Sowing Seeds of Social Consciousness? Linking Student Engagement and Community Engagement Through Service Learning

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Abstract

The current emphasis by government and private sectors on issues surrounding social concerns, sustainability, and community-mindedness has prominently trickled into education institutions. This paper proposes a perspective that they can be tapped with significant potential through a thoughtful process of addressing various groups of community needs under the right conditions. With many higher education institutions implementing community service as modules, there needs to be a deeper look at how community service outcomes can expand to a broader scope of community engagement through service learning and how this can influence student engagement. Additionally, to explore the conditions that could possibly make these modules or programs effective for not just social purpose outcomes and social consciousness but filling in gaps in personal development and employability expectations. With a look at past community projects and campaigns as well as students' perceptions of the causes they create and follow through, the paper hopes to provide a practical framework for implications and considerations of the Service-Learning approach.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Student Engagement, Service-Learning, Social Consciousness, and Civic Awareness.

Introduction

There has been a lot of attention given towards efforts for social purposes and community driven initiatives of government sectors from their community driven programs, corporations through their social responsibility practices and modules from educational institutions. According to the latest research by Mellon, Sanders and Vonbartheld (2018),

higher education institutions are urged to align with community efforts to collectively address civic and social issues. Jacoby (2009), who authored papers on the topic of student's civic engagement had already pronounced the active role it played in influencing what he endorsed as 'positive societal change'. A Malaysian study by Guptan (2015) acknowledged the pivotal role of Higher education that the initiative for community inclusiveness has been the focus of higher education institutions for decades as seen in the voluminous research.

The noble motives for young people to become socially responsible citizens is a truly vocalized notion. These constant reminders coupled with those of religious teachings, civic education and values embedded by parents and educators are seen as planting seeds of social consciousness that will bring hope to a broken world and that the young become contributing members of society that would do better than harm. Ultimately, that we all are very much part of the community we live with. As prompted by Thomson et al (2010) in the first line of the abstract that in an ideal democratic nation, citizen participate in their life of their communities. Furthermore, the United Nations introduced 17 sustainable development goals in 2015 which is being pronounced in countries and institutions around the world shows a massive global mind shift towards community and the world we share as our home (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2018). The Malaysian government has prioritized some of these sustainable goals. Hence, it is added that the pronounced focus of tertiary education churning actively engaged citizens is evidently significant to the development of society.

In the quest to recruit more holistic graduates, equipped with the necessary industry knowledge, competencies, skill sets, work ethic and values, employers are increasing lamenting about the gaps they see in graduates falling short especially where attitude was concerned. In a survey conducted by Jobstreet in 2017, 68% of fresh graduates had unrealistic expectations on salary and benefits and it went on the reiterate that in a job interview, employers look beyond the resume for ability to communicate, your attitude, the soft skills possessed, and ability to contribute to the company (The Star Online, 2017). Adding to the magnitude of concern of the expectation gaps are The Malaysia Employers Federation said there are about 200,000 unemployed graduates in the country. When skills and specific knowledge is a natural focus of academic modules, shaping attitudes, the more challenging task can be an integral by-product of service-learning modules, specifically on aspects of humility and empathy as well as problem solving within constraints. Goodman and Tredway (2016) suggest that engaging in volunteer activities can help equip students with competencies that make them more prepared for the world of work. Service-learning can build student's resiliency by improving their interactions with others, strengthening their character, and allowing them to model the positive behaviors of others (Kraft & Wheeler, 2003).

Scrutinizing the university experience to an end of prosperity and success is unfortunately not how some students feel. As classes expands and university numbers increase, there are many who become disconnected or disengaged from their purpose of educational pursuit, as observed by educators in higher education. Krause (2005) asserts they show signs of inertia, finding it difficult to get motivated, just biding their time at university, and at the risk of dropping out. He further emphasizes the need for a better way of understanding, monitoring, and promoting student engagement. Service-learning is cited as one strategy for creating greater levels of engagement (Kuh et al., 2007).

