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First-Year Student Motivations for Service-Learning: An Exploratory Investigation of Minority Student Perceptions

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Abstract

As a high-impact educational practice *(Kuh, 2008)*, service-learning can have a transformational effect on students, communities, instructors, and higher education institutions. However, despite cautions *(Butin, 2006, p. 481)*, student enrollment in service-learning remains overwhelmingly White and female *(Jacoby, 2015)*, creating a potential enrollment gap in a pedagogy intended to be inclusive. In this article the authors explore what might cause minority students to pursue service-learning, building on research that suggests that student traits and values impact the awareness of and disposition to enroll in service-learning *(Christensen, Stritch, Kellough, & Brewer, 2015; Pearl & Christensen, 2017)*. Through qualitative methodology, the authors work to better understand students' traits in relation to their interest and enrollment in service-learning. The findings, relevant to both service-learning theory and practice, suggest the importance of purposeful consideration of how service-learning can truly promote social justice, democratic values, and equality.

Keywords: service-learning, college student motivations

Introduction

Service-learning is a high-impact pedagogical practice *(Kuh, 2008)* with the potential for a transformational impact on students, communities, instructors, and higher education institutions *(Clayton, Bringle, & Hatcher, 2013a, 2013b)*. Clayton et al. *(2013a, 2013b)* proposed conceptual frameworks for assessing service-learning, focusing primarily on potential outcomes. For students in particular, the literature is replete with examples of how students benefit from service-learning experiences, including their academic learning, personal development, and civic learning *(Clayton, Bringle, & Hatcher, 2013a)*. Concentrating research on various student outcomes is a logical starting point, given the emphasis in higher education on improving student learning and demonstrating that students are benefiting from their educational experiences. For service-learning in particular, it is important to justify the additional resources and time that often are required to implement service-learning best practices. In higher education, we are in a

time of increased accountability and need to demonstrate that we are preparing students for life after graduation. Service-learning pedagogy has the potential to benefit students, and the research literature makes strides to support this claim.

However, this body of research literature must continue to evolve in order to remain rigorous and to advance our knowledge. We must purposefully connect established theoretical frameworks to service-learning pedagogy, and then work to extend our knowledge and build on those theories in a service-learning context. This will help the field begin to recognize *how* positive outcomes can be attained. To this end, we see it as necessary to increase what we understand about our students, particularly the traits and motivations that may predicate their interest in service-learning experiences. This understanding will contribute to a future foundation upon which we might unpack the causal paths of service-learning's benefits.

In addition, we submit that we need to find ways to make sure that the many benefits of service-learning are available to all students. Student enrollment in service-learning remains overwhelmingly White and female *(Jacoby, 2015)*, despite Butin's *(2006)* work that cautioned against service-learning enrollment trending toward students who are "White, sheltered, middle-class, single, without children, un-indebted, and between ages 18 and 24" *(p. 481)*. If service-learning goals include advancing social justice and inclusion, the enrollment gap needs to be closed. We are encouraged by recent research that suggests both minority students and female students are more knowledgeable of and more interested in service-learning upon entering college *(Christensen, Stritch, Kellough, & Brewer, 2015)*.

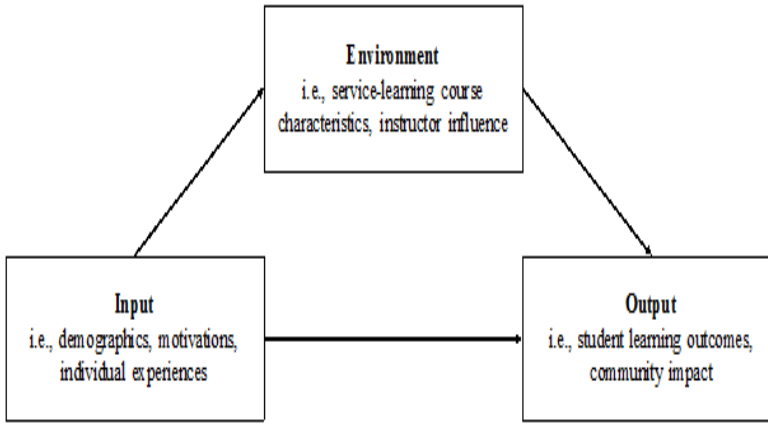
This present study builds on Christensen et al.'s *(2015)* finding that student traits impact the awareness of service-learning and the disposition to enroll in service-learning courses. In particular, our research question is why freshmen minority students may be more aware of and interested in service-learning. Our motivation is to explain and close the gap between students' traits and their interest, enrollment, and outcomes achieved in service-learning.

