



GENERATION Y'S ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION TOWARDS THE SERVICE LEARNING: AN EXPLORATION OF INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Today's Generation Y or Millennial is already forming a larger productive portion of the average workforce. Generation Y business students, they plan their future through a rapidly changing and highly interdependent relationships. As an academic institute preparing students the labor workforce, we need to know how to energize their talents, how to turn high maintenance into high productivity to strengths their strategic advantage. Beyond that, students need to use their cognitive domain, affective domain, and psychomotor domain (Bloom, 1999) along with social responsibility. This exploratory study investigated Generation Y student's attitudes towards the community-based service learning experience along with studying how to develop their needs and learning choice. The study mainly focused the business administration undergraduate students enrolled in general education course, class of Human Rights and Human Trafficking at BUUIC Fall 2013. Qualitative, quantitative and in-depth interview data collection methods were used. Findings indicated how service-learning activities encourage their motivations, self-esteem, assertiveness and more active lifelong learning. Additional, the college should integrate the service-learning dynamic into classrooms. This approach also strengths the curricula and teaching practices of business schools to be better organized and influence students for their responsive roles in the future.

Keywords: *Generation Y, Motivation, Service Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, businesses try to get involve with community concerns as we can see from many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project and develop to Creating Shared Value (CSV). Giving back to communities is a way for many companies to benefit themselves while also benefit society. This can create advantages such as innovation; Unilever innovated new products hair conditioner which using less water, brand differentiation; Pepsi and Coke defined strategies of zero net water usage as a uniqueness, and employee engagement to the companies.

Regarding education perspective, universities aim to prepare students, especially Gen Y, to work and understand the world diversity by helping them address global, social and organizational encounters. Service Learning could be one of the education key to link their outside of the classroom experience to succeed in the post-industrial and knowledge age. Service learning was an ideal setting to provide students with "first-hand experience of diversity and multiculturalism", Soukop (1996). Integrating service-learning into the business curriculum would shift to higher education academic standard by encouraging young student's ability in social activity to promote the norm of mutuality (Campbell, 2000, p. 641), a source of powerful



education knowledge with information flow, values and action outcomes (Sawyer 1991). Volunteer experience from service learning does not help only the society, but also builds skill set and working experience. LinkedIn research shows that 1 out of every 5 hiring managers in the U.S. has hired a candidate because they have volunteer experience. The company considers paid work experience equal to volunteer work.

In perspective of business, volunteers are important to many organizations as a human dynamic. More recent research from a variety of sources shows that the business skills development in employee was reflected by volunteering. Volunteering or civic engagement can improve employee skills and performance that are relevant to the business. There are 60% of responding companies apply the employees who have volunteer experience in the past training employee skills. Due to LBG Associates, over 50% of executives believed that volunteering could strengthen employee abilities and shining skills. Moreover, experience from volunteering becomes the core business strategy to increase business productivity (Skills for Employability, 2008).

Generation Y

Gen Y, Net Gen, Millennials becomes a very resourceful, productive part of the workforce (Prensky 2001). This research will focus on the students who born in the range of year 1982 -2000. Members of Gen Y have been described as individualistic, well-educated, technically literate, sophisticated, mature, and ethnically diverse (Syrett and Lammiman, 2003). Members of this generation is known for sharing best practices, self-learning, trustful, more liberal, active travelers. They are very familiar with the web as a source of information and users of mobile applications. They are the most culturally and ethnically diverse generation. Alternative lifestyles have been a part of their daily lives than any other generation (Erickson 2008). Moreover, this generation is a group-oriented with strong sense of identity and social support not just for society, but also for companies (Pesquera, 2005; Furlow, 2011). Higher level of education reflects higher rates of volunteerism for Gen Y (Putnum, 2000). Once compare Gen Y with other generations, they are more civic mindedness and volunteering actively (Pooley 2005). Their competitiveness comes from the fact that they believe in achievement. They believe that they can make difference in the world, such as joining service learning, involving in the community and make it better by learning outside classroom (Fine 2008). Thus, they want to be involved in volunteering they believe in (Preston, 2010) Cone, 2006 states that the majority of Gen Y is likely to trust the company more, pay attention to the company message and purchase the company's product. There is no surprise that Gen Y believe in learning outside classrooms.

