

**CALLED UPON TO SERVE AND TO CARE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
STUDY ON STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNITY EXTENSION  
SERVICES**

**John Mark S. Borbon\***; **Arianne Hazel E. Camarin\*\***; **Jimboy S. Madera\*\*\***;  
**Kaye G. Rafanan\*\*\*\***; **Grace R. Sabidong\*\*\*\*\***; **Elenita M. Tiamzon\*\*\*\*\***

\*Coordinator- Community Extension and Services Offi,  
Community Extension and Services Office- World Citi Colleges,  
PHILIPPINES

Email id: johnmarkborbon@gmail.com

\*\*Student,

College of Medical Technology,  
College of Medical Technology- World Citi Colleges, PHILIPPINES  
Email id: camarinarianeehazel@gmail.com

\*\*\*Student,

College of Medical Technology,  
College of Medical Technology- World Citi Colleges, PHILIPPINES  
Email id: jim.madera10@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*Student,

College of Medical Technology,  
College of Medical Technology- World Citi Colleges, PHILIPPINES  
Email id: kayegrafanan023@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\*Student,

College of Medical Technology,  
College of Medical Technology- World Citi Colleges, PHILIPPINES  
Email id: gsabidong@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\*Head,

Research Development and Extension Services,  
Community Extension and Services Office- World Citi Colleges,  
PHILIPPINES

Email id: tiamzon\_ellen@yahoo.com

**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00216.6**

---

**ABSTRACT**

*Community service is an activity done to help selected communities in a way that will help ease the everyday living of people residing in a particular community. It is also an experience that will allow the students to enhance their own development by contributing their skills to the community. Students do not stop learning inside the four corners of the room thus, those who participated in this kind of community service projects made them become aware of social-economic realities which resulted in having a greater sense of awareness and civic*

*responsibility. In this descriptive phenomenological research study, the researchers sought to understand how community extension service involvement shapes the students' general collegiate experience by gathering data through their experiences. The data collated for this study consisted of 10 major activities hosted by World Citi Colleges from the year 2016-2019 in cooperation with the Community Extension Service Organization (CESO) and the participation of the different college programs. The researchers collated all the reflection essays of the students who volunteered to participate which contain their learning's and insights and these were analysed and used content analysis to synthesize the ideas to be able to formulate a theme exhibited using a framework. Based on the data collected, the researchers propose the C.A.R.E. model that emerged from experiences of the students which describes how community extension service involvement shapes the students' general collegiate experience. The core categories are commitment to service, appreciation of life, realization of be-attitudes, and enhancement of skills.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Community Service, Core Values, Descriptive Phenomenology, CARE Model, Service Learning.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

Students do not stop learning inside the four corners of the room. Another way of honing the skills and character of every student is through community service. Community service is an activity done to help selected communities in a way that will help ease the everyday living of people residing in a particular community. Community service often comes together with the word volunteerism. A volunteer is an act of doing labor works pro bono.

In a phenomenological study conducted by Sakugawa and Ueda (2009) regarding the perception of Japanese students regarding volunteer efforts, they used phenomenological reduction in order to gauge and explicate the volunteer students' lived experiences in an organized and clear manner.

According to Sandaran (2012), teaching and learning techniques that integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection will enrich the learning experience, educate civic duty, and improve communities.

In addition, Coatsworth et al. (2016) stated that engaging into volunteering plays a vital role in reconnecting their empathy and compassion. Volunteers gained a deeper understanding of caring and sense of equality to people which improved their insight towards community. [1]

It is assumed that community service does not provide learners with an education in and of itself. Rather, community service activities improve education by allowing students to reflect on their experiences, create fresh interpretations of events, and obtain a greater understanding as a result (Bingle and Hatcher 1999). Sandaran (2012) emphasizes the need of including reflection activities into the service experience on a regular basis to encourage deeper contemplation and analysis.

According to Clinton and Thomas (2011), community service learning at a university is just more than voluntary work as it is beneficial for both community and the students as they can be

---

able to learn tons of skills that are relevant to their future profession. It is also an experience that will allow the students to enhance their own development by contributing their skills to the community. [2]

Sandaran (2012) goes on to cite studies by Waterman (2014) that shows, students who engage in reflection have more self-confidence and are more socially responsible. As a result, reflection transforms experience into knowledge.

Coatsworth et al. (2016) asserts the importance of participating into these activities appreciating their responsible role as students consequently drew upon knowledge and skills, they had gained from university but had not had the opportunity to put into practice.

