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The Role of Motivation in Community Partner Perceptions of Service-Learning

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THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN COMMUNITY PARTNER

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

by

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(Under the Direction of Rebecca Ryan)

ABSTRACT

The current study sought to determine how community partners' varying motivations for participating in collegiate service-learning programs relates to their perceptions of service-learning. Prior research has demonstrated a plethora of positive outcomes for students who partake in courses with service-learning requirements, but research investigating the outcomes for the organizations that host these students is less common, and research investigating the link between their motives and perceptions is nonexistent. Based on this gap in the literature, the quantitative, evidence-based Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale was developed for the current study to assess how community partners perceive their experiences with service-learning across four dimensions (university-community partnership, experience with students, cost-benefit analysis, and overall impact) as a function of their primary motivation for participating in service-learning. The four primary motivations were educating students, increasing capacity, improving relations, and securing support, although it should be noted that due to low sample size, the study was underpowered, and two of the four motive groups were excluded from analysis. The results of the one-way multivariate analysis of variance showed that the Educating Students Motive Group and the Increasing Capacity Motive group did not differ significantly in their scores, however, descriptive statistics revealed that the Educating Students Motive Group had higher scores on the scale and each subscale than the Increasing Capacity Motive Group. Potential reasons for these differences are discussed, as well as how these findings combined with further implementation of the scale can inform improvements in service-learning programming.

INDEX WORDS: Service-learning, Community partners, University-community partnership, Motivation,

Program evaluation, Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Service-learning is an experiential learning pedagogy intended to strengthen college students' understanding of course material through structured community service (Rinaldo et al., 2015). In courses with a service-learning component, the faculty set the general guidelines for how the service portion of the course will be incorporated into the curriculum, and how it will be graded or assessed for completion credit. Then, either the faculty or the students finalize a service-learning arrangement and site-specific expectations with an approved community partner, which is any public agency or nonprofit organization working to address specific needs in a community. Although service requirements vary by university, course, and community partner, they typically involve a minimum time commitment and/or completion of a project, as well as a reflection component to gauge student development across several dimensions because of the service. The staff at the community partner locations take on the responsibility of training and supervising the students, and in many cases, they also provide an evaluation of the student and their progress to the faculty. Through service-learning, the community partners become the teachers beyond the classroom, and student learning is facilitated through real-world, hands-on experience that allows students to both apply knowledge from academia and gain new insights from community stakeholders (i.e. organization staff, organization clientele, and affiliated community members). As such, service-learning is usually deemed a partnership between a university and the community that yields plentiful benefits for all parties involved, but its roots in academia shift most of the focus onto student outcomes, and it is precisely this inequality that often leads to the neglect of community partners' voices.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior research demonstrates a plethora of positive personal, professional, social, and academic outcomes for college students who partake in courses with service-learning requirements (Eyler et al., 2001), but research investigating the outcomes for the organizations that host these students is less common. Studies that have investigated community partner outcomes have employed both quantitative methods (e.g. fixed-response and Likert-type questions) and qualitative methods (e.g. semi-structured and structured interviews, focus groups, open-ended or free response questions), with the latter being the most frequently used. These studies report both the benefits and challenges community partners face with service-learning, and their combined findings reveal perspectives related to the university-community partnership, the experience of working with service-learning students, the costs incurred to train and supervise these students, and the overall impact of service-learning.

University-Community Partnership

Before reviewing common themes found across community partners' reported experiences with service-learning, it is important to understand the general nature of the university-community partnership. Bringle and colleagues (2009) posit that the term *partnership* is often misused in the context of service-learning to describe what is more accurately a mere arrangement or placement. Furthermore, the term partnership is also commonly used to describe the relationship between the university and community as a whole, but given that there are multiple stakeholders within both entities, this dyad is too broad for consistent analysis across studies. Therefore, Bringle and colleagues contribute three important points of clarification for examining the nature of university-community interactions. First, a relationship should not be considered a partnership unless it possesses closeness, equity, and integrity. Second, the SOFAR framework should be used to specify the units of analysis within the university and community. The SOFAR acronym identifies students, community organizations, faculty, administrators, and community residents as the five key stakeholders in service-learning, which yields 10 possible stakeholder relationships to consider when developing and maintaining a service-learning program. And third, the E-

T-T model should serve as a guide to understanding whether the service-learning taking place is exploitative, transactional, or transformational, and for whom.