This research is aimed at forming a stronger link between student engagement and community engagement and how service-learning programs can be engineered to deliver

impactful outcomes towards increased student engagement, meeting community needs and creating socially conscious graduates. It addresses the gap of service-learning literature which do not necessarily breakdown the process of service-learners from their perspective and therefore identify some significant outcomes(as elements) that could indicate a crucial pattern for service-learning curriculum design to instill social consciousness. By scrutinizing the current practice of ongoing service-learning module at the Victoria University Program called Social Issues and Community Engagement, with data spanning across eight semesters in three years, the study crystalizes a conceptual framework for similar programs in education or even for non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Literature Review
Service –Learning: From Concept to Practice
'An education system that gives children shared values and experiences by embracing diversity' is one of the five aspirations stated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2015-2025) (UNDP, 2014).

It is easy to deduce from research that the origins of Service-learning concept stems from community service. With broader application and practice, community engagement followed extending implications. This is covered in the following literature review.

Service Learning happens to be a more holistic and somewhat academically implied term to apply when it comes to achieving broader outcomes and experiences. One of the earliest definition was provided by Bringle et al (2004: 127) that it the a '*course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community goals and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.*'

Service-learning is 'a pedagogy that combines academic study with service to the community' (Deely, 2014, pp 39). Additionally, it is an education that combines academic coursework with service to the community through a process of structured and critical reflection (Deeley, 2010a) and is based on experiential learning theory (Jarvis, 2010; Merriam et al., 2007). The terminology considered that Service–Learning is an approach to civic engagement, according to many researchers on the subject matter (Bureau et al., 2014; Hunter and Moody, 2009; Jacoby, 2009).

It is worth to point out the commonality throughout researchers when examining the term that it somehow relates to experiential learning. Experiential Learning being the connection between theory and practice is accomplished when the learner goes through a cycle of experience, concept, reflection, and action (Kolb, 1984). Service-learning takes on the approach of experiential learning but specifically aims at learning about societal issues and the community. A recent study by Kavatekar and Vijaya (2017) focused on how experiential learning can be an effective tool to create engagement and empowerment among students for holistic growth by incorporating community service.

A local Malaysian researcher in the field has asserted that it is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning encounters, deliver civic responsibility and support communities (Sandaran, 2012). In the Malaysian context, her embrace on the subject was timely and relevant to the fact that Malaysian universities were already infusing courses of this nature within their course outline. She further acknowledges that the practice of service learning expands to a wide range of experiential educational and communal pursuits. An earlier local

study had asserted that students who participated in Service Learning programs gain experience, moral development, observation, creativity, social responsibility and heightened involvement with the local community (Ali et al., 2010).

It seems that Service learning as a pedagogical approach in universities has been propelled mainly by American academics (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, 2000; Butin, 2003). The term Service learning and the practice was found to be extensively applied in the curriculum of US High Schools as initial research indicates. With implications of Service-Learning effectiveness, Billing et al (2005) revealed in a national study of high school students that when youth reported greater engagement in service learning, they were more likely to become academically engaged and attached school or community.

To this study focusing on tertiary level students, it can be implied that Service Learning incorporates subjects or module related components delivered in educational institutions with a deeper sense of communal focus where students go through a process of experience and reflection. Butin(2010) published when the service-learning movement reached a milestone, that the number of service learning programs and courses has increased exponentially and explores just how effective these programs are in changing tertiary education. The definition and implications have expanded in recent years with practice and application.

Student Engagement: A Mission to Activate Through Service Learning and Community Engagement

There is a myriad of ways to consider students engagement. Engagement, by definition, is as "commitment," "involvement," "participation," "attraction," "active" while in higher education, engagement tends to be conceptualized as an index of student's time and energy invested in educationally purposeful activities (Simonet, 2008).

According to Axelson and Flick (2011), student engagement refers to "how involved or interested students appear to be in their learning and how connected they are to their classes, their institutions, and each other. However, Harper and Quaye (2009) argues that engagement is more than involvement or participation, as it requires feelings and sense making. Zimmerman et al (2014) offers a perspective from the students themselves in their study that revealed that active participation in class, comfort with the instructor and open communication seem to be important elements.

The connection between experiential learning and student's engagement can be established as one being the means for another. The more learning is experiential, the more students become engaged (Chong and Paul, 2015).