Astin's Input–Environment–Output Model

This study can largely be framed through Astin's *(2012)* Input–Environment–Outcome (I-E-O) model (see Figure 1). This model contains three distinct elements that are critical for comprehensive assessment, and to omit any of the factors would provide incom-

plete and invalid results, which eventually would lead to ineffectual policies. By only accounting for a desirable outcome, we ignore other factors that may make interventions successful. Therefore, it is important to also consider multiple student inputs in addition to their outcomes and the environmental context. By accounting for environmental factors, we begin to understand more about why particular outcomes occur.

Figure 1. Astin's (2012) I-E-O Model



As discussed above, much of the research on service-learning has focused on student outcomes, and, to a lesser degree, environmental factors. There is a paucity of literature that explores what drives students to consider enrolling in service-learning courses. This information is important because it could help service-learning instructors and administrators better plan for and target groups of students for service-learning and community engagement, creating opportunities for a broader audience to take advantage of service-learning's many potential benefits. Rather than merely perceiving that student growth follows some process that occurs within a nebulous "black box," researchers and higher education administrators can better understand why and how students are benefiting through knowledge of the motivations underlying student enrollment. Causality is a high standard to meet, and some believe that it is impossible to attain in a service-learning context *(Butin, 2006)*, but an understanding of the inputs, including motivational factors, can lead to clear connections between processes and outcomes.

An Integrated Theory of Volunteering

When developing an integrated and "supply side" theory of volunteer work, Wilson and Musick *(1997, p. 709)* proposed that volunteer work requires an integration of human capital, social capital, and cultural capital. According to these researchers (a) in terms of human capital, volunteering is essentially a productive activity; (b) In terms of social capital, the social networks and the relationships between individuals can be considered resources, particularly because these ties create reciprocal relationships and reinforce voluntary behavior through collective action; (c) finally, voluntary organizations can take advantage of existing cultural capital, essentially on the premise that people volunteer because they think volunteering is a good thing. In summary, Wilson and Musick contend that elements of human capital, social capital, and cultural capital come together in complicated ways that lead to individual voluntary activity.

Existing research indicates that individuals with higher levels of human and social capital exhibit a greater proclivity to volunteer *(& Lankford, 1992; , Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003; Mesch, Rooney, Steinberg, & Denton, 2006; Smith, 2002)*, and as might be expected, relatively lesser levels of human and social capital are cited as reasons for not volunteering *(Musick, Wilson, & Bynum, 2000)*. Mesch et al. *(2006)* suggested that human capital theory would likely predict significant differences in volunteering and charitable giving between racial and ethnic groups because of differing resources; however, researchers have suggested that persons of color exhibit a higher propensity to volunteer than others *(Van Slyke & Eschholz, 2002)* as well as engage deeply when volunteering with Black clients *(Morrow-Howell, Lott, & Ozawa, 1990)*. Wilson and Musick's *(1997)* work indicates that people fulfill different needs through their voluntary behavior, which is consistent with the findings of Clary et al. *(1998)* on functionalism and the Volunteer Functions Inventory *(VFI;* see *Pearl & Christensen, 2017)*.

