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The Relationship Between Participation in Community Service and Students Academic Success

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The Relationship Between Participation in Community Service and Students Academic Success

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BY

Kelsi Grubisich

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Masters of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between participation in community service and students' academic success at a mid-sized Midwestern institution. A quantitative study was conducted by distributing a survey through the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism Office listserv. The results from the t-test showed that there was no statistical significance in the participation in community service and students' academic success. Results from the Chi Square test showed that there was no statistical significance in the type of service students chose and their major, the gender participation, and the race participation. Recommendations were made to student affairs professionals to include more opportunities for service-learning and to make sure they are meeting the needs of all students at the institution. Suggestions for further research were made to broaden the group surveyed to attain more participants of academic, gender, and race diversity.

Key words: service-learning, academic success, community service, undergraduate students
Dedication

This research is dedicated to all faculty, staff, and students who may participate in community service or service-learning. I hope this study can assist faculty to choose to use service-learning as part of their courses. I wish for this study to be helpful to staff members of community service offices on campuses nationwide to help them meet the needs of all of their students.
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Chapter I

Introduction

In 2013, 62.6 million volunteers participated in community service around the nation (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2015). Volunteers participated in many different types of service including tutoring, office servicing, fundraising, and many more (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2015). In recent years, participation in community service has taken on an integral role in the development of a well-rounded college student (Case, Henck, Schreiner, & Herrmann, 2011). Trends show that male students are less likely to participate in club and organizations on campus, including community service (Case et al. 2011). The trends also show that males are missing out on cognitive development because of these missing pieces, while females continue to get involved in campus activities (Case et al. 2011). Participating in community service activities has allowed students to feel a sense of belonging on their college campus by allowing them to find something they are interested in doing during their free time (Hoffman, n.d.). The researcher is looking to find if there is a relationship between community service and students' academic success.

Community service is very important for a students' development (Case et al. 2011). It is not only important to the students, but it is also beneficial to the community surrounding the university (Spalding, 2013). In a recent study, Hebert and Hauf (2015) tested how service learning affects the success of students in the classroom. The data was collected by the pre- and post-test method. Hebert and Hauf found that over the last two decades, service learning has been linked to higher academic performance, and also an increase in skills in their field of study.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between participation in community service and the academic success of students at a mid-sized, Midwestern institution. This was done by distributing a survey to sophomore, junior, and senior students who participated in community service.

There are many benefits related to community service and volunteering. The study was conducted to find out if there is a relationship between students’ involvement in community service, and their academic success. The study looked at students who identify as sophomores, juniors, and seniors, meaning second, third, and fourth year students and transfer students. The variables were the students’ involvement in community service, and the students’ academic success (GPA). The involvement in community service was measured by those who did or did not participate in community service. The academic success was measured by the students’ current cumulative grade point average (GPA). The study also looked at the type of service the student participated in and their major. This will help to understand if community service related to the students’ major, or getting experience within the field is helping the student achieve a higher GPA. The number of hours spent studying will be considered when analyzing the data.
Research Questions

I sought to understand the relationship between participation in community service and the students’ academic success. This will be addressed by answering the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between participation in community service and academic success (GPA)?
2. Is participation in types of community service dependent on academic major?
3. Is participation in community service dependent on gender, race?

Hypotheses

The following related to the same order listed in the above research questions.

H1: There will be a significant relationship between participation in community service and a student’s academic success.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between participation in a certain type of community service and students’ majors.

H3: There will be more female students who participate in community service activities because they want to participate, while male students will be more likely to participate only if they are mandated to do so.

H4: There will be more white students who participate in community service than any other race.

Significance of the Study

By recognizing the relationship between participation in community service and students’ academic success, university staff will be able to better serve the needs of their students by implementing service learning into their course syllabi. Understanding the
relationship between community service and the academic success of undergraduate
students will help universities understand better ways to market getting involved while
students are on campus by using statistics to show the relationship. According to John
(2005), high school aged students that participate in community service achieve a higher
GPA than students who do not participate in community service activities. This study
will help to understand if the same is true for college students.

Limitations of Study

One factor that may have limited the results of the study was the fact that students
may not have filled out the survey when it was sent to them via email. This may have led
to a small sample size. Another factor may have been that students were not willing to
disclose their GPA to the study, or they chose to report an inaccurate GPA. Some
students may have spent more time studying then others, which may have influenced the
results of students’ GPA’s. If this happened, the researcher may not have been able to
gather enough information to find out if there was a relationship between community
service participation and academic success. In order to limit the number of students not
completing the survey, an e-mail was sent out midway through the duration of the survey.
Another element of the study was gender. Case (2011), Pike (2000), & Hoffman (n.d.)
found that in most cases females will fill out surveys more often than males. If students
chose to participate in service that was not related to their major, it may have limited the
amount of information that could be analyzed if it was not showing an increase or
decrease in GPA.
Definition of Terms

Academic success. This term is defined as students receiving a grade point average (GPA) of a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (Eastern Illinois University, 2015).

Community service. Services volunteered by individuals or an organization to benefit the community or its institutions (American Heritage Dictionary, n.d.).

Service-learning. Activities that combine volunteer work with education (Gray et al. 1999, p. 4).

Summary

The goal of this study was to understand how community service participation affects academic success of students. Chapter I included the introduction, the purpose of the study, the research questions that guide the study, the hypothesis of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and the definitions of terms. Chapter II contains a review of the literature relating to the study.
Chapter II

Review of Literature

The review of literature will explore current research on both community service and academic success of students. It will contain information about common trends in community service around the world. Finally, it will contain information about ways students participate in community service around the country.