The challenges of student engagement is almost in parallel with the timeline of millennials traits discovery by researchers. Shorter attention spans, boredom, restlessness, seeking relevance and preference to active learning versus passive learning are all hallmarks of millennial traits as pointed out by countless studies (Mann and Robinson, 2009; Schofield and Honore, 2010; Kandlbinder, 2010). Pastorino (2006) supported this notion by highlighting inherent generational differences that impact teaching and learning. Research also indicates the large university classes have associated problems with 'disengagement' (Mulryane-Kyne, 2010). However, data from National Survery of Student Engagement (NSSE), a foreign indicator known as NSSE in the US has provided insight into how students experience service learning and subsequent impact made on institutions (Hunter & Moody, 2009). According to Jordaan (2014), the students become more engaged and acquire social knowledge and skills.

The Expanded View from Community Service

There is a stark distinction between the two as this paper would indicate that engagement with the community takes on a broader term. Community engagement relies heavily on partnerships and mutual reciprocity between different stakeholders such as communities, universities, non-government organizations (NGOs), field experts and funding organizations (Ramachandra et al., 2014). Sandaran (2012) looks upon service as civic engagement and not charity, its focus on reciprocity, or the win-win situation of all parties working together and benefiting together, can provide opportunities for students to explore university-community engagement refers to activities which are conducted in the community by a university by expanding its role as passive provider of knowledge to an active participant (Hart and Northmore, 2011). A South African study in the subject by Lazarus et al (2008) acknowledged that the terminology used for community engagement has shifted from 'community service' (Department of Education, 1997) to 'community engagement' (Higher Education Quality Committee, 2004) and to a 'scholarship of engagement' (HEQC/CHESP, 2006).

Community Engagement and Service-Learning: The Employers Pick?

Universities worldwide are taking crucial steps to make graduate employability a priority and it was highlighted in the findings the strength students' of personalities, skills, and academic characteristics attribute to graduate marketability (Baker et al., 2022).   This study allowed the university to discover and practice the critica laspect of marketability for graduate students and participate in positive group cohesionto attain a high degree of personality, skills, and academic achievement

The value of community engagement and social purposes do not only extend to beneficiaries but can impact students personal development feeding into their careers. Although this may be not everyone's 'cup of tea' or area of interests, it has become glaringly evident by the CSR initiatives and project impressed upon employees that employers are looking for socially responsible and conscious individuals. Corporations in endorsing employee volunteerism have recognized that it improves engagement (Chandler, 2015; Moffat, 2015). Jung (2011) affirms that there is a close link between community engagement volunteerism and how it could benefit employability. Deely (2014) declares that voluntary work is integral to service-learning and provides students an ideal opportunity to cultivate their employability skills and attributes. There has been a great deal of literature that found prospective employers seeking personal attributes consistent with outcomes of community engagement and service learning. It was stated that *corporations encouraging employees to offer services as a volunteer has acknowledged great benefits to their employees which reinforces the need for business programs to include service-related experiences (Arnold, 2017).*

Within the scope of bountiful research for employability, there was one that proclaimed the concept of a 'graduate identity' which is defined as encompassing values, intellect, performance and engagement (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011). Interestingly, it implies quite astutely that employers were already seeking for graduates that are socially conscious with developed ideals and reaping all the benefits from exposure to community engagement.

As far as specific attributes emphasized by employees, Wickam (2018) findings reveals alignment between collaborative learning skills needed by employers and those enhanced through service-learning. The findings many studies revealed that most of the employability skills and personal attributes referred to in literature and sought by prospective employers

(Barnett and Coate, 2005; CBI, 2011; Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Knight, 2006) were evident in this service-learning course, although previously they had not been overtly acknowledged.