A Gap Between Interest and Enrollment

Christensen et al. *(2015)* found that among first-year students at a large public land-grant institution in the Southeast, minority students were (1) more knowledgeable of service-learning on entering college and (2) more interested in enrolling in service-learning. However, at the institution where Christensen et al.'s study took place, a significant gap remained in service-learning enrollment, with the majority of students taking service-learning courses being

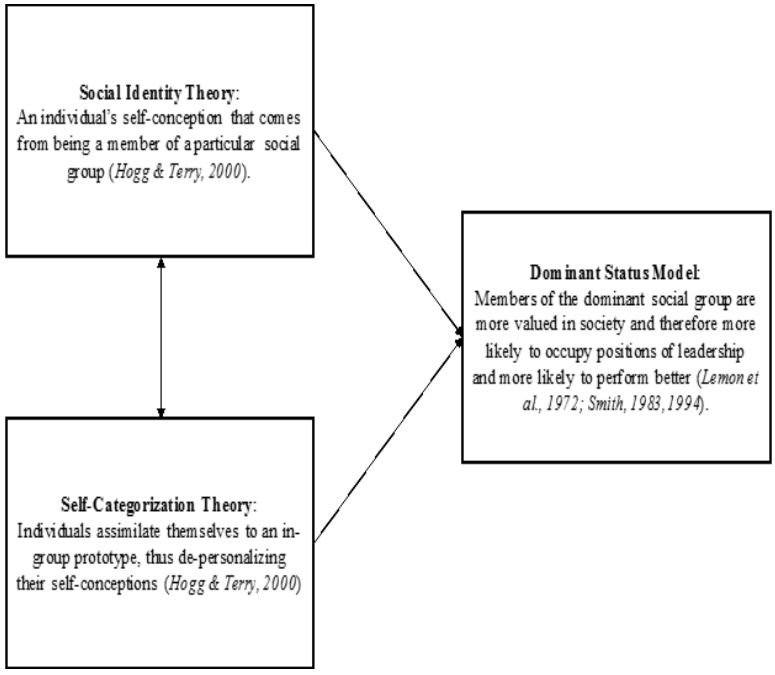
White. Similarly, national trends suggest that enrollment in service-learning courses is overwhelmingly White students *(Jacoby, 2015)*.

What causes this lapse between knowledge of and interest in service-learning, and actual service-learning enrollment? Butin *(2006)* warned that service-learning could become a pedagogy designed to provide an experience primarily for the "Whitest of the White" students, and stressed the importance of critically examining service-learning and purposefully working toward finding a way to make service-learning accessible to all students. Through this study, we hope to advance theory by getting a more nuanced understanding of how first-year students, particularly underrepresented minority students, understand how service-learning might (or might not) contribute to their goals. This work will build on social identity theory, the related self-categorization theory, and the dominant status model.

Social Identity Theory

In its most basic sense, social identity theory refers to an individual's self-conception that comes from being a member of a particular social group *(Hogg & Terry, 2000)*. Individuals gain internally driven conceptions of themselves, but also develop in light of their social connections. An increased understanding of one's social identity is often cited as an outcome of participation in service-learning *(Jones & Abes, 2004)*, but the research has given less consideration to individuals' social identities as an input or motivation for enrolling in service-learning. Two concepts related to social identity are relevant to this study: self-categorization theory and the dominant status model. In the following sections, we discuss how self-categorization leads individuals to develop their self-identity, and how the dominant status model explains how different social groups interact within the larger social structure (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Theoretical Frameworks



Self-categorization Theory

According to self-categorization theory, individuals assimilate themselves to an in-group prototype, depersonalizing their self-conceptions *(Hogg & Terry, 2000)*. When individuals self-categorize, resulting behavior often includes adherence to normative behavioral expectations; stereotyping; ethnocentrism; positive in-group attitudes and cohesion, cooperation, and altruism; emotional contagion and empathy; collective behavior; shared norms; and moral influence *(Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123)*. Thus, individuals who self-categorize with a particular social group are more likely to want to provide aid to other members of the group, reflecting increased levels of concepts including cooperation, altruism, and empathy. In the context of this study, students may enroll in service-learning courses in order to help others who are also members in their social group.