History of Community Service and Service-Learning

Community service and service-learning date back all the way to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Service-Learning is defined as “activities that combine volunteer work with education” (Gray et al. 1999, p. 4). Dipadova-Stocks defines service-learning as “an academically rigorous instructional method that incorporates meaningful community service into the curriculum” (2005, p. 345). The definition of community service, according to American Heritage Dictionary, is “services volunteered by individuals or an organization to benefit the community or its institutions” (American Heritage Dictionary, n.d.). The founders of both Harvard and Yale understood the need to help members of the community, and knew students needed to become involved in their community (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). Historically, American institutions had the duty to foster civic engagement on their campuses. Most institutions were doing this for democratic purposes and to promote helping in their community (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). American institutions were set apart from European institutions because of the minimal amounts of involvement by the government in institutions in the United States. Due to the lack of influence from the state, the institutions were able to adapt their curriculum to the changing society and its students (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). The
Progressive Era (1890-1920) brought about the idea of college students participating in service. College students started being a part of their community by becoming involved in creating a new democracy to suit the modern age. In the 1880's, Wisconsin and other Midwestern states started teaching courses to farmers and other people in the town about farming. Then, in the 1900's, the institutions began teaching classes that would be of interest to women and immigrants. These changes in higher education led to more Americans being able to get an education (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). In 1901, the University of Cincinnati began offering courses that included time in the classroom and field work combined. At the same time, Joliet Junior College, the first junior college, opened. Both of these events helped connect the community to education and work experiences (Speck & Hoppe, 2004).

Service-learning has been one of the most significant advances in higher education since the creation of graduate programs (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). A profession that is very closely related to service-learning and community service is social work. The social work profession advocates for society and provides a great model for service-learning. The Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, and the War on Poverty have been major events that have helped social work lay the foundation for what now many institutions call service-learning by giving clients the opportunity to serve the needs of their community during these difficult times (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). Social workers involved in the New Deal were very influential to President Roosevelt and were part of the reason that he created the National Youth Administration (NYA). The NYA was a way for the government to get into the schools, and to help youth find jobs in the vocational and academic setting. The students were being trained for vocational jobs, but
when the training was over they had to pay back the community by volunteering their services. For the students that were working at their institution, they had to focus their jobs on the needs of the community. In return for these jobs, the students were able to get a free education (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). Because of the NYA program, social workers created houses as hubs for community service. The federal government said that the contributors to the service should be those who wanted to become the top of society. They should contribute to the community to pay them back for what they have taught them (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). Community organizing, meaning “public advocacy and training others to advocate for themselves,” became very important to social workers because they were able to help individuals see the meaning behind the work they were doing (Speck & Hoppe, 2004, p. 36).

Today, many people in higher education fail to understand the importance of service-learning, because they believe in education to prepare for the workforce and not for democracy (Lisman, 1998). Service-learning is very important to help create a well-rounded student (Lisman, 1998). From a professor’s stand point, service-learning is very important for students to help support the rigorous curriculum. It is a great opportunity for students to reflect on their lives and to help them better understand their field of study (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). Lisman (1998) explains that service-learning creates a more learning-oriented environment for students instead of a teaching environment. This idea makes it more appealing to students knowing that it is more student centered. Service-learning can also be known for experiential learning. Professors around the country have been promoting community service to their students and students have been volunteering to help in the community for many years (Lisman, 1998). Many academic disciplines
have created programs to help their faculty launch service learning programs (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). Many times, students choose to participate in community service events on their own, or as part of an organization or club. Many educational programs are combining a service component in the beginning of the program and an internship later in the program to help students find out early if they are in the program that is right for them (Lisman, 1998). Service-learning can help create a more powerful experience for students across many levels of social class and economic class (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005).

Service learning can be done at any age because students as young as elementary school can begin to think about what they may want to do for their career. Students can use service-learning experiences to help them decide what they are interested in as they grow and begin to make decisions about college (Lisman, 1998).

According to Lisman (1998), many students find what they learn from volunteering more beneficial to their learning than what they learn in the classroom. Students who have participated in community service have also been known to have increased self-esteem and moral development. Vanderbilt University and Alma College studies showed that students who participate in service are more likely to learn more of the course content and receive higher grades (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Batchelder & Root, 1994). Also, Portland State University researchers found that service-learning increased students’ self-awareness, their awareness and involvement in their community, and their sensitivity to service and diversity in the community (Driscoll, A., Holland, B., Gelmon, S., & Kerrigan, S., 1996). Students also learn life skills from service-learning, for example, they learn how to work as a team and to be a leader (Lisman, 1998). Faculty also benefit from service-learning courses by being encouraged to study service-learning
or being able to give presentations about service-learning. Faculty members are satisfied when they see that their students are able to understand the course material better when they are able to go out in the field to work (Lisman, 1998).

At this day in age, it is not uncommon to find an office on a college campus specifically for community service or service-learning (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). Institutions benefit through participation in service-learning and community service because they are able to build relationships with the community. Institutions are also able to learn more about the community they are part of when they go out to volunteer. They are able to understand the needs of the community when they are sending students out to help in specific environments (Lisman, 1998). Service-learning and community service can be a bridge between the community and the institution. A lot of times a community resents an institution because they believe students come to college just to party, or because the institution is located in a low-income community, where the community members may not be able to afford to attend the institution. Service-learning and community service bring the community and institution together to help both groups in the most positive way (Lisman, 1998).

Community Service in Different Settings

Community service and service learning have become popular among schools at all levels. Service learning has been instituted into schools at the elementary, high school, community college, and four-year college level. The impact on all types of students in the U.S. has been proven to increase students' academic abilities and they have been making significant gains. Students are making significant gains in many aspects; these include their attitude toward themselves, their attitude toward school and
learning, civic engagement, social skills, and their academic performance (Celio et al. 2011). The results of the meta-analysis show that the students demonstrated a higher level of self-esteem, self-concept, and internalized moral standards. They also found that students had a greater interest in school, their education, and their community. They were more willing to try to make a difference in their community and were committed to meeting their own needs. The students showed growth in their social skills as well. They were more likely to become a leader, a better communicator, and a better problem solver.

