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THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION AND SERVICE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
STUDY

By
Jonathan Bryant

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2020

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Jonathan Bryant under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

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This phenomenological study examined the experiences of 19 former high school service participants. This study explored the perspectives and opinions of each participant regarding the quality aspects of their service experiences and the impact of their service on college, career, and life trajectory. Additionally, participants discussed their motivation to serve initially and over time. This study explored the history of service in America, discussed the impacts of service, and examined the Vroom Theory of Motivation. In-depth focus group interviews were conducted with 19 high school graduates to gain their perspectives on their service experiences. These interviews were transcribed to analyze trends, identify connections, and find commonalities. Interview responses demonstrated significant impacts on college and career decisions, and participants shared the personal and meaningful aspects of service. This study found that service is an inherent benefit to society, and it documented the benefits for each interviewee. As a result of these interviews, several lessons were identified.

Keywords: service-learning, altruism, volunteerism, motivation to serve, service

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

Martin Luther King Jr. (1967) once said, “Life's most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” (p. 1). This sentiment, coupled with significant historic backing from influential educators, elected officials, community organizers, and others has led to an intentional inclusion of service within American education. As the benefits of service continue to be studied and documented, volunteerism, community service, and service-learning have evolved into key elements that are foundational to a quality education (Eyler & Giles, 2013). While some research demonstrates mixed interpretations of the value of service, Dewey’s view of democracy encourages citizens to participate in a society that balances selfish interests with the interests of others (Rhoads, 1998). Additionally, an overwhelming body of research demonstrates that students benefit from service in the following ways: increased positive attitudes toward self, improved attitudes toward school and learning, developing character education, civic education, and academic achievement (Celio et al., 2011; Zaff & Lerner, 2010). Furthermore, higher education institutions have received criticism that they do not sufficiently positively contribute to the communities in which they reside (Braunsberger & Flamm, 2013). Service and service-learning can be the answer to the challenges education seeks to solve.

Statement of the Problem

A National Commission on Service-Learning survey found that parents consider schools a key factor in rearing children, on top of academics (Fiske, n.d.). Also found was that service-learning can bolster education efforts through prosocial development, career

exploration, academic integration, and social needs (Fiske, n.d.).

While it is not challenging to find research that proclaims the value of service, volunteerism, and service-learning, there are barriers to the implementation of quality service programs during K-12 education and beyond. In the age of accountability, value-added measurements, and the pressure to cover more material faster, service can often take a back seat as part of all education considerations (Ydesen, 2014). Additionally, “there is a narrative in our culture that generations in our culture are getting more and more narcissistic” (Chopik & Grimm, 2019, p. 1109), and this can lead to an impression that our youth do not value civic responsibility and service as a key tenant of citizenship. National policy decisions have been made with the understanding that proclivities to service and service-learning benefit civic engagement, with the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009 being a recent example (Nesbit & Brudney, 2010).

Even though there is a significant amount of research that promotes the values of service, bandwidth remains for increased service participation by America’s youth. A study completed by the Corporation for National and Community Service found that service-learning opportunities were only available to 35% of high schools and 24% of K-12 schools (Spring et al., 2008). A better understanding of the benefits of service may be rationale enough to increase the number of young people who actively participate in service. The National Commission on Service-Learning found that parents, when surveyed, believe that schools are essential in child rearing, complimentary to the academic instruction they receive (Fiske, n.d.). Service-learning has proved to be more successful than classroom learning for teaching citizenship skills (Birdwell et al., 2013). Service-learning and community service have also shown that they can reduce the

achievement gap in high school, narrowing the span between low-income and higher income students (Scales et al., 2006). Research also demonstrates that service benefits students by promoting proper adolescent development, character education, citizenship and civic values, and experiential learning (Kirby, 1989; Schine, 1997; Woeste, 2000). In addition, service-learning has shown value in promoting prosocial development, career experiences, and social needs (Fiske, n.d.).

According to Bonnet (2008), outcomes of service “comprise both personal and societal gains, including academic aptitude, cognitive development, efficacy to effect change and social responsibility” (pp. 4-5). Quantitative research by Eyler and Giles (1999) found that involvement in community service, and service-learning in particular, can positively impact leadership abilities, personal abilities to impact social change, openness to different perspectives, a developing sense of empathy, and systemic thinking about social concerns. Subsequent studies by Eyler and Giles (2002, 2013) bolstered these conclusions.

According to Williamson (2006), “as the rationale for community service strengthens, participation in community service increases” (p. 18). Research shows that service in high school is a precursor to continued service and citizenship development (Hart et al., 2007). Hart et al. (2007) found that community service participation in high school was a strong predictor of voting and subsequent volunteering, and this study demonstrated a strong correlation of service and civic skills. According to a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, the U.S. significantly trails most other industrialized countries in voter turnout (Desilver, 2018). The same survey found that the vast majority (almost $\frac{3}{4}$) of Americans believe that high voter turnout is important (Desilver, 2018). According to

Hart et al. (2007), “Our findings do suggest that providing opportunities for community service and extracurricular activities are particularly good choices for policy makers interested in grooming adolescents for citizenship” (p. 216). Partially in response to these myriad benefits of service participation, some schools (both secondary and postsecondary) have opted to encourage service for their students, and some mandate service.

Research demonstrates linkages between service performed in one’s teenage years and their future and how early experiences of socialization into community participation, involvement with community institutions, and participation in scouts and other youth groups are the most characteristic of those who sustain service throughout their lives (Marks & Jones, 2004). Along with this, Li and Frieze (2016) found that the personal benefits to those who are involved in service do not only manifest in the teenage years but extend into adulthood. A clear message that proclaims the value of service to the individual and the overall benefit of service to the community should enable policy makers, administrators, teachers, and parents to make well-informed decisions regarding their own respective service programs.

Background

Service was a foundational principle for America, promoted as early as Harvard College in 1636. There was a belief that a Harvard education would prepare students to serve and lead society (Bergstrom, 2004). Moving to more modern times, the first American-wide service movement was a response to the Great Depression, under the leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Congress approved the organization of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) on March 21, 1933. More than three million

previously unemployed individuals served in the CCC from 1933-1942, dramatically impacting the nation's parks, public spaces, and infrastructure. The CCC significantly contributed to the development of the country (History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, n.d.).

Service has not always been an isolated activity within American culture. In the second half of the 20th century, service started to become an intentional aspect of education. The term “service-learning” was first used by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1966 to describe a program linking students and faculty to a conservation project in Eastern Tennessee (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). In the 1980s, education started to become intentionally involved within the service movement (and vice versa) when two national nonprofits (Campus Compact and Campus Outreach Opportunity League [COOL]) were formed to encourage youth involvement and volunteerism (Shapiro, 1994). Furthering this trend, in 1994, President Clinton signed legislation creating the Corporation for National and Community Service to consolidate the domestic service programs AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America into one organizational structure (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). More recently, “between 2002 and 2005, college students between the ages of 16 and 25 increased their participation rates in volunteer work by nearly 20%” (Bonnet, 2008, p. 1). Conversely, almost two thirds of young persons in the United States are “considered disengaged, with nearly one in five not involved in any of the 19 possible forms of civic participation” (Lopez et al., 2006, p. 1). Even though service is an integral part of the human experience, there is still significant emphasis needed for the nation's youth.

As service has developed internationally and within the United States, service-learning has gained some traction as a teaching pedagogy that is promoted by a number of schools, districts, and communities. Service-learning, as defined later in this section, is a teaching pedagogy that incorporates learning, service, and instruction (Jacoby, 1996). Service-learning as a formal construct has only been discussed in relatively recent times. It has gained a following among educators, particularly those who are familiar with the overlap of service-learning and civic education and those who believe in the value of experiential learning. More recently, the 2009 Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act provided additional support for service and service-learning (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.a). This not only placed high-visibility emphasis on service but also allocated specific funding to encourage schools to delve into service-learning. This brings us to the present day, where continued inertia and work toward service and education integration are needed.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of why students participate in service as part of their educational experience and how these experiences help to shape their future. It will also explore how motivations for service participation change over time. This study will rely on the assumption that service is a net positive to society, while presenting research that explores various attitudes about service, mandatory service, and other perspectives. One of the main benefits of service and service-learning is that the net positive is not restricted only to the individual contributor. The community and the service provider all benefit as a result of the act of service. Acts of service cast a growing, wide net of positivity.

Understanding the benefits of participating in service and service-learning is a key step in this exercise. Many of the main goals of education, including student achievement, personal growth, social-emotional learning, exposure to current affairs, and developing a knowledge base of civic responsibilities and duties can be achieved through service-learning. Service and service-learning participation are research-based methods that promote these goals and significantly contributes to the positive achievement that quality educators seek.

Service and service-learning promote positive civic development in participating students. A significant amount of research has proved this statement, and the validity of educating students about their role in the community by involving them in their community is fairly straight forward. “One of the most frequently expressed goals of service-learning programs is the increase of social responsibility in adolescents” (Giles & Eyler, 1994, p. 77). Involvement within service-learning exposes students to the issues, concerns, and opportunities for growth/development within a society, and it allows students to consider solutions to these same situations. Service-learning allows students to be a part of the solution, a powerful concept. Rhoads (1998) expanded on the earlier mentioned views of John Dewey and developed a philosophy that education should play a key part in a democratic society, demonstrating the importance of a quality civic education.

The personal growth that results from service and service-learning is another rationale that district and school leaders use to introduce and strengthen service initiatives. Erikson (1969) introduced the term of “generativity,” as the state at which middle-age adults begin to view beyond their personal wants/needs/desires to a

perspective that considers their legacy beyond what they have offered outside of their own family contributions. Service is an action that can be personally gratifying. While it is challenging to quantify and qualify the extent to which student personal benefit occurs, this is a topic for many publications, dissertations, and journal articles. Using service-learning as a teaching pedagogy also is fulfilling from an instructor perspective, as student growth is tied directly to real-world experience, youth voice, and often hands-on action (Washington, 2018).

Overall, service and service-learning have also demonstrated a net positive impact on student academic achievement. School report cards in some states, cumulative end-of-course/end-of-grade testing, standardized testing for college admissions, and teacher bonus pay tied to student achievement/growth are all pressures that force teachers and administrators to prioritize student achievement within the scope of all considerations. While some researchers have failed to find a strong correlation between community service participation and student achievement, there is significant research demonstrating a strong link between service-learning participation and student achievement. In addition, Conrad and Hedin (1991) found that service-learning provides a meaningfulness and concreteness to academic achievement. Community service promotes higher order cognitive skills, including data collection, critical thinking, and decision-making (Kirby, 1989). A community service and service-learning survey of 1,799 principals found that 80% of all school leaders indicated that service-learning had positive student achievement impacts (Kiesmeier et al., 2004).

Additional benefits will be explored throughout this work, as it is also important to understand why educators promote service and why students participate in service and

service-learning. When considering the history of promoting service in America, it becomes very obvious that policy makers and leaders of varying perspectives value service as a common good, for valid reasons. What is less clear, however, are the motivations and proclivities of students who participate in service. This study explores the motivations of students who participate in service and presents information that may aid educators and policy makers who recognize the significant value that service adds to life experience.

Putnam (2000) showed that high amounts of volunteerism contribute to strong communities. This research, when coupled with individual proclivities can lead us to a better understanding regarding personal choices to participate in service. This study documented the motivations of the individuals surveyed, and explored these experiences and their relationship to general motivations. Unfortunately, research documenting student motivations to serve is scant (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Metz & Youniss, 2003; Williamson, 2006). When reviewing the benefits that are documented results of service participation, it is not difficult to hypothesize as to why students serve and why educators and policy makers encourage service. Researchers have found that by understanding the motivations, attitudes, and antecedents of altruistic behavior, educators will be able to effectively promote service to the disengaged (Ayer & Lavin, 2005; Williamson, 2006; Zaff & Michelsen, 2001).

Students (high school and college) and adults have similar types of motivation to serve, regardless of age or life experience (Clary et al., 1998). Clary et al. (1998) also found that volunteers had defined preferences for the tasks they performed, and their overall satisfaction was related to these preferences. Furthermore, when motivation and

benefit are aligned, consistently continuing to serve over time was observed (Clary et al., 1998). Empathy has also been linked to a propensity for serving others (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Schwartz, 1977).

Although there are several studies that have explored altruism (which this study viewed as a propensity to participate in service, generally) and empathy, the results are mixed. Several studies have shown that empathy is related, in various ways, to a willingness to serve or a willingness to give back to one's community (Batson, Batson et al., 1995; Baston, Klein et al., 1995; Batson et al., 1981). One of the conclusions from this selection of studies was "altruism does not result because of helpers' personalities but of their reaction in real time to the plight of another person" (Williamson, 2006, pp. 48). Other research does not establish clarity on this matter and shows additional rationale for an individual's rationale to serve. Staub and Feinberg's (1980) study defined "parallel empathy" and "reactive empathy" as important concepts in this discussion. Essentially this study established parallel empathy (commonly referred to as sympathy) and reactive empathy (an inherent alignment of emotions over time) within a population of elementary students, an important distinction (Staub & Feinberg, 1980).

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were

1. What are the aspects of quality service-learning?
2. What impact does service participation in high school have on the postsecondary experience and beyond?
3. What are the motivations for students to participate in service?
4. How do these motivations change over time?

Significance

In an era of American education that constantly shifts emphasis on what is of primary importance and what should be emphasized/deemphasized, it is important to maintain the knowledge base necessary to create school environments that allow for students to develop, related to service. This study contributes to the body of research on community service, volunteerism, altruism, and service-learning and summarizes useful information for those who coordinate service and those who believe service is an integral part of comprehensive civic education. This study also presents research that discusses other character traits and personal characteristics in relation to service and service-learning participation.

Much of the quality research on service-learning is not particularly current, and this study sought to add to the body of research that demonstrates the value of including service and service-learning as part of a quality and comprehensive education experience. Interviews with the subjects of this study will give policy makers, education leaders, teachers, parents, and others an authentic perspective regarding service involvement. This should give decision makers the opportunity to consider and evaluate the status of their service programs within the sphere of their influence and make well-informed decisions accordingly.

One of the main recent American guiding education legislative acts is the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This law established educational priorities that are to be implemented in America's schools, including high school graduation rates, advancing equity, elevated academic standards, college and career readiness, and global competitiveness (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Research argues that service is an important aspect of a quality education experience; however, service and civic engagement are not explicitly referenced in the main Every Student Succeeds Act synopsis (Heck et al., 2020). Keeping this in mind, the benefits of early service involvement are well documented; and research indicates that service involvement directly benefits developmental concerns, experiential learning, character education, and other educational benefits (Heck et al., 2020; Kirby, 1989; Schine, 1997; Woeste, 2000). This study also aligns with Goal 2 of the Corporation for National and Community Service's (2011a) 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, which sought to "strengthen national service so that participants engaged in Corporation for National and Community Service-supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity" (p. 17). The benefits of an involved, civic-minded populace contribute to a mature culture. Educators should recognize the value of service on proper human development, even though service often is not listed as a top education priority by legislators and/or educators. This work sought to contribute to the body of research that indicates how service performed in high school relates to life after high school.

As we understand the motivations and rationale for service participation, it is my hope that the contents of this study inspire policy makers, educators, stakeholders and students to audit their own practices, resulting in an increase of service involvement within their respective communities.

This study also demonstrates that knowledge of service and service-learning serves to promote greater service involvement and higher quality service experiences for our students, communities, and educators. This study is significant, because it speaks to the importance of service inclusion within a well-rounded education experience during

high school years and beyond. This study establishes the personal experiences of a number of former high school students who participated in service and the anecdotal perspective on how these experiences impacted their respective lives.

Overview of Methodology

This study used a phenomenological method to identify commonalities, challenges, motivations and benefits of a group of students who were involved in service while in high school. To truly understand a concept, it is often valuable to hear from those in the field and view the successes and opportunities for growth from those who have experienced it. Because of this, I decided to undertake this project to share stories of those who have participated in service during their time in high school, and to highlight their perception of their own involvement within the realm of service and service-learning. The shape that this study will take is a phenomenological study, in a qualitative manner. I will use a naturalistic inquiry study based on interviews with former high school students who participated in service while in high school. Naturalistic inquiry involves contact with interview subjects to seek a deep understanding of their perspective(s).

Definition of Key Terms

Altruism

A socially sanctioned act with positive consequences for another person (Schwartz, 1977).

Civic Engagement

The construct of citizenship aimed at social change (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2007).

Civil Society

The social institutions that operate outside the public and private sector, otherwise known as state and market institutions. Civil society is often used interchangeably with terms such as voluntary sector, nongovernmental agencies, nonprofit sector, and independent sector (Salamon et al., 2000).

Community Service

It is important to demonstrate a distinction between varying types of service. For the purpose of this study, community service includes volunteerism, altruism, and participation in service. This service is completed without actual or implied monetary compensation.

Community Service Attitude Scale

Developed on the helping behavior model of Schwartz (1977), the Community Service Attitude Scale is a measurement of adolescent attitudes about community service.

Empathy

The act of perceiving and understanding someone else's feelings or situation. Empathy is alignment of one's feelings with another one's feelings (Staub & Feinberg, 1980).

Mandatory Service

Some schools choose to make volunteering, service-learning, or other type of altruism a requirement for their students in the form of a graduation requirement or other compulsory method.

Prosocial Personality

An orientation and enduring tendency to think about the welfare and rights of

other people; to feel concern and empathy for others; and to act in a way that benefits them (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998).

Public Service Motivation

A method that assess how and why individuals favor one altruistic choice over another (Stazyk & Davis, 2015).

Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching pedagogy that integrates instruction, learning, and service. Service-learning can be mandatory or voluntary. Jacoby (1996) defined service-learning as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5). According to the National Youth Leadership Council (n.d.), “service-learning is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic and civic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs” (p. 1).

Voluntary Service

This refers to completing service without any expressed or intended external reward (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2011a).

Dissertation Organization/Summary

Chapter 1 reviewed the pertinent historic nature of service in America and how service has evolved as an aspect of education in the United States. Research questions and key terms were described. Chapter 2 examines pertinent research that explores service as a driver of civic education and discusses service as a component of quality education and as a predictor of the future. Motivational theory provided the theoretical

foundation for this study and is detailed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that drove this work. Chapter 4 describes and presents the results of the phenomenological study, highlighting the experiences of high school graduates who participated in service while in high school. Finally, Chapter 5 analyzes the data in relation to the theoretical framework. In addition, Chapter 5 provides implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 2 details the history of service as a component of the experience of adolescent and young adult education from high school and beyond. A history of service-learning in America is included. The benefits of service are reviewed, and predictors of those who serve are discussed. A review of the research on mandatory and volunteer service and the benefits and drawbacks of each strategy also are explored. Motivations to participate in service also are reviewed.

Inclusion Criteria

In preparation for this review, several different research tactics were utilized. A main source of information was the Gardner-Webb University library, which also linked to external sources such as ProQuest, JSTOR, Sage Publications, and others. During the research, the following keywords were used: service-learning, community service, phenomenological service study, service benefits, and mandatory service programs. I also reviewed the bibliographies of pertinent articles, dissertations, and publications for related resources. An effort was made to focus on articles and publications that were published within the last 20-25 years or less; however, some notable exceptions have been included in the research for various reasons. As noted by other researchers, there is less recent research pertaining to service-learning (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015; Washington, 2018). Because of this relative dearth of recent research, this is an additional rationale for the purpose of this study.

A History of Service in America

It is important to note that service has remained an encouraged pursuit for many

years. From Benjamin Franklin promoting a volunteer fire department in early America to the iconic inaugural address of John F. Kennedy when he stated, “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” volunteerism has remained a key component for a vibrant society (Williamson, 2006). For the purposes of this study, a focus on national/American service served to appropriately narrow this research.

Service was an important component of early America, and one of the oldest mentions is from Harvard College in 1636 (Bergstrom, 2004). Harvard held that “higher education viewed the development of student character and the transmission of the values supporting that character as an essential responsibility of faculty and administration” (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993, p. 4). It is not unreasonable to believe that this view may have helped to contribute to the overall success that is enjoyed by one of America’s oldest and most revered institutions. Contributing to the growing tradition, one of the earliest and most visible advocates of public service was Ben Franklin. In 1727, Mr. Franklin worked to create a volunteer fire department and public libraries and formed a volunteer club called Junto, an organization that focused on mutual improvement (Gregorian, 2000). Franklin was a devotee to service; and in 1749, he wrote *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*, a document that laid out several educational principles for the future University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). Franklin included civic involvement as an integral component. UPenn became the first university in the country 2 years later; and similar to Harvard, it helped to shape the consciousness of the country, along with its students and alumni (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010).

Ellis and Campbell (1987) noted that the Revolutionary War was initiated, fought, and won by a volunteer army; and a significant number of non-military volunteers provided support and resources before, during, and after the conflict. Later on, one of the most revolutionary movements of the new country, the anti-slavery movement, was developed and sustained by a group of dedicated volunteers, many of whom created and ran the Underground Railroad (Ellis & Campbell, 1987). Although it does not perfectly align with the definition of service used in this study, some believe the essential national service is demonstrated in the tradition of U.S. military service (Shapiro, 1994).

In the last 150 years, John Dewey and William James worked to develop an intellectual foundation to service-based learning, an early precursor to service-learning (Shapiro, 1994). According to Shapiro (1994), “many people have marked the beginning of the service movement to William James’ essay ‘The Moral Equivalent of War’ in 1911” (p. 1). James argued that service would help to address societal challenges, coupled with improving the country in spiritual and moral ways (Shapiro, 1994). Dewey (1938) held that democracy promotes a sense of communal good, alongside and balancing selfish needs and desires. According to Boldemann-Tatkin (2015), “the educational philosophy of John Dewey (1916, 1938) laid the groundwork for service-learning in the 20th century” (p. 19). This framework stressed the importance of reflection as a key part of the educational experience and stated, “the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (Dewey, 1938, p. 20). In 2000, Miettinen built on Dewey’s thoughts on reflection, and he developed a 5-stage process: Stage 1 is to identify a problem; Stage 2 defines the problem; Stage 3 works to

develop a hypothesis for the solution; Stage 4 applies reasoning; and Stage 5 tests the hypothesis and works on an action. These five steps became the basis for more formalized service-learning (Miettinen, 2000).

An obvious example of a nationally organized service revolution was initiated by the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt. This movement was mainly in response to the Great Depression in the aftermath of the stock market crash of 1929 and the ending of World War I. Roosevelt received Congressional approval to organize the CCC on March 21, 1933 (Shapiro, 1994). Over six million young men served in the CCC from 1933-1942, in terms of 6 to 18 months. They worked to improve the nation's public lands and parks while also receiving food assistance, housing, education, and a \$30 per month stipend (The Corps Network, n.d.). Commonly known as the "New Deal," Roosevelt shepherded America through this trying economic time, utilizing service as a catalyst for societal change.

Following the initial CCC legislation, the 1935 Work Project Administration followed the CCC, which broadened involvement in expanding services to the public (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). Once World War II concluded, another program was started to encourage national service. This program is the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known most widely as the GI Bill. According to Shapiro (1994), the success of the GI Bill started a movement that provided subsidies for service; i.e., the National Teacher Corps, the Police Corps of New York, and the National Service Corps.