According to Villiers (2018), many students have never participated in an outreach project before, and as a result, they face a variety of problems while organizing and implementing their outreach that is why creating chances for community service to bridge the gap between higher education and the community younger populations develop a sense of civic responsibility and political involvement, through embracing an agency role, community service initiatives provide great opportunity for students to experience and become more aware of the manifest social-economic realities of underprivileged communities.

Another study has shown that community service projects are one of the valuable tools for students to experience real life, practice desired graduate attributes and other competencies nurtured in the classroom and deepen their socio-economic awareness. Students who participated in this kind of community service projects made them become aware of social-economic realities which resulted in having a greater sense of awareness and civic responsibility. Additionally, students involved have also been able to develop a personal learning, growth, and development, as well as a deepened sense of gratitude. (Mey et. al, 2017) [3]

Moreover, Volunteer activity in education leads to awareness that preserves dignity of human life and have a broader understanding on the coexistence with the community for existential growth not with hardships on the latter processes, but rather on their own pleasure (Sakugawa and Ueda, 2009) [4]

According to Chandler et al (1997), most of the students have experienced participating regularly in community services at least twice and majority had worked for more than 30 hours. However, lower year levels and low-class performances were more likely the reason why some students rendered them unable to participate in community service activities. It was also shown in their study that the chances of community service involvement depend on the number of types of activities offered to the students such as involvement with the student government, extra co-curricular activities, and for student allowance. Lastly, the private and sectarian schools most likely have more students who are required to participate in such activities. [5]

This study used a descriptive phenomenological research framework to understand how community extension service involvement shapes the students' general collegiate experience by gathering data through their experiences.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

This study utilized descriptive phenomenological research to answer the grand research question based on the experiences and reflection of the students who participated in the activities conducted by the World Citi Colleges-Quezon city.

### ***Participants***

The students from World Citi Colleges-Quezon City who participated in the different activities from 2016 to 2019 such as Livelihood Meat Processing, Free Chest X-ray CPH, Money Management, Drug Awareness Seminar, Calumpang Laban sa Dengue, Feeding Program, Gift Giving Program (Christmas Party), Sports Injury Management, Operation Tuli were selected as the participants of the study due to the relevance of the study with their experiences.

### ***Instrument***

The data were collected through reflection essays, about what they have learned and insights, submitted by the students who volunteered to participate in several activities of Community Extension Service Organization (CESO) of World Citi Colleges-Quezon City.

### ***Data Gathering***

The researchers collated all the reflection essays from the activities conducted in World Citi Colleges-Quezon City from the year 2016-2019. Approval from the office of the Community Extension Service Organization (CESO) was granted to the researchers to have access to all the data required for the study. The reflection essays were analysed, and inductive reasoning was used to synthesize the ideas to be able to formulate a theme exhibited using a framework.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data acquired through the reflection essays of the student who volunteered in the indicated activities was collated, analysed qualitatively, and ideas were synthesized by the researchers through content analysis to formulate a framework that will help explain the answer to this study's grand research question.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

To practice the ethicality of this study, the researchers sought approval from the office of the Community Extension Service Organization (CESO) to have access to all the copy of the students' essays collected after all the events conducted in World Citi Colleges-Quezon City from the year 2016-2019. The students' personal information and responses written in the paper were kept confidential and were only accessed by the researchers and the staff of the office of CESO. This protocol is done to establish trust between the researchers, CESO, and the students from World Citi Colleges-Quezon City.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collated for this study consisted of 10 major activities hosted by World Citi Colleges in cooperation with the Community Extension Service Organization (CESO) and the participation of the different college programs. The following student population who volunteered shared their experiences during the community service. The first event in the list was the Livelihood Meat