Students participating in service learning can also lead to students improving their academic achievement (Celio et al. 2011). Researchers found that these aspects have not been consistent through all areas studied. The areas of concern are based on the fact that one of the meta-analyses studied included only 12 quantitative studies and most of them did not include a control group. Another meta-analysis that was studied included 103 interventions, but these included interventions from community service, volunteerism, and service learning projects. Many of these interventions also did not include a control group that made it difficult for the researchers to understand what was happening (Celio et al. 2011). The researchers used four methods to find the studies that were relevant to their analysis. The researchers started out by searching for information using key words and ideas (Celio et al. 2011). The second research method used was academic journals that were written between 1970 and 2008, because they were looking for information specific to these years. The next way they researched their information was by using the references from studies they had already found. Finally, they contacted leaders and scholars within the area of community service and service learning (Celio et al. 2011). Researchers discovered that their predictions were correct in that students who participate
in community involvement had a better outcome to their academic success (Celio et al. 2011).

At the university level, the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford universities created a program called Campus Compact. Campus Compact was “designed to infuse service and civic engagement into college academic programs” (Celio et al. 2011, p. 165). In 1999, Campus Compact, along with Pew Charitable Trusts, funded the launch of the Academy of Management Service-Learning Fellows Program (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005). In 2009, Campus Compact served 1,100 schools. The influence of Campus Compact is seen throughout the community being served, the institution hosting the program, and the students participating in the program. Just as with any other service learning, the students are benefiting academically, personally, and socially from Campus Compact (Celio et al. 2011). Schools that participate in Campus Compact are seeing significant gains in their students both in and out of the classroom, along with many other opportunities to participate in service learning. Students are making gains by becoming more socially conscious, earning higher grades in the classroom, and making the choice to continue their participation in community service events (Celio et al. 2011).

Students of different ages may see the opportunity to participate in community service as a way to investigate future career options. Elementary and high school aged children may struggle to understand the point of community service because they may not understand the impact they are having on the community. These students see that their parents go to work and get paid and they do not understand why they do not get paid for the work they are doing. Older students can see the benefit of helping in the
community because they understand the impact they are making and they learn something from their experience. According to Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson (2006), service learning among students in grades six through twelve has become very popular in low income schools. The researchers sent a survey to 2,002 school listed on the 2001-2002 Common Core of Data public school universe file and received responses from 1,799 principals from elementary schools (47%), middle schools (26%), and high schools (28%) (Scales, et al. 2006). The study took place in schools that were of high-poverty, urban, and majority non-White. Scales et al. (2006) found that students of low income that participated in service learning had increased attendance, higher grades, and scored better on tests than they did prior to their involvement. Due to the participation in service learning, the authors inferred that there was a decrease in the achievement gap between higher and lower income students (Scales et al. 2006). In 1997, many organizations began to talk about community service or service-learning at their national conferences. At the Academy of Management national meeting, they added regular sessions about service-learning that would continue to be offered year after year. They also created an award to be given to the best symposium on service-learning (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005).

Researchers found that there is a significant difference in individuals’ motivation to participate in community service around the world (Hustinx, Handy, & Cnaan, 2012; Fajardo, Lott, & Contreras, 2014; Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010; Holdsworth & Brewis, 2014). In China, college students participated in community service because it was mandated by the government (Hustinx, et al. 2012). College students from Canada and the United Kingdom chose to volunteer and help out at agencies and organizations
because they enjoy it (Holdsworth & Brewis, 2014; Hustinx et al. 2012). Holdsworth and Quinn (2010) stated that there was a greater provision within universities in the United States to participate in community service, therefore, students in the United Kingdom were influenced by students in the United States (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010). English and Welsh students believed they should be receiving tuition waivers due to their participation in community service (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010). According to Holdsworth and Brewis (2014), students in England have shown a decline in volunteering over the recent years. Holdsworth & Brewis concluded that this was happening because they feel that volunteering is devaluing their engagement at their institutions (2014).

Race and gender play an important role in students' interest to participate in community service. According to Fajardo, Lott, and Contreras (2014), Latina/o students who were active in their community were more likely to volunteer while attending college. They discussed in their results that "colleges provide opportunities that shape civic attitudes and behaviors" (Fajardo et al. 2014, p. 148). Researchers from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) studied students attending private institution. A similar study also conducted in a private institution looked gender differences in student involvement (Case et al. 2011). The data table of categorical data shows that only 46 out of 554 students that participated were male students of color, and only 137 of 991 students were women of color (Case et al. 2011). It found that female students were more likely to participate in student activities than male students, and were more well-rounded students because of their involvement (Case et al. 2011). The results of the study show that men were less likely to participate in organizations during high school,
had higher career aspirations, and spent more time watching television and partying during college (Case et al. 2011).

Involvement, Engagement, & Development of Students

The concept of student involvement and student engagement have very similar definitions. Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie (2009) defined involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to his/her academic experience” (Wolf-Wendel et al. 2009, p. 410). Engagement is defined as “the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success” (Wolf-Wendel et al. 2009, p. 412). Both definitions are similar in a way that they both revolve around the amount of energy students put into their experiences. The term engagement can be closely related to community service, when it is used as “community engagement” (Wolf-Wendel et al. 2009). Engagement can be associated with “purposeful student-faculty contact, and active and collaborative learning” (Wolf-Wendel et al. 2009, p. 413). The outcomes related to engagement are very similar to involvement and include satisfaction, learning and development, persistence, and educational attainment. The definition of involvement as defined by Astin (1984) is “the amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to his/her academic experience” (Wolf-Wendel et al. 2009, p. 410). The term involvement can be related to activities such as working on campus, socializing with friends, belonging to a club or organization, or socializing with faculty. Some outcomes to consider when measuring involvement would include satisfaction, grades, retention, and graduation rates (Wolf-Wendell et al. 2009). Some outcomes are based on characteristics of cognitive ability. According to Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997),
another way students are successful is based on the fit of their institution, meaning they found an organization that interests them, they are able to meet people with similar interests, and they are enjoying their academic experience as well as their social experience. Students on commuter campuses may not be as successful because they are not able to get involved and get the full college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Dipadova-Stocks (2005), American graduates who are not participating in service-learning are accepting employment at major companies due to high salaries. The middle class is shrinking, and the working class is growing.