Sandy and Holland (2006) conducted focus groups with 99 community partners and found that they overwhelmingly reported a strong foundational relationship with the university and service-learning faculty as paramount in creating a positive and productive service-learning experience. The major characteristics of said relationship were (a) clear expectations and ongoing communication, (b) an understanding of community partners' needs, perspectives, and goals, (c) a personal connection with the faculty and university beyond service-learning, (d) co-involvement in planning the service requirements and training students, and (e) accountability and equitable leadership of students. Here we see examples of that closeness, equity, and integrity that are central to establishing a partnership, as being weak in one or each of these foundational areas weakens the overall quality and strength of the relationship and allows more room for problems to arise in service-learning programs. To that point, Karasik (2019) surveyed 201 community partner representatives about their experience with their university-community partnership using an online assessment consisting of both fixed and open-ended items. Participant responses were then coded and organized into three main categories of barriers to service-learning success: university-related, student-related, and organization-related (note that the latter two will be discussed in subsequent sections). In terms of university-related barriers, Karasik found that poor student preparation, poor communication from faculty, and lack of genuine community support were most frequently reported, each of which could be attributed to a weak or nonexistent university-community partnership.

To assess agency voice, Miron and Moley (2006) interviewed 40 site supervisors from community partner agencies about their level of involvement in planning and implementing service-learning taking place at their organizations. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 1-to-5 scale, and then elaborate on their rating. Miron and Moley found that the more involved community partners are, the more benefits they report from it. This finding emphasizes the amplification of agency voice and early and ongoing collaboration as essential to creating a strong foundation for service-learning success and developing a true partnership rather than a mere arrangement.

In sum, the most relevant unit of analysis for the university-community partnership as it relates to service-learning is that of the faculty and the community organizations with which they work. Service-learning projects are most successful when both the faculty and the community organizations operate as equal partners in educating students and developing the terms of the service to be completed, as this enhances agency voice and allows the experience to be mutually beneficial (i.e. transactional or transformational) rather than exploitative. Of note here is the degree to which students are prepared for working with a community partner, and the degree to which they have a genuine interest in the partner's mission. Although these may be attributed to how well the faculty prepare students prior to their service, these characteristics are within the students' control as well, and thus play a major role in community partners' evaluations of service-learning students.

Experience with Students

In addition to the university-community partnership, it is equally important to understand how community partners perceive their interactions and overall experiences with the students that provide the service. "Extra hands" and "new ideas" are the most reported benefits of service-learning (see Blouin & Perry, 2009; Jettner, 2017; Karasik, 2019; Rinaldo et al., 2015; Sandy & Holland, 2006), as community partners place immense value upon the increased organizational capacity and variety of perspectives, expertise, and skills that service-learning students provide. Interestingly, Rinaldo and colleagues and Sandy and Holland also found that partners greatly appreciated the opportunity to "serve" the students by helping them achieve their academic goals and by educating them about the nonprofit sector. Additionally, Andrade and colleagues (2020) found that when service-learning students were evaluated across different professional competencies, students who were ranked higher also received higher rankings for their service projects in terms of quality and value, demonstrating that students who exhibit professionalism, work ethic, general preparedness, and overall interest in and engagement with the work of community partners have the greatest impact on their organizations.

Despite these benefits, community partners also report challenges when working with service-learning students. Karasik (2019) identified short-term service arrangements, poor fit, and lack of

professionalism as three major student-related barriers to service-learning success. In all fairness, the short-term nature of service-learning is not in the student's control, as the typical semesterly or quarterly academic calendar remains in conflict with the year-round operations of organizations. Poor fit could be the fault of the faculty if they merely assign students to a community partner without considering whether the student's interests and skills align with the mission and needs of the organization. Alternately, if students are allowed to pick their placement, they may encounter challenges if there are limited options because of faculty-imposed requirements, or just a general lack of organizations to choose from within the community surrounding their university. However, regardless of where a student ends up or how long their course term is, professionalism is well within their control, and exhibiting a lack of work ethic or lack of respect for the organization staff and clientele is a major drawback for community partners who agree to host these students. Consequently, community partners routinely advocate for students that have genuine interest in their organization's cause, and for students to be more knowledgeable about the nature of the nonprofit sector and appropriate workplace etiquette prior to beginning their service.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

According to Stoecker and colleagues (2009), many community partners have reported that faculty-defined service requirements can strain organizational resources and/or require partners to create work for students that do not address actual organization needs and goals. To investigate this idea of organizational strain, Littlepage and colleagues (2012) conducted a study to assess whether or not organizations have the capacity to take on additional students in non-employee roles (e.g. volunteers, service-learning students, interns, etc.). Two hundred ninety organizations that utilize the aid of college students were then asked to complete an online survey to describe the nature of these students' involvement. Littlepage and colleagues found that although organizations are generally willing to take on additional students of any kind, they are the most apprehensive about service-learning students because of the increased pressure to provide mutual benefits in exchange for their service. Karasik (2019) identified logistics, agency match, and cost-benefit balance as three major organization-related barriers to service-learning success. Things such as developing policies and procedures for students, getting approval for