Dominant Status Model

The dominant status model was originally developed by Lemon, Palisi, and Bennett-Sandler *(1972)* and further developed by Smith *(1983, 1994)*. Basically, this theory assumes that those

who are members of the dominant social group are more valued in society and therefore more likely to occupy positions of leadership and more likely to perform better. By extension, this also means that these individuals are more likely to have characteristics that are valued for voluntary activities. Mesch et al. *(2006)* examined voluntary behavior through the prism of the dominant status model (among others) and originally hypothesized that the dominant status model would predict less participation in voluntary behavior among minorities because of their less prevalent social positions and roles within the larger social system. However, their findings suggested that there was no significant difference in voluntary and philanthropic behavior between minority and White individuals after controlling for human capital. Applied to service-learning enrollment, the dominant status model may similarly predict less minority enrollment in service-learning, and this supposition is largely borne out in the literature on service-learning enrollment trends *(Jacoby, 2015)*. However, as noted, both minority first-year students and female first-year students have expressed more knowledge of and interest in service-learning. This gap between interest and participation may be partially explained by the dominant status model.

The dominant status model may suggest that service-learning is not perceived as *for* students from underrepresented minority groups; that is, only White students are capable of "saving the day," a perspective consistent with what has been observed and criticized by scholars like Butin *(2006)* and Mitchell *(2008)*. Perhaps the intentional connection between voluntary behavior and academic material discourages minority students, leading them to believe that they are better able to meet their individual needs through pure volunteerism.

Purpose of the Study

Guided by the preceding theoretical frameworks, this exploratory study seeks to learn more about first-year student motivations for enrolling in service-learning. As we consider the "supply side" of college students and their interests in enrolling in service-learning, we specifically consider the many ways that students develop their social identities in the context of how they socially categorize themselves and the dominant status model. We posed a two-pronged research question: What are the different motivations that influence students' interest in service-learning, and do these motivations vary by students' backgrounds and identities? Based on the theories discussed above, we believe that students

from different backgrounds or social groups are likely to engage in service-learning for different reasons. We hope that the findings from our qualitative analysis of open-ended student responses will lay the groundwork for future research delving more deeply into students' motivations.

Survey Design and Sampling

This study, which is a part of a larger mixed-methods research project that examines student motivations and interest in enrolling in service-learning courses, utilizes qualitative research methods to examine open-ended student responses to a question that was included in a survey that was distributed to a sample of first-year students at a large public land-grant institution in the southeast. In the following sections, we describe the sampling strategy, the survey instrument, and the quantitative and qualitative procedures. This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Sampling Strategy

We utilized a purposive sampling strategy to intentionally include first-year students in order to align with the goals of the study. In addition, we purposefully sought to include respondents from the university's minority student population. To do this, we partnered with the university's Office of Institutional Diversity (OID) and Center for Student Organizations (CSO). Each of these organizations distributed the link to the online survey we created for this study. For balance, we also included a sample from two sections of American Government (POLS 1101), an introductory political science course that fulfills a general education requirement, in which the enrollment is primarily freshman students. The instructors for these two course sections distributed the link for the survey to the students in each of their classes. Participation in a random drawing for a gift card was offered as an incentive to participate in the survey. The survey instrument was distributed via e-mail with a link to a Qualtrics survey.

Survey Instrument

This study analyzes responses to one open-ended question in a larger survey that examines student motivations for, interest in, and knowledge of service-learning. The quantitative portion of the survey instrument was an adaptation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory *(Clary et al., 1998; Pearl & Christensen, 2017)*. For the cur-

rent study, we sought to solicit students' reactions to the overall conclusions of Christensen et al. *(2015)*, who found that students' traits impact the awareness of and disposition to enroll in service-learning. The open-ended question read:

- Some recent research suggests that the university's minority students may have more interest in and awareness of service-learning compared to other students at the university.
- Regardless of how you responded to the previous question do you think that research is accurate? Why/why not?
- Remember there are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your honest opinions.