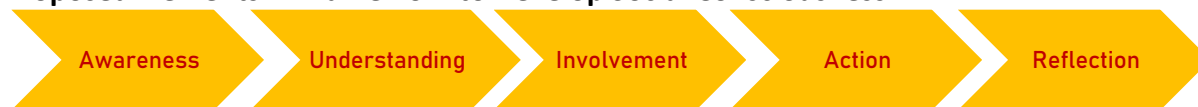**Proposed Elements in Framework to Develop Social Consciousness**

Figure 1. The approach and outcomes to develop social consciousness

In proposing the right conditions to enhance student engagement, the above elements are suggested to be included in the design of a Service-Learning program. Rutherford et al (2011) supported that students go through a purposeful process in co-learning while the founding principle of this proposed framework can be rooted in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning process. The framework also acknowledges the notion of transformative learning where students experience the process of transformation learning through service learning (Kiely, 2002).

Chong and Paul (2015) brought forth the component of the 'Pursuit' in their research for the Engagement Catalyst as a recommended approach in engaging Millennial. 'Pursuit' here would mean to facilitate the students through some form appealing task or goal to achieve that would possibly spark curiosity and sustain interest. The more learning is experiential and action oriented, the more students become engaged.

Effort to ensure students go through such a process with rewarding outcomes can be supported by Anderson (2005); Calvo and Lang (2004) to which implied that with curiosity, situational interest should result from exposure to a relevant external stimulus that elevates arousal and in turn holds attention and focus. The development of heightened social consciousness in the learning process was pronounced by (Crabtree and Sapp, 2002; Bourrelle, 2012).

Research Methodology

The Social Issues and Community Engagement(SICE) was initially a community service themed subject selected by the Australian University Program at Sunway College as part of the three additional compulsory MPU modules students would have to take starting in year 2014. In year 2015, every 2nd year and 3rd year international degree students from the Australian University program as Victoria University Business students who were completing their studies in Malaysia was asked to complete it. Since 2014, the number of students enrolled in the module continued to grow and in 2017, it was offered every semester (including summer) to allow the opportunity for more students to clear the module. Further demographic breakdown of the students such as gender and race were not obtained as it was not the focus of the study.

The data was from a population study obtained to facilitate the outcomes of this research. A brief questionnaire was administered at the end of each semester to the target group once they have completed the whole experience. Data from students were collected across eight semesters in four years from the summer of 2014 till mid 2018 and the total respondents with valid filled questionnaires were 569 students. Basic descriptive statistics was used to see what were the outcomes identified and then to measure Awareness, Understanding, Involvement , Action and Reflection . Students were given feedback forms at

the end of every semester to assess their own perception on understanding of the module delivered awareness of social issues and involvement on their causes.

Qualitative statements were taken from some open-ended questions of the questionnaire to measure some outcomes, particularly reflection and social consciousness; an indication whether students would consider investing in social purpose under any capacity.

Features of SICE Module Construct

Second- or third-year business students from the Victoria University Program of Sunway College would need to take up SICE as one of their compulsory additional modules under General Studies. They spent two hours a week on in class learning and the rest of the credit hours obtain from field work, engaging with a community partner or NGO, planning their project and executing it.

Table 1
Assessment breakdown

Project Proposal	25%
Project Execution	40%
Individual Reflection	15%
Session weekly participation	20%
TOTAL	**100%**

The SICE Project
The students can either select an Awareness Campaign or a Community Engagement Outreach for a community need to be fulfilled. Sometimes but not often, it can be both.

Research Data Background
Table 2
Number of SICE students in this study (based on batch)

BATCH	SUMMER 2014-2015	SEM 2 JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015/2016	Jul-16	SUMMER 2016/2017	Feb-17	Jul-17	SUMMER 2017-2018	FEB SEM 2018	JULY SEM 2018	TOTAL
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	51	48	47	10	59	75	52	49	76	97	**569**

Table 3
Number of SICE projects completed.

	SICE SUMMER 2014-2015	SICE SEM 2 JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015-2016 Projects	SICE SEM 2 JULY 2016	SUMMER 2016-2017	SICE FEB 2017	SICE JULY SEM 2017	SICE SUMMER 2017-2018 Projects	SICE FEB SEM 2018	SICE JULY SEM 2018	TOTAL
No. Projects	9	8	9	13	12	17	14	11	14	14	121

Social issues of greatest interest, as reported in *The 2016 Millennials Impact Report: Wave 1 Trends* (2016) are education, healthcare, employment/wages, crime, and human rights. The following are the themes of community engagement or campaigns conducted by the SICE students.