certain projects, and conducting orientations are examples of additional logistics organizations must consider. With agency match, organizations sometimes struggle with determining what kinds of service can be completed that meet the course requirements, interest the students and utilize their skills, and are also of practical use for fulfilling the organization's mission or meeting staff-identified needs. Finally, in terms of cost-benefit balance, resources expended on service-learning students primarily include time and money. Training and supervising students decreases the amount of time staff have to work on other important tasks, which is especially inconvenient when working with unprofessional or disinterested students, or when faculty have not clearly communicated the community partner's role in the service-learning arrangement upfront. In addition, spending money on things like background checks and other supplies goes to waste when the service-learning project does not yield desirable outcomes or cannot be completed within the allotted timeframe. Thus, when considering working with service-learning students, community partners must conduct a cost-benefit analysis of sorts to determine if the service provided would be worth the resources invested; in other words, they consider whether the risk of potentially wasting resources is greater than the potential reward of a significant positive outcome. With that said, Worrall (2007) confirms what appears to be a consensus in the literature: the benefits of service-learning can outweigh the challenges community partners sometimes experience.

Overall Impact

Examining the university-community partnership, experience with students, and cost-benefit analysis all provide insight about community partner experiences both before and during service-learning, but for holistic program evaluation to take place, we must also examine the impact of the service after it has been completed. To achieve this, Jettner and colleagues (2017) conducted a qualitative study that utilized data from phone interviews with 22 community partners to assess their perceptions of service-learning impact across three dimensions: organizational, economic, and social. They were asked to rate each dimension on a scale of -5 to +5. A negative rating indicated that service-learning was a cost to the organization, whereas a positive rating indicated that service-learning was a benefit to the organization (a rating of 0 indicated that service-learning had no impact). Participants reported a moderate organizational

impact (average rating of 3.64 with a range of 1 to 5), noting that service-learning students increase both the quality and quantity of services provided through extra hands and new ideas, which helps the organizations fulfill their mission. Some challenges in this category included decreased efficiency on account of staff using more of their time to supervise students, and students completing tasks or projects that are not useful (or simply not completing anything at all). Participants reported only modest economic benefit (average rating of 2.27 with a range of 0 to 5), noting that although service-learning students can help bring in additional money and resources through fundraising and donation drives and help to increase the overall value of services provided, service-learning can pose an economic risk to organizations when funds, supplies, and staff time are invested with little to no return. And finally, participants reported moderate (average rating of 3.41 with a range of 0 to 5) social impact in terms of networking, increasing their pool of volunteers, and increasing visibility and awareness in the community, but this is not always the case, and not always to a significant degree. The fact that community partners only reported on average a moderate impact across these three areas suggests that while there can be a lot of added value and incentive for partners to participate, service-learning often leaves much to be desired due to poor interactions with faculty and students. As such, Jettner and colleagues provided recommendations to improve service-learning programs that mainly center around the following: (a) increasing student preparedness in areas of cultural awareness and humility, professional development, leadership, and career planning, (b) ensuring that there is a good fit between the organization and both the faculty (in terms of co-developing service requirements that meet the needs of both the class and the organization) and the students (in terms of placing students with sites that they are actually interested in), and (c) ensuring a strong foundational relationship with faculty that includes ongoing communication, evaluation, and feedback (Jettner et al., 2017).

Another aspect of impact that has been assessed is that of a having a lasting imprint, which Gerstenblatt (2014) found when she interviewed both community partner staff and actively engaged citizens affiliated with nine different organizations about their lived experiences with service-learning. This theme can be seen as twofold, with benefits for the community partners and the community at large.

For community partners, service-learning students sometimes make recommendations, complete projects, or provide services that are instrumental in improving the way organizations operate long-term. For community members, particularly those who participate in or are directly served by an organization's programming, excellent students may make a lasting impact on the lives of others and inspire community activism or positive personal growth (Gerstenblatt, 2014). Thus, this finding adds to the existing operationalization of impact by illustrating how the benefits of service-learning can exist without being immediate or tangible.