Senior citizens were encouraged to volunteer in 1960 through the Corporation of National and Community Service: Senior Corps, which was approved via the Domestic

Volunteer Service Act of 1973. This act was amended in 1999 (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). The Senior Corps umbrella includes the Foster Grandparent Program, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and the Senior Companion Corps (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

Historically, senior citizens were not the only demographic who were encouraged to give back by volunteering and service activities. In 1960, President John F. Kennedy introduced the concept of the Peace Corps during his presidential campaign. The Peace Corps was intended to involve youth nationally and internationally in various ways. President Kennedy said,

I therefore propose that our inadequate efforts in this area be supplemented by a Peace Corps of talented young men and women, willing and able to serve their country as an alternative or a supplement to the peacetime selective service.
(Shapiro, 1994, p. 15)

Continuing a service-oriented national response to crisis, President Lyndon Johnson created Volunteer Service to America, the National Teacher Corps, and the Job Corps in response to poverty issues in the 1960s (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). Later, in 1966, the Urban Corps was started, which was funded by federal work study dollars and promoted youth development (The Corps Network, n.d.).

The term service-learning was initially used by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1966, and this embodied a program that linked students and faculty to a conservation project in Tennessee (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). Service-learning also was used by Oak Ridge Associated Universities to describe a project in the same decade (Bergstrom, 2004). From 1967-1969 the Manpower Development Internship

Program in Atlanta met several times; and notably, this conference linked the terms service and learning. This conference was promoted and sponsored by the following organizations: the Southern Regional Education Board; the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; the City of Atlanta; the Atlanta Urban Corps; the Peace Corps; and Volunteer Service to America (Bergstrom, 2004). The inertia from these groups served to promote experiential learning programs, and this education pedagogy started to develop. In 1979, the National Center for Service-Learning published *Synergist*, a publication that promoted service and learning (Sigmon, 1998). This movement gained traction and continues today.

By 1971, several federal departments initiated volunteer programs, continuing the recognition of service within civic duty and responsibility (Ellis & Campbell, 1987). Additionally, Congress mandated an independent organization, the National Center for Voluntary Action, which was designed to educate the public about the benefits of volunteerism and to help coordinate service efforts. Partially as a result of these initiatives, in 1974, approximately 24% of U.S. citizens participated in organized volunteer work annually (Ellis & Campbell, 1987).

In the 1980s, education began to become increasingly involved in national service efforts. Two nonprofits (COOL and Campus Compact) were formed to encourage youth involvement and volunteerism (Shapiro, 1994). Campus Compact was organized by a group of college and university presidents who committed to two main goals: (a) bolstering student service initiatives on campuses, and (b) encouraging national policy advocacy for youth service (Shapiro, 1994). Campus Compact was originally composed of three institutions; however, by 2009, it involved approximately one quarter of all U.S.

campuses (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010). Campus Compact was particularly integral to the service-learning movement because it sought to push service-learning from “individual pioneer efforts to a more institutionalized” process (Stanton et al., 1999, p. 6). COOL was a youth-led organization that sought to promote student service initiatives. This organization lobbied for recent graduates to coordinate service activities on campus, called “green deans” (Shapiro, 1994). Shapiro (1994) noted that Campus Compact and COOL have engaged over 800 campuses and several hundred thousand students in the course of their history. Campus Compact and COOL were the policy basis for Subtitle B2 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990; and related to this, President George Bush created the Office of National Service in 1989 (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

As noted earlier, it is not unusual for U.S. presidents to promote civic responsibility through service. As part of his administration, President Carter founded Habitat for Humanity (one of many civic-promoting organizations/initiatives); and by 1988, Habitat had organized home building programs in over 250 communities (Shapiro, 1994). According to Stukas and Dunlap (2002), community service was also a significant component to the domestic policy of both Presidents Clinton and Bush. In 1994, President Clinton signed legislation that created the Corporation for National and Community Service. This consolidated the coordination of domestic service programs under one umbrella organization. AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America are all administered centrally under this new organization (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

In an age when bipartisan political agreement is challenging to find, service has

historically served as one area in which different sides of the aisle can find common ground. The Presidential Summit in 1997, which was chaired by Colin Powell, brought Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Carter and Mrs. Reagan together to discuss and develop the programs of AmeriCorps and other service organizations (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b). In 2002, President George W. Bush created the Freedom Corps, which was a plea for all citizens to participate in community service (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

In 2009, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which was a bipartisan law that was intended to strengthen and expand national service programs (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.a). A new strategic partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Authority and the Corporation for National and Community Service occurred in 2012. This strengthened America's ability to respond to crisis by creating career opportunities for young citizens (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

Even with a robust history of service promotion in America, there continues to be significant areas for improvement. From 2002 to 2005, college students ages 16 to 25 increased their participation rates in volunteer work by nearly 20% (Dote et al., 2006). The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service estimated that 24 million Americans participate in some form of service; but "in a country of 329 million, imagine what more could be done if significantly more people were inspired and able to answer the call to serve" (Heck et al., 2020, p. 1).

Community Service Participation

Specific to community service, there are many ways to recognize the positive impacts this has on students, educators, and communities. Recent studies demonstrate that overall youth civic engagement trends indicate a decline, particularly striking with regard to civic attitudes (Heck et al., 2020; Oesterle et al., 2004; Putnam, 2000; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005). Boyer (1988) believed that one of the primary goals of higher education and community service is to “help students see that they are not only autonomous individuals but also members of a larger community to which they are accountable” (p. 218). Recognizing these facts, high schools and secondary schools have joined the service movement; encouraging and, in some cases, mandating service participation among their students. According to Lopez et al. (2006), these efforts have not resulted in a “quick fix” to the engagement issue in America; and almost two in three American youth are considered “disengaged, with nearly one in five not involved in any of the nineteen possible forms of civic participation” (p. 1). These types of service vary from fundraising, voting, or participating in altruistic activities.

Previous studies have demonstrated that acquiring a sense of civic purpose early in life is a precursor for the shaping of active civic behavior patterns as adults (Oesterle et al., 2004). To this end, almost 70% of traditional age college students and almost 50% of adult college students at 4-year colleges and universities participated in a form of community service while in college (Wasley, 2006). Oesterle et al. (2004) posited that the movement from postsecondary life to adulthood is a “crucial time during which lifelong trajectories of civic participation are formed” (p. 1129). As the understanding of the service benefits deepens, it becomes more and more clear that youth service participation

is an imperative for quality, well-rounded education.

As secondary and postsecondary schools have promoted community service, the reality is now that there are more opportunities for engaging civically in the form of service-learning, community-based research, and community outreach departments (Stanton & Wagner, 2006). High schools have also worked to intentionally include service as a component of their programming, leading to service-learning opportunities and, in some cases, mandatory programs (Niemi et al., 2000). According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2011a), a growing number of American high schools now require some form of community service. Mandatory service programs in high school and college are a source of some controversy, although there is comparatively less of an issue with the benefits of promoting volunteerism among students. Chapman and Kleiner (1999) estimated that close to one in five high schools have some form of a service requirement, an increase of almost 5% in the years preceding. More current data on this are lacking.

Helms (2013) purported to demonstrate that mandatory service programs actually acted as a catalyst to decrease future service. This study looked at Maryland, a state that instituted a mandatory service program in 1992. The researcher found that while service participation among eighth graders increased, service participation among 12th graders saw a net decrease. Helms surmised that the service mandate reduced the amount of voluntary service performed in the future. In an interview with the author, Helms related, “I’m pro-service learning. However, I think it matters how we implement it” (Sparks, 2013, pp. 6).

There is additional research that proclaims the opposite, however. Metz and

Youniss (2003) found that a service requirement made substantial increases in continued volunteerism, specific to students who were typically less inclined to volunteer in the first place. A regression analysis showed that this increase was due to the service requirement and was not due to any other factors (Metz & Youniss, 2003). Another study concluded that those who participated in service programs in high school were more likely to continue acts of altruism in college (Woeste, 2000). When paired with the results from an earlier study that found “the most important predisposing factor was whether the student volunteered during high school” (Astin & Sax, 1998, pp. 162; Williamson, 2006), it is apparent that volunteering begets future altruism.

Some aspects of mandatory service can cause issues for schools, including potential liability concerns, the possibility of injury during service, supervision of students (particularly at off-site service locations), risk management, and best practices (Hyman, 1999). The conversations that surround mandatory service, according to Anderson (1999), depend on the “intent of the policy” (p. 3). Essentially, this means that if a district or school is instituting a mandatory service program for primarily academic reasons, their program will look different than a program that is mainly intended to improve the community. Regardless, the organization of the service program, mandatory or voluntary, is important.

In 1990, the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship advocated for the inclusion of service as a graduation requirement or promoting service as part of course work, due to the perceived civic benefits (Riedel, 2002). In recent history, several large districts have chosen to institute mandatory service hours that are a graduation requirement. Among these are Atlanta, Georgia; Cincinnati,

Ohio; and Washington, D.C. (Anderson, 1999). A 2004 Cooperative Institutional Research Program noted that close to one in three first-year college students entered college coming from high schools that had some type of a service graduation requirement (Vogelgesang, 2005). In 2006, New Jersey initiated a pilot program that established a service requirement for graduation, and other individual districts started service programs.

In 1992, Maryland became the first state to require community service in all schools; and currently, all school districts in Maryland implement service-learning as a graduation requirement (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.). In the 2018-2019 school year, Maryland students accumulated over 7.4 million service-learning hours and participated in over 7,000 service-learning projects (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.). A study of Maryland's service-learning efforts, specific to high school students, found a reduction in students who participated in risky behaviors, improved academic achievement, increased civic engagement, better school climate, and improvements in school and community relations (Ayer & Lavin, 2005).

Within the considerations of mandatory service programs, personnel and fiscal aspects are important to keep in mind (Anderson, 1999). The manpower that is necessary to maintain mandatory service records, deliver and pay for sufficient professional development, ensure compliance, perform service program coordination, and other duties cannot be understated. There are also significant financial considerations, including paying for the above and other aspects of a program. As a counter point, however, many of these same costs and considerations can come with a voluntary service program. Mandatory programs “depend on careful preparations, stakeholder buy-in, academic

merit, safeguards for all students, accurate record keeping, and recognition of long term educational goals” (Loupe, 2000, pp. 32).

Despite the support in some circles for mandatory service, some research indicates that high school voluntary service correlates more directly with continued service than high school mandatory service programs (Marks & Jones, 2004; Niemi et al., 2000). There are others who believe that mandatory service programs reduce a fostering of intrinsic motivation and posit that this actually works counter to efforts that seek to develop civic-minded individuals (Sobus, 1995). In fact, Metz and Youniss (2003) suggested that mandatory service programs primarily work as a positive catalyst for those who traditionally and/or typically are not inclined to serve and work as a chilling effect for those who were more inclined to serve.

Additional research argued that the academic, testing, and other priorities of schools can work to deprioritize character education and service programs. This occurs by funneling financial resources, teacher training, and school schedules toward germane academic pursuits rather than altruistically focused efforts (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2004). Oesterle et al. (2004) argued that mandated service has the benefit of “inclusiveness, as it exposes all students to civic participation and provides participatory opportunities, especially to those who are least likely to participate because of their lack of connections to other institutionalized programs” (p. 1144).

Hart et al. (2007) used National Educational Longitudinal Study data, and the authors used a regression analysis on almost 7,000 community service participants to study high school civic involvement and continued civic participation post high school. They found that students who participated in voluntary or mandatory service were

significantly more likely to participate in a service organization in early adulthood, when compared to those who did not volunteer at any point during their senior year of high school. A separate regression test in this same study identified that students coming from mandatory and voluntary service programs in high school had a significant impact on altruistic behavior (volunteering with a civic organization). This study was inconclusive with regard to the difference of students coming from mandatory or voluntary service programs. However, the important thing to note from this study is that service participation positively impacts future service participation.

Another study that used National Educational Longitudinal Study data was completed by Marks and Jones (2004), who performed a regression analysis on over 6,000 participants to determine the community service impact on the future. This work showed that mandatory service high school programs resulted in a chilling of serving in college, and high school seniors who were forced to volunteer were significantly linked to failing to serve in college. This study went further and identified that encouraging community service in high school predicted starting to serve in college and furthermore contributed significantly to sustaining college service work. This is encouraging data for current educators, proving that the work that is done to promote service and altruistic behavior does pay dividends into the future.

It is interesting to note that some researchers do warn that mandatory service programs can support attitudes of compliance and less sustained service work rather than sustained behaviors (Marks & Jones, 2004; McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Sobus, 1995). In addition, some studies have highlighted the inherent dislike students have toward mandatory service requirements, contributing to a tendency to move away from future

service post graduation (Lopez et al., 2006; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). Some studies have found that service research has a tendency to focus only on positive results, indicating a bias that may color the results of some studies (Bonnet, 2008; Niemi et al., 2000). This is valuable information for educators to consider when structuring or revamping service programs.

Service Participation Proclivities

To fully understand the impact service participation has on youth and their future, it is valuable to discuss the characteristics that are present within a typical service participant. The predictors that will be discussed are gender, race/ethnicity, employment status, religiosity, family structure, political involvement, type of high school, and socioeconomic status.

Gender

Several studies indicate that women are active within service more than men (Astin & Sax, 1998; Metz & Youniss, 2005; Niemi et al., 2000). In an analysis of the September 2005 Current Population Survey of 60,000 homes, White (2006) described a propensity for females to volunteer within several demographic groups like age, race, family status, education level, and employment. Female high school students were found to be more civically engaged than their male peers, and this was also observed within ethnic/racial groups (Davila & Mora, 2007). This same study indicated that women were more frequent participants in service-learning. Marks and Jones (2004) revealed that women were found to be the more consistent volunteers.

Vogelgesang and Astin (2005) made an important distinction regarding gender and service participation. They found that men and women are typically active in service

in different ways. This study found that women were more inclined to be involved in education-related service, while men were more inclined to volunteer within political movements. Even though there is some nuance within gender service participation research, it is clear that women serve at higher rates than men.

Race/Ethnicity

The research for race/ethnicity and service participation shows mixed results. A Current Population Survey of 60,000 households showed that 32% of White students purported to participate in service activities, which was greater than what other racial groups reported (African Americans, 24.1%; other races, 22.9%; Dote et al., 2006). This position is supported by additional research (Eyler et al., 2001).

As a caveat to the information above, Lopez et al. (2006) found that African Americans were more likely to be politically involved, vote regularly, and be civically engaged. It is important to note that often civic engagement can be devoid from service research. Levine and Cureton (1998) revealed that White and Black students participated in service at the same rate. Dote et al. (2006) found that African American students often participated in service in different ways, when compared to other races. This study demonstrated higher levels of mentorship and food assistance for African American students compared to other racial groups. Conversely, White students participated in fundraising more than other races, and those of other races were more inclined to volunteer their own labor and participate in transportation assistance, when compared to other racial groups (Dote et al., 2006). These results may indicate that availability of service opportunities and other factors are the true determinant for racial service participation.

Raskoff and Sundeen (1999) investigated the service inclinations and behaviors of almost 300 high school students in the Los Angeles area. This regression research showed that Latino students were more inclined to volunteer in the future, when compared to all other racial groups. Davila and Mora (2007) also found that Latino/Hispanic students were more likely to show positive attitudes toward civic engagement, when compared to non-Hispanic White and African Americans, while their amount of time spent serving was comparatively less. Interestingly, the number of Hispanic students who reported working 20 hours per week or more was the highest level, compared to all other racial groups (Davila & Mora, 2007). This factor may contribute to the relatively lower numbers of actual service seen for Hispanic students, particular to this study. The terms “Hispanic” and “Latinx” will be used interchangeably in this work, depending on the language used in the affiliated research.

A study that controlled for certain variables determined that service involvement was similar between non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans, and Hispanic participants (Niemi et al., 2000). When controlling for factors such as “race/ethnicity, college aspirations, perceptions that it is ‘not important’ to help others in the community, participation in sports, working more than twenty hours per week, family income, parents’ education, being foreign-born, or being U.S.-born of foreign parents” (Davila & Mora, 2007, p. 20), there was not found to be significant disparities in service participation between non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics, and Asian students.

A further understanding of this question can be found in a study of a service-learning class at an urban Midwest high school (Swaminathan, 2005). This research documented characterizations of students of color that may negatively impact views of

altruism and participation in service. It was observed that certain service sites believed students of color were completing service as restitution or as a result of a judicial mandate, and they viewed White students as responsible young adults (Swaminathan, 2005).

Some research has demonstrated that communities of color place a high value on civic involvement and altruistic behavior (Levesque, 2018). Related to this discussion, Gilbride-Brown (2008) asserted,

one such issue is the silence that exists within this narrative about the experiences of people of color who are both underrepresented in service-learning's program and research participation rates. Race and class have received some amount of attention but are constructs typically examined through the lenses of white students and white researchers. (p. 2)

When all of this is considered, it is likely that the impact of race on service participation and attitudes toward altruism is a complex question.

Socioeconomic Status

Most of the research that surrounds socioeconomic status and its relation to service participation includes family income levels and the educational achievement level of parents. It is well documented that students from college-educated households are more likely to participate in service activities than those without a college education (Davila & Mora, 2007; Lopez et al., 2006; Metz & Youniss, 2005). Individual education level does correspond to service rates, and one study found that nearly 50% of college graduates who were 25 years old or older participated in altruistic activities, compared to 10% of individuals in the same age range without a high school diploma (White, 2006).

Family income level is a significant predictor of service participation. This was studied by Vogelgesang (2005), who found that families with an income over \$150,000 were more likely to participate in service activities than those at lower income levels. This study also related that some higher income level families likely send their children to private or parochial schools that have service mandates. Relatedly, it was noted that “were it not for time and financial pressures, students might have higher levels of civic engagement” (Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007, p. 17).

It is important to consider the amount of sustained service activity related to socioeconomic status; and some research has demonstrated that comparatively, more wealthy participants have a greater likelihood of serving (over 60%) in high school than those who are less wealthy (less than 30%; Planty et al., 2006). In the same study, progressing from high school showed a significant drop in service participation for the wealthy cohort (-19.4%) compared to a more marginal decline for the less wealthy (-3.9%). The possibility that some of the more affluent students attended schools that had service requirements to bolster a college admissions resume was noted by the authors. Friedland and Morimoto (2013) also supported this idea, noting that family wealth, service inclination, and resume padding were all related. This all correlates to the college admissions process and more affluent families who place particular emphasis on bolstering student resumes prior to applying to college.

Despite the resume padding of affluent families, students from higher income backgrounds are more likely to serve than their lower socioeconomic peers. Marks and Jones (2004) lumped family income, parent/guardian education level, and family environment together to show that higher socioeconomic status correlated directly to

sustained service participation in college. Conversely, as noted later, the same study indicated that higher levels of student loans related to lower levels of service participation. This suggests that the level of financial need for any individual may correspond to their ability or willingness to serve.

Some studies have shown that there are not significant differences between tiers of socioeconomic status with relation to service participation. Oesterle et al. (2004) revealed no difference between participation rates of lower and higher socioeconomic status when considering family wealth levels and parent education. When considering higher socioeconomic status (defined by parent education and income levels), this corresponded to higher service participation rates. However when education level and overall affluence were separated, only parent education levels proved to be a strong predictor (Marks & Kuss, 2001).

Employment Status

Employment status is the next category that relates to service participation proclivities. Several studies show that an individual's ability to work does correspond to the same individual's propensity to give back to the community (Dote et al., 2006; Oesterle et al., 2004). In a study from 2004 to 2005, it was observed that 40% of those who worked part time participated in some form of volunteer work and those who worked (part time and full time) were more likely to volunteer than the unemployed (White, 2006). In addition, a positive relationship was demonstrated between part-time work (defined as 1 to 10 hours per week) and service involvement in college students (Youniss et al., 1999).

Similar findings were also reflected in another study that found part-time or

minimal employment (working 1 to 10 hours per week) demonstrated a 46.4% volunteer rate, compared to those who worked moderately (working 11 to 15 hours per week) who demonstrated a 35% volunteer rate, and finally compared to those who did not work and volunteered at a rate of 23% (Dote et al., 2006). Interestingly, this study also found that individuals who worked over 30 hours per week volunteered at the same rate as those who were unemployed. Dote et al. (2006) also demonstrated evidence that the impact of raising tuition costs and the resulting student loan debt may serve as a catalyst for increasing the amount of work necessary and a corresponding reduction in the amount of volunteering. This is bolstered by Marks and Jones (2004), who found that “having large student loans also increased the likelihood of dropping service for some students” (p. 327). A further review of those who are employed full time showed that their tendency to volunteer was reduced by 4% for each month the individual remains fully employed (Oesterle et al., 2004).

Religiosity

Students who attend religious or parochial schools are more inclined to participate in volunteerism, when compared to students from non-religious and public schools (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). A positive correlation with attending a religious school and inclination to participate in volunteer service was established by Niemi et al. (2000). Religious affiliation has demonstrated a propensity to serve in multiple studies (Astin & Sax, 1998; Lopez et al., 2006; Metz & Youniss, 2005) for high school and college students. Religiosity was identified as a catalyst for beginning and sustaining service work (Marks & Jones, 2004). “Students who participate in religious activities are more likely to engage in volunteer activities generally, and in service-learning specifically”

(Vogelgesang, 2005, p. 56). Lopez et al. (2006) also found that church attendance positively correlates to volunteering in college.

Specific religions offer additional perspective on the question of religiosity and altruism. Alumni from Catholic colleges reported volunteer rates of 62.7%, and other religious institutions reported a 77% volunteer rate (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005). Utah ranks as the top state regarding college student volunteer rates (62.9%; Dote et al., 2006). This relates to research that demonstrated that Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Hindu, Catholic, Islamic, and Buddhist students demonstrate higher levels of volunteerism than students of other religions (Vogelgesang, 2005). The Youniss et al. (1999) hierarchical regression analysis demonstrated that students at Catholic high schools predicted service involvement, when controlling for characteristics like gender, student life involvement, employment status, and socioeconomic status.

Family Environment/Early Socialization

Family priorities can have a great deal of influence on a young person's intentions or inclinations to serve. Parents who volunteer or who emphasize volunteerism predict youth altruism, as shown in multiple studies (McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Metz & Youniss, 2005; Niemi et al., 2000). Metz and Youniss (2005) revealed that students were significantly more inclined to serve when they had parents who participated in community service. Additionally, "growing up within a socially active and involved family also predicted participation in community service in college" (Marks & Jones, 2004, p. 312). Also, "students who were socialized into community at an early age...continued to volunteer in the transition between high school and college" (Marks & Jones, 2004, p. 329). Family involvement can have a significant positive impact on future

altruism.

Additional Predictors of Service Participation

Marks and Jones (2004) found that students who believed in the importance of making a lot of money were those most likely not to report any service participation, and continuing volunteers deprioritized making a lot of money. Advanced degrees (master's, professional degree, or PhD) also correlated with those who were inclined to continue service work.

Service-Learning Overview

As defined previously, service-learning is a teaching pedagogy that integrates instruction, learning, and service. According to the National Youth Leadership Council (n.d.), "Service-learning is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic and civic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs" (p. 1). Service-learning has shown enhancements in student motivation, empathy, civic knowledge and skill, prosocial development, overall competence, and appreciation of diversity (Deeley, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013; Sass & Coll, 2015; Zaff & Lerner, 2010). Service-learning has been recognized as a premier and high-quality strategy to boost citizenship skills, when compared to standard classroom learning (Birdwell et al., 2013).

In addition, Scales et al. (2006) demonstrated that service-learning and service participation reduces the achievement gap between high and low socioeconomic students. One study summarized the benefits of service-learning programs for high school students as increasing civic knowledge/skills/attitudes, promoting social behaviors, and increasing social capital (Billig et al., 2005). Jones and Abes (2004) concluded that an "enduring

influence of service-learning was the development of a more integrated identity, as indicated by complexity in thinking about self and relationships” (p. 1). Jones and Abes also found that service-learning promotes “self-reflection, personal awareness, and scrutiny of certain aspects of identity previously taken for granted” (p. 149).