In order to provide guidance for students who may not have previously been familiar with the concept of service-learning, we provided a simple, introductory definition as a header on each page of the survey instrument: "Service-learning has been defined, in its most basic sense, as a method of teaching that combines classroom instruction with meaningful community service." We acknowledge that this definition may be oversimplified, but our intent was to introduce service-learning to the uninitiated and distinguish it as a pedagogical tool that is distinct from traditional volunteerism. We sought to balance this goal with being concise and avoiding information overload with an overly detailed definition.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to build upon and extend the theoretical frameworks described above in the context of first-year students and their motivations for service-learning; therefore, the qualitative analysis was conducted using grounded theory through the constant comparative method *(Glaser, 1965; Merriam, 2009)*. Students' responses were grouped based on their demographic information, and individual student quotes were read, analyzed, and assigned codes corresponding to the theoretical perspectives described above. All thematic coding was conducted by hand.

Findings

In this study, we analyzed open-ended student responses to a single question as a part of a larger survey. We believe that these responses align well with each of the theoretical frameworks described above (see also Figure 2, which connects the specific theories on which this study is based, contributing the input part of the model described in Figure 1 outlining the overall conceptual I-E-O model). First, we present the descriptive information for the stu-

dent respondents, followed by the qualitative findings. The larger themes in the findings are supported directly with student quotes.

Descriptive Findings

In total, 52 students provided qualitative responses. In terms of gender, 33 students identified themselves as male, 10 as female, and nine students chose not to respond. For race and ethnicity, nine students self-identified as White, 39 as minority (18 Black or African American, two Latino, 17 Asian, one Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, one American Indian/Alaskan Native and four students elected not to respond.

Overall, 32 of the 52 students in the sample agreed with the prompt, 14 disagreed, and six were unsure. Of the 33 male students, 18 agreed, 11 disagreed, and four were unsure. Of the 10 female students, eight agreed, one disagreed, and one was unsure. Of the nine students that elected to not respond to gender, six agreed, two disagreed, and one was unsure. Of the nine White students, five agreed, two disagreed, and two were unsure. When looking at the 39 minority students in the aggregate, 27 agreed, nine disagreed, and three were unsure. Finally, for the four students who chose not to respond to race/ethnicity, none agreed, three disagreed, and one was unsure. For a summary of the descriptive findings, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

		Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Total
Gender	Female	8	1	1	10
	Male	18	11	4	33
	Chose not to respond	6	2	1	9
Race/ ethnicity	Minority	27	9	3	39
	Black or African American				18
	Latino				2
	Asian				17
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander				1
	American Indian/Alaskan Native				1
	White	5	2	2	9
	Chose not to respond	0	3	1	4
Total		32	14	6	52

Students' Responses and Perspectives

The student responses to the open-ended question were wide-ranging and demonstrated that individuals have varying thoughts on why students from different backgrounds may (or may not) be more interested in service-learning than their peers. In the following sections, we present a selection of representative student quotes and analyze them through the theoretical and conceptual lenses described above.

One clear and consistent theme that emerged from the student responses is that individuals attribute interest in and knowledge about service-learning to a complex variety of factors, and the balance of these factors is far from equally weighted among individuals. For example, one particular difference that emerged was the assumptions of respondents from different racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. To illustrate, one White male student responded, "I think it depends much more on your major than your cultural identification whether or not you are aware of/participate in these service-learning courses." This respondent seems to believe that minority students (and presumably all students) develop their identities as students from their majors, allowing that identification to be the primary driver of their decisions regarding course selection, rather than their cultural identification. A minority student's response to the question prompt seems to offer the opposite perspective:

> As a minority, I can say that from what I have seen minorities are usually more interesting [*sic*] in community service. I think it might be due to the fact that minority students know the difficulties first hand of what it is like to live in oppression and therefore, connect more with those in need. Also, they want to help those in need get out of their difficult situation.