Community Partner Motivations

The motivation of community partner staff to allow service-learning at their location is an important element of service-learning evaluation that has not been examined with a quantitative design. In some studies, community partners have mentioned specific reasons for participating in service-learning, but the possible relationship between motivation and overall perception has not yet been explored. Through qualitative interviews with 67 community partner staff members, Stoecker and colleagues (2009) found that community partners are generally motivated by four primary goals. First is the altruistic motive to educate students. Community partners participate in service-learning simply because they enjoy working with students and serving as both an educational and community resource for them. Second is the long-term motive to secure future support. Community partners may be interested in working with students in hopes that after their service-learning requirements are complete, these students will continue to engage with their organization by volunteering, making donations, and raising awareness. In addition, there is a desire for these students to "work their way up" and later become employees of their host organization, or at the very least seek a career in the nonprofit sector. Third is the capacity-building motive to have additional human capital. This motive has been frequently cited as a primary benefit to service-learning: more hands on deck equals more work that can be completed. Fourth is the higher education relationship motive to gain or maintain access to resources and connections. Service-learning can be an invaluable avenue for community partners to strengthen their relationship with a university and access resources such as research, specialized knowledge in the field, funding, volunteers, and additional

avenues for promoting their cause. With that said, some community partners fear that by declining to participate in service-learning, even if only temporarily, they may lose access to these resources.

In Basinger and Bartholomew's (2006) study, 38 nonprofit organizations engaged in service-learning completed a survey consisting of fixed and open-ended questions to explore community partner motivations for, expectations of, and satisfaction with service-learning. They found that in terms of motivation, participants reported motives that were mainly student-serving or organization-serving in nature, which aligns with the findings of Stoecker and colleagues. However, Basinger and Bartholomew did not investigate whether there was a relationship between motivation and satisfaction, and since different community partners are motivated to participate in service-learning by different goals, it can be reasonably argued that they would then emphasize different aspects of the service-learning experience as being the most important, which may have implications for their overall perceptions of service-learning.

Current Study

As demonstrated above, prior researchers have identified several aspects of the university-community partnership, the direct experience working with students, the cost-benefit analysis of resource expenditure required to host students, and overall impact as central themes to community partners' experiences with collegiate service-learning programs. The current study expanded on this area by examining how community partners' primary motivations for participating in service-learning relates to their perceptions of their experiences. With the measure I developed for this study, I aim to demonstrate the usefulness of a comprehensive survey comprised of Likert-type items. Qualitative research has laid the groundwork for uncovering common themes in community partner experiences, so my new quantitative measure includes and combines those themes as assessment items based on previous literature. This measure is intended to provide both a more efficient approach to assessing perceptions of service-learning experiences, and quantitative data that can be used to assess the relationship between other variables of interest and those perceptions. It is understandable that a pedagogy established by institution-serving faculty would be student-focused, but given that the specific pedagogy of service-learning implies reciprocal collaboration (Smith-Tolken & Bitzer, 2017) with community partners on

account of the fact that service-learning would be impossible without the service component, it is imperative to understand community partners' experiences by employing more holistic service-learning program evaluations. This study sought to bring the voices of community partners to the forefront of the conversation surrounding the utility and pitfalls of service-learning, and to inform institutions so as to cultivate more mutually beneficial service-learning programs.

Based on the previous literature that revealed community partners generally regard service-learning as being beneficial despite the challenges they may experience, I investigated the potential relationship between those findings and community partner motivation by answering the following question: does a community partner's primary motivation for participating in service-learning influence their perception of service-learning outcomes? More specifically, I investigated whether groups of community partner staff categorized by primary motive differed in their ratings on the measure provided.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

A sample of staff at community partner organizations affiliated with higher education institutions in Georgia was obtained for this study. For a staff member to be eligible for participation, their current organization must have worked with at least one service-learning student prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The drastic and uncertain nature of the pandemic created many challenges, hardships, and organizational changes that have undoubtedly impacted service-learning operations within the past two years, but the current study is interested in the experiences of community partners under typical, pre-pandemic circumstances. Additionally, participating staff members had to self-report that they are knowledgeable about the service-learning that has taken place at their organization in recent years. A G*Power calculation for four groups and five response variables (effect size = .06, alpha = .05, power = .8) determined that at least 108 participants were needed for data analysis, with at least 22 participants per each group. However, due to time constraints, my thesis committee determined that data collection should be completed by February 4, 2022, so within the allotted timeframe I collected data from 25 participants who represented 21 community partner organizations and 16 higher education institutions in Georgia. Of these 25, two were excluded because they did not meet the eligibility criteria. Additionally, a minimum of six participants was needed per motive group for analysis, and because two of the four groups did not meet this requirement (the Securing Support Motive Group and the Improving Relations Motive Group), the five participants within those groups were excluded as well. Thus, data was analyzed for a final sample size of 18 participants (see Table 1 for sociodemographic information).

Materials

All study materials were administered through Qualtrics and completed online. In order, participants completed an informed consent, an eligibility screener (see Appendix A), the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale (see Appendix B), and the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C), which included the question inquiring about motivation. The demographic questionnaire also collected

information about the participants' organizations, but because this may potentially be identifying information, these questions appeared on a separate screen at the end of the study and were linked to a separate survey so that an independent data set could be created. These additional items were included for informational purposes only and were not reported in this paper. If participants did not consent to participate or did not meet the eligibility criteria, they were redirected to a message indicating that they are ineligible to participate in the study.

The Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale is a 32-item self-report survey that I developed for the purposes of this study. I developed this evidence-based measure by including a mix of items adapted from relevant service-learning studies that assessed community partner experiences, and original items that address some of the benefits, challenges, and recommendations from previous research that was discussed in the literature review. The measure is divided into four subscales, including: University-Community Partnership, Experience with Students, Cost-Benefit Analysis, and Overall Impact. The full list of items along with their respective sources is included in Appendix D.

Procedure

This research was approved by the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board. To recruit participants, community partner information was obtained from the higher education institutions' service-learning or community engagement webpages. The primary contacts listed for a total of 207 organizations were emailed and invited to participate in this study about service-learning. In the recruitment email, primary contacts were made aware of the eligibility criteria and general study details, encouraged to share this opportunity with their fellow staff members, asked to complete the study alone and in a quiet environment, and asked to refrain from discussing the specific details of the study with anyone else until after the study deadline passed. The data collection period lasted for five weeks (33 days), during which time primary contacts also received two biweekly follow-up emails to remind them about the study. All community partner staff members who successfully completed the study and passed the attention check items in the survey by the listed deadline were included in the data analysis. Participants did not receive any form of compensation, however, they were informed that their honest

feedback may be used to improve the service-learning program and collaborative efforts between their organizations and their respective universities, as well as to enhance the body of literature surrounding community partner outcomes with service-learning.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Factor	Total Sample	Educating Students Motive Group	Increasing Capacity Motive Group
Sample Size			
N	18	11	7
Gender			
Female	15	10	5
Male	3	1	2
Race and Ethnicity			
White or European American	14	8	6
Black or African American	4	3	1
Hispanic or Latino	1	0	1
Age			
M	45.94	47.73	43.14
SD	11.13	8.08	15.08
Education Completed			
Bachelor's Degree	8	3	5
Master's Degree	7	6	1
Doctoral Degree	1	1	0
Other	2	1	1
Years at Organization			
M	8.11	9.82	9.03
SD	7.50	5.43	3.10

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Because this is the first time that the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale has been administered, psychometrics for the measure have not yet been established. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the subscales to determine whether they have an acceptable reliability index of .7 or higher. Each subscale consisted of eight items and achieved internal consistency: University-Community Partnership (α = .80), Experience with Students (α = .82), Cost-Benefit Analysis (α = .71), and Overall Impact (α = .75). Additionally, the reliability index of the overall measure with all 32 items combined was .86.

In terms of scoring, each Likert-type response item corresponds to a numerical value of 1 through 5. For each of the motive groups, an average index score was compiled for each subscale separately, as well as an average index score for the overall measure (all items combined). All 18 participants passed the attention checks and answered all the items. However, as aforementioned, the Securing Support Motive Group and the Improving Relations Motive Group were excluded from analysis for having too few participants. Thus, the following statistical analysis compared the Educating Students Motive Group (N = 11) and the Increasing Capacity Motive Group (N = 7).

A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the motive groups differed in their overall perceptions of service-learning outcomes. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in perceptions, $F(4,13)$ = .43, p = .783, Wilk's Λ = .88, partial η^2 = .12. Levene's test was non-significant ($p > .05$) for the scale and the subscales, suggesting the assumption of equal variances was met. The partial eta squared value indicated a medium effect size. Table 2 displays additional statistics for the tests of between-subjects effects, and Table 3 displays Pearson correlations for the overall scale and the subscales.

Table 2

MANOVA and Descriptive Statistics for Overall Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale and Subscales

| | Educating Students Motive Group | Increasing Capacity Motive Group | | | |
	M (SD)	M (SD)	F	p	η_p^2
PSLS[a]	132.00 (14.91)	123.43 (11.56)	1.51	.237	.086
UCP[b]	31.91 (5.43)	29.43 (8.44)	.58	.456	.035
EWS[b]	32.36 (4.46)	29.43 (4.89)	1.72	.208	.097
CBA[b]	35.18 (4.62)	33.57 (4.47)	.53	.476	.032
OI[b]	32.55 (5.41)	31.00 (2.52)	.49	.492	.030

Note. PSLS = Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale. UCP = University-Community Partnership subscale. EWS = Experience with Students subscale. CBA = Cost-Benefit Analysis subscale. OI = Overall Impact subscale.

[a]The total possible score on the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale is 160.

[b]The total possible score on each subscale is 40.