Philosophical Underpinnings

Altruism and service have been seen since early times, and a history of service is a clear thematic thread in the United States since inception. The early roots of volunteerism can be traced back to Seneca’s work *On Benefits*, who wrote about how humans can give and receive benefits (Alexander, 1950). This missive, written around 56 CE, discussed the virtue of “giving back” and how it benefits the giver and the receiver. Making Seneca’s philosophy a goal and accomplishing it with education make for a formidable and complex teaching pedagogy.

Dewey’s (1916, 1938) ideas about education were a main precursor to the service-learning movement. Dewey laid out a teaching pedagogy that integrated the concept of democracy and citizenship as a key function of academic intent. Dewey’s (1916) work challenged the concepts that a teacher needed to be the center of the learning; instead, he argued that student experiences were important to demonstrate valuable results. Dewey (1938) related, “the fundamental unity of the new philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education” (p. 20). To complete his vision of service-learning, Dewey (1938) incorporated the important aspect of student reflection.

Dewey’s model was expounded upon and broken up into five intentional aspects by Miettinen (2000). These steps include the actions and intended results for each stage.

Initially, students/teachers will choose an issue that is a problem. Second, this issue is defined. Third, the students/teachers identify a hypothesis that is related to a solution to the problem. Fourth, the class will apply reasoning. Finally, the hypothesis is tested, with the express intent to identify a solution to the issue (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015; Miettinen, 2000). This process defines early service-learning structure.

The term service-learning was not a part of the educational lexicon until the 1960s, even though some teachers and educators were already linking service with their curriculum. In 1967, William Ramsey and Robert Sigmon used service-learning related to the Manpower Development Internship Program, and they proclaimed the positive nature of adding benefit to the community to traditional education efforts (Berman, 2006; Stanton et al., 1999). A generally accepted definition of service-learning heretofore is “active participation, thoughtfully organized experiences, focus on community needs and school/community coordination, academic curriculum integration, structured time for reflection, opportunities for application of skills and knowledge extended learning opportunities, and development of a sense of caring for others” (Bhaerman et al., 1998, p. 4).

Service-learning can be viewed as one method of studying civics. In the early 20th century, civics education was mainly seen as a way to assimilate immigrant populations into American culture. Widespread dissatisfaction with the success of this program led to the elimination of civics education, generally, in the 1960s (Quigley, 1999).

Approximately 20 years later, civic education reemerged as a trend, to allow for renewed focus on building up communities, action research, and democracy in action (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011). Educators saw this as a teaching pedagogy that allowed them to

instruct in an effective and meaningful way. This time of service-learning was typified by “technical aspects of a discipline, almost to the exclusion of its civic dimensions” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011, p. 30).

Service-learning and volunteerism gained traction through the early 1990s as a result of funding and leadership initiatives (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015). When Campus Compact was founded in 1985, altruism and service-learning were a main focus of the initiative; and by 2009, approximately one in four campuses was a participant in the program (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010). Campus Compact is an important catalyst for service-learning, in that it promoted service-learning on an institutional level rather than classroom to classroom (Stanton et al., 1999). As a further push to promote service-learning efforts, President Bill Clinton established the Corporation for National and Community Service in 1993 to allow for a systematic effort to promote service. As a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service portfolio, service-learning was promoted and funded through the Learn and Serve America program (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.b).

Soon after, Putnam (2000) expounded on the ideas of the Progressive Era thinker Hanifan, who promoted the concept of *social capital* to advocate for collective actions as a benefit to communities, compared to individual action. Putnam posited that the comparative loss of social capital in America contributed to a growing lack of societal connection in American; and he cited a growing number of televisions and decline of the traditional family structure, among other factors. Based on this research Putnam created a program at Harvard University named Better Together, an initiative aimed at increasing social capital by promoting volunteerism, reducing civic apathy, and increasing civic

knowledge and involvement (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015).

Service-Learning Models

Many approaches to service-learning have been seen since its inception, and these various methods lead to a variety of ways service-learning presents in the classroom.

Davidson et al. (2010) related that “while there is little doubt that ‘service-learning’ is becoming more popular, the scientific basis for advocating the impact of such models is less robust” (p. 443). Six service-learning models most typically seen in high school are described by Bohat and Godorich (2007): placement, project, product, presentation, presentation plus, and event models. The placement model includes a visit (often regular visits) to a community service location to perform altruistic activities. The project model involves students in research surrounding a nonprofit or service entity. The product model allows students to create something that is helpful to a nonprofit or service entity. In the presentation model, students gather knowledge and/or experience about a topic to create a presentation that is used to educate others. Building on this model, the presentation plus technique includes delivering this education piece to a larger gathering of individuals, such as a conference. Finally, the event model describes student action through the creation or organization of a service-oriented event (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015).

Heffernan (2001) described these models from the college perspective, and these models show similarities to those of Bohat and Goodrich (2007). Heffernan listed the following models: the directed study model, community-based action research model, service internship model, capstone course model, problem-based model, and discipline-based model.

Additional organizational structures of service-learning models have been described. Swanson (2000) described several models that were based on high school service-learning experiences in Chicago and Philadelphia, all of which rely on a partnership between the school and a nonprofit or service organization. As described in this study, the single course model outlines a service-learning experience that relies on a class that intentionally incorporates service within the curriculum. The single discipline model includes teachers from a particular academic discipline who incorporate service-learning accordingly. The multi-discipline model includes coordination between multiple classes, intentionally working together to create a service outcome. The elective model occurs when a student voluntarily offers to dedicate their academic time to a service initiative. A service-learning club model is the next option, where students meet as part of student life and dedicate their volunteer time after normal school hours. The individual project model describes an independent study where a student participates in service-learning in conjunction with a staff member.

The Florida Department of Education (2009) organized service-learning models differently. They described four types of service-learning: (a) direct service-learning, in which students volunteer personally with individuals; (b) indirect service-learning, in which students typically work to volunteer with a service organization rather than serving directly with individuals, (c) advocacy service-learning, in which students promote education or community action on civic issues, and (d) research service-learning, in which students conduct surveys or test hypotheses to contribute to the public good.

Miettinen (2000) described the PARE (preparation, action, reflection, evaluation) model that has been developed and popularized by the University of Maryland. This

model intentionally builds on the original service-learning ideas from Dewey. During the initial step, students plan their goals for the activity and do any required research. Second, students are active participants in the activity or project; and this may be a single action or sustained efforts. Student actions may be direct or indirect. Third, students record their perception of the activity and explore the potential impacts of their work. Finally, students examine the entire scope of the activity and consider the success of the exercise.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Service-Learning

The effectiveness of service-learning and community service within the education setting have been studied, and the benefits are well-documented. According to Heck et al. (2020),

Service—beginning at an early stage and continuing throughout one’s lifetime—develops skills and leadership among those who participate; maximizes Federal investments in pursuit of local, State, and national solutions; helps develop the Nation’s workforce; and brings people together to meet the critical needs of the Nation. Perhaps most importantly, enhancing the country’s culture of service holds the promise of invigorating civic life in America and strengthening the foundations of the Republic. (p. 2)

These benefits cannot be taken for granted, however. The aspects of the service-learning program can significantly contribute to the potential effectiveness, and researchers have identified various aspects that hold sway over program efficacy (Conway et al., 2009). Factors that should be considered, with regard to program effectiveness, are (a) placement strategies, (b) student discussion, (c) reflection options, (d) student voice, (e)

real-world application, (f) partnerships, (g) feedback from partners, (h) duration and intensity, (i) instructor training, (j) the overall goals of the action, (k) evaluation, and (l) interplay between academic and skill development (Boldemann-Tatkin, 2015).

Service-learning is specifically designed to counter the isolation of learning from experience and the artificial division of subject matter into disconnected disciplines that lead to what cognitive scientists call the ‘inert knowledge’ problem, or the tendency to acquire knowledge which cannot be accessed and applied in new situations. (Eyler, 2002, pp. 517-518)

Eyler and Giles (1999) found that high-quality service-learning programs had the following characteristics: (a) staff (instructors and nonprofit staff) provided helpful feedback to students, (b) the service experience had a sustained duration, (c) students were trusted with significant/meaningful tasks that offered varying perspectives, and (d) students worked directly with community partners. Nandan (2010) stated that providing new collaborative partnerships between groups increased the chances that the service-learning would demonstrate success. In addition, “the core experience of service is not the service itself but the sustained dialogue across boundaries of perceived difference that happens during service and in reflection along the way” (Keen & Hall, 2009, p. 77).

Dymond et al. (2007, 2008) evaluated 62 articles to identify the most common and effective characteristics of quality service-learning programs. The most common components of successful service-learning programs, as identified by this research, were (a) student participation, (b) action, and (c) reflection. Celebration and the evaluation of students were the least cited aspects of successful programs. This work also demonstrated that engagement and feelings of satisfaction were positively impacted by a strong link

between service and curriculum (Dymond et al., 2008). Reflection is a common theme seen in quality service-learning initiatives, and “attempts to measure quality of service-learning do suggest that quality matters and that the quality that matters most is the amount and type of reflection” (Eyler, 2002, p. 519).

A later study by Dymond et al. (2013) polled service-learning staff to gain further insight on successful service-learning programs. This study supported the earlier findings of Dymond et al. (2007, 2008) and found that the main program characteristics of successful service-learning programs were (a) instructor participation, (b) real-world application, and (c) student participation. Similar to the earlier studies, celebration and evaluation of students were again the least impactful for successful programs (Dymond et al., 2013). Billig (2000) identified the following characteristics which were critical pieces for sustained, quality service-learning: (a) substantial student responsibility, (b) student voice, (c) student choice, (d) a high degree of direct service, and (e) substantial emphasis on reflection.

Harris et al. (2010) found that service-learning programs were most successful when students had a key role in shaping their service-learning experience, were active participants, and had significant responsibilities in the entire process. Students working together in small (six to eight) groups helped to ensure a positive experience, when compared to individual contributors. A Missouri State University study looked at the effectiveness of service-learning as a teaching pedagogy by surveying university students from various majors (Levesque-Bristol et al., 2010). This study found that student autonomy, significant student involvement, and reflection are all integral to quality service experiences. Direct service, interacting directly with community service

organizations or directly with the individuals receiving assistance, was also a key indicator of successful service-learning experiences.

Lu and Lambright (2010) noted that facilitating many points of engagement within the service-learning opportunities was a recommended aspect of quality programs. In addition, participants who were involved in multiple actions expressed that they developed more skills than students who only worked on a single action. Students also reported that those who participated in groups that functioned more cohesively had a better overall service-learning experience.

Celio et al. (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 62 studies that involved 11,837 students to determine the effectiveness of service-learning programs and benefits of service-learning. This study identified the following benefits of quality service-learning programs: (a) increase in attitudes toward self, (b) increased social skill development, (c) enhanced civic skills, (d) academic achievement, and (e) improved attitudes toward academic learning. Celio et al. found that these benefits were more likely to be experienced when the following service-learning aspects were present: (a) community participation, (b) student voice, (c) curricular linkage, and (d) reflection.

Another documented aspect of successful service-learning programs is intentionally linking the learning experience to the students who are involved. This has been studied by Zaff and Lerner (2010), who found that student voice in the planning, implementation, and reflection of service-learning directly corresponds to the perceived success of the experience. Zaff and Lerner identified that some successful service-learning experiences may be more applicable to some student populations than others, and they found this particularly evident with respect to opportunities tailored for low and

high socioeconomic and/or low and high academically achieving students. Certain activities directly appealed to certain segments of student populations and consequently experienced more success. To back up these results, Morgan and Streb (2001) related, “It is imperative that service-learning projects involve activities where the students are given a real level of control over the project. If the students do not have a voice in the activities, they apparently do not connect with them” (p. 166).

Some studies have focused efforts on service-learning in the earlier years of education. Ohn and Wade (2009) studied the results from a CiviConnection program that involved elementary and middle school students in service-learning. Evaluating their results using the Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform (1993) framework, Ohn and Wade concluded,

If community service-learning is well planned to incorporate content knowledge and certain modes of disciplinary investigation in social problem-solving processes, not only can we get students excited about learning, but we can also help them obtain and apply academic skills and knowledge. (p. 207)

There is a growing amount of research on the benefits of service-learning with regard to citizenship and civic skill development. Conway et al. (2009) evaluated successful service-learning programs and found that service-learning spurred participatory citizenship and academic, personal, and social outcomes. One of the ultimate civic duties is exercising the right to vote. Hart et al. (2007) found that school-based service was a strong predictor of adult voting and volunteering.

Further Benefits of Service-Learning

While many arguments show a clear picture of the benefits of service, community

service, volunteerism, and service-learning, there is a significant body of research that demonstrates the unique benefits specific to service-learning. Ramaley (1997) indicated that service-learning would bring benefits that include positive trends in citizenship, development of leadership qualities, academic benefits, solutions to societal challenges, and involving youth in applicable problem-solving. Service-learning programming has demonstrated positive impacts on student motivation, expressions of empathy, civic skill development, personal development, development of communication skills, individual willingness to embrace inclusivity, and problem-solving (Deeley, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013; Levesque-Bristol et al., 2010; Sass & Coll, 2015; Zaff & Lerner, 2010). Service-learning has demonstrated comparative advantages for civic education, when compared to traditional classroom education (Birdwell et al., 2013).

Davila and Mora (2007) demonstrated that male high school students who participated in service-learning in high school were almost 33% more likely to graduate on time from college when compared to those who did not have the service-learning background. In summarizing the Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning, “service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both” (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, p. 1). Hellman et al. (2006) identified that connecting students with community needs would result in benefits to the student and the community. Taking this concept further, “it seemed clear that when someone helped students make sense of why they were doing what they were doing, it was more meaningful to them and the commitments deepened” (Jones & Hill, 2003, p. 535).

Motivational Theory

This study is grounded in motivational theory that outlines the levers that

influence students toward altruism. Determining a relevant motivation theory that accounts for various cultural factors is an imperative. This dissertation used one of the primary motivational theories, expectancy theory, and reviewed and evaluated this theory with regard to individual motivations toward service participation.

The 1960s saw Victor Vroom (1964) working to determine a theory that addressed the gap between research completed by industrial psychologists and practical models of motivation that could be used by managers. Vroom was a U.S. psychologist and behavioral scientist. He described his motivation theory (MF), known as “expectancy theory of motivation,” as a product of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. This theory has been roundly discussed and significantly debated by many scholars and remains one of the most widely tested motivational theories (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). This section reviews the attributes of Vroom’s theory and applies it to the service motivations of students.

Lloyd and Mertens (2018) stated, “expectancy theory was postulated during the golden age of motivation theories during the 1960’s” (p. 25). Expectancy theory differs from other main motivational theories because of the unique focus on cognitive antecedents that impact personal motivations (Lunenburg, 2011). This theory communicates the belief that individuals always seek to gain certain requirements and attempt to achieve certain goals (Vroom, 1964). An individual seeks to meet a goal; and until this is realized, the expectancy motivation works as a lever on the personal actions and behavior. According to Zhang et al. (2018), “the power of motivation depends on the product of target value (valence) and expected probability (expectancy)” (p. 4). Expectancy theory describes motivation as a product of three constructs: (a) effort-

performance expectancy, which represents a person's thoughts regarding their efforts achieving the desired impact on a goal (*expectancy* or E); (b) performance-outcome expectancy, which describes a person's intentions that are related to the expected rewards that will result from the corresponding individual effort toward the aforementioned goal (*instrumentality* or I); and (c) the overall desirability of the rewards that are expected (*valence* or V; Vroom, 1964). Combining these results in the following equation: $MF = E \times I \times V$.

While each of these aspects can ultimately result in individual motivation, the nexus of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy results in a cumulative impact that is greater than the sum of the parts. Valence describes the "affective orientations toward particular outcomes," and the outcomes are positively valent for an individual who desires an anticipated outcome. A non-desired outcome would be described as negatively valent (Vroom, 1964). "Valence is a function of an individual's needs, goals, values, and sources of motivation" (Estes & Polnick, 2012, p. 3). Instrumentality is the personal belief that first-level goals are the antecedent to second-level goals (Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964). When someone believes that any amount of effort will achieve desired goals, instrumentality will be low (Pinder, 1984). Expectancy is "a momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome" (Vroom, 1964, p. 17). Influences on expectancy include an individual's previous experiences and biases, self-reliance, and the perceived difficulty and effort required to meet the goal (Porter & Lawler, 1968). Estes and Polnick (2012) said,

Vroom suggests that expectancies, instrumentalities, and valences interact psychologically within an individual's beliefs to create a motivational force which

in turn influences behavior. Further, Vroom maintains that when deciding among behavioral options, individuals select the option with the greatest motivational forces. (p. 3)

Several theorists have contributed to Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, including Peak (1955) and Porter and Lawler (1968). Vroom utilized Peak's concept of "instrumentality," adding the construct of expectancy. Instrumentality theory describes the perspective of an individual regarding the relationship between the expected byproducts of actions necessary to achieve a goal and the achievement of the outcome. Porter and Lawler added to Vroom's theory by hypothesizing that performance is a product of the combination of instrumentality, valence, expectancy, ability, and role perceptions. Adding role perceptions is an identifier between the two theories (Heneman & Schwab, 1972). Porter and Lawler defined role perception as the actions that are believed to be necessary to be successful in performing a job.

Reinhardt and Wahba (1975) found that expectancy theory (which is also known as the Theory of Motivation or the Rational Intention Theory) is a valuable perspective because it demonstrates a rational thought process that influences an individual's motivation on the "motivation-decision-action" process. Building on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2017) posited that "people act more from anticipation than from deprivation, as put forward by the traditional theory that individuals have a natural tendency to meet their basic needs" (p. 1099).

Additionally, Lawler and Suttle (1973) argued that the motivation of the individual is based on the anticipation of the desired achievement of the intended goal. The center of the theory is the evolution of the thought processes for each individual as

they approach the ultimate and final choice. Hirschi and Fischer (2013) determined that this final choice is not the only factor when making decisions. Expectancy theory marries the cognitive processes an individual uses to reach a decision and explains the importance of the intended or foreseen outcome on the behaviors leading up to their ultimate choice.

Vroom (1964) identified motivation as the combination of a person's expectations that their efforts will result in a desired outcome, achieving a certain product, and the overall desirability of the intended outcome. Building on this model, Graen (1969) added to the expectancy theory by delineating two stages of results. The first stage is described as "work role," which is described as the behaviors that are expected to be needed to perform necessary functions in pursuit of the intended outcome. The second stage is described as "work role outcome," defined by the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and punishments that result in the actions performed by the individual in Stage 1. Ultimately, Vroom "attempts to predict effort and, consequently, productivity as it relates to individual motivation" (Estes & Polnick, 2012, p. 3).

George Washington stated,

It may be laid down as a primary position and the basis of our system, that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defence of it.
(Washington, 1783, p. 1)

This statement still rings true today; however, not all citizens feel the call to give back and serve. The March 2020 Report to Congress of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service indicated that some 24 million American individuals participate in "some form of military, national, or public service to meet critical national

needs” (Heck et al., 2020, p. 12); however, this equates only to 7% of the population, considering that America has 329 million individual citizens. *Giving USA* (2016) reported that 62.8 million U.S. adults, which equates to 25% of the population, volunteered at nonprofit organizations in 2014. Regardless of the specific statistic, there remains a significant amount of potential U.S. service growth. Understanding the individual motivations to serve is an important step to promoting an involved populace and increasing the amount of service that is performed.

Motivations to Serve

Considering that volunteering inherently involves spending dedicated personal time away from selfish pursuits and typically does not result in compensation, why do individuals choose to participate in service? This question has interested researchers who have attempted to determine the rationale for service participation. Research has found selfish and selfless reasons for service motivation (Bacter & Marc, 2016; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Horton-Smith (1981) identified that selfless, or altruistic, motivations are typically founded in beliefs of the value of the common good. Additionally, selfish, or egotistic, motivations are driven by the personal gains realized from volunteering. Hustinx et al. (2010) found that a broad number of individual reasons motivated service participation, essentially concluding that motivation cannot be distilled down to a single reason. A number of studies do indicate that general altruistic characteristics are a main motivator for service participants (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Hustinx et al., 2010).

Service motivation is an important and problematic consideration for policy makers, teachers, administrators, and educators. Understanding the underlying

motivations will help these groups to maximize the service involvement of the students within their respective spheres of influence. Regarding civic involvement, Verba et al. (1995) said,

Our conception of the participatory process rests upon two main factors: the motivation and the capacity to take part in political life. A citizen must want to be active. In America, participation is voluntary activity and, thus, involves choice. However, the choice to take part in a particular way is a constrained one. Various forms of participation impose their own requirements--the time to volunteer in a campaign, the money to cover a check to a political cause, the verbal skills to compose a convincing letter. Thus, those who wish to take part also need the resources that provide the where-withal to participate. (p. 3)

Clary et al. (1998) provided one of the seminal works on motivational theories for service participation, which “applied a functional approach to volunteering” (Washington, 2018, p. 13). Katz (1960) identified two aspects of this approach: (a) human actions are governed by varied needs and goals; and (b) similar behaviors may have multiple rationales for the same behavior. Clary et al. (1998) found that similar service engagement activities occurred for varied reasons, and these reasons were broken down into six categories: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. These six categories are summarized in Table 1 (Washington, 2018).

Table 1*Functions Served by Altruism*

Function	Volunteering allows the individual to...
Values	Express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others.
Understanding	Increase knowledge and perspective. The chance to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed.
Social	Be with friends and family while volunteering, and to create new relationships.
Career	Prepare for a career (e.g., resume building) and build professional skills (e.g., communication and task management skills).
Protective	Protect oneself from negative feelings (e.g., reduce guilt from being more fortunate than others) and address personal problems (e.g., volunteer to heal from current or past issues).
Enhancement	Personal growth and development (e.g., increased self-esteem or self-worth).

To further understand and measure these functions, Clary et al. (1998) created the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI). Their study deemed the VFI a reliable and valid tool for measuring these functions. Before the advent of the VFI, most studies on service motivation relied on unproven measures (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). The VFI asks individuals to respond to 30 questions, each of which corresponds to a function of volunteering. Responses are given on a Likert scale. Since the introduction of the VFI in 1998, this instrument has been used in a variety of applications to determine volunteer motivations (Aguirre & Bolton, 2013; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014). Since its

introduction, the Clary et al. (1998) VFI model has become a foundational service motivation theory.

Debate remains regarding the types of motivations that correspond to volunteerism; however, there is general agreement that motivations typically are either altruistic or non-altruistic and that altruism is the most important motivator (Aguirre & Bolton, 2013; Horton-Smith, 1981; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014). Volunteer motivations were outlined as including the following reasons: egotism, values, social, and career (Clary et al., 1998). Horton-Smith (1981) worked to identify altruistic and egotistic motivations for service participation. Altruistic motivations typically offer intangible benefits, contributing to a feeling of helping others; and egotistic motivations generally offer tangible rewards like project management skill development or career-enhancement (Horton-Smith, 1981). Fitch (1987) determined that social influences can also play into service motivation.

Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) argued that the end goal of volunteerism is to perform a positive act; therefore, they posited that motivations should be represented on a unidimensional scale. This study lists 28 frequently observed variables that contribute to service motivation, including opportunity to do something worthwhile, loneliness, opportunity for relationships, and continuing a family tradition. They related, “volunteers act not from a single motive or a category of motives but from a combination of motives...they not only give but they get back some type of reward or satisfaction” (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p. 281). The authors also mentioned the theory of commitment to welfare, which theorizes that there is “no absolute altruism” (p. 281).