Service Learning

Service learning is an integration of community service and classroom coaching, focusing on critical thinking, reflective creative thinking and personal social



responsibility. Service learning is one of educational practice that goes beyond the classroom teaching and learning, also has an impact on students' learning and enhances their community involvement (Knapp, Fisher, & Levesque-Bristol, 2010, p. 233). Service learning develops student's lifelong experience throughout student action, reflection, and knowledge management. It is an important education methodology which integrates community service with explicit academic knowledge at the same time (Chupp and Joseph 2010). They are learning- by- doing from real situations, making difference as they believe and having impact on people's lives. They can also change their attitudes and have a chance to reflect their responsibility to society. Zlotkowski states that service learning strengthens various students' abilities which companies are looking for when they evaluate skill sets such as technical expertise and soft skills, interpersonal and communication skills, cross-functional flexibility, cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness. "Socialization with diverse people, helping others in difficulty, having a meaningful philosophy of life, and promoting racial understanding" (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999).

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a basic psychological practice that activates a behavior (Luthans 2011) and consequences of the individual and the environment relations (Latham & Pinder 2005). Demographic, motivation and environmental factors would influence the volunteering participation. From many research found that people with higher income and educational level are more volunteering participation (Hodgkinson, 2003). Some studies found that different gender proves different motivation. They report that men are more externally motivated while women are more internally motivated. Men inquire about achievement, however, women concern about management with relationships (Vermeir and Van, 2007). Moreover, women have more motivation to volunteer than men. Thus, these findings are also relevant to volunteerism.

Deci and Ryan developed a theory of motivation that impacts behavior. They recommend that people is driven by a need to grow and achieve completion. Whereas people are often motivated by external identified regulation or extrinsic motivation, self-determination or intrinsic motivation theory focuses on the internal sources of motivation, for example, a need to get knowledge or independence (Fairchild et al., 2005). To accomplish psychological growth, people need to have the sense of competence by learning multi-skills, having connection, and autonomous. Thus, to understand volunteer motivation is important that college need to understand student's motivation as Safrit states that "The more understanding about motivation of volunteers, the more effective in volunteer management." (Safrit, R. Dale, 1999).

METHODOLOGY



Questionnaires were distributed in class room setting to all 60 undergraduate business students, who are in Generation Y, enrolled in Human Rights and Human Trafficking class, majoring in international business, logistics, management, marketing, human resource development, finance. All participants were 18-20 years of age and most of them were female.

The students were assigned to the Deft School in Chonburi Province, the Eastern part of Thailand. To consider effective service learning, each team was expected to serve at least 15 hours. During their service learning, they were required to create the class as the “edutainment” for the deaf students at the school. In some classes that they involved, the school directors jointed a class session and worked on their action plans with the students. To follow-up their creative activities, students were asked to write about their individual opinion and reflections.

Burapha University International College (BUUIC) students are in BBA program. Most of them are never took any service learning before. Course projects and activities were created to follow up their understanding about the human rights under the Thailand Constitution, especially in the part of disability rights.

Due to time constraint, the researcher was not able to have pretest questions survey, which can affect some concerns about the accuracy of the survey. However, this research can provide some insights on the attitudes and values held by the students because BUUIC never run service learning before during 10 years of establishment.

Finding

The research was completed in Fall semester 2013. The total of 60 survey questionnaires was collected from BUUIC students. The motivation is the first consideration for this research. The respondents can have more than 3 selections in this part. The results show that helping others people is the main important factor to get them involves with the service learning. Society improvement and new skill development are another two factors activate orderly while self-serving is the least concerned from their responds.