Table 3

Pearson Correlations Among Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale and Subscales

	PSLS	UCP	EWS	CBA	OI
PSLS	-				
UCP	.73*	-			
EWS	.70*	.46	-		
CBA	.67*	.19	.17	-	
OI	.77*	.25	.74*	.74*	-

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. PSLS = Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale. UCP = University-Community Partnership subscale. EWS = Experience with Students subscale. CBA = Cost-Benefit Analysis subscale. OI = Overall Impact subscale.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether community partners differ in their perceptions of service-learning based on their primary motivations for participating. The results of the MANOVA were non-significant, indicating that motivation does not seem to have any effect on community partners' overall attitudes toward service-learning. Thus, while university faculty should inquire about which elements of the service-learning experience would be most meaningful to their community partners, the results suggest that community partners have similar, positive experiences with each aspect of service-learning regardless of their motivations for participating (as demonstrated by the above-average scores displayed in Table 2). If a larger study with a representative sample and adequate statistical power also found that there is no relationship between primary motivation and perceptions of service-learning, that would be consistent with previous findings that community partners are generally satisfied with service-learning regardless of various organizational differences, which supports the idea that service-learning has value as a mutually beneficial program for universities and community partners alike.

Although the sample size was low and the study was underpowered, the descriptive statistics of the MANOVA results reveal interesting trends that could explain the moderate variance that was detected between the scores of the two motive groups. As shown in Table 2, the Educating Students Motive Group provided higher scores on the overall scale and each of the subscales than the Increasing Capacity Motive Group. Furthermore, within one standard deviation of the mean, the Increasing Capacity Motive Group reported the lowest subscale ratings overall with a score of 20.99 on the University-Community Partnership subscale (for comparison, the lowest score provided by the Educating Students Motive Group within one standard deviation of the mean was 26.48 on the University-Community Partnership subscale).

The discrepancy in scores between the two motive groups can be understood through the student-serving versus organization-serving lens. Because altruism is a primary characteristic of the student-serving motive to educate students, it is understandable that community partners in this group would

provide higher scores across the board, as they may feel the service-learning experience is worthwhile just for the opportunity to be involved in students' educational experiences. Likewise, since the motive to increase organizational capacity is more organization-serving in nature, it is understandable that community partners in this group would indicate at least slightly lower levels of satisfaction, since staff in that group may sometimes feel that service-learning does not contribute to or perhaps even hinders their productivity. Additionally, community partners may deemphasize the need to receive something in return when they are primarily motivated to educate students, whereas community partners motived to get more work done may be less satisfied with service-learning outcomes if they lack organizational gain or tangible benefits. This relates to challenges with the university and service-learning faculty that have been identified in previous research. As mentioned in the literature review, community partners have reported that students often complete service projects or activities that are not of much practical use to their organizations. This could potentially be perceived more negatively by community partners who aim to get more work done (in comparison to community partners with other motives, such as educating students), so in alignment with previous recommendations, faculty should be more cognizant of organizations' needs and motives so as to ensure that (1) community partners are included in the service-learning planning process, and (2) the agreed upon service will actually be of use or interest to the organizations.

Another reason for the variance in scores could be community partners viewing students more like mentees when they are motivated to educate them, but more like employees when they are motivated to get more work done. As a result, community partners' experiences with students may not be as negatively affected if they see opportunities to provide guidance and teachable moments to students who need more direction. Taken together, these results suggest that specifically for partners who intend to get more work done by participating in service-learning, it can be difficult to work with some students, which in turn decreases the quantity or quality of work that gets completed. Difficulty with students could potentially be attributed to lack of student preparation, engagement, and/or professionalism, and although previous literature has cited these as areas of improvement for service-learning programming (see Karasik, 2019), more data is needed to confirm this speculation as it relates to the results of this study.

Nonetheless, faculty should arrange for students to engage in more community preparedness training prior to starting their service-learning assignment so that community partners can focus more on the service that is to be completed and less on teaching or reiterating soft skills.

Overall, future research with a larger sample could potentially reveal that community partners with the motive to educate students have significantly higher ratings of their service-learning experience than any other motive group simply because they place less emphasis on reciprocity than community partners with other motives, and because they have different perceptions of what the student's role is in service-learning. However, even if that were found to be the case, university faculty should still be cognizant of community partners' needs and avoid creating an exploitative relationship, particularly with those that are not necessarily prioritizing organizational gain.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to consider for this study, the most obvious of which is the low sample size. Since there were not enough participants to achieve statistical power or to analyze all four motive groups as intended, a future replication study with a larger, more representative sample is necessary to establish external validity and generate more definitive conclusions about the findings. Additionally, the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale measures attitudes about the service-learning experience across several dimensions, but there are no open-ended questions for participants to elaborate on their responses (e.g. What have been the most meaningful aspects of the service-learning program to you? What specific challenges have you faced with the service-learning program?), so there may be some missed opportunity to identify other potential factors contributing to their perceptions that were not considered in the initial development of this scale, as well as other potential primary motivations that are unique enough to stand alone as their own grouping variables. Lastly, the lack of psychometrics for the measure further limit the generalizability of the findings.