This student does not mention academic major playing any role when it comes to making decisions related to service-learning courses. The perspective and implication is that, at least in this sample, White students and minority students approach their decision-making process from different perspectives. Although this finding is not particularly surprising, it is interesting to see these perspectives put in such sharp relief. Another response, this time from a White female student, is especially illustrative of the lack of ability to understand approaches other than one's own:

> I think students who get good grades (like top of the class grades) or who already have connections that will ensure them future jobs are less likely to be interested in getting involved with service learning because they don't see how it benefits them. Individuals from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to be in either category, so they are looking for extra things to put on their resume.

This quote is mildly troubling, due at least in part to the assumed privilege and apparent lack of effort to see past one's own experiences. There are implicit assumptions that seem to equate minority students with students who come from a lower socio-economic background. Further, this respondent seems to assume that, because of their backgrounds, minority students do not earn elite grade point averages, that they lack sufficient social capital for career advancement, and that service-learning is merely a way for minority students to compensate for built-in disadvantages.

In many ways, the troubling aspects of this quote largely come from a lack of nuanced understanding. We do not mean to imply any explicit prejudice in this student's comments; however, her perspective speaks to a larger systemic issue: that researchers have assumed for too long a homogeneity among students, in terms of their backgrounds, interests, and goals. Further, not all White students share a similarly narrow view, and it is encouraging to see that some of their quotes demonstrated a broader worldview. For example, another White respondent wrote,

> They [minority students] come from backgrounds with similar people like that and know how it feels to be in need. They feel like more of a difference should be made, while other students are content with how they think life is.

This student's statement is interesting because he acknowledges his privilege and recognizes that minority students may feel more empathy because of how they personally identify. Along similar lines, another White student stated, "It's likely that they [minority students] identify with a group that they perceive as oppressed in some way, and so they are more proactive in correcting these perceived inequalities." These students, from the perspective of outsiders, observe similar feelings of empathy.

These comments, however, seem to carry an implicit assumption that all minority students know what it means to be in need, and that White students do not know what it means to be in need. These students also seem to hold the corollary assumption that White students likely do not have a reason to participate in service-learning; they are "content with how they think life is."

Another White student observed, "Statistically, minority students are more likely to be disadvantaged, and I imagine the one[s] who are more privileged still know what it feels like to be disadvantaged based on their race, so they want to help others more." This statement speaks to the idea that it is not necessarily the socioeconomic circumstances of an individual, but rather how they self-identify, that guides their behavior, leading them to empathize and sympathize with the social group with which they identify.

To further illustrate how minority students self-categorize and form their social identities, one male minority student explained,

> Minorities are more aware of their surroundings and know more people who may be in need of service. Thus, service is more important to minorities because it could be benefitting people of their own culture. Also, as a minority, I realize how lucky I am to be where I am so I take more advantage of my surroundings.

This respondent clearly indicates how his self-identification as a minority student leads to greater awareness, feelings of empathy, and a strong desire to give back. Another minority student gives insight into the reason for this, stating, "I feel that often minorities come from tighter and smaller communities," an observation supported by another minority student's response stating that this can lead to the idea that service-learning and "community service hits more at home to minority students." Another minority student wrote, "It is not necessarily that minorities have more of an interest but rather are more aware of its importance." One African American respondent echoed these sentiments: "Students belonging to minority groups typically can relate better to marginalized groups in need of service given their own experiences as a member of the minority." This statement implies that minority students have a predilection toward service-learning because they can empathize and can draw on shared, marginalized experiences. Because minority students develop their social identities through their self-categorization, one minority student states, "Possibly minority students know what it is like, generally, to be second to

things and not be thought of first. Therefore, they are more like the help others [like themselves]." This is a clear example of empathy that is developed through one's social identity.