According to Case et al. (2011), students who participated in clubs and organizations on a college campus experience cognitive gains in their development. Case et al. (2011) also indicated that males were less likely to participate in clubs and organizations on a college campus, and according to her study, those students had less gains in their cognitive development. Being involved in a club or organization not only assisted with cognitive development, but it also helped to shape leaders. Involvement in clubs and organizations was a big contributor to students learning in a variety of domains including leadership, which was the focus of the study (Dugan, 2011). Herbert and Hauf (2015), looked at the difference in students' academic development when they participated in optional service learning and when students did not participate. The study was conducted using the test-retest method. The test was given to the service group twice, and the control group once at the end of the study. A total of 130 students participated in the study from developmental psychology classes at St. Francis Xavier University. Only 23 out of 130 students participated in service learning available to the classes and they were all females. The majority of the students were second-year
students and had no prior experience with service learning. The researchers found no difference in the students' development and their GPA (Herbert & Hauf, 2015).

When many students go to college, they decide that they want to get involved in activities on campus as a way to get to know people. Astin (1993), indicated that a student's group of friends is the most important influence of student growth and development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). They use these groups or organizations to meet people with similar interests, attitudes, and behaviors. Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) recognized that students' commitment to their involvement is persistent to their decision making. They also found that students have a positive outcome with their academics and their involvement when they have positive influences from their peers (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995), found that engagement was indirectly related to students' success and persistence in the classroom (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Ullah and Wilson (2007), undergraduate students who are actively involved in their learning and with their faculty are more academically successful. Academic success is not always true about students' interactions with their peers. Ullah and Wilson (2007) indicated female students' peers were more of a positive influence on academic achievement, while male students' peers can be more of a negative influence.

Different types of involvement have specific ways that they effect students' development and academic success. Fraternities and sororities are known to have a negative effect on first year students' cognitive development. Pike's (2000) study, found that students involved in fraternities and sororities have a higher level of involvement that helped students gain cognitive development. The results show that Greek life does not
promote, nor deemphasize, academics and success, it is the campus culture that effects Greek students’ development and success in college (Pike, 2000). College student athletes are another group of students that face developmental and involvement struggles. Student athletes have very busy and strict schedules they have to follow. They have to schedule their classes around practices, and also have to find time to study (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001). The NCAA has created rules limiting the number of hours students can spend on their sport to help them become more successful in the classroom. They also created rules stating that institutions are required to provide academic advisement, career development, and skill development to all student athletes (Carodine et al. 2001). Carodine et al. (2001), suggested that students become involved in additional organizations outside of their sport to help with their cognitive development.

A recent study by Wells and Lynch (2014) discussed the opportunity that President Obama has given to low income students attending college. He has offered up to $4,000 tax credit to students for completing 100 hours of volunteer work, which encouraged students to become more engaged and involved on their campus. The study revealed that students who come from low income families were not given sufficient amount of opportunity to volunteer, which put them at a disadvantage of knowing about options to get involved and what to study when they went to college. President Obama believed that giving students this tax credit it would benefit the community and allow low income students the opportunity to go to college (Wells & Lynch, 2014). Without this opportunity from President Obama, some of these students may have never been given the chance to attend college.
Community Service Activities

According to *USA Today* (2014), the volunteer rate dropped nationally by one percentage point between the years of 2012-2013. This may not sound like much, but this is a big loss for organizations who rely on volunteers every day (*USA Today*, 2014). Some ways that students are still highly involved are through programs similar to Alternative Breaks, youth after school programs, working with the elderly, and helping with the environment (Jaksa, 2011; Son & Wilson, 2011). Giving students meaning behind the service they are doing will give them more of a reason to participate. Social justice is promoting community service and service learning to help participants understand the injustices around the community (Mather & Konkle, 2013). Social justice is a great way to help students understand the reason they are helping a specific community, specifically in low income and high poverty areas (Mather & Konkle, 2013).

When discussing service-learning, and community service in the classroom, Rhoads (1997) believed that education is built around care. He says that female teachers are very nurturing to their students, which is why service-learning is very beneficial to students. The students learn about the nurturing from their teacher, and then are willing to go out and help in their community (Rhoads, 1997).

There are many ways that students can volunteer, or participate in community service activities. According to Spalding (2013), students at the University of the West of England- Bristol were given an option to take an elective class about volunteering. The students were given a log book, and had to volunteer and log their experiences as they went through the semester. At the end of the semester, the students had to give a presentation about their experiences (Spalding, 2013). Furthermore, students in Canada
were more likely to participate in community service by mentoring and tutoring children. They tend to work through non-profit organizations rather than going through their university to volunteer (Hustinx, et al. 2012). Students in the United Kingdom are also usually found mentoring youth, or working with children in some way. Students in the United Kingdom are willing to volunteer within their communities. These students are influenced to participate in volunteer opportunities by seeing the service their peers in United States higher education systems participate in (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010).

Service-Learning has recently started taking place as part of graduate programs as well. A student in an MBA class was assigned to work with a 17-year-old student in a wheelchair. He had never worked with that population before and had always thought negatively about people in wheelchairs. After being given the opportunity to work with this student, the MBA student came to class and told the story about how much he learned and how his perspective of people in wheelchairs has changed (Dipadova-Stocks, 2005).