Esmond and Dunlop (2004) identified 10 separate motivators for service

participation, building off the Clary et al. (1998) model. In addition to the functions that were outlined in the Clary et al. (1998) model, Esmond and Dunlop identified four additional functions:

- (a) **Reciprocity** whereby the individual volunteers in the belief that ‘what goes around comes around.’ In the process of helping others and ‘doing good’ their volunteering work will also bring about good things for the volunteer themselves.
- (b) **Recognition** whereby the individual is motivated to volunteer by being recognised for their skills and contribution.
- (c) **Self-Esteem** whereby the individual volunteers to increase their own feelings of selfworth and self-esteem.
- (d) **Social** whereby the individual volunteers and seeks to conform to normative influences of significant others (e.g. friends or family). (Clary et al., 1992, pp. 51-52)

This framework was used in a 5-stage study that surveyed participants on their motivations to perform service and used a McEwin and Jacobsen-D’Arcy (2002) Volunteer Motivation Inventory (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). Esmond and Dunlop also noted the presence of government, religious, and societal/cultural factors in service motivation; and they discussed the interconnectedness of multiple motivation factors and the general complexity with the overall question.

Butt et al. (2017) reviewed the work of Clary et al. (1998) and built on the original concepts of the VFI. Butt et al. identified four categories for service motivation, commonly known as the ABCE model: affiliation (social) [A], beliefs (values) [B], career development [C], and egotistic [E]. This simplified model consolidates career and understanding and broadens the belief category.

Particular to undergraduate service participants, the research concurs with findings for general volunteers, i.e., altruism is the most important motivating factor but many motivating factors exist for undergraduate volunteers (Cnaan et al., 2010; Gage & Thapa, 2012). However, some research does argue that egotistic and non-altruistic motivators are the most prevalent of all (Fitch, 1987; Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010).

Altruism is the most commonly-referenced service participation motivation, when reviewing the relevant literature. As previously stated, altruism is a socially sanctioned act with positive consequences for another person (Schwartz, 1977). This aligns with the views of Dewey, Seneca, Franklin, and others; and altruism promotes community growth. McCabe et al. (2007) found that altruistic motivations in the form of values and understanding were the most influential factors for volunteers and non-volunteers. Clary et al. (1998) held that humanitarian rationale and values were main motivators for student service participants. Ballard et al. (2015) used political and non-political volunteer activities to divide altruistic motivating behaviors into multiple categories, and they noticed differences in motivation between racial and ethnic subgroups. Butt et al. (2017) focused on religious-based altruism, as religion can play a key role in motivating the religious contingent.

Sandra Day O'Connor said, "The only reason we have public school education in America is because in the early days of the country, our leaders thought we had to teach our young generation about citizenship...that obligation never ends" (Heck et al., 2020, p. 2). This concept is the next motivating factor that is important to comprehend, and volunteerism and service-learning allow our education system to accomplish this knowledge acquisition while giving experience with civic actions. The knowledge and

perspective gained through service was described as “understanding” by Clary et al. (1998). Gage and Thapa (2012) found understanding and values to be one of the most important motivators for undergraduate students. This study also identified the ability of volunteerism to positively shape student consciousness, helping to foster situations that encouraged open-mindedness and the development of a nature of inclusiveness.

Egotism, as demonstrated by several studies, is a main motivator for service participation. This motivation, also viewed primarily as a selfish pursuit, was identified by Holdsworth and Quinn (2010). Specific to the selfish “ego,” Clary et al. (1998) identified two categories: protective and enhancement. Butt et al. (2017) described the egotistic motivation as “both are related to the ego, with one focusing on protecting the ego and the other on enhancing it” (p. 598).

Social motivations and career motivations were both demonstrated as selfish motivations for service participation by Holdsworth and Quinn (2010). Interestingly, the type of volunteer activity was shown to typically determine a student’s proclivity to service, not a selfless concern for others; and a student’s interest or major usually impacted a student’s motivation to volunteer (Garver et al., 2009). The broad definition of egotistic motivation (being motivated by the benefits gained from involvement) allows for an interpretation that all non-altruistic motivations are egotistic (Washington, 2018). In addition, several studies have demonstrated that egotistic motivations are the main consideration for those considering volunteerism (Fitch, 1987; Gage & Thapa, 2012). Gage and Thapa (2012) found that many students initiated their volunteerism for non-egoistic reasons; however, they continued serving for selfish reasons.

Research also demonstrates that social affiliation or social network motivations

are an important factor for service participation (Butt et al., 2017; Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012; Gage & Thapa, 2012). In at least one study, peer influence was held to be a more important motivator to serve than altruistic reasons; and Gage and Thapa (2012) said,

Items represented by the values and understanding function (altruistic in nature) are not as important to the individual as reported. Rather, they are perceived as being important to those around the individual and by volunteering, the individual is able to improve the way others perceive them. (p. 424)

This view is bolstered by Francis (2011), who argued that students are more likely to serve if they observe a family member or friend in a volunteering capacity. Francis also said that peer influence has recently evolved to become a more important motivator for students. Recommendations from this study include promoting service as an inherently “normal” activity and clearly communicating the positive benefits of service. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2012) found that students would be more likely to volunteer if they had existing social connections in the form of religious organization membership, family influence, and/or school influence.

The influence of career and career aspirations is also the focus of research on service motivations. Because service gives the participant exposure to real-world and hands-on experiences, it can be perceived as skill development for the workforce (Bacter & Marc, 2016). Compared to their non-volunteering peers, students who volunteer are shown to possess higher levels of leadership, social skills, critical thinking, and management skills (Astin & Sax, 1998). All of these traits are clearly desirable from an employer perspective. Career motivation is one of the four main influences explored by

Butt et al. (2017).

Although career motivation can promote service participation, Cnaan et al. (2010) warned that those primarily motivated by career reasons are less likely to volunteer consistently and are less likely to volunteer to the extent of those who are motivated by non-career factors. Cnaan et al. also found that while career aspirations and skill development are all motivators for service, typically this motivation shifts as the volunteer continues to serve. McCabe et al. (2007) surveyed volunteers and non-volunteers and identified that non-volunteers held that career motivations were more important than those who were active service participants.

While this chapter outlines several of the motivations that influence service participants, it is important to note that some who are active in volunteerism do so because of mandatory service programs. The research is mixed on the benefits of mandating service, with no clear determination on the overall value of forcing volunteerism (Metz & Youniss, 2003; Oesterle et al., 2004).

Summary

To seek to understand the nature of service, volunteerism, and service-learning, there are several key components that are necessary for this discussion. It is important to explore the history of service in America and to understand the foundational principles that undergird service expectations and the American culture of service. The history of service reveals significant and influential forces that have shaped policy, motivations, and culture. Despite support and encouragement from titans like Benjamin Franklin, President George Washington, President John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., for some, service remains an elusive goal.

As discussed in this chapter, there are many significant benefits of service participation. First, benefits are realized by the individual who serves. These can include skill development, civic development and engagement, increasing problem-solving skills, and motivation to continue serving. Second, the community receives the benefit from service in action. In fact, the Independent Sector (2019) estimated that the value of volunteer time is \$25.43 per hour. Based on this value, “Americans are contributing approximately \$203.4 billion to our nation through nonprofit organizations of all types” (Independent Sector, 2019, p. 1). Additionally, service can also deepen the experiences that come from a well-rounded education, often in the form of service-learning. Effectiveness of service-learning programs and methods were discussed.

It is also important to understand the characteristics of service participants, so policy makers, educators, and leaders can leverage these trends to encourage altruistic behaviors. This chapter shares that volunteers are often women, religious-affiliated, from a college-educated background, middle or upper class related to income levels, and those who have a family that demonstrates a support of service activities. It should be said, however, that much of the research on service participation proclivities is mixed, complex, and inconclusive.

Finally, this chapter outlines the various motivations for service participation. Researchers have differed in their organization of these motivations; however, reasons related to career development, peer and familial influences, egotism, altruism, and a pursuit of understanding are all discussed. The majority of research shows that altruistic intentions are the primary drivers of service participation; however, the rationale for performing altruistic actions differs from individual to individual. The next chapter

details the methods used for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of why students participate in service as part of their educational experience and how these experiences help to shape their future. The motivations for participating in service were also explored. This study relied on the assumption that service is a net positive to society, while presenting research that explores various attitudes about service, mandatory service, and other perspectives. Service, altruism, community service, and service-learning all benefit the service participant, non-profit organizations, and the community at large (Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013; Hart et al., 2007).

Understanding the benefits of participating in service and service-learning is a key step in this exercise (Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013). Education seeks to create higher student achievement, personal growth, social-emotional learning, and knowledge of current affairs and develops civic attitudes and skills. Service and service-learning participation is one research-based method that promotes these goals and is a pedagogy that leads to better education results (Heck et al., 2020).

According to the Report to Congress of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service,

National service has routinely demonstrated its positive impacts and return on investment by improving the lives of those who are being served, by providing much-needed resources for local and nonprofit organizations, and by creating more united, civically engaged communities. Participants in national service can reap substantial benefits from their service, including better employment

prospects, higher wages, achievement of educational goals, and improved health.

Communities served benefit not only from improved civic health but also from lower crime rates, improved education outcomes, and attention to unmet needs.

(Heck et al., 2020, pp. 44-45)

Ultimately, service offers a net benefit for all involved. However, there remain significant opportunities for growth (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012; Spring et al., 2008). Also, some believe that “generations in our culture are getting more and more narcissistic” (Chopik & Grimm, 2019, p. 1109), which contributes to a sense of communal dissatisfaction with civic engagement. To combat this, service and service-learning promote positive civic development in participating students.

Service-learning is defined as,

a type of experiential and project-based learning that drives students’ academic interests and passions toward addressing real community needs. The process is a learner-centered cycle of inquiry, compelling young people to answer questions such as:

- What are the true needs in my community?
- What are the root causes of these needs?
- How, where, and from whom can I learn more?
- How can I contribute to a solution? (National Youth Leadership Council, n.d., p. 1)

Ultimately, teachers work to plan and deliver instruction and content, using service as a tool that is part of the process, resulting in service-learning. Service-learning demonstrates increases in student motivation, student empathy, and civic development;

aids in social development; and increases open-mindedness (Deeley, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013; Sass & Coll, 2015; Zaff & Lerner, 2010). When compared to standard classroom learning, service-learning demonstrates a comparative advantage to boost citizenship skills (Birdwell et al., 2013).

It is important to understand the benefits that come with service; however, it is also necessary to understand what motivates individuals to perform service. Absent this knowledge, it is challenging to motivate students and individuals to participate in service. Expectancy theory describes motivation as a product of three constructs: (a) expectancy, which represents a person's thoughts regarding their efforts achieving the desired impact on a goal; (b) instrumentality, which describes a person's intentions that are related to the expected rewards that will result from the corresponding individual effort toward a goal; and (c) valence, the overall desirability of the rewards that are expected (Vroom, 1964). While each of these aspects can ultimately result in individual motivation, the combination of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy results in a cumulative impact that is greater than the sum of the parts.

Context

This study gathered qualitative information from several former high school students who were from the Piedmont and Foothills region of North Carolina. The majority of this research took place remotely, for the convenience of the individuals involved and to account for social distancing as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Participants were asked to complete a background questionnaire and then be interviewed. The experiences of the participants provide perspective to educators, policy makers, administrators, and others who wish to promote service in their respective

spheres of influence.

Research Design

The design of this study is qualitative and designed to provide a richer understanding of the service experience of former high school students. Creswell (1998) posited that the end result of successful qualitative research is to achieve understanding. In addition, Creswell (1998) believed that the qualitative approach allows for the researcher to serve the role of active listener to gain a more complete understanding of the perspective of the interviewee. A case study method allows for the researcher to create a comprehensive analysis of several individuals while collecting data from a variety of sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2014).

Grounded theory research methodology promotes a qualitative design in which the researcher is the main data gatherer (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews and questionnaires gather data that can be used in aggregate to make assumptions and generate hypotheses. These data can then be compared to identify similarities and differences, gaining further and deeper understanding. Finally, data are analyzed and grouped to develop a grounded theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This approach should be categorized as a phenomenological study. According to Spiegelberg (1984), Franz Bretano was an initial adopter and researcher of the phenomenological method. Bretano emphasized the concept of “intentionality,” which promoted the connectedness of the human being to the environment (Van Manen, 1990). Several of Bretano’s students, including Carl Strumpf and Edmund Husserl, contributed to the science of phenomenology; and they along with Alfred Schutz developed this method into a “practical approach for sociology” (Creswell, 1998).

Phenomenology is described as “inquiry [that] begs the question, ‘What is the structure and essence of the experience of this phenomenon for these people?’” (Patton, 1990, p. 69). Moustakas (1994) defined phenomenology as the relationship between an individual and their environment. Moustakas related, “In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience” (p. 84). This type of analysis allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of the individuals included in the phenomenological study, even though this is typically a lengthy process (Colaizzi, 1978).

It is important for the findings of this study to maintain a balance between the sensitivities of the research, without allowing the research to manipulate the results of the study. Scott (2000) described this dichotomy:

The phenomenological researcher, as well as any qualitative researcher, walks a fine line between knowing too little to successfully conduct a study and knowing too much. Knowing too little leads to failures in appropriately circumscribing the study and allows flaws and weaknesses to be introduced into the structure of the design. Knowing too much-especially about the phenomenon being investigated-can produce a description of the phenomenon’s essential structure that conforms more to the investigator’s understanding than the participants’ and discovers nothing new. (p. 37)

Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) described two distinct approaches to phenomenological research: transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology considers the description of an

experience while not seeking to focus on an interpretation (Moustakas, 1994). This type of research involves Husserl's strategy of *epoche*, or bracketing (Creswell, 2007).

Bracketing removes the personal feelings, biases, and attitudes from any analysis or interpretation of the subject matter. While this type of research is challenging to attain, it does allow the researcher to present their findings as new material (Creswell, 2007).

Hermeneutical phenomenology is the approach that was used in this study.

Hermeneutical phenomenology is valuable in educational studies because it allows the researcher to consider "lived experience" as part of educational situations (Lee, 2017).

Creswell (2007) described the value of hermeneutical phenomenology as enabling an individual to interpret their findings within the context of the researcher's own perspective and understanding.

Participants

This study started by approaching a variety of North Carolina high school principals and/or superintendents. These education leaders identified and recommended students who were active service participants during their high school years. Efforts were made to approach schools that represent large, medium, and small student populations in diverse regions of North Carolina. Both charter schools and traditional public schools were included. Former students came from Region 6 (Southwest) and Region 7 (Northwest) of North Carolina. Participation was completely voluntary, and this was communicated to the interviewees at multiple times throughout the process.

Figure 1

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Regions



Once these former students were identified, they completed an initial survey that identified preliminary questions related to the research questions laid out in this section. This survey is represented in Appendix A. Students identified the type(s) of service they participated in during high school; they identified the type(s) of service they have continued post-high school, if any; they identified any new service experiences they have had; and they indicated their frequency of voting. Demographic information was also collected.

As a second aspect to this interaction, the researcher also interviewed each individual respondent. These interviews involved more open-ended questions, again centered around the research questions in Chapter 1. These questions attempted to discern the following: perception of service impact on the individual, any perceived skills that were developed directly related to service experience(s), motivations for participating in service and whether these have changed over time, self-perception regarding civic engagement, and opportunities that can be attributed to service involvement.

Instruments Utilized

Prior to data collection, permission to collect data was obtained from the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Gardner-Webb University. This permission is contained in Appendix B. Once this permission was received, participants were contacted to discuss the purpose of the study and to explain the qualitative process of this study. After explaining that participation was completely voluntary, individual participants were provided written consent to the researcher, and the initial questionnaire was distributed. A signed copy of this permission form was returned to each participant. Prior to being interviewed, participants were provided the list of questions that were used in the interview. The background questionnaire and interview questions may be found in Appendices A and C respectively.

Data Collection Process

Twenty-seven former high school students were targeted as participants for this study. Prior to participation, individuals were given a synopsis of the study and told that their participation and honesty would be encouraged. The details of the study were completely explained, and the importance of the study was further explicated. The voluntary nature of their participation was clearly communicated.

All former students were provided a background questionnaire to be completed prior to the interview. Once the completed background questionnaire was returned, an interview date and time were scheduled. Separate individual interviews were scheduled, to increase the candor of the responses and to benefit the validity of the study. To keep the identity of the respondents anonymous, specific individually-identifiable information was not collected. Responses remain anonymous, and individual participants are identified by a numeral throughout the work. Personally identifiable information for participants will only include former North Carolina Region 6 or Region 7 high school

student who participated in service. Interviews were conducted by a focus group conversation that included several individual participants. A follow-up conversation was offered to participants; however, this was not likely necessary as determined by the researcher and/or the interviewee. Interviews were completed in the fall of 2020, primarily during the month of September.

Prior to each interview, the interview questions were provided to the interviewee to allow time for reflection. The same questions were used for each interview, and these questions are represented in Appendix C. Interviews were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. Interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Early questions were more general in nature, to allow for a naturally developing sense of trust and rapport. More specific questions were asked later on during the interview. During the interviews, the researcher indicated that there are no correct or incorrect responses to the questions and that the purpose was to better understand the service experience of the interviewee. To ensure confidentiality, names are not attached to the transcripts or the interviews.

Data Analysis Process

Data from the background questionnaire were collected and summarized, with each former student represented by a number. Interviews were recorded, as previously described; and a transcript was generated. These transcripts allow for an analysis of data, identification of similarities and differences, and an aggregation of all collected information. These data were then used to formulate responses to the research questions. Themes, commonalities, and lessons learned are described and depicted in Chapter 4.

Ethical Considerations

In the process of this study, several procedures were utilized to ensure the ethical

conduct of the study. First, all participants were informed that their responses would be collected and maintained confidentially. Name and personally identifiable information were not maintained as an aspect of the results. Participants were made aware that they could stop the interview or cease their participation at any time. Each was invited to view a copy of their individual transcript at their convenience. The results of the study were also offered to all participants at the conclusion of the research. These practices are not meant only to safeguard participants but also may serve to benefit their own service participation.

Research Questions

This study was driven by participant responses to the following research questions:

1. What are the aspects of quality service-learning?

This question was answered with data from the participant interview responses and from the background questionnaire. All responses were transcribed, and commonalities and similarities were determined.

2. What impact does service participation in high school have on the postsecondary experience and beyond?

This question was also answered with data from the participant interview responses. All responses were transcribed, and common themes and trends were determined.

3. What are the motivations for students to participate in service?

This question was also answered with data from the participant interview responses. All responses were transcribed, and commonalities and similarities were determined.

4. How do these motivations change over time?

This question was also answered with data from the participant interview responses. All responses were transcribed, and commonalities and similarities were determined.

Consolidated results from these interviews and responses from the background questionnaire are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the conclusions for this study.

Assumptions of the Study

This study made several assumptions that are important to be considered. First, service is believed to be a net positive for the participant, any involved educator, affiliated community organizations, and the community as a whole (Heck et al., 2020). Second, it was assumed that participants would be honest and candid in their responses. Third, it was assumed that the information provided to participants would be adequate and clear to allow for completely honest and helpful responses for this study.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to collect data, for the benefit of this study. The first was the background questionnaire. This survey gathered general information on the type of high school attended (traditional public or public charter), the general area of the high school (urban, rural, suburban), the individual's frequency of voting, demographics, and a brief synopsis of the participant's service participation.

The interview questions comprise the second instrument. These questions were used to provide consistency in responses from study participants. These survey questions were validated by the Lawshe Content Validity Index (Ayre & Scally, 2014). Five content experts reviewed the proposed survey questions via the Lawshe method, and their feedback determined the final survey questions. These questions were focused around the

research questions previously discussed.

As a function of convenience, interviews were conducted over the phone or via an online meeting platform. Participants were notified that their interview was recorded and that a transcript would be generated post-interview. A participant was able to request for their data to be shared with them at any time. Participants could also opt to not respond to any question for any reason. All data gathered from surveys and interviews were maintained with absolute confidentiality and were kept anonymous.

Summary

This chapter gave a brief description of the overall study, a depiction of the research design, data collection, data analysis, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, research questions, instruments used, and a brief description of the participants. The collection of data centers on 19 former high school students who were active in service during their tenure in high school. The individual and aggregated perspectives of the participants provide context and understanding to educators, policy makers, administrators, and others who wish to promote service in their respective spheres of influence. Looking forward to Chapter 4, this provides a detailed analysis of the findings of the accumulated data.

Chapter 4: Results

I would say that was a defining moment for me in terms of the role that service played in my life, because I think it went back to that idea of what you're really passionate about and throwing yourself into that type of service. I think I grew much more passionate and much more involved because of the opportunity to dive into something that I was really interested in. (Participant 1)

Overview

As schools seek to identify new ways to engage students, double-down on proven strategies to prepare graduates for life after secondary school, and encourage character and citizenship education, service should be included in the lexicon of educational offerings. The research on mandating service compared to encouraging service participation is mixed at best; regardless, service participation clearly accomplishes many of the goals of a quality education (Eyler & Giles, 2013). Service participation is a proven motivator for future service; it aids in the development of soft skills; and it truly develops many of the aspects of an informed, contributing citizen (Li & Frieze, 2016). Despite the previous and historic successes of the service movement, there is still significant room for growth and improvement. The recent Report to Congress of the National Commission on Military, National, and Community Service indicated that the United States is a country of over 329 million people, and only 24 million of these are active in service (Heck et. al, 2020). Former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor stated, "Ours is a Nation built on pride in sacrifice and commitment to shared values—on a willingness of our citizens to give of their time and energy for the good of the whole" (Heck et. al, 2020, p. 2).

The hope is that the results of this work will inspire some and inform others to benefit the continued and increasing inclusion of service within a K-12 context. When school leaders, policy makers, and educators understand the myriad benefits from service, they will find a willingness to incorporate service within their classrooms and communities. This work will also attempt to document the consolidated and individual experiences of the participants, which should serve to provide clarity and lessons learned for decision makers.

The research methodology for this study is qualitative and incorporated a focus case study method. This allowed the researcher to poll multiple service participants to document their individual successes, generate consolidated findings, and share overall service impacts. Participants were also able to relate their individual experiences with those of their fellow interviewees. The case study method allows a researcher to represent multiple perspectives in aggregate, while delving deeply into individual experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Stake, 1995). “For example, in case study research, Stake (1995) referred to an assertion as a propositional generalization - the researcher’s summary of interpretations and claims - to which is added the researchers’ own personal experiences, called ‘naturalistic generalizations’” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 86).

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This chapter presents the perspectives of 19 high school graduates who were service participants while in secondary school. These graduates were identified by administrators who were familiar with the service participation of each interviewee. Multiple methods of collection were used to accumulate information. These school administrators currently serve at traditional public schools and public charter schools, all

from North Carolina. These school administrators accumulated a list of former students (with contact information) and provided it to the researcher.

Upon receiving approval from the Gardner-Webb University IRB, several school administrators began identification of former high school students who previously participated in service. The researcher individually contacted each potential participant. Text messaging, email, and phone calls were all utilized in soliciting participants. Following this initial contact, the researcher provided the IRB-approved letter of consent, a background questionnaire, and the interview questions. Participants were requested to return the completed consent form and complete the background questionnaire. This background questionnaire consists of 10 questions that relate to the service participation, motivations, and demographic information. The background questionnaire was completed by each participant via Google Forms. The consent form, interview questions, and background questionnaire may be found in Appendices A, B, and C.