Future Directions

The Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale shows promise as a potential standardized method of garnering holistic information about community partners' service-learning experiences, and while

establishing internal reliability is a good first step, future studies are needed to refine the measure and establish psychometrics. Another rather time-sensitive line of research may involve a comparison of service-learning programs before, during, and after the COVID-19 global health crisis. The current study focused on service-learning pre-pandemic, but since the pandemic likely led to a shift in how some service-learning programs operate, it may have potentially exposed other patterns of programmatic flaws and community partner concerns that require attention, as well as changes in primary motivations for participating in service-learning. Additionally, community partners' memories of their service-learning experiences pre-pandemic may have faded over time, which could have influenced their reported attitudes. Lastly, since this study was administered asynchronously as a web-based survey, there was no control over environmental variables (e.g. consulting with or sharing answers with fellow staff members during the study, etc.) that may have influenced partners' participation in the study. These are all areas that can be addressed in future research with larger samples sizes and the implementation of the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The merit of the current study is its emphasis on community partners' perspectives of service-learning, specifically in regard to how it affects their organizations, as this is a key component of service-learning that has been understudied in previous literature. Additionally, no service-learning study to date has attempted to identify a relationship between community partners' motivations and experiences, so the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale is a novel contribution that can serve as both an educational tool and as a strong foundation for future service-learning studies that seek to assess how motivation and other variables correlate with community partners' perceptions of service-learning. Understanding community partners' experiences alone is important to ensure that they are not being taken advantage of as a resource or overburdened with educational and supervisory responsibilities. Interpreting their motivations as their needs may provide additional insights about how universities can avoid those pitfalls and offer fulfilling service-learning programming for both community partners and students alike. While different studies have begun to explore various aspects of community partner involvement in and satisfaction with service-learning, further research pertaining to community partners' motivations and future implementation of the Perceptions of Service-Learning Scale may uncover additional opportunities for service-learning programming evaluation and improvement.

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APPENDIX A

ELIGIBILITY SCREENER

Has your organization worked with at least one college service-learning student **before** the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. **before** January 2020)?
- o   Yes
- o   No

Do you believe you have enough knowledge about your organization's experiences with service-learning to participate in this study? (This knowledge could have been obtained through direct training and supervision of service-learning students, or through indirect involvement such as general interactions with the students, your own experience with the outcomes of their service, staff meetings in which service-learning has been discussed, etc.)
- o   Yes
- o   No
- o   Not Applicable

APPENDIX B

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE-LEARNING SCALE

All questions will be presented in Likert-type matrices and begin with the prompt "To what extent…"

The response items are as follows (in order):
(1) Not at all; (2) A little bit; (3) Neutral; (4) A lot; and (5) Very much so

Any reference to **students** specifically means college students that complete service with your organization as an academic course requirement.
Any reference to **faculty** specifically means the instructors of the college service-learning courses.
Any reference to **university** specifically means the college(s) that the service-learning students attend.

Sources marked with an asterisk (*) indicate that their respective items have been directly adapted from the original item as presented in the source. All other items are original and have been created for the current study based on the findings discussed in the listed source.

Items ending with a bolded **RS** indicate that they will be reverse scored.

Subscale	Question	Source
University-Community Partnership	Do the faculty clearly communicate upfront the purpose of service-learning?	Sandy & Holland, 2006
	Do you have ongoing communication with the faculty pertaining to service-learning?	Sandy & Holland, 2006
	Is your organization involved in determining the workload of the students (i.e. projects, deliverables, time commitment, etc.)?	Sandy & Holland, 2006
	Do you feel like you and the faculty have equal roles in educating and leading students throughout their service-learning experience?	Sandy & Holland, 2006
	Do you believe the faculty have a genuine interest in supporting the needs and goals of your organization through service-learning?	Karasik, 2019 Sandy & Holland, 2006
	Do you believe you and the faculty are equal partners in service-learning?	Bringle et al. 2009
	Do the faculty or office of community engagement seek your feedback and evaluation of the service-learning program and implement changes accordingly?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Is the university involved with your organization beyond service-learning?	Sandy & Holland, 2006
Experience with Students	Do students seem prepared for their service-learning experience?	*Miron & Moley 2006
	Do students express a genuine interest in your organization?	*Ferrari & Worrall, 2000
	Do students show an understanding of the importance of your organization's work?	*Ferrari & Worrall, 2000