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The first theory that will guide this study is Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement. Astin defines involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p.31). Astin’s (1984) theory contains five postulates. Each postulate relates to how a student becomes involved in their college community. Postulate one refers to the “objects” students may experience during college. An object can be identified as “the students experience as a whole to a specific activity” (Evans et al. 2010, p.31). Postulate two involves the amount of time students participate in a
certain activity. Postulate three talks about how involvement can be considered both qualitative and quantitative. Postulate four discusses the outcome of the activity based on the amount of time put into the activity. Finally, postulate five states “the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement” (Evans et al. 2010, p.31). Postulate five could be related to this study because it talks about the “effectiveness of educational policy” and how it is related to the involvement (Evans et al. 2010, p.31). This theory will be useful to this study because the researcher can look into ways that the amount or type of community service is related to the students’ academic success.

Another theory that will guide this study is George Kuh’s Theory of Student Engagement (2003). Kuh (2003) indicated that any interactions with other individuals on a college campus is considered engagement. This includes going to floor meetings, talking to a professor outside of class, talking with an RA, or joining an organization. Kuh (2003) believes that students who are engaged on their campus are more likely to succeed and also receive a higher GPA. Kuh (2003) will be useful to this study because he talks about how engagement will lead to a higher GPA, and the researcher is looking to find if there is correlation between students’ participation in community service and their academic success. The researcher will be testing this theory using a survey. The researcher will be asking questions related to the amount of time spent studying, the amount of involvement in community service, and the specific types of community service the students participate in.
Summary

Chapter two includes a literature review about the participation in community service and students’ academic success. Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement is very important to the study. This chapter also outlines community service around the world, the involvement and development of students, and community service activities. The research shows that students who participate in community service become well rounded students, and begin to feel a sense of belonging because they have found something that fits them. Chapter three will contain the methods used to conduct this study.
Chapter III

Methods

The purpose of the quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between participation in community service and students' academic success at a midsized, Midwestern institution. In this chapter, the researcher explained the design of the study, where the participants were found, and information about data collection and analysis. The researcher tested the research questions by collecting survey data and analyzing it using SPSS.

Design of Study

The focus of the study was how participating in community service affects the academic success of college students. This study was conducted as a quantitative study by distributing a survey to 3,000 undergraduate students during the fall semester of 2016. A correlational quantitative study was conducted to help the researcher understand if there was a relationship between participation in community service and students' academic success.

Participants/Sample

Potential participants for this study were full and part time undergraduate student who identify as a sophomore, junior, or senior in a mid-sized Midwestern four-year state institution. The sample was drawn from the students who choose to participate in the survey sent out through the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism listserv. The participants had previously participated in community service, signed up for the newsletter, or attended the institution for at least one semester prior to taking the survey. There were 156 participants out of 3,000 recipients who completed the survey, and 116 of
those responses were analyzed to help receive accurate data. The researcher deleted 40 of the responses because they were either freshman or graduate students, faculty, or did not complete the survey.

**Research Site**

The research site was a mid-sized Midwestern university located in a rural community with a population about 21,900 residents. This research site included students of multiple cultural backgrounds, including African American (18.9%), Hispanic (6.1%), Asian (1%), White (67.6%), and many others. The students included domestic and international students. It included students from multiple states. The study took place through an electronic survey, which means there was no meeting place on campus. As of fall 2015, there were 1,295 students who identify as sophomores, 1,791 juniors, and 2,385 seniors (Eastern Illinois University, 2015). The Civic Engagement and Volunteerism Office at the institution was an official certifying organization for the President’s Volunteer Service Award, which means that students were able to set up an account to log their community service hours nationally.

**Instruments**

The instrument that was used to collect data for this study was a quantitative survey. The survey was created by the researcher to distribute to students around the campus. The survey included demographic questions for the researcher to gain knowledge about who completed their survey and to understand if there was a difference between gender and race in participation in community service. The survey also included questions about the amount of time students spent participating in community service, what type of community service they participated in, how much they enjoyed their
service, and their GPA. This instrument was designed to help the researcher understand if there was a relationship between participation in community service and the academic success of the students who participated. The survey can be found in Appendix A.

**Data collection**

The data was collected by sending out a survey electronically to 3,000 undergraduate students. The survey was sent out in the middle of the Fall 2016 semester. The e-mail addresses were obtained from the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism office's list of volunteers. The survey was created using Qualtrics™, and the e-mail contained a link to the survey. The survey remained open for three weeks. A reminder e-mail was sent out halfway through the duration of the survey. The data was collected using the survey questions found in Appendix A. The researcher used the data to gather information about students' academic success.

**Data Analysis**

Before analyzing the data, it was imported to The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS™) from Qualtrics™. The data was analyzed by running statistical analysis using SPSS to determine the results of the study.

In order to determine if there was a significant relationship between participation in community service and a student's GPA the researcher ran a *t*-test. The number of community service hours was the independent variable and the students' GPA was the dependent variable. In order to determine if there was a positive relationship between the type of service a student participated in and their major the researcher ran a 4 by 5 chi square test. In order to determine if there were more female or male participants in community service, the researcher ran a 3 by 2 chi square test. In order to determine if
there were more White students who participate in community service than any other race, the researcher ran a 6 by 3 chi square. The researcher looked to find out what race participated in community service the most, and which race participated the least. The data was found using the information collected from question number 10 on the survey found in Appendix A.

**Treatment of the Data**

The data was collected and kept in a confidential and secure file with password protection according to Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards. Participants were assigned a code/participant ID number to protect confidentiality. During the study, the data collected was only available to the researcher and the participants of the study. After three years, all information will be destroyed per the institution’s IRB policy.

**Demographics**

Tables 1-5 describes the demographic information from the 116 participants. The data was self-reported by survey participants with participants having the option not to answer the questions.

Table 1 includes the gender of the participants. Most of the participates that completed the survey were females (n = 95; 81.9%). The rest of the survey participants identified as male (n = 21; 18.1%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 displays information on the race and ethnicity of the survey participants. The majority of the survey participants were White/Caucasian (n = 93; 80.2%). A total
of 18 participants identified as African American (15.5%). Two participants identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (1.7%). A total of three participants identified as Hispanic/Latino/a (2.6%).