Table 4
Types of SICE projects completed.

THEMES SELECTED		No of Projects From 2015-2018
Health-Related	*Organ donation, fitness, kidney care, multiple sclerosis etc*	9
Mental Health Related	*Depression, suicide prevention, stress management, anxiety-social anxiety etc*	23
Humanity Related Outreach	*Eldercare, homeless, disabilities, abused and neglected kids, visually impaired, learning difficulties, autism, single mums, HIV kids, kids with Cancer*	31
Animal Welfare	*Animal abuse and neglect, stray dogs' issue, adoption, anti-animal testing, anti-cruelty etc*	9
Addiction related	*Phone addiction, drug addiction, porn addiction, alcoholism, smoking, gambling addiction, POKEMON addiction, sex addiction etc*	9
Environmental	*Recylcing campaigns, Up cycling, Caring for the environment*	6
Other Awareness themes	*HIV Stigma, Transgender discrimination, Islamophobia, International students issues, Cyberbullying & bullying, safety driving, Women Empowerment, Racism,Divorce, Anti-Abortion etc*	34
		121

Research Findings from Student Survey Feedback
Respondents were asked the following question on their understanding of the module. Answers looks into whether the students understood the module.
QUESTION 1: Do you understand what this module was about?

Table 5

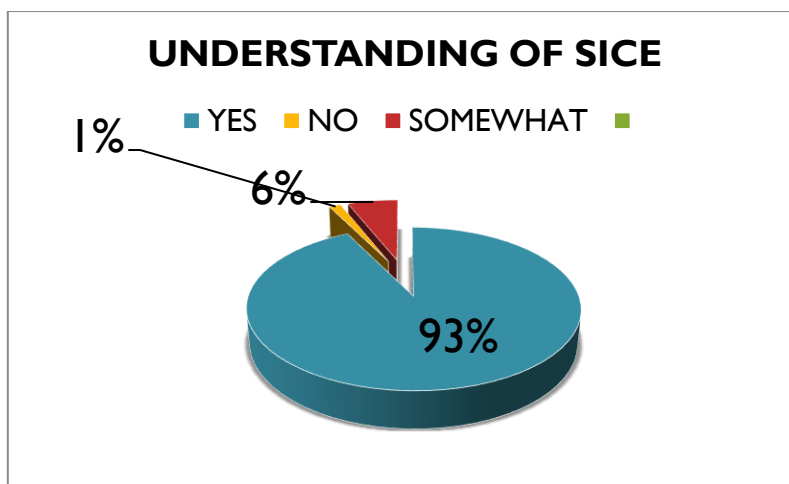| BATCH	SUMMER 2014/2015	SEM 2 JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015-2016	JULY 2016	SUMMER 2016/2017	FEB 2017	JULY 2017	SUMMER 2017/2018	FEB 2018	JULY 2018	TOTAL	%
YES	48	47	46	10	54	72	51	45	73	81	527	**92.6**
NO	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4	8	**1.4**
SOMEWHAT	3	1	1	0	4	2	4	4	3	12	34	**5.98**
TOTAL FOR THE SEM	**51**	**48**	**47**	**10**	**59**	**75**	**57**	**49**	**76**	**97**	**569**	

Figure 2. Understanding of SICE.

Implications

The vast majority (93%) of the students understood the module and its purpose. Considering this was a compulsory subject, it was important for students to comprehend the rationale of why this was being introduced and conducted in such manner. Students must understand the rationale behind a service-learning module and its expectations (Jordaan ,2014). It was a relief to note that efforts to increase social consciousness are not futile with high. Eyler and Giles(1994,p.69) states that the understanding gained through service-learning enhanced what they learned from books and classes as it is reality learning and further posits that deep understanding come through a process of constructing knowledge through assessment of experience.

Table 6
QUESTION 5: Did you become more aware of certain social issues after this course?
Measures the AWARENESS of social issues.