Discussion and Theory Building

One particularly compelling implication from these findings is that minority students may have different needs for service-learning than their White counterparts. The minority students are expressing interest in service-learning, but they may be more interested in its volunteering function than in the academic ties. This possibility is consistent with the empirical research discussed above suggesting that Black individuals may be more likely to volunteer in general than White individuals *(Van Slyke & Eschholz, 2002)*. Minority students may be more drawn to the service aspect of service-learning, which ties to the self-categorization theory of social identity, particularly the connection between self-categorization and empathy *(Hogg & Terry, 2000)*, and the survey responses are largely supportive of this difference. Therefore, minority students may feel that they can meet all of their needs through volunteering, and thus they have no motive for participation in service-learning. Moving forward, it will be important to understand whether or not minority students believe that the academic components of service-learning serve as a barrier to their primary objectives.

Breaking Out of the Dominant Status Model

The original conceptualization of the dominant status model suggests that White students may be more likely to enroll in service-learning courses as a result of their dominant status in society. This assumption is largely reflected in the national service-learning enrollment trends *(Jacoby, 2015)*. However, as one minority student stated, "Minorities feel more oppression and service learning course[s] help fight and advocate for social justice." This statement runs directly counter to the assumptions of the dominant status model and supports previous research involving minority volunteering trends *(Mesch et al., 2006)*, which found that minorities may choose to engage in service-learning (or other voluntary activities) as a way to challenge the dominant structure rather than reinforce it.

Service-Learning and Academic Enhancement

Among the findings that surfaced from the students' responses, we were surprised that one trend in particular did not emerge.

Previous research on faculty member motivations has found that among the many reasons for utilizing service-learning pedagogy, its perceived effectiveness as a teaching method for positive student outcomes is primary *(Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; McKay & Rozee, 2004)*. However, none of the students in our sample made any reference to service-learning as an effective pedagogy or to any consideration of course content. There were a few allusions to the capacity of service-learning to increase human capital in terms of attractiveness to future employers, but no mention of academic knowledge gained. It was not necessarily the goal of this study to gauge student perceptions of their learning, but this omission does suggest potential implications for both practice and future research.

As a practical matter, the lack of explicit, or even implicit, mention of academic learning through service-learning in the survey responses indicates a need to explore a number of potential explanations. For their specific purposes, students may not be differentiating between service-learning and traditional student volunteerism, despite their distinctive characteristics *(Furco, 1996)*. For students utilizing service-learning as a means to an end (giving back to the community, for example), the differences between service-learning and volunteerism may not be important, particularly if they are able to achieve their goals through a more traditionally focused volunteer activity. Specifically, one student respondent said, "I'm extremely interested in service learning in order to better the community around me." This response indicates that this student is more concerned with the "service" aspect in particular, rather than the whole of "service-learning."

Research on faculty members suggests that some individuals engage in volunteerism but have no experience with service-learning pedagogy or other forms of community engagement *(Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007)*, which we believe is relevant to our student findings. We recognize that a partial explanation of this lack of distinction between service-learning and volunteerism may be the students' lack of experience with service-learning and the relative sparseness of the definition we provided to students.

Despite this limitation, we still believe that at some point in the process, there is a failure to connect the individual's desire to contribute to the public good with that individual's academic work, regardless of whether that person is a faculty member or a student. Therefore, we need to explore further whether or not students have any desire to make this connection. We need to learn more about student preferences. For example, are we successfully communicating the potential multifaceted benefits of service-learning,

and students are still choosing to separate coursework from volunteerism? Or do we need to continue to find better ways to communicate with our students and speak to their specific preferences and interests? It is not our place to tell students what is best for them; we simply need to be prepared to provide them with the tools to succeed.