Once the researcher received the background questionnaire, a focus group interview was scheduled. This focus group interview consisted of seven questions. Most interviews included three to four individuals. Due to schedule limitations and conflicts, two interviews were conducted individually. Interviews typically lasted less than 1 hour. These interviews were recorded via Zoom and then were transcribed using the tool Trint. Trint is an internet-based transcription software that converts the audio of recorded conversations into written form. These transcriptions were then used to identify the commonalities and differences regarding participant service experiences and perspectives.

Participant Details

This study's population consisted of 19 former high school students who had service experience during their secondary school years. A summary of the participants' demographic information is found in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Information

Participant number	Gender racial/ethnic background	Type of high school	Post-high school experience
1	Female White	Suburban	4 year college
2	Male White	Suburban	4 year college
3	Male White	Rural	4 year college
4	Female White	Suburban	4-year college
5	Female White	Suburban	4-year college
6	Female Asian	Suburban	4-year college
7	Male White	Rural	4-year college
8	Male White	Suburban	4-year college
9	Female Black or African American	Rural	4-year college
10	Female White	Rural	4-year college
11	Female White	Rural	4-year college
12	Female White	Suburban	4-year college
13	Male Black or African American	Urban	4-yr college & work
14	Male Black or African American	Rural	4-year college
15	Female White	Suburban	2 & 4-year college
16	Female White	Rural	4-year college
17	Male White	Rural	4-year college
18	Male Asian	Suburban	4-year college
19	Male White	Rural	2-yr college & work

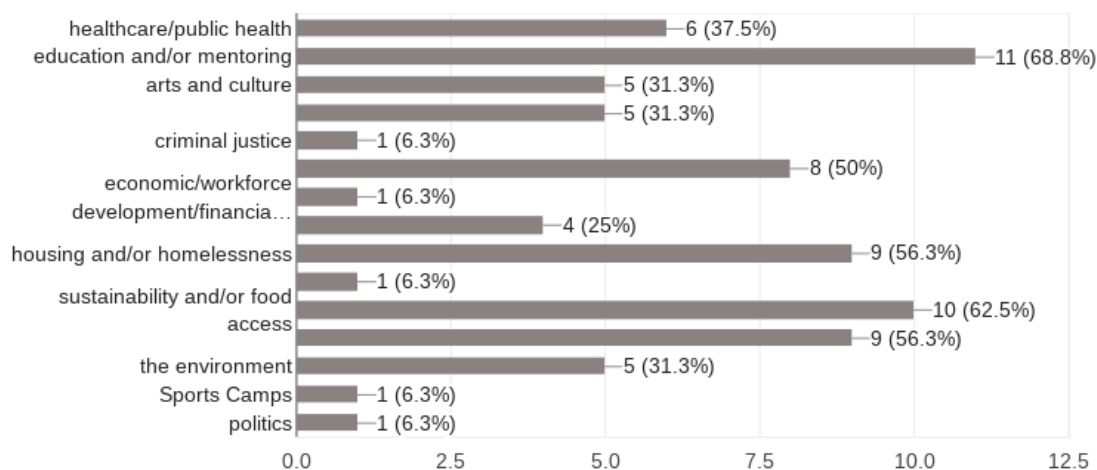
The group represented nine males and 10 females who primarily attended suburban and rural high schools. Even though the researcher did not request former high school students who continued their education into college, all but one participant reported that they continued their education at a 4-year college. Several participants also reported work and 2-year college as part of their post-high school experience. The racial makeup of the group was primarily White (73%), with 16% of the participants identifying

as Black or African American and 11% identifying as Asian.

Participants were also asked if they were a first-generation college student, and only one participant reported that they were part of this category (6%). Six of the participants responded that they were not currently active service participants; however, during the interviews several noted that the COVID-19 pandemic served as an adverse effect on their normal service activities. Participants were also asked to categorize the focus of the service organization(s). Most service participants reported service at multiple types of organizations, and their responses are detailed in Figure 2. The most popular types of service organizations were education and/or mentoring, diversity and/or multiculturalism, housing and/or homelessness, sustainability and/or food access, and work with individuals with disabilities.

Figure 2

Participant High School Service Experiences



In addition, 42% of the participants indicated they “currently were part of a course, scholarship program, and/or extracurricular organization that requires volunteer participation.” It should be noted that this study included several participants who had

already graduated from college; therefore, the findings from this question may be skewed. Similarly, 42% of participants shared that they currently were “part of a course, scholarship program, and/or extracurricular organization that promotes and/or encourages volunteer participation.” Again, the results from this question will be impacted, as multiple participants were college graduates.

The final background questionnaire question asked for participants to rank their motivations for service, according to nine categories. These categories included career, enhancement, protective, recognition, religion, requirement, social, understanding, and values. As indicated in Appendix A, these categories are defined in the following ways: Career is defined as “I want to build future work skills and it allows me to explore different career options.” Enhancement is defined as “it makes me feel like a good person and it makes me feel useful.” Protective is defined as “I have been in difficult positions myself and it helps me to deal with some of my own problems.” Recognition is defined as “I want to receive recognition for my volunteerism.” Religion is defined as “it fits with my religious beliefs.” Requirement is defined as “it's a requirement.” Social is defined as “my family and/or friends volunteer and I want to meet new people/build relationships with others.” Understanding is defined as “it allows me to appreciate the differences in people and it helps me to gain a new perspective.” Values is defined as “I want to help meet a community need and I believe volunteering makes the world a better place.” Participants were instructed to rank each motivator on a scale of 1 (highest motivating factor) to 9 (least motivating factor). These results are depicted in Table 3:

Table 3*Participant Service Motivators*

Participant Number	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Cat 4	Cat 5	Cat 6	Cat 7	Cat 8	Cat 9
1	5	8	3	4	1	2	7	9	6
2	4	3	7	8	9	6	5	1	2
3	3	5	6	9	7	8	4	1	2
4	4	3	9	7	8	6	5	2	1
5	3	4	2	5	1	9	6	7	8
6	7	3	6	8	9	1	4	2	5
7	5	4	2	7	8	9	6	3	1
8	2	3	4	9	8	7	5	6	1
9	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	8	1
10	6	3	9	8	2	7	4	5	1
11	4	1	2	7	9	6	8	5	3
12	7	3	1	9	5	8	4	2	6
13	4	3	7	8	2	9	6	5	1
14	6	2	1	7	8	9	5	3	4
15	4	3	9	6	7	5	8	1	2
16	4	7	6	2	3	1	5	9	8
17	4	3	7	8	9	6	5	1	2
18	3	6	7	9	5	8	4	2	1
19	2	4	9	8	7	6	5	1	3
Average	4.1	3.7	5.3	7	6	6.3	5.4	3.9	3

Note. Motivator 1, highest motivator; Motivator 9, lowest motivator; Cat 1, career; Cat 2, enhancement; Cat 3, protective; Cat 4, recognition; Cat 5, religion; Cat 6, requirement; Cat 7, social; Cat 8, understanding; and Cat 9, values.

Based on the responses, participants rated “values” as the highest motivating category, “enhancement” as the second highest motivator, and “understanding” as the third highest ranked motivating category. This ranking analysis comes from the average motivator score when looking at all participants in aggregate. The lowest ranked motivator is “recognition,” followed by “requirement” and “religion.” “Values” is the category that received the most “highest motivator” selections, and “protective/

recognition/religion/requirement” all tied with the most “lowest motivator” selections.

This ranking analysis comes from the average motivator score, when looking at all participants in aggregate.

Research Questions

The cornerstone of this study was four research questions:

1. What are the aspects of quality service-learning?
2. What impact does service participation in high school have on the postsecondary experience and beyond?
3. What are the motivations for students to participate in service?
4. How do these motivations change over time?

To establish participant perspectives on these questions, seven interview questions were developed. These interview questions were validated via the Lawshe Method. These interview questions were

1. What are the most important aspects of effective service-learning?
2. What benefits did you receive from your service experiences?
3. How has your high school service influenced your postsecondary service?
4. How has your high school service influenced your college and/or career choices?
5. How has your high school service influenced your civic involvement, including voting?
6. What motivates you to participate in service, and how has this changed over time?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about your service experience?

Table 4*Relationship of Interview Questions to Research Questions*

Research Questions	Interview Questions
What are the aspects of quality service-learning?	1, 2
What impact does service participation in high school have on the postsecondary experience and beyond?	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
What are the motivations for students to participate in service?	2, 4, 6, 7
How do these motivations change over time?	4, 6, 7

At the conclusion of the interviews, the researcher was able to aggregate the accumulated data, identify themes, and consolidate results.

Research Question 1: What Are the Aspects of Quality Service-Learning?

The purpose of this question was to determine the perspective of the participants regarding the aspects of service that were meaningful, impactful, and important.

Participants were given broad latitude to describe their personal experiences related to their service. While some participants chose to focus on the community influences of their service, most opted to speak primarily from a personal perspective. The impacts that were most referenced were skill development, student voice/choice and passion development, exposure/learning from and about others, relationship development, and realizing change.

Student Voice and Pursuing Passions

One of the aspects of quality service that was identified by several participants was the ability to choose the focus of their respective service. Participant 7 said,

What's really important to make it effective in the very beginning is that the

person engaging the service has the autonomy to actually pick what they're doing.

I find that mandatory service where they don't have a choice, where their serving is usually not the most effective. Because if you're not personally engaged and whatever the mission of the program is, it's going to be hard to actually find a reason to put your all into it. So, I'd say that you need to have the autonomy to pick what you're actually doing. And a good way to do that is to give participants or students or whoever you're trying to give the education to a wide variety of options so that they can actually pick the one that best suits them.

Several other participants touched on mandatory service, student voice, and volunteer service during their interview. Some participants felt that entering into a service experience with a clear goal was the most important aspect to ensure success. Participant 4 noted, "I think like sticking with one specific field or interest" instead of it being "a free for all." This perspective was shared by others; however Participant 9 shared,

I say explore your options because it's kind of hard to know really what you want [to do]. Well, for me, it was hard to know what I enjoyed doing back when I was in high school. I explored a lot and once I got in college is when I found out more concretely what I enjoy doing.

This exploration would not be possible without student voice and choice.

Participant 8 related, "I think knowing your mission is key. I think if you do any sort of service work service project, I think having a clear idea as to what your goal is, I think it's highly important." In the same interview, Participant 3 followed up with,

I feel that having a pretty good understanding of reflexivity and like the ability to look inward and evaluate what you're doing, kind of going off what Participant 8

was saying. But, you know, that idea to look inward and value or choose what's correct to do and also engaging with your community and being active enough to build some sort of relationship and strengthen that relationship with your community.

Participant 5 added,

To ensure the service learning activity you are completing is an effective use of time, go into it with a certain goal in mind and objectives to complete. If you are completing a service-learning activity aimlessly, you are not going to get any new perspective out of it. Because at the end of the day, you are volunteering with the idea that you can make an impact and help a certain group of people.

These participants highlighted the dichotomy between mandatory service and voluntary service, confirming that benefits exist within each strategy for service promotion.

An alternative view on this was shared by Participant 2:

I think engaging in the community is one of the more important parts. From my experience when I started doing my service learning, I really didn't have a mission or purpose. I didn't know what I was doing with it yet, but I went in with a good attitude, a positive attitude. And I just wanted to see what was going to happen and just went with it from there. So, I think a positive attitude and willingness to engage and put forth the effort necessary. That's what got me through it and what made it a good experience for me.

Ultimately, different aspects were meaningful for each individual. Some participants indicated that they appreciated the ability to choose their service opportunity; others felt that general exposure was key.

Building Perspective

Several participants discussed their impressions of quality service specifically related to understanding others, exposure to diversity, developing a close proximity to the issue, and building perspective. Participant 11 said,

being exposed to different perspectives, different cultures, different types of people, not just people that I'm serving, but the people that I get to work with, too, and seeing their different leadership styles and how they approach things really gives you something that you can take away from every opportunity that you've been given.

She continued to talk about the importance of

having an awareness of the community that you're working in and what unique conditions that you're going to be approaching. If you just go into volunteering with no deeper understanding about who you're serving and why you're serving them, then it could potentially be very harmful.

Participant 13 added that service “puts you in that space to be able to recognize and to understand other people.”

Participant 12 talked about the importance she places on perspective building related to service. Before getting into the work, it may be challenging to face the true goal behind the service. She also referenced being close to the problem and how that helps to develop perspective. She said,

I think you need to be exposed to, like, the true conditions of what you're volunteering for. I used to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and I still do in college. I was heavily involved in it in high school. And I think for a lot of the

new volunteers, like the freshmen and sophomores, they would come to like the fundraising events and they wouldn't really know what we're working for. Like they knew our purpose, but they didn't really have a grasp on the severity and just like what we are actually doing. So, I think with volunteering, go to the work site or build site. Actually, interact with what you're doing instead of just [working] behind the scenes. You need to do [both]. But I think for you to really grasp what you're volunteering for, you need to go to the front lines of it. And for me, in Habitat, I think building the homes were really beneficial and like actually meeting the family that you're building a home for and raising all the money for. It helped a lot and made you realize, like what you're doing is actually really good, really beneficial for not only you, but for that family too.

Participant 10 shared a similar perspective, the importance of seeing the direct impact of her service and how this benefitted her and contributed to her continued motivation to serve:

A big thing is if I can actually see the people affected. I would lead an event in high school, we would go around to all of these elderly people's communities and we would help clean up [the community]. And at the end, they would come outside their homes and thank us for our service. That is like the biggest thing. I was able to actually get to see who we were directly impacting, that's what leaves [a] lasting impact in your mind. That's the reason I want to keep on doing service.

Dovetailing on this concept, Participant 9 shared that his most important aspect of quality service experience was “understanding different people's perspectives and things like that. It puts you in that space to be able to recognize [them] and to understand other

people.”

Participant 16 shared,

I just really felt that the most important aspect is to be close to the problem and understand and better meet the needs and really help anticipate the needs of the community you are serving. So that that really just means leaning in. And I feel like that helps the most effectiveness.

Participant 1 agreed, adding, “being close to the problem, being open to listening to others when you are engaging in that service.” Participant 14 shared that he gained (as a result of service participation)

a better sense of perspective. You know, when you're doing service projects, you kind of look at things that people are going through. And it kind of puts things into perspective, like things that you would normally see as obstacles in your life may pale in comparison to the things that other people are going through. So, you really just kind of get that perspective.

Several participants related the ability to choose their activity with developing a passion, and this passion contributing to a successful experience. Participant 14 said,

I think the most important aspect is having a passion for whatever you're doing. I've been a part of certain projects where, you know, everybody is 100% involved and the project goes smoothly. But in other projects, you know, people don't put in as much effort and the project doesn't go as well.

Participant 2 did not enter his service experience with a passion or a clear goal. He said,

I just got a whole new kind of perspective. I never really thought about working

with individuals with disabilities. [This] was my first exposure to that, at least to that extent. And I went in not really knowing what I was going to be like, I was just asked by a member of the staff. I was interested and I figured I'd try it. And then it introduced me to what is now my passion and hopefully will be my career. So, it just showed me a whole new opportunity and perspective and passion I didn't know I had.

This perspective indicates that exposure to various opportunities is a key component to successful service experiences.

In addition, Participant 6 said, "I also realized that because of the community service that I did, [I was] actually [out] in society meeting people that I would normally not meet. [It] definitely opened my eyes to certain things." Building on this response, Participant 6 added,

I was definitely in this sort of private bubble where you don't really get exposed to what people are going through. I [am] definitely privileged and I'm grateful for my experience at my high school. Because of the volunteering that I did and how my school emphasized working with underprivileged communities, going out in society, and actually helping out. I definitely learned a lot from those experiences and I'm able to serve people better because [of this experience].

Participant 13 also noted a noticeable change in perspective as a result of his service. Gaining a deeper understanding of the community led to a change in his worldview and allowed him to develop feelings of empathy. He said,

The connections, humility, and patience, I think is key. The people that you're involved with don't have access or don't have the things that you have. And so it

really teaches you to kind of take a step back and realize what you have and what other people might be going through and [they] still come to work. It gives you a sense of understanding and sympathy for other people as well.

Participant 17 also referenced perspective development as part of his service experience. He said, “I’ve found that the most important aspect of service learning is the ability to interact with a diverse population within my community. [I have] been able to offer my services in order to make someone’s untenable situation a little brighter.” Within this same response, Participant 17 continued,

Eventually, later on in the year, I found myself engaged to encourage others to join and interest them to be to the different ways to become involved. I’ve benefited [by] learning how to challenge my creative mind, to find different ways to motivate my peers as well as to help others.

This comment mirrored the experiences of other participants, as they discussed their initial efforts to benefit their community and the corresponding personal development they realized as part of the overall service experience.

Skill Development

Several participants detailed specific skills that were part of their service experience. These skills were discussed as an important intended outcome for some and an unintended or unexpected benefit for others. Some of the skills that were referenced included leadership characteristics, public speaking, networking, social skills, and soft skills as necessary aspects of the service experience. It is also important to note that some of the comments included in this section are also beneficial related to Research Question 2.

Participant 4 mentioned work as a volunteer coach and said,

I think I definitely gained...learning how to be like a leader and everything, because I volunteered for all of high school, at a soccer camp over the summer. Learning how I also worked with younger kids and just being a leader in that position.

Participant 12 shared, “I had a lot of leadership roles in some of my clubs and volunteering services. I got a lot of public speaking experience. And it helped me grow.”

Participant 10 related that delegation was a skill she gained:

One big thing would be a lot of leadership opportunities. So, in my opinion, when you have a group event it is kind of hard to have every person actively get engaged. If you have smaller groups, really everyone has a different task and they can all really do leadership in their own way. It's a lot better and it allows everyone to actually understand what community service is like.

Participant 9 stated that the skills she developed were “relationship building, networking, and just gaining experience in general.” Participant 8 noted,

The biggest lesson, or biggest skill I think I learned or took away from it was talking to adults. I'm so used to talking, you know, to my friends in those situations. But I think, honestly, just talking to adults was probably the biggest thing I learned from the services I did.

Several participants also mentioned related characteristics, such as improvement in interviewing skills.

Building on this concept, Participant 19 cited that he also worked on some technical skills, such as leadership, effectively managing

people, as well as how to manage yourself and your organization, during your service time. I think this is really important to us to be able to take a step back and be able to learn. Learn how to follow instead of always having to lead.

Participant 15 related several skills that were part of her service experience:

Learning back then was the time management that came with it. And the social skills that I got to learn were a big part of it. The experience and attitude and learning how to talk to those people and build those relationships, is probably the most effective part of it.

Beyond leadership development, participants also related that teamwork was a key part of a quality service experience. Participant 10 related that prior to becoming involved in service, typically she would take charge of group projects and would not accept much help. As she became more service oriented, “it taught me to actually be like a team player and learn how to like, you know, let everyone have their own task.”

Through working together, Participant 13 said,

the connections that you made with the people, whether it's from you having an impact in somebody's life or the people that you're around that you're working with. And that can all serve as a stepstool for something later on. You all are working together collaboratively on something effective and good.

Participant 11 contributed,

I would say that the thing that I'm most personally benefited from, from service learning and volunteerism, is probably just being exposed to different perspectives, different cultures, different types of people. Not just people that I'm serving, but the people that I get to work with, too, and seeing their different

leadership styles and how they approach things really gives you something that you can take away from every opportunity that you've been given.

Some of the additional skill development mentioned by participants included leadership with regard to delegation, managing people, soft skill development, technical/analytical skills, communication skills, and learning how to interact with adults. These analytical skills are key in a very important way, as described by Participant 16 who shared that the

most important aspect is for it to be effective is to be close to the problem and understand it so that you can understand and better meet the needs and really help anticipate the needs of the community you are serving. So that that really just means leaning in. And I feel like that helps the effectiveness.

Participant 1 added,

I think putting people in positions where their skills are really highlighted in terms of who is doing what. And then also, I think being close to the problem, being open to listening to others when you are engaging in that service.

Concluding the discussion on Research Question 1, Participant 18 bridged Research Question 1 and Research Question 2:

I definitely agree that learning from your service is one of the most important aspects. Another important aspect is the impact of your service. So how does it change your community or the population that you want to help? Those two combined, I feel, are the most important aspects of service learning.

Research Question 2: What Impact Does Service Participation in High School Have on the Postsecondary Experience and Beyond?

The purpose of this question was to determine the perspectives of the participants regarding the aspects of service that were impactful and to allow study participants to share the extent of this impact. The impact on college decisions, career choices, and civic engagement was specifically explored. Participants were given the opportunity to share their personal experiences and detail the perceived community and personal impacts of their service. It is worth noting that the aspects of quality service have significant interplay with the impact of service, and this influences the motivations to serve. Each research question possesses overlapping and interrelated components.

Many interviewees chose to share very personal experiences as part of their interview. It is important to recognize that the researcher/interviewer was not acquainted with any of the interviewees, and most interviewees were not familiar with their fellow interviewees. Because of the nature of this interview structure, it can be challenging to elicit personal or intimate perspectives. Generally, despite these factors, there was a sense of congeniality, honesty, and camaraderie between the interviewees. Many interviewees exhibited a high level of comfort sharing very personal perspectives.

Relationships of Service Impact and Service Aspects

Ultimately, as Participant 18 referenced in the response documented above, there is a close relationship between quality service components and the impact of those experiences. Participant 7, when speaking to the impact of service, said,

Everyone wants to have a positive impact. Most people do. And service is a great platform for them to do that. [Some] may not have previously engaged. And

oftentimes you find people that feel like they don't have a lot of control over what's going on. But service is an area in which they can really have an impact or effect on something. I think that's really powerful because it also gives them the confidence to keep [serving] in the future. And it's sort of like a positive feedback loop. If you do it one time, you're much more likely to do it again. So really, getting kids started an earlier age will show that they can have a positive impact.

And I think [that] is, at least for me, one of the most important effects of service.

This comment is a key indicator for this study, as Participant 7 referenced the importance of becoming involved in service during formative years to encourage future participation.

Community Impacts

As referenced earlier, multiple participants indicated they developed moral or personality characteristics related to their service. While this impact can be challenging to quantify, it is meaningful that young adults recognized this important byproduct of service. Participant 3 indicated that he “gained the ability to understand people empathetically and really kind of humble or lower myself and be able to evaluate my situation, in proximity to other people. That gave me the ability to definitely be less judgmental.” Through service, Participant 16 developed

a better understanding of people and their needs, which I think just helped me be a better human in the world. And I've also learned more about how the legal system and bill passing works, because that's often how you [understand] what goes along with getting things done. Also, we've got a better understanding of the medical and social needs of our world, to then be able to better understand the needs of the people I'm serving. And then I think I've benefited and actually know

[the importance of] being a part of a better community (myself and my peers) through the service that we're doing.

It is important to note that many of the attributes that are referenced by the participants align with quality educational outcomes.

Many participants shared introspective and personal reflections on the impact of their service. Despite the nature of these interviews, interviewees candidly shared deep, personal impacts of their service. Participant 1 shared that she

gained from service a better sense of clarity in terms of what I care about deeply, what I'm passionate about, what I value, and then going along with that, I just gained a more fulfilling sense of purpose day to day, because of that service.

Similarly, Participant 15 shared that her service project

was very eye opening for me at that age. I mean, that's a really tender age when you're learning all these things and kind of learning about life and things like that. And I was able to meet some of the people that my clothes were donated to and see how Christian Ministries functioned and worked for those families. It gave me a whole new perspective on life and how people's lives are, compared to mine. It made me more appreciative of my raising and it made me more motivated every year to want to build my project and make it even bigger every year.