---

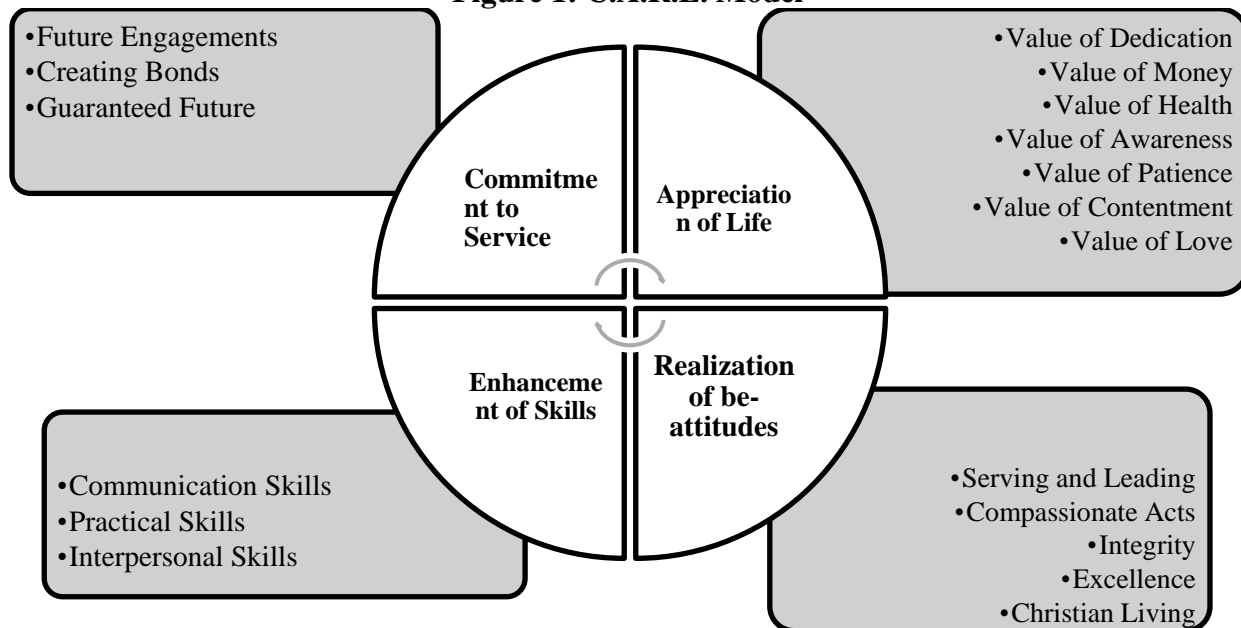
Processing in which there were 20 females and 7 males volunteers with a total of 27 students. Free chest X-ray had 5 females and 10 males volunteer students with a total of 15 students. Next, Money Management had 5 females and 5 males with a total of 10 students. The Drug Awareness Program had 7 females and 5 males with a total of 12 volunteer students. The activity, Calumpang Laban sa Dengue, had 7 females and 2 males only with a total of 9 students. Next, the feeding program activity had 15 females and 5 males with a total of 20 students. The Gift Giving Christmas party program held last December 9, 2017, had 7 females and 8 males with a total of 15 students. Sports Injury Management had 11 females and 27 males with a total of 38 students. Another Gift Giving Christmas party program held last December 17, 2018, had 38 females and 24 males with a total of 62 students. Lastly, the program Operation Tuli had 16 females and 8 males with a total of 24 students.

Through their sharing of reflective essays about their experiences during the community service, the researchers were able to acquire the data needed to identify how community extension service involvement shapes the students' general collegiate experience.

**Proposed Paradigm of the Study**

Through the synthesis of data acquired, the researchers propose the C.A.R.E. model that emerged from experiences of the students which describes how community extension service involvement shapes the students' general collegiate experience. The core categories are commitment to service, appreciation of life, realization of be-attitudes, and enhancement of skills. Each core category consists of subthemes as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1: C.A.R.E. Model**



Commitment to service means the students have developed a sense of loyalty or responsibility to tasks that they chose to take which in the end hones them to be the best version of them that guarantees a better future and ability to establish rapport with people they encounter or an improved adversity quotient. Evidently, commitment to service constitutes new learning's for the students regarding the real-life situations in the community. They are able to reflect with the help

of concrete experiences and creating their own resolution to problems, thus strengthening their link to the community as a student which is beneficial in shaping their commitment to social community engagements. (Morris, 2016) [6]

Appreciation of life means the ability of the students to understand the worth, quality or importance of something. Through the community activities that the students have been part of they have been able to realize the value of dedication, patience, money, health, contentment, awareness, and love. Even though these community activities are simple, what matters the most is how this becomes an eye-opener to them to be able to not take things for granted and recognize the true value of something. Having this full awareness makes the students appreciate life further, brings gratitude no matter how small it is and motivates them to engage with the community in the future. For this reason, it was also perceived that students who are associated with community engagement have better academic performance and they experience a more positive environment in school due to reduced number of absenteeism because they enjoy their time in school. (Maier et al, 2017) [7]