Service-learning scholars and practitioners need to do a better job of conveying to students that the credit in a service-learning course should be for the learning, not for the service. The service is a critical element in any service-learning course, but it is intended to bring relevance and meaning to the academic material. As a high-impact practice *(Kuh, 2008)*, service-learning has the potential to positively impact student learning and development, and it is necessary to emphasize this aspect of service-learning in order to differentiate it from traditional student volunteerism. Other high-impact practices, such as different types of learning communities, have contributed to the culture of diversity on campuses *(Longerbeam, 2010; Thompson, Hardee, & Lane, 2011)*. Research has also suggested that emotional connections and reactions can be an important part of the process of connecting interracial reactions and college student growth *(Bowman & Denson, 2011)*; service-learning has the power to facilitate these interactions through critical approaches *(, 2008)*, and researchers have noted the potential benefits of offering students a variety of pedagogical approaches to engage them in intercultural experiences *(, Perez, & Shim, 2013)*. Finally, participation in voluntary activity offers a host of potential benefits to students *(Giles & Eyler, 1994; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; , Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996)*, but the connection to academic material is what makes service-learning unique. It is incumbent upon practitioners to help students understand this difference in order to help them achieve their goals and fulfill their varied functions.

The importance of making a clear distinction between service-learning and traditional volunteerism cannot be overstated. It is not our intention to imply that service-learning is always preferable to volunteerism; rather, we believe that it is important to distinguish between the two in order to best allow students to achieve their goals.

Future Research

As an exploratory study, we believe our research lays the groundwork for future investigations on student motivations related to service-learning. The current study is complemented by

the conclusions presented by Pearl and Christensen *(2017)*, who quantitatively analyzed responses to an adapted version of the Volunteer Functions Inventory *(Clary et al., 1998)* and found that students' motivations for service-learning are influenced by their identities related to race and gender. Taken together with the findings of the current study, we believe that a more in-depth exploration of students' identities is necessary. Specific attention should be paid to how students navigate their multiple forms of identity and how the development of these forms of identity can influence students' motivations and behaviors in various contexts. In addition, we believe that it will be important to understand the differences in students' views of service-learning and traditional student volunteerism to allow for better specification of what functions students are seeking to fulfill through their work. Finally, as we build on our understanding of students' motivations and other inputs, it will be necessary to integrate this information in a comprehensive data set with students' experiences in service-learning courses to develop a more complete picture of how a wide range of learning outcomes are achieved.

Conclusion

Proponents of service-learning pedagogy applaud and extol its ability to promote social justice and democratic values, but if the trend continues toward enrollment of what Butin *(2006)* calls the "Whitest of the White," this lofty expectation can never be met, even though service-learning pedagogy tends to be offered by the "least powerful and most marginalized faculty (e.g., people of color, women, and the untenured)" *(Butin, 2006, p. 475)*. If anything, such participation serves chiefly to reinforce cultural expectations of a White savior providing charity to a minority service recipient. This predominance of White students in service-learning promotes feelings of "otherness," reinforcing cultural expectations that only the privileged few are capable of helping those less fortunate than themselves. A resulting corollary message is that only those in a dominant social group have the ability to provide service leadership. More than a decade ago, Butin *(2003)* responded to a "monochromatic perspective on what constitutes service learning" *(p. 1690)* by discussing a variety of frameworks through which service-learning can be conceptualized: technical, cultural, political, and poststructuralist. The findings from the current study suggest that we still have a long way to go in researching both service-learning theory and practice.

This message that tends to exclude minorities from service-learning may be an unconscious relic from previous prejudicial thinking, but it apparently still exists to some degree. Whether students act from conscious or unconscious thinking, it is critically important for administrators and instructors tasked with promoting service-learning to acknowledge continuing barriers. Failure to examine the deficiencies in the social structure, regardless of how uncomfortable the conversation may become, will only lead to a continued misconception about who is capable, "worthy," or predisposed to engage in service-learning. Through these conversations we can move forward and make progress, allowing service-learning pedagogy to fulfill its promise of truly promoting social justice, democratic values, and equality. We hope that this exploratory study has laid groundwork for initiating these conversations.

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