

Service Experience as A Goal-oriented Self-regulated Process for Whole Person Development: A Conceptual Model (0233)*Outline:*

We present a model for investigating students' development of the sense of identity through participation in service learning or volunteering. Service is understood as actions with a moral intention – to care and to help disadvantaged members in socially and culturally diverse communities (Lough, 2011; Youniss & Yates, 1999). The model carries a conviction that experience in higher education need to orient students to lifelong moral, cognitive, and affective development (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). 'Whole person development' captures students' evolving conceptions of self as (1) morally oriented persons, (2) multicultural communicators, and (3) change agents.

This paper contributes to literature by re-examining key themes from existing research into moral, multicultural, and leadership identity development, which looks into individuals' use of moral, multicultural and leadership beliefs and values in defining the self in service contexts (Gilligan, 1977; Hart, 2005; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; Rhoads, 1997; Sparrowe, 2005; Sussman, 2011). With a few exceptions (e.g. Rhoads, 1997; Seider, 2010), existent research has not explored in-depth the interaction between these areas of identity development among students.

The significance of the paper lies also in its exploration of the role of self-regulation in service experience. Self-regulation is the self-direction of task completion process motivated by goals or intentions, during which task strategies, actions, knowledge/skills acquisition, and task-related emotions are monitored and re-adjusted to ensure task goals fulfillment (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). Although researchers have elaborated on how goal-setting and reflection might enhance student development (Giles & Eyster, 1994; Parker-Gwin & Mabry, 1998), effort has yet to be expended in exploring holistically how self-relation functions in service experience among students.

The model is based on qualitative findings from interviews with 34 students of a Hong Kong university examined through phenomenographic and grounded theory analysis. In each of the three domains, qualitative variations in students' conceptions of self and their approaches to service were analysed in terms of coherence and sophistication, and the relationship between conceptions and approaches explored. This was followed by an examination of the interrelation between student experiences in the domains to understand the convergent aspects of students' experiences.

The data suggested that the students entered the service context with varying goals and purposes and went about service in different manners, which corresponded to their differing conceptions of self in the three domains. More specifically, how students constructed their conceptions of self was related to the extent to which they were able to set explicit goals and self-regulate actions and strategies. Based on these

findings, we postulate that students attain fuller identity development when they exhibit self-regulative behaviours and dispositions such as:

- setting explicit goals oriented to high quality service and personal development outcomes,
- aligning goals with values, purposes and plans,
- being creative and flexible in solving problems,
- being adaptive to new situations (e.g. different cultures; tough physical environments) and persevering when faced with difficulties,
- being sensitive to community members' cultural beliefs and empathetic of their needs, and being able to gain their trust,
- being able to generate self-feedback (self-reflection) and seek feedback (guided reflection) through dialogue with mentors and peers,
- knowing how to collaborate with others,
- being proactive in acting as a change agent and motivating others in achieving collective goals.

The data also indicated that central to students' conceptions of self in all three domains was a moral core – their care for community members (cf. Rhoads, 1997). Students frequently referred to their moral beliefs and values when commenting on their multicultural communication and leadership skills and behaviours. For instance, students mentioned the importance of empathy with local members to ensure that their service was planned and performed in a culturally appropriate manner. When social conflicts arose among themselves, students were able to settle such conflicts by prioritizing collective service goals before catering to personal goals. For the student leaders, a primary objective was to enhance peers' learning so that they could serve the community effectively and develop long-term commitment to service.

Following from the above discussion are four principles of service experience for whole person development applicable to all three domains: authenticity, agency, reciprocity, and reflexivity (Barnett, 2007; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Hart, 2005; Lough, 2011; Reed & Aquino, 2003; Rhoads, 1997; Seider, 2010; Sparrowe, 2005).

Authenticity refers to engagement in service as motivated by intrinsic rather than extrinsic goals. It also means the close alignment between one's values, purposes, goals, and actions. It is from authenticity that students gain their sense of commitment to service in the long term.

Agency is defined as a sense of control over one's course of actions and a sense of responsibility for the impact of such actions on the community and oneself. Given the multiple contemporary moral crisis, especially the Oslo massacre and London riots in summer 2011, agency is critical to students' well-being and growth.

Reciprocity denotes a sense of care for, and mutual trust with, community members. As such, it entails students investigating community members' needs in a culturally sensitive manner and seeking their partnership in bringing about changes, which is particularly important for student leaders.

Reflexivity entails self-reflection of one's pre-conceptions about causes of social problems and approaches to seeking changes. As a pre-condition for creativity, flexibility and adaptability (cf. Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002), reflexivity also

requires subjecting one's values, motivations, goals, and strategies to critical judgments.

To sum up, the findings highlighted the important role of self-regulation in students' whole person development and identified a close relationship between students' conceptions of self and approaches to service. Development in the three domains rests on the incorporation into service experience a sense of care and the key principles of authenticity, agency, reciprocity, and reflexivity. The model will be further explored through interviews at two universities in Hong Kong, and then applied upon further refinement to surveys and follow up interviews to inform policy and practice at these universities. The model may be applied in investigating student service experience in other settings.

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