

[Sample Title: The Service-Learning Experiences and Outcomes of Low-Income, First-
Generation College Students Utilizing Multivariate Regression Modeling]

A Dissertation submitted
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for the degree of

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of the [Full College Name]

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ABSTRACT

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[NOTE: You will need to manually add a semicolon “:” after each table number once your table is updated. Number and title all tables, figures, photographs, and illustrations. If you have three or more figures and/or illustrations, present a list showing their location after your table of contents. There should be a separate list for Tables, a list for Figures, and one for charts or illustrations if needed. Do not include a list if there are less than three tables or figures. (Hint: When using tables, present a brief summary of the contents before the table is presented rather than repeat all statistics in the narrative. Try to limit tables and figures; if there are more than 15 of each, it is permissible to place in the appendices instead of the chapters to avoid disrupting the flow of the narrative.) Capitalize first letters in titles and figures.]

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION [HEADING 1]

[Heading Level 2]

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[Heading Level 2]

[Heading Level 3]

[This is heading 4.] This text is formatted as "normal" on the style menu, but do not allow extra blank lines between paragraphs.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a brief exploration of the broader higher education context that increasing institutionalization of and research on service-learning are situated within. Service-learning is then explored in detail along with the research that has investigated the relationship between this pedagogy and student outcomes. Next, literature on Low Income, First Generation (LIFG) college students is used to explicate the host of complex barriers these students commonly experience in their academic journeys. A critical lens is then used to illustrate the gaps in literature that give rise to persisting questions about the efficacy of service-learning as a pedagogical strategy to increase LIFG student success. These questions are further refined and undergirded with a theoretical and conceptual examination of service-learning for LIFG students which provided the foundation for this study.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Data Source

[Note: Mention the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval/exemption in this chapter (see Appendix X) – a copy should be included as an appendix.] Data used in this study is part of an ongoing mixed-methods study exploring the outcomes and experiences related to participation in service-learning courses for low-income, first-generation college students. This study utilizes national, longitudinal, data from matched responses between the 2004 Freshman Survey (TFS) and 2008 College Senior Survey (CSS), administered by the Higher Education Research Institute. TFS is given to students within the first 2 weeks of their first year in higher education, and the CSS is given to seniors in college within 6 weeks of their graduation. Low-income, first-generation students are operationalized using two items: annual family income and parental educational attainment. In a NCES report on middle- and low-income families paying for higher education, low-income is defined as annual family incomes below \$30,000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Choy, 2000). First-generation status is identified as students who indicate their parents' educational attainment is less than "some college." Of the 5,270 cases in the original dataset, 312 cases from 69 institutions meet the criteria of being both low-income and first generation. Of those 312 cases, 41% (n = 128)

represent low-income, first-generation college students who participated in service-learning (Table 1).

Table 1

Low-Income, First-Generation Sample Demographics

Institutional Type	<u>No. of Institutions</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>	
Public	37 (53.6%)	220 (70.5%)	
Private	32 (46.4%)	92 (29.5%)	
Total:	69	312	
	<u>Service- Learning Participation</u>		
Sex	<u>No (%)</u>	<u>Yes (%)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Male	71 (67.6%)	34 (32.4%)	105
Female	113 (54.6%)	94 (45.4%)	207
Total:	184 (100%)	128 (100%)	312
	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
Race/Ethnicity	<u>No (%)</u>	<u>Yes (%)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Asian	43 (82.7%)	9 (17.3%)	52
Black	23 (48.9%)	24 (51.1%)	47
Hispanic	72 (57.1%)	54 (42.9%)	126
White	24 (55.8%)	19 (44.2%)	43
Other Race/Ethnicity	7 (50.0%)	7 (50.0%)	14
Two or More Races/Ethnicity	15 (50.0%)	15 (50.0%)	30
Total:	184 (59.0%)	128 (41.0%)	312

Outcome Variables

Three dependent variables were selected: GPA, CSS Civic Awareness Score, and Cognitive Diversity Score. GPA, a stand-alone self-reported item, was chosen as a broad measurement of academic success (Kuh and Associates, 2006). The CSS Civic Awareness Scale was selected for prevalence as an outcome related to service-learning in previous literature (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999). The CSS Civic Awareness Scale is constructed from three self-reported items: understanding of social problems facing our nation (weight = 7.88); understanding global issues (weight = 3.32); and,

understanding of the problems facing your community (weight = 2.09). Finally, the Cognitive Diversity Scale was constructed from four self-reported items: change in critical thinking (weight = 0.783); change in analytic problem solving skills (weight = 0.736); change in knowledge of people of difference races/ethnicities (weight = 0.766); and change in ability to get along with people from different races/ethnicities (weight = 0.628). The Cognitive Diversity Scale resulted from a principle axis factor analysis (exploratory factor analysis)¹ that was employed to explore latent outcome constructs specific to a low-income, first-generation population ($\alpha = 0.814$).