For some, serving in high school or early on resulted in developing future service experiences. Participant 12 related,

I [worked with] Habitat for Humanity. I loved [it]. And that's actually influenced me to continue working with them here. We have a big chapter at NC State. So, I've been working with them a little bit. It has been halted this year. So that's sad.

But it definitely has allowed me to join that club and meet new people that want to volunteer.

This experience demonstrates the importance of early service leading to future service. It also illustrates the chilling impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on many service opportunities, which was referenced by multiple participants.

Participant 10's experience highlighted her changing mindset, as she became involved in service. She said,

As I started doing service, it might have been more like checking certain boxes, I guess. But then, later on [I] actually started to like it the more I did it. I realized how much I loved it and how important it was for my life.

From this initial experience, she developed an appreciation for service. Participant 10 continued,

So, I guess when I started looking into what jobs I could do, I knew, a big part was [personal] interest. So, I've always been super into math. So that's kind of what led me towards engineering. But also, I want to make sure a certain aspect of my career had service incorporated. And I knew it could be something that would give back to others. So that's why I chose engineering. Whether it's like biomedical and you're creating prosthetics or different medical equipment or I'm more interested now in energy engineering, creating solar and wind energy solutions.

Clearly, service served as an important impetus for this individual.

Participant 6 also highlighted service as a catalyst. She has not made career or major choices based on her service experiences; however, her past service led to future

service impressions and decisions. Participant 6 said,

For me, I was thinking about it, and I think the way my high school service influenced [me], it was like it kind of helped me narrow down my passions. So in high school, I was volunteering with our middle school math club. So I realized that I really liked teaching. Maybe not math, but I like teaching in general. So once I got to college, I kind of explored how I can incorporate service with teaching. That's something I really like doing, especially with kids, and breaking it down. Something complicated is something simple. It's very fascinating to me. So now I volunteer at two different schools. I volunteered with middle schoolers for a little bit, but now I realize I like younger kids. But I do this with children at an urban elementary school. That's really fulfilling for me. This is a bit more underprivileged neighborhood. A lot of these kids don't have access to resources that most other kids do in suburban areas. And because of that, I really enjoy that. Teaching with them because I know it's something that will mean a lot to them later down the line, even if they don't understand how the volunteers and working with them one on one definitely helps them. You can see their growth even within a short time, which I think is really fulfilling. So, I think that what I did in high school, just like trying out different things because I wasn't really doing many long-term volunteering things. But I would volunteer for an hour here and there. But because of that, I kind of was able to see what I like and what I want to continue to do. And so for me, teaching was one of the things I really like. I just really found it interesting, especially [working] with children.

Developing passions is an important part of youth development, adolescent growth, and

maturity.

This development of passions and interests was evident for Participant 5 who shared, “A major benefit to completing volunteer services is meeting new people and learning their personal experiences. Every new person that you meet and talk to influences your own personal growth, by learning new perspectives.” Building on her skill development, Participant 5 also referenced the personal gratification she received from one of her service experiences:

Depending on what volunteer service you are experiencing, you can see the impact of your work instantly. For instance, when I volunteered at Joy Prom, which is a Prom for the Special Needs Community, you could see them beaming as they walked in on the red carpet with all of us cheering them on and later, we got to dance with them at their prom.

When service participants realize positive, personal impacts from their experience, they will be more likely to continue in service and will be more able to become involved in deeper and more meaningful ways.

College/Career Impacts

The impact on career and college is a mainstay of this study. This was clearly seen in multiple interviews in which participants described minor and significant impacts on their college and career choices. Generally, impacts were observed to be more significant than not. Ultimately, an individual’s education and career are some of the most important life impacts; therefore, significant impacts should not be understated. Most participants described a service impact on their career intentions (for those who had not yet graduated at the time of the interview), on their career (if they were working at the

time of the interview), and/or on their college major/focus. Service played an integral role in the development of the future of all participants. It is instructive to contemplate the potential long-term impact of the service of these participants.

Beginning the discussion on career/college impact, Participant 11 related how service was a continuing impact and how it was part of her career/college decision-making, stating,

I definitely still volunteer in college right now. I do some crisis counseling through an online tech service, but it's also impacted what I'm majoring in. I think political science can be really service oriented if you go into the right field after you graduate.

In this response, Participant 11 demonstrated the impact of service on continuing service and her college major; however, the impact was not limited to these areas. Participant 11 continued, "I'm also hoping to get a master's in nonprofit administration after and potentially going into some sort of field that's service related."

Participant 10 indicated that she also experienced impact on her major and how she was making efforts to use her experience to influence others:

What I figured out in high school kind of continued on to college. One [thing] I focused on was engineering, [because] there's not a whole lot of girls in that major. So one thing I started focusing on in high school was how to introduce more girls to be involved in STEM. So, I started a Girls Who Code Club at high school which focused on getting them involved in technology. Now they can be involved in different computer science careers. So, whenever I got to college, I volunteered this past summer with them through Project Scientist. They're a

nonprofit that works with all kinds of different STEM fields. Since it is virtual this year, we sent kids to the different girl's households. And we would have sessions every morning where we go over different activities. We'd also bring in people from different companies like Duke Energy or medical companies, really anything on the spectrum just to kind of a glimpse of what it'd be like. So, for me, I started that kind of [experience] in high school and kind of continued all the way through college.

Participant 10 continued,

So, when I first started out serving it was mainly hopping on with an already established club and just kind of like doing whatever they assign for us to do. But like later on now that I am in college, I kind of started becoming involved with this idea incubator called the Ford Center through our Office of Entrepreneurship at our school. And they basically help you like start up an idea and kind of help you grow and develop it into a project. So, I'm trying to start something called Sol Cooking. We're creating solar cookers, and going to start a campus or a chapter or campus and hopefully expand to other schools. [We are planning to make] solar cookers and ship them to like other countries in need. So I guess just like taking a more independent route.

This speaks to the compounding impact that service can have, spurring participants to develop and expound on their own passions, interests, and connections.

Some individuals reported a different type of service impact on their college choices. Early service helped to shape the experience of Participant 7, who said,

My high school service story was self-organized in a lot of avenues to do what I

did. So, I found that going to college was good because I felt more confident, prepared for service because of what had happened in high school. I sort of knew the ropes by then so I could just jump right into it. I feel like I wasn't afraid to do different service activities I had some experience with, which goes back to the point of it's better to be introduced to it earlier. If you are, you'll have that engagement, understanding it earlier on and it making you more likely to do it later.

Although he did not report an impact on his college major in this response, clearly the high school experience created more opportunities for Participant 7 to serve.

The service experience of Participant 6 directly related to her intended career path and college focus/major. Based on this response, it is unclear if this service was the ultimate catalyst for Participant 6, or if the service was a main contributing factor to her future decisions:

When I was in high school, I volunteered at Novant Health. Because of my experience volunteering with them (for over four years) I got to see a lot of different fields of medicine, which I found very fulfilling. So, while volunteering with them I not only got to meet a wider range of our community, but I also got to see things that were really interesting to me. I got to volunteer in the emergency department, the maternity ward, and different departments like that. That definitely influenced my career choices because it kind of solidified [my] STEM [interests]. But volunteering in that specific location really made me realize what I want to do with the rest of my life. It kind of guided the path for what I want to do.

Participant 2's impact is seen from his high school years, to college, and now into his intended career. He discussed a belief that certain careers are service-oriented. This same belief was shared by other participants. Participant 2 stated, "I've continued to work in the field that my [high school] service opportunity was, but [it] isn't necessarily volunteer or service. I was paid for jobs in that field and now I'm doing an internship in that field." Regardless of whether a paycheck is involved, it is valuable to know that service maintains an impact on career decisions. He continued, "Ever since my service in high school, all my jobs and or education experience and stuff like that have all been in the same field as my high school service experience" (Participant 2). This concept of refining interests and passions was echoed throughout all interviews, and Participant 14 related,

For me, in high school, I kind of got my feet wet in a lot of different service organizations. And in college, I really wanted to find maybe just one or two organizations that I was passionate about, which I did through my fraternity. It was just being able to do stuff that is really rewarding.

He did not indicate that his career was impacted by service, but he continued, "I think that learning from what I did in high school and being able to continue that was really valuable" (Participant 14).

Some participants were recent high school graduates who have had less time to determine their college major and/or career path. One of these recent graduates, Participant 18, said,

I'm a college freshman, so I just entered college. I intended to go into the health care field during high school. I did volunteer in a hospital for several years, so

that was definitely a big influence. And obviously, you like you know, I didn't get to go into the O-R because I was a high school student just helping day to day. I just really liked how it went though. And I felt that through my service, I helped to make a change. So, through that, I felt if I went to the health care field, hopefully I can make a change, you know, not working for any big hospitals, but going into third world countries or underserved communities and helping out there.

Not only did service factor into this individual's major choice, it also impacted his current focus on a career that will enable him to give back in a charitable manner.

Service was a contributing factor for Participant 17 who said,

I was volunteering at the local homeless shelter, Christian Ministries, and I became a youth board member. With that [experience], it has me wanting to, with my business degree, somehow work in a place that will allow me to enhance opportunities for people who need a hand.

Following up on this, Participant 15 related,

[Service] definitely had some influence on my career choices and doing what I want to, because it just goes into that category of helping others and how you feel after you do that and making a difference in their life. So as far as that goes, I think that it did have some persuasion on what I'm doing now.

More concretely, Participant 5 shared her perspective on her early service and the perceived impact on her future: "I am majoring in Biomedical Informatics, so in the future I am aiming to become a researcher in the field. For reference, Biomedical Informatics combines Biomedical Engineering and Computer Science so its basically

data analytics in the medical field.” According to her response, this major/focus was not service related; however, she continued, “My service in the special needs community and my participation in Jogathon this year have cemented my degree decision so I can possibly help these kids with the research I could conduct” (Participant 5).

Service was a defining high school experience for Participant 2. He shared, “My service learning experience introduced me to a whole field of professions. Working with individuals with disabilities and things like that, I really had no experience with it beforehand.” Despite this experience, he did not move into college with a service goal in mind; however, he continued,

And even my first half of college, my first two years, I really didn't look into studying anything like that. I couldn't find anything else that really struck my interest. So I started thinking more [about] it. I went back to that great experience I had in high school and looked into the different majors and found recreational therapy. It seemed like the most related to my high school service learning experience and the passions that [that experience] created for me, so I'd say my service learning really essentially determined what I'm going to do with my career. (Participant 2)

Even though the service impact was not immediate, the influence eventually directed Participant 2's career decisions.

There is a straight line from the high school service experience to college and career for Participant 1:

I would say that the service I did in high school was a lot of volunteer work in schools and that impacted what I chose to get involved in in college. I got

involved with literacy non-profits and a lot of volunteer work in schools. And then that impacted what I chose to do afterwards, which was to become a teacher. Continuing on, she spoke to the specific choices she made, keeping her service in mind:

That volunteer work filtered through different types of work in education systems, which then impacted where I chose to teach finally. I would say that I consider teaching active service, a profession that is service oriented. So, I would say that's directly impacted by what I was doing in high school. (Participant 1)

Ultimately, this can be viewed as a service impact that is carrying through and exhibiting long-term impact.

Civic Impact

As this study has detailed, service can contribute significantly to civic engagement and citizenship education. Evidence of this was demonstrated from several participants' experiences. Participant 16 related,

I think that actually what I did in high school directly impacted what I'm doing now and what I have passion for. I was engaged in education, volunteering. My dad is a teacher. So, I just think I was closer to the problem and understood the needs that the community and I volunteered at a developmental center. I think that that helped create the passion I have. So, I can see how much education impacts your community. And also, now I'm just a lot closer to the disability community and feel like I understand their needs. And I can help be a better advocate for that community because of getting involved in high school.

Once participants become involved in service, their awareness of societal challenges grows. Participant 12 said,

[My service] really opened my eyes to what the government can do and what you can do for the government by just like putting in some work. [This] really opened my eyes to the world of politics. Now I'm more interested in politics.

She indicated that this plays out in not just an interest in politics, but in the following way, "I know more about it so that it's helped me broadcast that people should register to vote. So that has definitely helped me shape what I know about the government and politics" (Participant 12).

Some interviewees commented on the exposure they gained as a result of their service. Participant 6 related,

Communities, especially the urban community, is something I wasn't really exposed to in high school. I was always in this bubble of privilege. And now that I'm in more of an urban community, I see different things that I didn't see in high school.

This continues the theme of experiences in diversity and perspective development that was evident in Research Question 1 responses. Participant 6 continued with her response:

So I would say yes, my service has influenced my civic involvement because I'm more passionate about certain things and I know more and I'm more [informed]. I just think that I've seen more, which makes me more inclined to vote, to protect [others], and to help out groups other than myself.

Participant 13 shared,

At the end of day, it also makes you more aware of how many people don't know how to vote or how you need to go and register. It just really opens your eyes and makes you more determined to educate people on the people that they're voting

for, too.

This perspective validates the view that service education dovetails with civic education.

Participant 13 continued, “It just makes you more aware of everybody's opinions and ideals and makes you want to get people out to vote basically, makes you want to educate people.”

Not all interviewees saw a link between service and civic participation.

Participant 19 shared,

I mean, if I'm being honest, it really hasn't impacted me too much because when it comes to politics, I can really get kind of headstrong. For me personally, I think it's more about doing the best for the country and what I mean by that, is doing what's best for the citizens of this country.

Civic engagement and knowledge often can be linked to politics, even if this linkage is unintended or invalid. Participant 18 shared,

When I entered high school in 2016, you know, it was a shift from middle school to high school. And also that year, it was a shift from one party to another party.

Definitely an uncertain and turbulent time in America. Going through those major shifts, that really taught me the importance of civic engagement.

Despite the uncertainty, knowledge and experience can give certainty and purpose.

Participant 18 continued,

And as I went throughout high school and I was volunteering with various organizations that did deal with civic engagement, it made me even more knowledgeable. And it made me even more motivated to go out to participate and vote for certain politics and things like that. So I would definitely say that the

service that I was involved in definitely shaped how I view civic engagement.

Later in the interview, Participant 18 shared that (at the time of the interview) he was not old enough to vote. He was encouraged to vote by his fellow interviewees, and the entire panel supported voting and civic involvement.

Another young interviewee said,

So I think in high school, obviously, I wasn't eligible to vote, but that was definitely on the forefront of my mind because it was coming up. [I was] coming of age really soon. I worked with quite a few groups within the community. I think that exposure to the adult community gave me more political awareness, kind of indirectly and [it] made me feel like I should do my duty as an up and coming adult to participate and have my voice be heard. (Participant 3)

Some participants did not see a service linkage to voting but shared that their overall worldview and perspective was changed. Participant 2 shared that he “would say specific to voting, [service] hasn't really affected my opinion on that in any way. But it did give me a voice for advocacy, for stuff that I cared about.” This cognizance of the community is an invaluable skill. As a follow-up, Participant 2 said,

It just brought me an awareness of populations of people that I didn't have before and learning more about that and working with them gave me a new perspective and gave me the opportunity to advocate for them with my voice and with my actions.

Some interviewees shared that their service was an important part of their direct action with the political process. To this end, Participant 11 said, “I don't think [service] impacts necessarily how I vote or how likely I am to vote. But I do see myself as being

more inclined to volunteer to work at the polls or do things that are more political.”

Participant 7 shared a poignant anecdote regarding his service and civic involvement. His story speaks to the true power of service and action:

So maybe I'm weird, but I kind of always wanted to vote when I was a kid. On top of that, it's a right that people have died for. And I feel like it doesn't take that much time of the day to walk down to a polling site or send an absentee ballot or whatever it may be, even though there are a lot of restrictions in place. So anyways, in high school, that was one of my biggest volunteer activities or service activities, voter registration. We set up a lot of voter registration drives in our high school. And in North Carolina, you can vote in a primary if you're 17, as long as you'll be 18 by the general election. Pretty much every single senior in high school can vote in presidential election years, assuming that they turn 18 before the election. It was something like 80 percent of seniors could vote. But the thing is, none of them were registered to vote or even knew that they could vote. So, we would just set up registration tables during lunch and people would come over and fill out the registration form and they were good to go in. And they went and voted. I'd say we got a couple hundred kids to vote, which is pretty decent in the small town we were from. So obviously, it's you know, I guess the question is, how has it impacted your civic engagement? My civic engagement for a long time was doing stuff through service.

He continued,

But it for me was my first chance to really see (hands on) how these voting and election things mattered because in our case we were registering people in the run

up to 2016, but we were doing it for a mayoral race and the person that won, won by a handful of votes that was smaller than the number of people we registered. I have no idea how the people we registered voted, but either way, the people we registered outweighed the margin of that year's election, which I think was pretty cool. And I think that just goes to show that especially in local elections, your vote matters a lot more than you think it does. It can easily flip an election. And, you know, even if you think that your vote doesn't matter, it's important. Remember that plenty of people who have served and died for this country thought it mattered. And, you know, if you can get yourself to vote, you should get other people to vote, too. So, it's one of the bigger things I've been involved in. (Participant 7)

This illustrates the power of the democratic action of citizens, and it speaks to the significance of service as a catalyst for change.

Participant 16 shared that she had a different experience with service and civic involvement:

Service really impacted my civic involvement. I was from Burke County and we went through quite a bit with our school board. When I was in high school, we almost lost our accreditation. That really kind of showed me how, like even being involved in your school board and local elections, how that trickles down and affects the community and really gave me a sense of purpose for telling other people about it, because I don't think that everyone understands, especially on a local level, how much your involvement in that aspect impacts your day to day life. In my opinion, so much more than the national level. But, you know, items

people spend a lot more time talking about, you know, the national level politics when so I try to advocate for people and understanding how their vote really does impact what they see and what their kids eat in school and what the roads are like and all that.

This mature perspective on civic involvement demonstrates the importance of service and how it formulates the views of service participants. This response from Participant 16 showed significant passions from a number of perspectives: service, disability rights, and civic involvement. She continued,

So, I did some lobbying [because] I have a friend who has a disability, she uses a wheelchair, and [being] a wheelchair user in America, especially in North Carolina, is very hard. Getting treatment for her disease is really hard.

Volunteering in high school and working with people who use wheelchairs was the first time [for me]. I had never really been around someone who understood what those needs are. And now having a best friend who has those greater needs, you understand that oftentimes it's the laws who can impact her life and the community's lives the most. And people just don't know that. Voting is definitely high on my list and definitely something that I advocate for. Because I think people don't often understand the importance as much as they should. (Participant 16)

This response is evidence of the power of service and passion and demonstrates the potential when individuals act in a service-oriented manner.

One of the oldest participants identified a service and civic connection that the college-aged interviewees would have struggled to make. He said, “when in high school

and college, I didn't really see a link between service learning and civic involvement” (Participant 14). This viewpoint may mirror where most participants were regarding career/college. He continued,

But now, as a full-fledged adult, I see that most people who are involved in service projects generally have a better understanding of what's going on in the world and are more [likely] to get involved in voting, community involvement, and things like that. (Participant 14)

This shows a mature view on service, civic involvement, and perspective or worldview. Participant 15 added that one of the main impacts for her was “being able to see different families and what level of lifestyle, puts some things into perspective for me to understand how important voting is.” A similar sentiment was, “[Service gives] you a different perspective of everything outside of your little bubble, being able to experience different things, and helping everybody around you” (Participant 4).

A changing perspective because of service was also shared by Participant 1. She developed a sense of advocacy through her new knowledge and experiences:

I think the biggest thing I think about civic involvement is service put me really up close with holes in our laws and holes in the way that our government works. It also put a face to a lot of different issues that I hadn't necessarily seen before. A lot of policies that even didn't directly affect me but I saw how they affected my community. And that made me a lot more passionate about what exactly our laws are saying, how they're affecting people and how they affect our daily lives. I think it made me zoom in and kind of see things more closely and how our civic duty impacts that. I think also it made me more aware that on the local level, too. I

had a similar experience in that way. (Participant 1)

Research Question 3: What Are the Motivations for Students to Participate in Service?

The purpose of this question was to determine the initial motivations of the participants regarding their service experiences. Participants were given the opportunity to share their personal experiences and detail their motivating factors. Responses are listed in several categories; however, it is important to note that many of the initial motivations are complemented by additional benefits that are realized throughout the experience.

Student Voice and Choice Motivations

The motivation to serve is described by Participant 18, who shared his perspective:

I would say that through my volunteer service, it has made me realize my passion for social activism. And that's like one of the main benefits I've taken from service. The idea of bettering my community and helping others was something that I really enjoyed. So aside from other volunteer services that I had to go to, I chose to create my own initiatives with my friends or with my school and just [attempted to] better my community.

This thought references choosing a service initiative that speaks directly to the individual, a key motivator for some service participants. Participant 7 added,

What's really important to make it effective in the very beginning is that the person engaging the service has the autonomy to actually pick what they're doing. I find that mandatory service where they don't have a choice, where their serving

is usually not the most effective.

Participant 8 believed that the personal impact was key, and said, “I think [service] is touching, just touching to actually, you know, make somebody's day. And like I said before, I think it's just that I'm doing something for somebody else. It's just really powerful and meaningful.” If service is personally gratifying, this will be a motivation to serve.

Non-Altruistic Motivations

Not all service motivations are born from goodwill and seeking to make the world a better place. Some service motivations are self-serving. Participants discussed various motivators that were not altruistic, including resume building and networking. However, even though some participants started serving because of uncharitable reasons, they often continued service because of selfless reasons. Not only this, but most participants reported gaining a sense of moral purpose and perspective, even if their original motivation was self-serving.

To this end, Participant 11 reported,

I've always said that service is a selfish thing for me because I feel like I get so much out of it. And, you know, there's the idea that you're going out and you're helping people or community for certain [reasons], and that's great.

This rationale is honest and shares the personal benefits realized by this individual. She continued,

At the end of the day, I get this warm, fuzzy feeling inside. I've been able to network and meet new people and develop new skills. And so, I think that's definitely part of the reason why I enjoy volunteering so much and I continue to

do it. (Participant 1)

Participant 15 was identified for a specific service project in high school. Initially she said,

Well, if I'm being completely honest in the beginning, when I was a freshman, I was fifteen years old and I got that project. I thought, oh, this is neat. This will be nice to see and do. This will look really good on my college applications. And, if I'm being honest, that was the first pull for me. (Participant 15)

As this participant continued to share later in the interview, it became obvious that her motivation changed over time, and it ultimately impacted her intended career and her perspective of her community.

School activities were mentioned by several participants, as a catalyst for starting service. Peer interaction and socialization were referenced.

I think it probably started back when, like, you were in clubs and the more you did, the more like things you got. And I think that that's really where I learned about doing things. And so, I think that that was probably the real first motivator, because I like to be involved in stuff. And it was just meeting people. But I think that when you get more involved, you do learn more about the problem.

(Participant 16)

Participant 16 later reported significant changes in her perspective as a result of her service. This change would not have occurred without the initial service experience. College preparation and resume building were also mentioned by several participants as their initial service motivator. Participant 10 related that she started to serve because “It was more to appear [better on] college applications and a stronger candidate. Later on, it

started to be the social part to [be with] my friends. That was kind of how I picked what I was involved in.”

Other individuals discussed additional non-altruistic motivators. Participant 13 shared,

Overall, my passion to help others and to basically motivate myself to improve on my own skills and abilities. If it's health care oriented, it's kind of both now. So, I get to learn more about the health care system while also benefiting others and helping others. So, the big thing is just helping others and being there for people.

