II. Community Questions

<u>Circle the level that most closely reflects your feelings towards each of the statements below.</u>

1. I really enjoy living in my community.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. I feel a strong bond and sense of loyalty towards my community.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. There is nothing about my community that I would change.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. I feel like I know a lot of people in my community.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. I feel safe in my community.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Part III. Service Questions

1. <u>Circle the word that best describes your feelings about participating in community service activities.</u>

Enthusiastic   Interested   Neutral   Uninterested   Unenthusiastic

2. Circle the activities you would consider to be community service activities. (<u>You can circle more than one</u>)

    Mowing your elderly neighbor's lawn.

    Adopting a section of the highway near your home and picking up trash

        along it.

    Sending money to feed starving children in another country.

    Hosting a community yard sale to fundraise for your athletic team.

    Helping your girlfriend/boyfriend carry their books to class.

    Holding a bake sale to raise money for breast cancer awareness.

    List your own example on the line below.

    _____

3. Have you ever participated in a community service activity?   Yes   No

    If yes, have those activities been as an individual, as a group, or both?
            Individual   Group   Both

4. Circle the word that best describes how you felt after participating in the community service activity.

Enthusiastic   Interested   Neutral   Uninterested   Unenthusiastic

5. List the community service activities in which you can remember having participated.

6. Would you ever return to participate in community service activities again?
    Agree   Neutral   Disagree

7. Did you feel more connected to your community after participating in the activities?   Agree   Neutral   Disagree

8. Do you think that participating in community service activities is a positive thing?
    Agree   Neutral   Disagree

9. Do you think that high school students should participate in community service activities?   Agree   Neutral   Disagree

    If yes, for how many hours do you think students should participate each semester? _____ hours