Analytic Procedures

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used to provide information and frequency data about the population. Data was cleaned and multiple imputation analysis was utilized to accommodate missing data (missing values were found to be non-monotone and missing completely at random; 9.7% of cases were missing values for the annual parental income, all other variables were missing less than 4% of values).

Regression Analysis

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) blocked regression analysis is then utilized to examine the direction and significance of the relationship that participation in service-learning courses has with explored outcomes. Blocked regression was chose for its ability to parse independent variables such as student demographics, such as race/ethnicity, and student pre-college experiences, such as attending a High School that required

¹ Varimax rotation was utilized.

community service.² Blocking was organized using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks previously discussed. For each of these analyses Q-Q plots, and Normal P-P plots of model residuals were used to check that assumptions were met for the appropriate use of this analysis. A full list of the variables utilized in this study can be found in Appendix X.

² Hierarchical linear modeling was considered as a method to explore the impact of institutional characteristics; however, due to the narrow specifications of this population most institutional cell counts were too low to meet the assumptions required for this analysis.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

OLS blocked regression was conducted for each of the three outcome variables. Of the three regression analyses, participation in service-learning is a statistically significant predictor only for GPA. Table 2 [included as Appendix A in this case since the data extended beyond required margins] includes the results of the regression predicting college GPA (see Appendix A). As this table shows the participation in service-learning courses has a positive ($\beta = 0.528$) relationship with college GPA. The full model accounts for 23.2% of the variance in this variable. Because of the blocked nature of this analysis, we see that service-learning, as a single item, increases the model's overall R^2 by 4.0%. It is also interesting to note that of the three outcomes, that college GPA, though still a self-reported item, is a much less subject measurement. Whereas the other outcomes ask students to perceive their skills and growth, this item asks students to report a more objective figure. Consistent with other literature, students' pre-college characteristics account for that largest amount of variance in the model (11.2%) and students' high school GPA ($\beta = 0.343$) is also a significant positive predictor of college GPA. Finally, it should also be noted that Hispanic ($\beta = -0.928$) and Black ($\beta = -0.873$) race/ethnicity descriptors are both significant, negative, predictors of college GPA. This finding indicates that even when financial (low-income) and cultural (first-generation) capital are roughly held constant, there appears to be a systemic racial inequity in GPA attainment for these subpopulations.

While not in the original conceptualization of the study, several *ad hoc* measures were taken in response to the initial finding that service-learning is not a significant predictor for CSS Civic Awareness Scores and Cognitive Diversity Scores. Regression analyses were run on each of the individual survey items that make up the Cognitive Diversity Scale. In each of these analyses service-learning was not a significant predictor. This contrasts with prior research that indicates that service-learning increases exposure to diversity and the cognitive development (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne, Hammerich, Hensley, 1998). Since each of these items are self-reported by college seniors just prior to graduation, this may simply be a limitation of the data. Examination of these items shows that most students tend to rate themselves high on each of these questions; concordantly, there is very little variation present, which explains why almost no independent variables were significant predictors in either of the regression models. College seniors' perception that they have grown in critical thinking, analytical problem solving, knowledge of and ability to get along with people from different races/ethnicities while in college are an expected outcomes that virtually all institutions of higher education strive for. Additionally, research indicates that students may have difficulties self-assessing these subjective measures (Gonyea, 2005; Porter, 2011). Interestingly however, regression analyses of CSS Civic Awareness Scores and of Cognitive Diversity Scores conducted for the larger overall sample of college students results in models where service-learning is a very significant ($p < 0.001$), positive, predictor of both of these outcomes.

[Note: Always include a space before and after each =, +, <, >, ± symbol.]