While this response can be categorized as including somewhat selfless rationale, it is also clear that Participant 13 was choosing to serve in part because of the benefits he was receiving. Building on this motivation, some individuals were driven to serve by the skills and/or the perspective they gained as a result. Participant 17 said,

What motivates me to participate in service would probably be the growth that I feel I get from it. By helping others, I feel like I'm getting more help than they are because I'm learning their story. I'm learning what they're basically like. Their crisis or whatever, you know, their low point in their life. And I feel like with that information, I can somehow use that to try to make it better for everybody in the community.

Regardless of the motivator, it is clear that participants personally gained from their service experiences and that the community also received benefit.

Moral and Ethical Motivations

Many participants related that moral or ethical motivations were a major part of their service motivations. This was further evidenced in the responses to the background

questionnaire, in which the top three ranked motivating categories included “values” and “understanding.” Understanding others and experiencing diversity were referenced frequently by most participants. Participant 9 related,

I think for me, I have this desire to help other people and it just helps me to view other perspectives. We're all in this little bubble of our lifestyles. And so the ability to be able to get outside of that and see things from another light is rewarding in itself.

Personal experiences, coupled with the desire to make positive change, was a motivator for some. Participant 12 shared, “[Growing up] I moved around a lot. So, I wanted to have housing security for other people.” Ultimately, formative experiences helped this individual to see a societal need, which then served as a strong motivator.

I can now volunteer for things that I want to. So, I think that's developed over time where I can realize [that] I can actually be interested in what I'm working for. Especially with college, there's a lot of opportunities for volunteering and there's so many things you can choose from. I can pick what I want to do. (Participant 12)

This type of motivator was similar to thoughts that were shared by Participant 16:

One thing that I noted is just like being from a rural area, you're in a community that has a greater obvious need for volunteers because there's just often not enough resources to go around. And so, I think that sometimes that's really important for our community.

As a contributing member of her community, she saw evidence of need and then sought to fill that need. Individuals also can be motivated to improve their region, as they will

see the benefit directly impact their neighbors and immediate community. She continued, “I think that that's also what motivated a lot of people in my area to volunteer and to be involved, because if you didn't and there were going to be some gaps” (Participant 16).

Benefitting one's community was also referenced by Participant 18: “I would say I have two motivations. One is to obviously help better my community and to serve communities that are underserved to help them out with challenges that they face.” As mentioned by countless participants, the knowledge and perspective gained through service help to identify injustices or needs. Participant 18 continued, “Oftentimes the challenges that they face are things that they shouldn't be dealing with or are preventable issues.” The second motivator was “[that] doesn't play as big of a role, but it's kind of significant. It's fulfils my religious values” (Participant 18).

Participant 13 shared that he made connections that were part of his service experience. His advice for service participants is as follows:

I also say that if you don't learn anything else from any service or any type of environment, learn patience and humility, because that's the reason why you're there. If there is not anything else that you get. If it's not any type of technical skills or if, let's say you don't improve personally, it's to change your mindset a little bit every time you go to help somebody else. And you should be impacted from that experience and make connections that will help you understand other people's perspectives when you get into the real world.

Additional moral and ethical motivations were mentioned by Participant 13:

I think the true motivations are just being able to help and benefit others and being able to improve on myself and my well-being, as well as [developing]

technical and personal skills as well. You're helping others. You're improving your mindset and how you think about people. And you benefit yourself also by learning skills that you might not have learned before. Depending on where you're at and what type of service you're doing.

If individuals follow these sentiments, the moral and ethical impacts will be significant.

Participant 5 mentioned more specific personal moral choices that impact her volunteerism, and her ethics contribute to her motivations in a politically involved manner. She shared,

Volunteering by definition is civic engagement within your community. Likewise, voting is the number one way to be an effective citizen. Politically, I definitely lean more left. My volunteer experiences contribute to this as I have worked with different groups that are directly impacted by policy from underprivileged children, the special needs community, to working in a food pantry with people that can't afford to buy their basic needs without government assistance. In the next few weeks, I'll be participating in an online voting bank where we call NC voter delegates to get voters to come out on Election Day.

Participant 19 shared a sentiment that was shared by many participants, essentially that there are a number of societal deficiencies that benefit from service. Participant 19 said,

I would say that my motivation is kind of twofold. It allows me to help people that are in need and it also allows me to be a better person by making this world a better place. Because we can always use a better community.

He continued, "Everywhere you look, there's people that always need volunteers or need

some form or fashion of help” (Participant 19). As service participants increase their volunteerism, there is evidence that they understand and realize the community needs that can benefit from service.

Early exposure to service was a catalyst for several participants. Participant 7 shared,

First, I think that being involved in service in high school and earlier piqued my interest in service itself. And right now, I'm going to pursue a career as an officer in the Marine Corps after college. And I think that that's mainly because, you know one, I've seen a lot of people from high school who went that path. And two, you know, the military is one of the more full forms of service that you can find. And I think that being involved in service in the first place made me interested in that.

He continued,

The second thing, which I'm not sure where along the road this will come, because I'm still figuring things out. But it's public interest law. I grew up in a pretty poor family, and we depended on a lot of government service programs and whatnot. And during high school, I worked in some places that dealt with that stuff. Some law firms, some public interest areas. And college made me realize that if you want to have an impact on, you know, people in this country that don't have the best access to resources, that's one of the best ways to do it. And I think if I hadn't volunteered in those areas in high school or college, I probably wouldn't have known that as much. So that's certainly something that has influenced me. I'm not really sure when along the line I'll be doing that. But it's certainly

something that I would say is directly borne out of my experience in high school and college. (Participant 7)

This individual had an early experience with service, he has continued a habit of service during his college years (currently), and he is contemplating a career that is focused on service in multiple ways.

Participant 16 cited a poignant anecdote that highlights her motivation to serve: I think that when I learn about the problem, it becomes almost impossible not to try to solve it or at least help or try to find people who can bring people together to maybe solve something. So I think that the motivator is often seeing, you know, I want to see the work being done. I went with my friend to lobby in D.C. for her disease to be added to the screening panel for babies. And while we were there, [something] got approved, we actually saw something happen. And that was really cool. But it's also seeing the need still there. You see things.

Accessibility for me is a human right. Like my friend being able to go enjoy her life and go grocery shopping and have public transportation and have access to her treatment and be a regular adult. It's like a basic human right. So I guess that's a motivator because it's almost like there is not another option until I feel like those basic rights are met.

This is the ultimate moral rationale for service: seeing a problem and seeking to be a part of the solution. It is a moral imperative. Clearly, service has given this individual a significant reason to get involved and to continue this involvement.

Family Motivations

Participants also named family influence as a significant motivator. Oftentimes,

this resulted in early service participation, which has been seen as a predictor of continued service. Participant 12 shared that family and religious influences were a motivator for her:

So growing up, my family is Catholic, so we've just done a ton of volunteering with the church. Also my dad was really big in volunteering because of his religious affiliations. So that has stuck with me throughout my life. But I also now like to volunteer for things that I actually care for.

When discussing motivations for service, Participant 8 said that family, mandatory service, and personal benefits were all motivators for him:

First was through my family. Family members getting me engaged in it. Then high school was like a requirement. Throughout the service project I always had a sense of self-satisfaction, like I did something. And I think that, you know, that's a good feeling. At the same time, helping somebody else who is in less beneficial circumstances than I am; helping them out is just moral.

Although there were multiple motivators that were part of this individual's experience, the first was clearly a pedigree that emphasized service.

Additional examples of family influence were seen in Participant 3, who shared, So I think like in regards to service, I've always had a pretty general understanding of that. Growing up, my family has had a relationship with the service community. My mother working with low income services in Morganton and my dad being an elementary school teacher.

This participant also was clearly raised with a background of the importance of service. He continued,

So that idea was always kind of ingrained in my head to just do good, you know, with no real expectation of a reward. But just general kindness of heart goes a long way and it helps to promote productivity in yourself and, you know, reflexivity, the ability to empathize with people, you know, humbleness, that kind of thing. (Participant 3)

Similarly, Participant 1 shared,

I would say growing up, the motivation was that it was really a pillar of the community I was in and also the family that I grew up in. Service was always emphasized as something that should just be a part of your life every day.

Finally, Participant 7 spoke to his family's impact on his motivation to serve. His response also included personal and empathetic motivations.

I'm tempted to say, you know, that it's just the right thing to do. And we all want to have a positive impact. There's also a personal component. Like I mentioned before, I didn't grow up in the best resourced family. I had four siblings, a single parent. A lot of stuff going on. But I remember at the same time, my mom's influence. No matter what situation we were in, she was always like, well, there are people that are worse off. You know, we're pretty privileged in the spot that we're in right now. So, you need to go out and help other people when you can. And she was right. Whenever I would volunteer, I'd find [some] people a lot worse off. But I was able to help them and I felt like that's what kept me grounded. So, it's, you know, it's a personal thing, but really important.

(Participant 7)

Mandatory Service Motivations

The research on the benefits of mandatory service programs is mixed, at best. Several participants described mandatory high school service programs as the initial reason behind their participation. Some individuals appreciated this push to serve, others seemed to resent the mandate. Participant 6 shared,

For me, initially, volunteering was required at my school and during that time, I was serving and getting my hours. It wasn't really something I was passionate about. It was more like "I'm here because everyone's doing it. It's what's required. I'm expected to do this."

This experience demonstrated less of a deep community impact and evidenced less of the moral/ethical change that has been referenced previously. She continued her response:

I was doing more short-term volunteering. Now I don't even really consider that real volunteering anymore. But later, as I started understanding the reasons behind volunteering and the importance of volunteering, I started more long-term things that I'm passionate about. (Participant 6)

Once she realized the benefits of volunteering, the personal impact and motivation pivoted.

Similarly, Participant 2 was originally motivated to fulfill his mandatory hours:

It's bad to say. But in the beginning, it was like, I just have to go do these twenty-five hours for my high school class. I didn't want to do it because it was something that at the time I didn't care about. I was just told, I got to go do this for this class.

Again, this service experience gives the impression of surface-level actions, lacking

meaning. He continued,

But as I started my independent studies service learning, I had a choice [for the service focus]. Then I started to realize [the] impact for me and for all the people involved in it. All the people I was helping and how much those people were helping me really without even knowing it. Then so from there, it just went from a requirement to [something] I felt like I had a moral reason to do it and [I] enjoyed doing it and wanted to continue doing so. (Participant 2)

As noted above, this participant is now pursuing a career in which he will work with individuals with disabilities.

Some individuals referenced mandatory service that is part of their current undergraduate program. One of these, Participant 5 said,

Although I love volunteering for the reason that I am making a difference, my number one motivator is that my scholarship with my college requires that I obtain 10 hours of volunteer hours every semester. This was the same in high school as we were required to get 40 hours per year.

Adding to this, Participant 12 talked about her high school experience:

I'm really happy that I did volunteer in high school, I was in every honor society where you are required [to do] so many service hours. I didn't feel like doing it sometimes, but I'm really glad I did, because it just not only makes you feel better that you're doing it, but also helps the community and I think it definitely helps with my resume.

Continuing on, Participant 12 mentioned some of the skills she gained as a result of her service participation:

I've had some interviews for jobs when I've brought up experiences that I've had in volunteering, which has definitely helped me secure some positions. Definitely. So, I'm really happy with having done a lot of volunteering all my life. I think volunteering in high school is really beneficial, not only for the school, but also for yourself, for personal reasons, too, because it allows you to grow and just meet new people and network and build some skills. So I would say to instill more volunteering in high school. That would definitely help them later on.

Interestingly, she did not view her mandatory high school service in a favorable light; however, she advocates for high schools to promote service. For this individual, this anecdote clearly demonstrates that her mandatory service in high school begat experiences that promote continued, deeper service opportunities.

Finally, Participant 5 shared her perspective on mandatory service: "I do think that requiring service is really helpful because I wouldn't reach out by myself personally, to find opportunities in a pandemic that isn't required. There's just so many ways that people are innovating ways to volunteer." Participant 11's experience was enlightening. While she did have a family influence, she related,

One thing I'd like to add is that I never felt pushed by family members or peers to go volunteer. I was just kind of something that I discovered on my own and discovered that I had a love for all my own. So I feel like when people, especially young children, are kind of pushed towards that end, the perception is that it's for college or for jobs or for some sort of other benefit, then it makes it really easy to hate volunteering and hate community service growing up. (Participant 11)

This argument, coupled with an encouragement for including student voice in service

opportunities, can result in a powerful motivator for individuals who may benefit from service action.

Research Question 4: How do These Motivations Change Over Time?

The purpose of this question was to determine the perspectives of the participants regarding the motivators for service participation and how they change. Participants were given the opportunity to share their personal experiences regarding their reasons for serving.

Participant 9 shared that her initial motivation was non-altruistic; it was related to improving her college application. Over time, this developed into a completely unrelated motivation. She said,

I feel like when I did service in high school, I was doing it a lot for college to build [my] resume and things of that nature. And I really didn't take it as seriously as I should have. And then when I got into college and I finally got back into service, it made me really realize what I wanted to do [related to] my career.

(Participant 9)

Later on in the interview, Participant 9 expounded on this response by sharing,

I felt myself forcing myself to do it [serve], just to build my resume. And when I finally started doing it for the purpose of serving others, it really made a difference. And I think that's ultimately why I became a school counselor. It took me honestly to probably the last couple months of my senior year of undergrad to realize that is what I want to do.

Ultimately, those early service experiences created a purpose that is directing this individual's career choice.

Early in the interview, Participant 6 spoke to the mandatory service she completed in high school. Volunteerism initially was not a meaningful activity for her. However, “later, as I started understanding the reasons behind volunteering and the importance of volunteering, I started more long-term things that I’m passionate about, like tutoring or volunteering at the hospital. I felt like I was making a difference” (Participant 6). This shift took place, and she began to develop different motivations. She continued,

Like a real difference in other people’s lives was more stuff that I lean towards later in my high school career. And that’s definitely something that even now in college, I preferred to do long term service, like things that I’ll be with the same people. So, like with the kids that I tutor. I see them the entire year. It’s not really a one time I’ve helped you out and I left kind of thing, but it’s more like a long-term relationship, which I think is more meaningful. And I think that’s the best way to make an impact on someone else. By being in your community. So that’s kind of how it changed. Kind of was like initially, just like doing it to do it. But later now I do think it’s more important that I value it more. (Participant 6)

A change in motivation over time was evident for Participant 14. He started volunteering for self-serving reasons:

For me, I started volunteering young, probably in my teens, and it was kind of just the social aspect of just being involved. You know, if your friends are going to volunteer at a certain place, you’re just going to tag along and see what it’s like and kind of get a feel for it. But as you get older, it’s kind of similar to what I said earlier. You kind of gain that perspective.

As this individual continued volunteering, it became,

It's just about making better use of your time, you know, especially now with the pandemic. Some people are just kind of wasting away, in their houses or working from home, you know, not going out as much. So, any opportunity that you have to get out of the house and help somebody you know is valuable. (Participant 14)

Ultimately, Participant 14 was one of the older participants in this study, and he had the benefit of more years of life experience, compared to many participants. Transitioning to his career, he stated,

So for me as a journalist now I get to write about all the things that I participated in as a high school student and a college student, which has been really helpful for me, it's been a really awesome experience getting to tell my community about different ways that they can get involved to give back. (Participant 14)

This illustrates the benefit of continued service, and now this individual has a public platform in which he advocates for volunteerism and service organizations.

Building on the conversation surrounding mandatory service and volunteerism, Participant 2 spoke to his experience:

So I guess it kind of goes back to the last question, which had me thinking that I guess one of the more important things about my experience was just having the choice to participate in it and the extent of how much I wanted to participate. Being able to look into what services were available and choose which one I wanted to participate and was, I think, one of the most important things for me, because then I got to choose my interests, which led to my passion and which would be my career. I got to explore the options of what I can do with service, and I wasn't told what kind of service to do. I was given a lot of freedom in that

and that was really helpful with me in the long run.

This participant was not originally motivated to serve; however, he participated in mandatory service. This service experience did have an aspect of choice, and his experience has served to directly influence his intended career path of working with the disabled.

Reflecting on her service experiences, Participant 6 shared her motivation evolution: “I was thinking about what benefits I gained. Not only did it [benefit] my personality, but also career wise, overall volunteering has helped me a lot.” As she realized the benefit, she continued, saying,

I'm not gonna lie and say like I was intrinsically motivated to volunteer as a high schooler. At that young age, I didn't really know, I didn't really care. But for me, it was required for us. So that's kind of what made me actually begin to volunteer. It definitely helped me gain different leadership skills. And also volunteering helped me realize my compassion. And I recognize my privilege, which I think is very important, especially in today's society. But also, career-wise, I know definitely volunteering has benefited me. So, the [current] program I'm in, in order to even be considered for the program most people have to have at least a minimum of 50 to 60 [service] hours per year. To even be considered [for other programs], they do expect around a hundred one hundred hours of nonclinical [service hours]. Definitely helped me get into the program that I'm in. And for that I'm grateful for. So, I would say it definitely benefited both my personality and who I am, but also helped me with my future. (Participant 6)

The process of serving was a catalyst for Participant 16. She was involved in high

school mainly in the way that

I think it probably started back when, like, you were in clubs and the more you did, the more like things you got. And I think that's really where I learned about [serving]. And so, I think that that was probably the real first motivator, because I like to be involved in stuff. And it was just meeting people. (Participant 16)

The motivation evolution continued, however. Eventually, she continued, “But I think that when you get more involved, you do learn more about the problem. And I definitely think that I've [developed into] an empathetic person” (Participant 16). While she has not chosen a career in service, this individual has successfully lobbied for changes that directly impact disabled persons, and she has continued to serve in more and more meaningful ways.

Participant 1's motivation transformation is extremely evident. She was originally motivated by family and mandatory service:

So I would say growing up, the motivation was that it was really a pillar of just like the community I was in and also the family that I grew up in service was always emphasized as something that should just be a part of your life every day. But I think since then, I've in my life gone through waves of doing more and less service when I was in grad school. I would say there was probably a dip in how much I was participating in because my life was so busy. And then when I got back into becoming more involved, I think I realized that there was a fulfillment that was really missing in my life when I wasn't involved in that service.

(Participant 1)

Transitioning to her undergraduate and graduate student years, she continued, “So I think

later in my life, I've learned that I just feel more in touch with the people around me, more in touch with myself when I am actively engaging in service regularly” (Participant 1). She continued her response and highlighted her view that her career is now a service-oriented profession. Finally,

With every level of service that I've done, I've gotten closer and closer to what I'm really passionate about. So I feel like my early on service was really a jumping off point to just kind of go deeper and deeper into more and more specifically what I saw as the most urgent and important things to me when I was looking at what I would move on to next. But yes, it directly impacted what I did in college and definitely what I do now as a teacher. (Participant 1)

Similarly, Participant 15 spoke to her experience with a service project that began her freshman year in high school. Her response illustrates several self-serving motivations:

Well, I'm being completely honest in the beginning. When I was a freshman, I was fifteen years old and I got that project. I thought, oh, this is neat. This will be nice to see and do and this will look really good on my college applications. And, if I'm being honest, that was like the first pull for me.

As her view matured, her perspective and motivation changed. She continued, “But then once I started doing it and getting older and reflecting on it now, it definitely had much more of an impact on me, [I realized] how important it was, and how meaningful it was to those families” (Participant 15). Participant 10 referenced a similar change in motivation:

I can remember [serving] through like Girl Scouts. And we kind of would start off

with those smaller projects we did, like drives every year or we [would] do Christmas luminaries like our community. And at the time, we didn't really understand the impact. Later on, as I started to get involved in more long-term projects. That's kind of where the meaning came in because I really liked to interact with the same people over time and kind of understand more of what it actually meant [for them]. That probably is still the most meaningful part of it for me. It's just actually getting to, you know, meet them and see who's being impacted.

Finally, Participant 14 shared one of his lessons learned, which is arguably a change in motivation. This became evident as his understanding of service and service impacts grew deeper. He related,

So, I don't really have anything specific to share, but just want to say that pretty much all the service projects that I've been involved in have been really fun. And I think that a lot of people, when they think of service, they think of kind of backbreaking work and a work that no one else wants to do. But it's actually been really fun and I've actually made some of my best friends that I still talk to, to this day, I met them from service projects. So, I think that if more people kind of had the mindset that, hey, I can go meet a new person, spend time with a diverse group of people, then rather than think of it as just work. Then I think more people would get involved. (Participant 14)

Summary

Chapter 4 outlined the results of multiple case study interviews with 19 former high school students who participated in service. Interview responses were based on four

research questions. These questions explored the aspects of quality service, the impact of service, and the motivations for service participants. Chapter 4 also included the results from a background questionnaire that detailed participant demographic, service history, and motivational proclivities. Chapter 5 shares the analysis of these results and draws conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

By helping others, I feel like I'm getting more help than they are because I'm learning their story. I'm learning what they're like. Their crisis or whatever, you know, the low point in their life. And I feel like with that information, I can use that [knowledge] to try to make it better for everybody in the community.

(Participant 17)

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the quality aspects of service participation by gaining the perspectives of service participants who hail from several North Carolina high schools. This study also documented the key impacts of service on the individual and on the community. Finally, motivations for service and volunteerism were explored. As a result of these interviews, lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations are stated, which can be valuable information for policy makers, education leaders, teachers, and service advocates.

The learning theorist Eduard C. Lindeman (1926) said, “Experience is the...learner’s living textbook” (p. 10). Reflection is a key part of quality volunteerism and service-learning participation (Kaye, 2010). Brookfield (1995) referenced reflection related to service by saying, “teachers believe that encouraging students to speak personally and directly about their experiences honors and encourages authentic voices” (p. 13). Through this phenomenological study, it can be possible to discover a deeper understanding of the essence of volunteerism and service participation. The findings can also benefit teachers/educators, policy makers, and service supporters in their efforts to promote quality volunteerism and service-learning.

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service wrote that “fostering a culture of service in which Americans can identify how their own strengths, skills, and interests could contribute to the public good by addressing needs in their communities” (Heck et al., 2020, p. 3) is important to build systems that elevate the “concept of service as a National imperative” (Heck et al., 2020, p. 3). The Commission continued by saying that when service “education is reinvigorated, students across the country will gain the ability to identify social and civic problems in their community, State, and Nation and understand how they can make a difference” (Heck et al., 2020, p. 11). The call to institutionalize and improve the practice and implementation of service as part of a quality education is a growing and consistent refrain (Berkey et al., 2018). Additionally, service-learning exhibits an impact on increasing soft skills, reduces the achievement gap, and offers career experiences (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012; Scales et al., 2006). However, despite general agreement on the importance of civic and character education, a limited number of Americans are active in service; and less than 40% of students have service-learning opportunities (Heck et al., 2020; Spring et al., 2008).

This chapter describes the study and provides the answers to each of the four research questions. Conclusions and lessons learned are discussed based on the results of interviews with each of the 19 service participants. Limitations of the study and opportunities for future research are also presented.

Description of the Study

This qualitative study focused on case study interviews with 19 high school graduates, each of whom participated in service during their secondary school education.

Data collection was conducted using two processes, initial completion of a background questionnaire and case study group interviews. Due to schedule conflicts, two interviews were conducted individually. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher to identify trends and themes. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the aspects of quality service-learning?
2. What impact does service participation in high school have on the postsecondary experience and beyond?
3. What are the motivations for students to participate in service?
4. How do these motivations change over time?