According to the results of Skills Development from Service Learning part in the questionnaire, the majority of students considered strongly on their personal effectiveness as the following:

1. Communication skills
 2. Their ability to help others
 3. Team working
 4. Planning & organizing skills
 5. Adaptability
 6. Problem solving skills
 7. Willingness to continually improve
 8. Decision making
 9. Leadership skills
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10. Influencing and negotiation skills
11. Building relationships and networks

Skills Development from Service Learning	Significant development	Some development	A little	No difference
Adaptability	34.3%	35.6%	10.2%	20.1%
Team working skills	30.2%	40.4%	22.1%	7.3%
Communication skills	51.7%	37.2%	9.8%	1.3%
Influencing & negotiation skills	24.8%	33.7	26.1%	15.4
Problem solving skills	33.1%	41.4%	23.2%	2.3%
Leadership skills	20.6%	38.4%	30.8%	10.2%
Planning & organizing skills	29.7%	37.6%	20.8%	11.9%
Decision making	25.5%	34.2%	28.1%	12.2%
Building relationships and networks	35.3%	45.8%	16.1%	2.8%
Motivation to continually improve	30.6%	41.9%	14.7%	12.8%
Helping others improve	31.2%	42.5%	23%	3.3%

Here are some feedbacks of their effectiveness.

“Working with the deaf students was very challenging because they cannot talk to you. This service learning helps me understand more how important communications especially in the business world.”

“The things that I concern the most are the way we plan and the way we manage in any perspectives. Communication is not just you send the message, but beyond that, you need to understand your audience very well. Although they are disabled, they can create many things that I cannot do it. Sometimes I think that they got talent. If you want to help them, just please ignore that they cannot talk, and you will see how cool they are.”

“Volunteering from this service learning gave me the opportunity to improve my skills. I love to get new knowledge outside the classroom. I can see the real world and have more self-awareness.”

“Working with new friends allows me to test myself in terms of my leadership skills and social skills. I have never known that I can do it before. This class helped me a lot.”

“I would recommend this experience to my friends next time. This class helped me understand more about the content of the class together with real life.”

Once it comes to the personal impact that they got from the service learning, the overall experience was positive although the majority of respondents were their first experience of their volunteering. These results show that the service learning was generally positive about volunteering.



Personal Impact from Service Learning	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Self-confidence	1.1%	6.4%	52.1%	40.4%
Happiness	0.89%	12.5%	67.3%	19.31%
Understanding other people	2.3%	23.1%	40.8%	33.8%
Awareness of wider social issues	1.4%	21.2%	44.1%	33.3%

On account of their experience, the majority of students reflect that they are more likely to continue volunteering in the future, and also recommend to their friends or family. Moreover, they have more positive about BUUC from this service learning.

Most of the students have never done service learning before (68%), 15% of students say they have done service learning or volunteering just once, 6% of students say they have done twice and 11% of them say they have done more than that. There are 42% of the students who join the service learning for the first time intend to spend more time than 15 hours visiting the deft school, 27% of students say they have done for 10-15 hours, and 15% of them say they have than 20 hours.

The finding also shows about organization or community service that they would like to join as volunteer activity if they can choose 3 types of community agency for the next of their service learning; there are 40% of students choose to join community service for animal shelter, 32% for social service agency, and 28% for environment agency.

CONCLUSION

Service learning improves students learning especially their lifelong learning and their competencies. It allows students generation Y in volunteering having more understanding of citizenship and sustainable. This can enhance and prepare them getting ready to the real world experience after they graduate from the college. They can have effective learning and development tool at the same time by strengthen their communication skills, problem solving skills, technical skills and others skills. Students need to integrate their cognitive domain, affective domain, and psychomotor domain along with social responsibility. As an academic institute preparing students the labor workforce, the college need to know how to energize their talents, how to turn high maintenance into high productivity to strengths their strategic advantage of their future life.

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