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

[Note: Include brief overview of the study, limitations to the study, and recommendations for future research, and conclusion in this chapter.]

Limitations to the Study

Xxx xxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx
xx.

Recommendations for Future Research

Xxx xxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx
xx.

Conclusion

Xxx xxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx
xx.

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[Sample References]

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ETC.....

APPENDIX A:

Blocked Regression Model Predicting GPA

[NOTE: Supplemental material should be placed in appendices. You need a separate appendix for each type of material presented. Some style manuals allow you to place tables, figures, and other graphical representations in an appendix, rather than dispersed throughout your text. Each appendix should have a cover page that identifies it. Reference the cover sheet page number in the Table of Contents. Center the title on the page. A copy of your IRB or IACUC approval or exemption (if applicable) must be included as an appendix. Be sure to mention the IRB or IACUC in your “Methodology” chapter.]

Table 2

Results for Blocked Regression Model Predicting GPA for Low-Income, First-Generation Students

Variables	M1		M2		M3		M4	
	B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p
<i>Student Pre-College Characteristics</i>								
(Constant)	6.080	.000	3.892	.000	3.240	.021	5.508	.001
Male	-.223	.286	-.265	.201	-.270	.196	-.234	.265
Asian	-.300	.433	-.391	.291	-.392	.290	-.304	.410
Black	-.960	.020*	-.968	.014*	-.947	.015*	-.873	.025*
Hispanic	-1.087	.002*	-1.067	.001*	-1.058	.001*	-.966	.003*
Other Race/Ethnicity	-.607	.252	-.403	.435	-.368	.477	-.327	.524
Two or More Races/Ethnicities	-1.175	.009	-1.085	.014	-1.031	.014	-1.017	.016
TFS View: Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	.126	.659	.222	.441	.250	.405	.232	.448
TFS View: Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	.115	.578	.159	.419	.152	.440	.120	.539
TFS View: Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	-.179	.347	-.124	.501	-.126	.495	-.197	.290
TFS View: Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	-.040	.863	.073	.731	.092	.671	.115	.594
TFS View: Affirmative action in college admission should be abolished	.112	.610	.077	.716	.084	.696	.127	.549
<i>Student Pre-College Experiences</i>								
What was your average grade in high school?			.315	.000**	.313	.000**	.329	.000**
Act in Past Year: Performed community service as part of a class			-.275	.044	-.260	.065	-.257	.067
Act in Past Year: Performed volunteer work			.121	.395	.106	.470	.110	.450
Did your high school require community service for graduation?			.150	.494	.148	.504	.129	.562
<i>Student College Characteristics</i>								
Primary undergraduate major aggregated					-.010	.626	-.006	.762
Full-Time					.744	.535	.797	.500
<i>Institutional Characteristics</i>								
Public Institution							-.390	.081
Institutional Selectivity							-.002	.042
<i>Service-Learning</i>								
Participation in Service-Learning Course(s)								
Change in R ²	0.112		0.060		0.001		0.019	
R ²	0.112		0.172		0.173		0.192	

Helpful Hints

1. Be sure all pages have a 1.5" left margin.
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3. The bottom and right margins are 1".
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5. Set your paragraph settings to single or double spacing, not multiple...with no extra blank lines between paragraphs (this is the default setting in Word - do not use).
6. Spacing after a period ending a sentence – two spaces.
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11. For our purposes, when writing of units of time (years, months, weeks, days, hours, seconds, minutes, etc.), use numbers instead of spelling out (e.g., 6 years, 35 years, 7 months, 12 weeks, 30 minutes, 1 hour, 24 seconds, etc.). Use Arabic numbers when referring to chapters in text (e.g., In Chapter 1, the Definition of Terms included...). But use Roman numerals in the Table of Contents and chapter headings.
12. For our purposes, in the References, we ask students to capitalize the first letter of each word in Book titles.
13. For the Table of Contents - use leaders and page numbers (do not include "p.").
14. When using = < > + symbols, place one space before and one space after each. For example, n=45 should read as n = 45; p<.05 should be p < .05.
15. Include a copy of your IRB approval or exemption as an appendix (mention it in the Methodology chapter and include in the Table of Contents).
16. When discussing percentages, use either the symbol (%) or the word (percentage). Be consistent with use – don't interchange!
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