Table 2. Race/Ethnicity of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 represents the class demographics of the survey participants. The majority of the participants identified as seniors (n = 73; 62.9%). A total of 11 participants identified as sophomores (9.5%). A total of 32 participants identified as juniors (27.6%). Freshman and Graduate students were not surveyed.

Table 3. Academic Classification of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 displays the age of the survey participants. The majority of the participants identified as 21 years old (n = 44; 37.9%). The next biggest group was the 22-year-old participants (n = 23; 19.8%). A total of 21 participants identified as 20 years old (18.1%). Seven participants identified as 19 years old (6%). A total of 5 participants identified as 23 years old (4.3%). One participant identified as 25, 27, and 31 years old (0.9%).
Table 4. *Age of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and over</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 displays the academic colleges where the participants’ majors are located. Each college had a very similar number of participants. A total of 34 participants represented the College of Education & Professional Studies (29.3%). A total of 33 participants represented the College of Sciences (28.4%). A total of 29 participants represented the Lumpkin College of Business & Applied Sciences (25%). The College of Arts & Sciences was represented by 20 participants (17.2%).

Table 5. *Major of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education &amp; Professional Studies</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Sciences</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumpkin College of Business &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The GPA of the participants ranged from 2.0 to 4.0 on a 4.0 scale. The majority of the participants have a GPA ranging between 3.5 and 4.0 (n = 59; 50.9%).

Summary

Chapter three contains the design of the study, the participants, and the research site, the instrument being used for the study, the data collection, and the data analysis.
Also, included in chapter three are the demographics of the 116 survey participants.

Chapter four provides the results of this study.
Chapter IV

Results

This chapter presents results of the survey that will answer the three research questions. The data was collected using a survey created by the researcher to find the relationship between community service and students' academic success, as well as to determine if a specific gender or race participated in community service more than others. Participants were asked to respond to a survey sent via email sent from the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism office's list. The survey was sent to over 3,000 students, faculty, and staff at the institution. A total of 156 students completed the survey, with 116 of those responses being used for the data. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS™).

RQ #1: Is there a relationship between participation in community service and academic success (GPA)?

For the first research question, the researcher was looking to find out if there was a difference in GPA between students who participated in community service versus those who did not. The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between a students' participation in community and their academic success. In order to determine if the hypothesis was correct a $t$-test was used to find significance, if any. The results of the $t$-test showed that there was not a significant difference between students who participated in community service and those who did not participate in community service $t (1.419), p = 0.159$. On average the students whom participated in community service ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.515$) and students who did not participate in community service have a similar GPA ($M = 3.18$, $SD$
= 0.46). The researcher's hypothesis for RQ 1 was not confirmed by the t-test, therefore it cannot be confirmed that students who participate in community service have a higher GPA.

Out of the 116 survey participants, 114 participants have participated in community service. Table 6 shows the results of the t-test and the information to answer RQ 1, including the mean and standard deviation of the data collected.

Table 6. Participation in community service and cumulative GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA</td>
<td>M = 3.39</td>
<td>M = 3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = .515</td>
<td>SD = .460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t = 1.419</td>
<td>df = 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p = .683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at < .05

RQ #2: Is participation in types of community service dependent on academic major?

For the second research question, the researcher looked to determine if students chose a type of service based on their major. The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between the community service and the students' major. In order to determine if type of service is related to major GPA the researcher used a Chi Square test. The Chi Square tests to see if there is a relationship between two variables. The null hypothesis would show that type of community service does not determine major GPA.

In this analysis, 114 out of 116 participants were used because three students reported not participating in community service. The majority of the participants were able to be used (n = 113), the data can be viewed in Table 7. The responses were divided up by colleges and types of service. The highest percentage of the survey participants that participated in community service opportunities were from the College of Education.
and Professional Studies (29.3%). The next greatest college to participate in community service opportunities was the College of Sciences (28.4%). Lumpkin College of Business & Applied Sciences (25%) was very close to the previously mentioned colleges. The lowest number of participants were from the College of Arts & Humanities (17.2%).

There was no significance in the participation in youth community service and the participants' major ($X^2 = 5.042; df = 3; p > 0.05$). There was no statistical significance in participation in community service working with animals and the major ($X^2 = 1.321; df = 3; p > 0.05$). Looking at data from participants major and their participation in community service with the environment, there was also no statistical significance ($X^2 = 1.934; df = 3; p > 0.05$). When it comes to non-profit service, there is no statistical significance with the participants' major ($X^2 = 12.469; df = 3; p > 0.05$) therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.
Table 7. *Type of Service and Major*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Non-Profit</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education &amp; Professional Studies</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Sciences</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumpkin College of Business &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $x^2(3, N = 116) = 12.469, p > 0.05*

RQ #3: Is participation in community service dependent on gender, race?

For the final research question, the researcher was looking to find if there was a relationship between the gender and participation in community service and race/ethnicity and participation in community service. In order to determine if there is a significance, the researcher ran Chi Square tests. Two different tests were run, one to analyze gender data and one to analyze race/ethnicity data. The researcher hypothesized that female students would be more likely to participate in community service than male students. The researcher also hypothesized that White students are more likely than any other race/ethnicity to participate in community service.
The first hypothesis stated that there would be more female participants than male participants. To find the results, the researcher ran a two by two Chi Square test. The results of the survey show that 74.1% of the survey participants were female (n = 86), and 14.7% of the participants were male (n = 17) that participated in community service. The results also showed that 7.8% of female (n = 9) participants, and 3.4% of male (n = 4) participants did not participate in community service. The Chi Square showed that there is no statistical significance between gender and participation in community service ($X^2 = 1.584; df = 1; p > 0.05$).