To answer these research questions, background questions and seven interview questions were used. Interview questions were validated using the Lawshe method.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 examined the features of service that were most valuable and meaningful to the participants. Participants were able to share their personal impressions on the service they participated in during high school, and some participants chose to respond by referencing ongoing service in college or beyond. Additionally, some participants primarily referenced personal benefits, while others responded mainly from a community-wide perspective. The first and second interview questions were used to answer Research Question 1. Interview questions are listed in Appendix C. Most participants discussed aspects of their service that influenced skill development, student voice, finding meaning, exposure to diversity, relationships, and impacting change.

The concept of student voice and choice was frequently mentioned by participants as a key aspect of quality service experiences. Student voice is an important and research-

based element of quality service-learning (Kaye, 2010). Many participants discussed the ability to pursue their own interests, taking advantage of new opportunities, and following their passions as aspects that were appreciated and/or recommended for quality practice. Particular to quality aspects of service, Participant 7 said, “what's really important to make it effective in the very beginning is that the person engaging the service has the autonomy to actually pick what they're doing.” This impression was echoed by many other participants who felt that their ability to choose the work naturally led to two results: (a) they were more inclined to see the value of their volunteerism in relation to the benefits realized by the community; and (b) they were more inclined to continue service beyond the original action. While freedom and choice were universally discussed as important aspects, several participants also mentioned that their service experience benefitted from exposure to opportunities that were part of mandatory service programs. Participant 9 said, to “explore your options” to help with identification of service passions, even if this exploration occurs within a mandatory service context.

Developing a passion in conjunction with altruism was another key aspect for many participants. Several interviewees talked about their current college major and how this related to their early service work. Others discussed the relationship of their career (or intended career) to their service participation. Participant 2 related that his mandatory high school service experience “introduced me to what is now my passion and hopefully will be my career.” Some participants discussed the needs they identified or the interests they uncovered. One goal of education is to help students realize the importance of their participation within the overall community rather than “only as autonomous individuals” (Boyer, 1988, p. 218). Participant 16 discussed how she identified a love for fighting for

disability rights and how she sees this as a human rights issue. This move to social justice and passion development will ensure continued service and will also guarantee that the service participant understands the problem from the role of an insider. This leads to better outcomes and a deeper experience for the participant.

Developing skills was another key aspect of quality service many participants referenced. Kirby (1989) and Kaye (2010) referenced improvements with prosocial skills, critical thinking, soft skills, leadership qualities, organizational skills, building relationships, networking, and other personal benefits. Participants discussed their feeling of personal benefit when serving, and Participant 10 specifically discussed how volunteerism accentuated her leadership and teamwork skill development. Participant 19 referenced technical skill development, along with networking and relationship building. Participant 16 talked about the importance of being “close to the problem and understand it so that you can understand and better meet the needs and really help anticipate the needs of the community you are serving.”

Despite the differences in experiences and variety of backgrounds, participants generally agreed that giving back and benefitting their community were vital aspects of their service experience. Participant 14 related that he gained “a better sense of perspective...and it kind of puts things into perspective, like things that you would normally see as obstacles in your life may pale in comparison to the things that other people are going through.” This promotes Dewey’s view of democracy, to benefit the community by balancing individuals’ non-altruistic and altruistic desires (Rhoads, 1998).

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 delves into the impact of the service participant’s

volunteerism and allows room to discuss the impact related to life after secondary school. Participants primarily responded to these questions by citing their personal experiences. Many participants chose to share their current career and/or college major and discussed the relationship between their previous/current volunteerism and these plans. Other impacts that were referenced primarily relate to community benefits. Participants also discussed the impact of their service on their motivation to serve. Enlightenment for this research question was found in the responses from Interview Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. Interview questions are listed in Appendix C.

Some responses focused on the perceived and/or realized benefits of their volunteerism. This impact manifested in various ways. A part of this community impact relates to the personal development of the interviewees. Participants described gaining empathy, understanding, introspection, reflexivity, passion, and other personal characteristics. As evidence of this, Participant 15 described her service experience as “eye opening” and said it “gave me a whole new perspective on life.” Participant 5 shared, “Every new person that you meet and talk to influences your own personal growth, by learning new perspectives.” Character education closely relates to civic education and engagement (Celio et al., 2011; Hart et al., 2007; Zaff & Lerner, 2010). In addition, community service participation has been demonstrated as a strong predictor of voting, a standard measure of civic engagement (Hart et al., 2007). Interestingly, most participants shared that they did not feel more inclined to vote because of their service involvement; but most shared that due to their service, they felt more informed as a citizen. This was communicated by Participant 14, who said, “I see that most people who are involved in service projects generally have a better understanding of what's going on

in the world.”

Many participants talked about the effect altruism has had on their college major or college plans. While a college major often is viewed as a precursor to an individual's career intentions, college plans are more of an immediate impact when compared to high school years. A current college student, Participant 10, shared that her volunteerism and interests in high school have translated into building on these experiences in college. Not only has Participant 10 continued to serve in similar ways, she is also active in creating new opportunities for service through her self-designed project, Sol Cooking. Participant 6 served in the medical field and shared, “volunteering in that specific location really made me realize what I want to do with the rest of my life...it kind of guided the path for what I want to do.”

The impact on participant career intentions was significant and pronounced throughout all interviews. Several participants indicated that their service directly impacted their intended or current career. Others shared that even though they were not pursuing a career that directly related to their service, they noted that their career choice was service-related. Participant 1 shared, “I consider teaching active service, a profession that is service oriented.” Participants 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 18 (63% of all participants) explicitly indicated that their career (or intended career) was impacted by their high school service. It should be noted that many of the interviewees were still in college, and a number had not determined their career path at the time of the interview. Even those participants who did not indicate service impact on their career, most interviewees shared that service continued to provide an impact.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 attempted to explore the motivations behind service participation. Service participants shared the benefits they gained that contributed to motivation and the inherent proclivities that support service participation. Interview Questions 2, 4, 6, and 7 all relate to this topic. The main motivators that were referenced include choice, non-altruistic motivators, moral/ethical motivators, familial motivators, and mandatory service motivators. In addition, responses on the background questionnaire gave additional insight into service motivators.

Many participants talked about the importance of mandatory service as an initial motivator for their volunteerism. Even though this is not depicted in a favorable manner, participants recognized that their first experience with service was a catalyst that inspired them to future service. Participant 5 said, “I do think that requiring service is really helpful because I wouldn’t reach out by myself.” Participant 2 shared,

It's bad to say. But in the beginning it was like, I just have to go do these twenty five hours for my high school class. I didn't want to do it because it was something that at the time I didn't care about.

Despite these views, each participant’s attitude pivoted to recognize the value of their initial service exposure. There was scant evidence of a chilling effect from mandatory service, as referenced by Helms (2013). Rather, it appears that the findings of Metz and Youniss (2003) and Woeste (2000) held true for this sample. This indicates that mandatory service does correspond to continued, future service.

Non-altruistic motivations were mentioned as part of the initial foray into service participation. Participant 15 shared, “this will look really good on my college

applications. And, if I'm being honest, that was the first pull for me.” Participant 11 said, “I've always said that service is a selfish thing for me because I feel like I get so much out of it.” Some research argues that the most significant motivator for service participation is egotistic or non-altruistic (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Washington, 2018). Even though non-altruistic behaviors were expressed as a component of the interviews, this was not borne out in these interviews. Additionally, background questionnaire responses showed that egotistic motivations are some of the lowest rated motivations in aggregate.

Family influences demonstrated a motivational influence for multiple participants. Participant 3 shared, “growing up, my family has had a relationship with the service community.” This led to a number of quality service opportunities for this individual, and he intends to continue volunteerism. This supports research that showed that students are more likely to serve when their parents were service proponents (Metz & Youniss, 2005). Participant 8 discussed mandatory service and family motivations and said his service involvement “first was through my family. Family members getting me engaged in it. Then high school was like a requirement.”

Moral and ethical motivators are one of the primary reasons for service participation (Aguirre & Bolton, 2013; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014). This was demonstrated from interviews and background questionnaire responses. In the background questionnaire, the top-rated motivational category was “values.” Participant 16 spoke to her perspective of growing up in a rural community, observing the challenges, and then becoming involved via volunteerism to attempt to solve these issues. Participant 13 shared, “I think the true motivations are just being able to help and benefit others.” Participant 19 indicated that service participation “allows me to help people that

are in need and it also allows me to be a better person by making this world a better place. Because we can always use a better community.”

Research Question 4

The final research question was an opportunity to explore interviewee impressions on how their service motivations have changed over time. Interview Questions 4, 6, and 7 all contribute to this response.

A number of interviewees shared that their initial service motivator was a non-altruistic motivator that then led to an altruistic motivator. Building a resume for college was referenced by several participants as an initial motivator. Participant 9 said, “I felt myself forcing myself to do it [serve], just to build my resume. And when I finally started doing it for the purpose of serving others, it really made a difference.” Participant 15 also started serving in large part because of her desire to bolster her college application chances. Later on, however, “[I realized] how important it was, and how meaningful it was to those families” (Participant 15).

Many participants were initially involved because of mandatory service programs through their high school. Participant 6 was one who started volunteering to fulfill a requirement. After this initial experience, she started to see service more as an action to “[make] a real difference in other people's lives was more stuff that I lean towards later in my high school career.” This motivation has now carried into her college years.

Several interviewees mentioned that as they increased their proximity to the problem, they gained more motivation to be part of the solution to that challenge through their service action. Participant 16 and Participant 1 both shared that they found a passion for service in their respective fields, and this motivation increased as they continued their

volunteerism.

Several participants also volunteered for social reasons initially. Once becoming active within their service opportunity, this motivation changed. Participant 14 started volunteering initially because

it was kind of just the social aspect of just being involved. You know, if your friends are going to volunteer at a certain place, you're just going to tag along and see what it's like and kind of get a feel for it. But as you get older...you kind of gain that perspective.

Participant 16 also mentioned starting to serve to meet people; but eventually, she said, “when you get more involved, you do learn more about the problem. And I definitely think that I've [developed into] an empathetic person.”

Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) found that volunteer motivations do not come from a single motive but from a variety of motives that contribute to the choice to serve. As documented by most participants, the initial motivator (and the subsequent service) often leads to more altruistic and personal motivations for future service.

Lessons Learned

Considering all the conclusions that have been discussed, it is instructive to glean several lessons learned from the participants.

1. Service had an overwhelming positive impact on the participants, and the influence continues to compound into the future. As a general rule, service was observed to be a positive catalyst for service participants. Service participants demonstrated life-changing impacts from service. These impacts are seen in college, career, civic education, and life trajectory ways. Service

experiences were shown to lead to future service experiences, and initial service experiences led to a deeper understanding of the underlying problems the service action seeks to solve. Participants discussed their service experiences in a very positive manner and shared deeply personal stories that reflect past, current, and future impacts. Participant 12 related that her service experiences “were really beneficial...[and] it helped a lot and made you realize...what you’re doing is actually really good, really beneficial for not only you, but for that family too.”

2. The action of service fulfills several educational goals. Ultimately, many of the positive byproducts from service experiences align with educational goals (Eyler, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999, 2013; Heck et al., 2020; Nesbit & Brudney, 2010). Study participants verified this via their interview responses. There are many character education outcomes that are accomplished through service-learning and volunteerism, including soft skill development, critical-thinking skill development, civic education, dropout prevention, knowledge/empathy development, academic achievement, and other personal growth. If education leaders are seeking to accomplish many of these positive outcomes, service should be a methodology that is utilized to the fullest extent.
3. Developing personal passions/interests is part of an effective service experience. Several participants indicated that their perspectives on civic affairs were changed as a result of their service experiences. Exposure to different sections of the community, experiences with community challenges, experiences with problem-solving, appreciation of diversity, knowledge of

citizenship expectations, and development of passions were all part of the service experiences that were referenced by study participants. Achieving a deeper understanding of one's community and the associated societal gaps was highlighted as a key component of many service experiences. Participants also mentioned that they were able to pursue existing and fresh interests in an effort to grow passions. This resulted in influences in college, major selection, career, and other life-changing aspects. Participant 1 shared,

That was a defining moment for me in terms of the role that service played in my life, because I think it went back to that idea of what you're really passionate about and throwing yourself into that type of service. I think I grew much more passionate and much more involved because of the opportunity to kind of dive into something that I was really interested in.

4. As a result of service experiences, some see their intended careers as “active service,” a continuation of their service. Several participants explicitly mentioned that their intended career path – either their current job or their projected career – was a role that focused on giving back to the community. Several examples of the jobs that were referenced are teacher/educator, working with individuals with disabilities, public interest law, enlisting in the military, and working in the medical field. Each of these professions offers a level of service to humanity, even though there is an associated pay with each. It is important to see the value of this mindset in which a service participant sees their past previous experiences as a jumping-off point for the future and a

career that focuses on addressing inequities and bettering their community.

5. Early service experiences inspire participants to continue serving. This is one of the strongest themes that emerged from the participant interviews.

Participants initiated their service for a myriad of reasons: familial influence, mandatory service, socialization, non-altruistic reasons, knowledge of community challenges, and many others. Each individual's perspective matured and morphed as they served, and their motivations evolved over time. While this evolution transpired, perspectives also changed. Participant 1 shared, "service was always emphasized as something that should just be a part of your life every day."

All participants mentioned the passions that developed as a result of early service; the knowledge that was gained that led to continued interest in serving; and as more awareness of community issues grew, willingness to service also grew. Essentially, service performed in the younger years led to future service, creating a compounding effect. These results are a compelling rationale for school leaders, policy makers, and teachers. The early work to promote service will pay off exponentially.

6. Participants mentioned the importance of "seeing" and experiencing the impact of their service and getting close to the problem. One of the most poignant effects of the service participation described in this study are the participant views regarding their personal proximity to community challenges. Several participants indicated that they recognized community needs because of various reasons: familial exposure, general knowledge of the community,

and some by continued service exposure; all of which deepened their experience and knowledge of the problem. Participant 16 discussed her service experience: “We actually saw something happen. And that was really cool. But it’s also seeing the need still there. You see things. Accessibility for me is a human right...it’s a basic human right.” She continued and shared that this encounter helped to convince her of the importance of sustaining altruistic efforts. These experiences shaped the view of participants and helped to create knowledge that allowed participants to better serve their community. These also encouraged a familiarity that led to future/continued service.

7. Impacts on career, college, and civic engagement were all evidenced. This led to a better understanding of the world and the community. The impact of service participation on the college, career, and civic enlightenment of each participant is considerable and significant. While participants overall did not indicate a significant relationship between their service in high school and a proclivity to vote, there were other impacts that were evident for most participants. Many discussed a more developed sense of community knowledge and a deeper understanding of the benefits of civic engagement. A better understanding of the world was clearly evidenced. Further, one of the top motivators was “understanding,” as demonstrated by background questionnaire responses. Additionally, many participants related specific impacts on their college, major, and career choices as a result of their service participation. Participant 14, one of the older participants (who has comparatively more “life experience” than most) said his view is that “most

people who are involved in service projects generally have a better understanding of what's going on in the world.”

8. A number of interviewees shared that their initial service motivator was a non-altruistic motivator that naturally led to an altruistic motivator. Many participants referenced their initial service motivations as non-altruistic; and over time, these motivations evolved into altruistic motivations. Regardless of the initial or continuing motivation(s), service is a benefit to the individual and to the community. This demonstrates that involvement of high school students will pay off long term, irrespective of the initial motivator.

Participant 15 shared that she initially started serving for non-altruistic reasons and then her mindset changed: “Once I started doing it and getting older and reflecting on it now, it definitely had much more of an impact on me, [I realized] how important it was, and how meaningful it was to those families.”

While the research on mandatory service compared to non-mandatory service is mixed, it is obvious that service participation did influence these participants in an altruistic manner.

Participant 11 did raise a cautionary point, however. She related that some mandatory service mandates can serve as a chilling effect, causing a negative impression of service work. Quality, intentional implementation is key.

9. “Whenever I would volunteer, I'd find [some] people a lot worse off [than me]” (Participant 7). This lesson relates to the perspective-building that is referenced in Lesson 3, Lesson 6, and Lesson 7. In the course of the interview,

this individual shared about his childhood that was steeped in showing appreciation for what one has (even though this individual's family admittedly had significant challenges during his upbringing). Participant 7's childhood also emphasized giving back to the community as a moral imperative. This lesson also was echoed by others who referenced working with high-poverty students, working with individuals with disabilities, volunteering at various non-profit organizations that assist with food/housing insecurity, and others.

As participants increased their proximity to the challenges that are seen in their community, an understanding of these issues notably helped participants to value the privileges they have and to appreciate the situation of their fellow humans. Participant 14 shared that service "kind of puts things into perspective...things that you would normally see as obstacles in your life may pale in comparison to the things that other people are going through." This ultimately achieves developing feelings of altruism and empathy and assists in the effective development of quality character.

10. All participants are college students (current students or college graduates).

Interestingly, all students who were identified as participants were college students, and the vast majority of participants were 4-year college students (at the time of their interview) or 4-year college graduates. Additionally, this sample represents former high school students from a variety of backgrounds. College experience was not a qualifier for identification in this study; however, this demographic characteristic was fairly striking. This aspect of the study may be an indication of the interconnectedness of service and

education and the value that service participants place on continuing education.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was based on the responses from 19 former high school students who participated in service while in high school. For the sake of convenience and due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 global pandemic, interviews were primarily conducted over the phone or by using the online meeting platform Zoom. The modality of the interview was at the discretion of the interviewee, whatever was most comfortable. In-person interviews may have resulted in different results. Additionally, all interviews occurred during the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic, which influenced the lives of the researcher and all participants in various ways. This research was limited to former North Carolina high school students and consequently should not be generalized to other groups. More specific qualifying information could have been given to the administrators who identified these participants, which could have resulted in different results. For additional and/or a more in-depth study, the number of participants could have been increased.

Implications for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of former high school service participants regarding the aspects of quality service, the impacts of this service, and the motivations to perform altruistic actions. Clear evidence was demonstrated regarding the value of service, the formative nature of volunteerism, and the initial and changeable nature of service motivations; however, questions and opportunities remain.

Future study could investigate several aspects that were not explored as part of this study. First, future study could include students from private or parochial schools.

Participants came from traditional public schools and public, grassroots charter schools. Future study could also select participants who were at least 4 years removed from high school graduation to allow for more study related to career, graduate education, and continued service. Several participants were very recent high school graduates, some were nearing the end of their undergraduate tenure, and others had been part of the workforce for several years. More uniformity between participants would provide additional, different insights.

Future research could also expand to represent different states. Additional efforts could be made to represent additional diversity within the participant pool, seeking interviewees who hail from urban/rural/suburban regions; more ethnic diversity could be represented; socioeconomic diversity could be sought; and other subgroups could be included. Demographic, ethnic, gender, or other factors could have been used to differentiate or categorize results.

A VFI or another type of motivation model could have been utilized to add a facet of quantitative perspective to the results. In addition, more research can be done to identify the reasons that service participation rates are low, considering the benefits. This could identify additional best practices that could be used to proactively increase initial volunteerism. Finally, motivation interview questions could be written to align with the motivation categories that are included in the background questionnaire.

Final Reflections

Since the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, service continues to gain notoriety among educators and policy makers as a catalyst for community improvement, character education, civic responsibility, and other positive

impacts. These goals align with a strong tradition and history of altruism that stretches back to the dawning of the republic. From Ben Franklin to President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the history of volunteerism runs in parallel with the history of America.

This study clearly indicates that service is an inherent net positive for the service participant and for the community. Participants shared personal impacts and perspectives related to their previous service actions. These impacts extend to career, college plans, continued service, personal development, and countless additional changes. The formative nature of service is evidenced. Significant discussion on the variety of perspectives regarding the motivations to serve is also part of this study. Many participants demonstrated wide-ranging motivations that contributed to their initial service actions. Most participants shared that their motivations to serve evidenced a trend toward altruistic reasons as they continued their volunteerism. Concurrently, all participants reported personal and community benefits as a result of their service.

It is hoped that policy makers, education leaders, teachers, and others will benefit from the results of this study. It is also hoped that the benefits of service will continue to be promoted, resulting in school service program improvement. As the benefits of service inclusion in secondary education are realized and understood, quality educators and policy makers will work to increase altruism and volunteer experiences in their respective spheres of influence. This important work is an effort toward the development of contributing to an informed populace, or as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education" (King, 1947, p. 124). This speaks to the focus educators should have. Dr. King (1947) continued,

The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living. (p. 124)

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Appendix A
Background Questionnaire

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your perspective will benefit students, educators, policy makers and administrators - and anyone who wishes to promote service, service-learning and citizenship education. This questionnaire will help gather general information and the interview questions (separate document) will be discussed during our interview.

Thank you!

- What is your gender self-identification?
- What is your racial/ethnic background?
- Would you describe your high school as: Urban Rural Suburban
- Please describe your post-high school education experience: 4 yr college
2 yr college trade/vocational school work military
- Are you a first-generation college student?
- Are you a current volunteer?
- Are you currently part of a course, scholarship program, and/or extracurricular organization that requires volunteer participation?
- Are you currently part of a course, scholarship program, and/or extracurricular organization that promotes/encourages volunteer participation?
- Which of the following best describes the organization(s) in which you have previously volunteered? (select all that apply)

healthcare/public health	education and/or mentoring	arts and culture	college access and/or readiness
criminal justice	diversity and/or multiculturalism	economic/workforce development/financial literacy	government or law

housing and/or homelesses immigration and/or resettlement sustainability
 and/or food access work with individuals with disabilities the environment

10. I volunteer because.... (rank)

Values	I want to help meet a community need. I believe volunteering makes the world a better place.
Understanding	It allows me to appreciate the differences in people. It helps me gain a new perspective.
Social	My family and/or friends volunteer. I want to meet new people/build relationships with others.
Career	I want to build future work skills. It allows me to explore different career options.
Protective	I have been in difficult positions myself. It helps me deal with some of my own problems.
Enhancement	It makes me feel like a good person. It makes me feel useful.
Requirement	It's a requirement.
Recognition	I want to receive recognition for my volunteerism.
Religion	It fits with my religious beliefs.

Appendix B

IRB Notice and Participation Request Communication

-Hello XXXXX-

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your experiences with service-learning. In order to perform my research, I am interviewing individuals who have previously participated in service. I am attaching three documents to this email:

- The Informed Consent Form for Gardner-Webb University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- A link to the background questionnaire
- Interview questions

The Informed Consent Form for Gardner-Webb University IRB

The attached Informed Consent Form for Gardner-Webb University IRB requires you to execute a copy as evidence of your consent to participate in this study. This form mentions a background questionnaire and interview questions. The background questionnaire will be completed on your own time via a google form and the interviews will be conducted via a small group setting.

Background questionnaire

I ask that you complete this form prior to your interview. [Background Questionnaire Link](#)

Interview questions

The interview questions are provided to enable you to be familiar with the content of the interview.

I realize that you are busy and I appreciate you sharing your perspectives and experiences with me. I look forward to our interview.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bryant

Appendix C

Interview Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following terms and definitions will be provided to the participants: altruism, civic engagement, civil society, community service, empathy, mandatory service, prosocial personality, service-learning, and voluntary service. All questions are related to the individual's service experiences.

The questions for this study are:

1. What are the most important aspects of effective service-learning?
2. What benefits did you receive from your service experiences?
3. How has your high school service influenced your post secondary service?
4. How has your high school service influenced your college and/or career choices?
5. How has your high school service influenced your civic involvement, including voting?
6. What motivates you to participate in service, and how has this changed over time?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share about your service experience?