Realization of be-attitudes are the values and attributes that students learn and perceive. Through these be-attitudes—Serving and Leading, Compassionate Acts, Integrity, Excellence and Christian Living. Having an open heart to receive the gift of knowledge and wisdom through these experiences, it creates a platform of self-improvement and self-actualization. These collections of traits are advantageous in a way that students get to learn how to interact with diverse individuals which can help them improve their decision-making insights as their skills are associated with the guidance of the other traits. (Helgeson & Schneider, 2015) [8]

Lastly, Enhancement of skills refers to students' ability to continuously develop their skills, talents, and competencies through time to increase their performance and become more capable, confident, and competent in engaging in such community activities. These professional skills can also help enhancing the student's academic development because having a sense of civic responsibility awareness breeds social awareness, practical skills that may help resolve issues, and interpersonal skills which is helpful in dealing with daily interaction. (Hebert & Hauf, 2015) [9]

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Analysis of the reflection essays of students regarding volunteering in community service activities revealed that the students gained skills that greatly affected their general collegiate experience. Students shared how they became committed to the responsibility they chose that resulted in them learning new skills which also leads them to better opportunities while adapting to the environment they are in. They also got to learn how to build rapport with people they are with. Community service also made them appreciate life by realizing the value of dedication, patience, money, health, contentment, awareness, and love. The students at World Citi Colleges also applied the core values that honed them more to become a World Citizen who are Christ-centered, excellent in exhibiting their serving and leading capabilities fuelled with compassion during the community service programs. [10]

With this data, the researchers were able to create a model entitled "C.A.R.E model" that described how student involvement in community service extension affected their general collegiate experience. C.A.R.E. The model consists of four core categories namely Commitment



to service, Appreciation of life, Realization of be-attitudes, and Enhancement of skills in which there were subthemes that further discuss and support the core categories. [11]

Based on the results, the researchers therefore recommend more students to participate and testify about their experiences during community service and to encourage more students to share, the researchers suggest conducting the reflection essays via online to be more accessible to the students.

## LIMITATIONS

This study is limited only to the experiences of the students who volunteered in the activities hosted by World Citi Colleges-Quezon City regardless of their year level. The essays consist of what and when have they learned from the activity, what is the importance of their learning's, and what are their realizations after the activity. The events included in this study were held from the academic year 2016-2019 participated by all the college programs of World Citi Colleges-Quezon city. All the events are conducted in the adopted community of WCC-QC which is in Barangay Calumpang Marikina.

In terms of data gathering, the method used to acquire the data needed for the study was through a reflection essay provided for the students every after the event is finished which is collected by the Community Extension Service Organization for documentation.

## REFERENCES

1. Coatsworth K, Hurley J, Miller-Rosser K. A Phenomenological Study of Student Nurses Volunteering in Nepal: Have Their Experiences Altered Their Understanding of Nursing? *Collegian Journal of the Royal College of Nursing Australia*, 2016;24(4).
2. Clinton I, Thomas T. *Business Students' Experience of Community Service Learning*. Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia. 2011.
3. Mey MR, Werner A, De Villiers B. Student experiences of service learning through a community outreach project, *Development in Practice*. 2018;28(4):1-11
4. Sakugawa H, Ueda K. Using Phenomenology to Study How Junior and Senior High School Students in Japan Perceive Their Volunteer Efforts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 2009;8(2):53-64.
5. Chandler, K. et al. Student Participation in Community Service Activity. *Student Participation in Community Service Activity*. NCEs, 1997. pp.97-331.
6. Morris LV. Experiential learning for all, *Innovative Higher Education*, 2016;41(2): 103-104.
7. Maier A, Daniel J, Oakes J, Lam L. *Community schools as an effective school improvement strategy: A review of the evidence*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. 2017.
8. Helgeson S, Schneider D. Authentic community-based youth engagement: lessons from across the nation and through the lens of violence prevention, *National Civic Review*, 2015;104(3):16-23
9. Hébert A, Hauf P. Student learning through service learning: effects on academic development, civic responsibility, interpersonal skills and practical skills, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 2015;16(1):37-49.

10. Meyer, M et al. Students' Community Service: Self-Selection and the Effects of Participation. WU Vienna University of Economic and Business, Welthandelsplatz, Austria. 2019.
11. Miftachul H., Kamarul SMT, Nasrul HNM, Badlihisam MN. Transmitting leadership based civic responsibility: insights from service learning, International Journal of Ethics and Systems, 2018;34(1):20-31.