Table 8. Gender and Participation in Community Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>86</th>
<th>74.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $x^2(1, N = 116) = 1.584, p > 0.05$*

The second hypothesis looked at the race/ethnicity of the participants. The researcher ran a 4 by two Chi Square test to analyze the data. The results of the Chi Square showed that 71.6% of White (n = 83) survey participants participated in community service, and 8.6% of White (n = 10) survey participants did not participate in community service. The results also showed that 13.8% of the African American (n = 16) participants participated in community service, and 1.7% of African American (n = 2) participants did not participate in community service. Looking at Asian/Pacific Islander 1.7% (n = 2) participated in community service, and 0% (n = 0) have not participated in community service. Finally, 1.7% of Hispanic/Latino/a (n = 2) participated in community service, and 0.9% (n = 1) have not participated in community service. The
Chi Square test showed that there was no statistical significance between race/ethnicity and participation in community service ($X^2 = 1.748; df = 3; p > 0.05$).

Table 9. *Race/Ethnicity and Participation in Community Service*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>White/Caucasian</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $X^2(3, N = 116) = 1.748, p > 0.05$

**Summary**

In summary, RQ1 was answered by running a $t$-test examining if there was a relationship between community service and academic success (GPA). The results indicated that there was no statistical significance between the two factors. The second research question was looking to find if there was a relationship between type of community service and the major of the participants. The results of this question also showed no statistical significance between the four types of service tested and the four colleges that were recorded. The third research question had two hypotheses. The first hypothesis looked at the relationship between participants' gender and their participation in community service. The results of the Chi Square were also statistically insignificant showing that it more females participated in community service. The final hypothesis was looking to find if there was a statistical significance between participants race/ethnicity and their participation in community service.
Chapter four answered the research questions presented in chapter one. Chapter five will draw conclusions based on the findings from the study and connect the current study to the research discussed in chapter two.
Chapter V

Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings and interpretations of the study. The chapter will also connect the literature from Chapter II to the findings and the limitations of the study. Finally, this chapter will discuss the recommendations for student affairs practitioners based on the findings and some suggestions for further research.

Discussion

The research compared the results from the research questions to the literature from chapter II. In terms of comparing the previous research to the research in this study, there was not much comparison. Much of the research found from previous studies related to service-learning more than to participation in community service by choice (Celio et al. 2011; Dipadova-Stocks, 2005; Driscoll et al. 1996). Chapter II included a lot of information on service-learning related to academics and community service was presented (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Gray et al. 1999). Additionally, it included information about community service at different levels (Son & Wilson, 2011; Spalding, 2013).

RQ#1: Is there a relationship between participation in community service and academic success (GPA)?

The findings of this study indicate that there was no statistical significance between participation in community service and the students’ academic success. There were no relationships between the number of community service hours’ students completed and their GPA. This suggests that students work hard in school to increase their GPA and that community service involvement may not play a role. Celio et al.
(2011) said that community service can lead to students' academic improvement, but that does not always happen. Survey participants mentioned that they did learn more about their major from participating in community service, but their academic success was because of the time spent studying. The hypothesis for this research question said that students who participated in community service would have a higher GPA. Participants were asked to self-report their GPA, which could have caused a problem with accuracy. Another limitation that could have affected the study would be that the participants were self-selected by using the listserv from the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism Office. There is a possibility that students who were not on the listserv could have had lower GPAs.

**RQ#2: Is participation in types of community service dependent on academic major?**

The second research question wanted to find out if the type of community service was related to a student's major. Participants mentioned in the survey that they did learn more about their major by participating in certain types of service, but they did not achieve higher academic success. The results of two studies from Vanderbilt University and Alma College showed that students who participate in community service are more likely to learn more of the course content and receive higher grades (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Batchelder & Root, 1994). The results of the study indicated that there was no statistical significance between the type of service students chose and their major. This could be true because students did not sign up for the class because of the service opportunity, they decided that the service offered to them was helpful after registering for the class. There is also the possibility that professors were not intentional about the community service
they incorporated in the class, they may have realized this after the students participated in the opportunity. Academic programs have started to incorporate service as part of the class work for the semester. This is something that is being done to help give the students more opportunities for field work before graduating and getting a job (Lisman, 1998).

RQ#3: Is participation in community service dependent on gender, race?

The final research question had two hypotheses, the first was that White students are more likely to participate in community service and the second was that female students were more likely to participate in community service. Case (2011) mentioned that there were more females participating in activities on campus than males. This was something that the current researcher found true as well. Although, there was no statistical significance found in the participation of females versus males, the sample size could have played a factor in the results of the study. The same goes for the White students participating more than any other race/ethnicity. The current researcher found it to be true, but when the Chi-square was conducted there was no statistical significance. Although according to current research on Latino/a students, students who were active in their community at a young age are more likely to volunteer while in college (Fajardo et al. 2014). According to Case (2011), very few students of color participated in the study. She mentioned that less than 100 students out of over 500 were female or male students of color.

Limitations

Throughout the study, many limitations were found to be a factor that may have changed the results if done differently. First of all, the study was sent to over 3,000
students, faculty, and staff who were interested in participating in community service, and only 156 students participated in the study. The list that was used does not have a way to separate the students from the faculty and staff. This could have also been a limitation because the survey was being taken by participants who were not able to be used in the data analysis. Another limitation is that the data tested was self-reported by the survey participants. This is a limitation because the researcher has to trust that the participants were being truthful when answering the questions. In addition, the survey was created by Qualtrics™, an online system, then sent to the participants via the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism email list. This could have skewed the data because most participants have participated in community service are on the list. Students that participated in this survey are more likely to be involved if they are going to take the time to participate in an online survey or if they are interested in the topic on the survey. Some students who receive an email from the list will just delete the email without reading it because of the sender, or because they see the subject is a survey and they think it will take a lot of time. Another limitation found in the study was that the majority of the participants were female. The researcher did not get enough male participation to see how participating in community service affects them. Male participation has been limited in many previous studies as well (Case, 2011; Kalahar, 2015). Finally, the majority of the students were white and there were some races that were not represented in the study. If there were more participants from other races/ethnicities, there may have been more significant results.
Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals and Practice

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations could benefit student affairs professionals working with community service activities:

1. **Making more opportunities for service-learning available for students.**
   
   Volunteer offices should work with departments on campus to create service-learning opportunities for students each semester. It helps the students to get to know the community they are living in and it can be very beneficial for students when it comes to learning more about their major. One of the survey questions asked students if they learned more about their major by participating in service related to their major, and the majority of students said they did. Intentionally planning to get students involved in activities that will benefit their academics could help to raise the students' GPAs and their academic success.