	Do students seem culturally competent in terms of working with people from different backgrounds and/or vulnerable populations?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Do students show a commitment to quality and thoroughness of their work?	*Ferrari & Worrall, 2000
	This is an attention check. Please mark answer choice "3" for this question.	Attention Check
	Do students conduct themselves in a professional manner (i.e. no unexcused absences, appropriate dress, punctual, responsible, respectful, etc.)?	Andrade et al. 2020 Karasik, 2019
	Are the students easy to work with and get along with?	*Ferrari & Worrall, 2000
	Do students remain engaged with your organization after their service-learning arrangement ends?	*Littlepage et al. 2012
Cost-Benefit Analysis	Does your organization staff benefit from the work of the students?	*Lester et al. 2005
	Do the clients that your organization provides services to benefit from the work of the students?	*Lester et al. 2005
	Do students place a strain or burden on your organization? **RS**	Stoecker et al. 2009
	Do the benefits students provide outweigh the cost of **time** spent by your organization staff to train and supervise them?	*Lester et al. 2005
	Do the benefits students provide outweigh any cost in **money** spent by your organization to train and supervise them?	Karasik, 2019
	Do the benefits students provide outweigh any cost in **other resources** used by your organization to train and supervise them?	Karasik, 2019
	Do you find any extra logistics required to work with students (e.g. paperwork, background checks, orientation, creating projects, etc.) to be an inconvenience? **RS**	Karasik, 2019
	Does your organization develop or accept service projects that meet course requirements **at the expense of** being a practical project for your organization to use? **RS**	Karasik, 2019
Overall Impact	Are you satisfied with the outcomes of the service-learning program?	*Vernon & Ward, 1999
	Is the service-learning program effective in helping your organization meet its goals?	*Miron & Moely, 2006
	This is an attention check. Please mark answer choice "4" for this question.	Attention Check
	Does service-learning help your organization's capacity to fulfill its mission?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Does service-learning increase the **quality** of the services you provide?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Does service-learning increase the **quantity** of the services you provide?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017

	Does service-learning have significant positive economic outcomes for your organization?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Does service-learning have significant positive social outcomes for your organization?	Jettner & Elliott, 2017
	Does service-learning have a positive lasting impact on your organization?	Gerstenblatt, 2014

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

What is your age (in years)? _____

What is your gender?
- o Female
- o Male
- o Transgender
- o Genderqueer
- o Non-binary
- o Not listed: _____
- o Prefer not to say

What is your race or ethnicity? (please check all that apply)
- o Asian
- o Black or African-American
- o Hispanic or Latino
- o Native American, American Indian, or Indigenous American
- o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- o White or European-American
- o Not listed: _____
- o Prefer not to say

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
- o Less than a high school diploma
- o High school diploma or equivalent
- o Associate's degree
- o Bachelor's degree
- o Master's degree
- o Doctoral degree
- o Not listed: _____
- o Prefer not to say

What is your current position/job title? _____

How long have you been an employee with your current organization (in years)? _____

Roughly how many service-learning college students does your organization host each year?
- o 1 – 4 students
- o 5 – 9 students
- o 10+ students
- o Unsure

What kinds of service activities do service-learning students complete (please check all that apply)?
- o **Direct**: face-to-face activities in which the students directly engage with clients, program participants, and/or recipients of your organization's services
- o **Indirect**: "behind-the-scenes" activities in which the students work on projects that have clear benefits to the target population, but do not involve direct contact with them

- o **Research-based**: activities in which students compile research and information for your organization staff so as to inform organizational practices and projects
- o **Advocacy-based**: activities in which students raise awareness about your organization through outreach to general community members and/or university students

What would you say is your organization's **primary** motivation for participating in service-learning? In other words, which of these goals is the primary motivating factor for you to work with service-learning students?

- o **Educating Students**: You are primarily motivated by the opportunity to help students achieve their academic goals, and by teaching them about community organizations and social justice issues.
- o **Securing Long-Term Support**: You are primarily motivated by the potential for students to continue supporting your organization in the future, and by the possibility of identifying future employees for your organization or the nonprofit sector in general.
- o **Increasing Organizational Capacity**: You are primarily motivated by the opportunity to gain additional labor and get more work done as a result.
- o **Improving Your Relationship with the University:** You are primarily motivated by gaining or maintaining access to university resources such as research, specialized knowledge, volunteers, funding, promotion, and networking.

What is the official name of your current organization? _____

What is your organization's **primary** cause (e.g. *animal welfare*, *food insecurity*, etc.)? _____

From which colleges in Georgia do you take service-learning students? _____