2. **Be sure to offer community service opportunities for all students on campus.**
   
   There may be more students willing to participate in community service if there is something that they feel passionate about. Giving students many different opportunities will also help them to decide what they are interested in. It may also be helpful to survey students to see what they are interested so the office can be sure they are meeting the needs of their students.

3. **Connect with the Multicultural office on campus to help meet the needs of all students.**
   
   Volunteer offices could work with the Multicultural office to help to better understand what all of their students are looking for. This will help the volunteer office be sure they have activities for students of every culture and
every race. There could also be opportunities to partner with the Multicultural office to plan a service event specifically for students served by the office.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. **Replicate this study using a more general group of participants.** If this research were to be conducted in the future, the researcher would recommend that the survey be sent to the entire undergraduate population. This will help the researcher to collect more data from students who do not participate in community service, or students who do participate but are not on the list for the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism. It will also ensure that the survey is being sent to enough male participants to get better results.

2. **Request permission from participants to use their GPA reported by the university.** It will be more accurate if the researcher were to use the GPA reported by the university because it will be an exact answer instead of the participants guessing, or giving a higher number because they do not want anyone to know their actual GPA. In order to do this, the researcher will have to collect identifiable information.

3. **Include a qualitative question on the survey about students experience with community service.** This will help the researcher to understand if the students were receiving a higher GPA because of their participation in community service, or if it is because of the amount of time they spend studying each week. It will also help to understand if students are not as successful because they are spending too much time on their community service or if they should be spending more time studying. The researcher could also add a qualitative component to the study
to help further explain the results of the quantitative study. Another option would be to conduct a mixed methods study to meet the communication styles of more students.

**Summary**

Chapter V discussed the findings of the study based on the data collected and related the information to the literature in chapter II. The study attempted to find the relationship between students' participation in community service and academic success. The study included three research questions and four hypotheses. All four of the hypotheses proved not to be true and there was no statistical significance found in the study. According to the study conducted by Case (2011), there was statistical significance in the amount of female versus male student participation. Another study conducted by (Giles & Eyler (1994) & Batchelder & Root (1994), it discovered that students who participate in service-learning have received a higher GPA. Chapter V also included information about the limitations of the study, recommendations for student affairs professionals working with community service, and suggestions for further research on this topic based on the research completed in this study.
References


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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire - Community Service and Academic Success

What is your age?

What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other

Which of the following best describes your racial and ethnic background?
   a. White/Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Asian/Pacific Islander
   d. Hispanic/Latino/a
   e. Native American/American Indian
   f. Other

Year in school?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate Student

What is your current cumulative GPA?
What is your major? Drop down menu with choices

How many credit hours did you register for in the fall 2016 semester?

How many credit hours did you receive at the end of the fall 2016 semester?

How many hours did you spend studying per week in the fall 2016 semester?

Have you participated in community service?
   a. Yes
   b. No

If yes, about how many hours a week did you participate in community service in the fall 2016 semester?

What types of community service have you participated in?
   a. Youth
   b. Animals
   c. Environment
   d. Non-profits
   e. Other

What types of service relate to your major?
   a. Youth
   b. Animals
c. Environment

d. Non-profits

e. Other

What motivates you to participate in community service?

a. Classroom required hours

b. Mandated hours

c. I like to help the community

d. I need hours for an organization

e. I want to learn more about the community

f. I wanted to meet new people

g. Get work experience

Has participating in community service increased your knowledge about your major or field of study?

a. Yes

b. No, my volunteer work didn’t have anything to do with my major

c. No, I didn’t learn anything new about my major

How many hours a week did you spend participating in other organizations?

How satisfied were you with your experience?

1 being not satisfied and 5 being highly satisfied
Appendix B

Informed Consent

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Relationship between Participation in Community Service and Students’ Academic Success

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kelsi Grubisich under the direction of Dr. Dena Kniess, from the Department of Counseling and Student Development at Eastern Illinois University.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you have previously signed up for community service, or have requested to receive a newsletter from the Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteerism.

• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to examine the affects community service has on students’ academic success among different races and genders.

• PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Please fill out the survey about your experience with community service. The survey will not ask you for any identifiable information.

• POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The study presents no potential risks, as no identifiable information will be collected.

• POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

As a participant you may come across some community service opportunities that you did not know were offered through the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism Office.

This survey may be beneficial to the Civic Engagement and Volunteerism office by sharing the results about what helps students be successful.

• CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping the data in a locked folder. Only the researcher and the sponsor will have access to the data. The data will be destroyed after three years per the IRB requirements.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Dr. Dena Kniess, Faculty Sponsor  
217-581-7240  
drkniess@eiu.edu  

Kelsi Grubisich, Principal Investigator  
klgrubisich@eiu.edu  

**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL  61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: euirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.
Appendix C

IRB Approval

May 23, 2016

Kelsi Grubisich
Counseling and Student Development

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "The Relationship Between Participation in Community Service and Students' Academic Success" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 5/23/2016, has certified this protocol meets the federal regulations exemption criteria for human subjects research. The protocol has been given the IRB number 16-069. You are approved to proceed with your study.

The classification of this protocol as exempt is valid only for the research activities and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 217-581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

Richard Cavanaugh, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 217-581-6205
Email: recavanaugh@eiu.edu