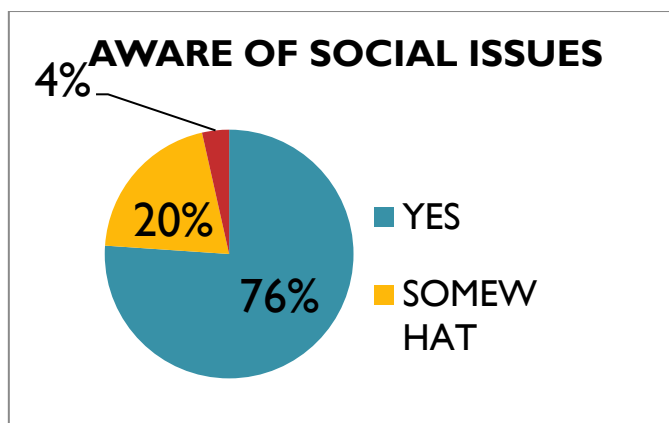| BATCH	SUMMER 2014-2015	JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015/2016	JULY 2016	SUMMER 2016/2017	FEB 2017	JULY 2017	SUMMER 2017/2018	FEB 2018	JULY 2018	TOTAL	%
YES	39	41	40	9	43	60	40	33	52	76	433	76
SOMEWHAT	11	6	7	1	14	13	16	10	20	18	116	20.4
NO	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	6	4	3	20	3.5
	51	48	47	10	59	75	57	49	76	97	**569**	

Figure 3. Aware of social issues.

Implications

The module helped to create awareness on social issues for 76% of the students said they became more aware during the course. This is the main outcomes of the modules to heighten social awareness and civic consciousness. According to Gafoor(2012) , awareness is the state or ability to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns. It is a level of basic consciousness.

Table 7
Q2 The question was to rate the experience of the module in terms of Class Topics and Activities

Reflective on students' sentiment of their INVOLVEMENT in the weekly social themes and experiential activities.

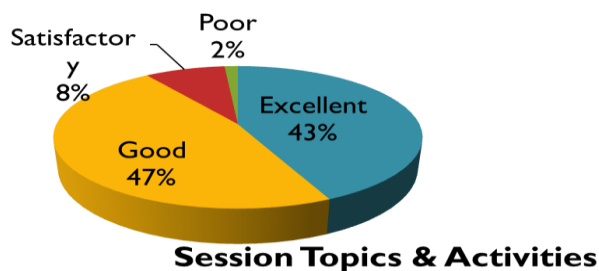| BATCH	SUMMER 2014/2015	SEM 2 JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015-2016	JULY 2016	SUMMER 2016/2017	FEB 2017	JULY 2017	SUMER 2017/2018	FEB 2018	JULY 2018	TOTAL	%
Excellent	28	20	28	5	30	27	16	20	31	40	**245**	**43.1**
Good	21	27	19	5	23	41	32	22	31	47	**268**	**47.1**
Satisfactory	2	1			5	6	6	7	13	8	**48**	**8.4**
Poor					1	1	3		1	2	**8**	**1.4**
	51	**48**	**47**	**10**	**59**	**75**	**57**	**49**	**76**	**97**	**569**	

Figure 4. Session Topics & Activities.

Implications

A significant number of them found the weekly topics and activities in the session to be on 'good 'or excellent. A high degree of involvement was expected in these activities and participation marks were awarded. Weekly sessions consisted of exposure to experiential learning and personalization of social issues and concerns from real life cases / incidents which draws appeal to *Millennials* as supported in research. Student engagement is identified by authors as students involvement in meaningful academic activities (Collaco,2017 ; Delialioglu, 2012).

There is consistent research that states how *Millennials* are more inclined to respond to relevance and real practical learning as they see how it relates to themselves, realism and relevance draw appeal and delivers a deeper approach to learning (Pressley, 2006; Revell and Wainwright, 2009).

As for experiential and reflective approaches to each activity, the students become more observably engaged perhaps because of the degree of personalization used in the approach. Since Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) affirms that one of Gen-Y traits are that they are indeed experiential learners and Metz (2011) the best tool in a classroom is an enthusiastic teacher who can connect with students on a personal level, the combination of the two would certainly improve engagement levels though self-expression. Self-expression and individuality are regarded highly for Millennials, according to (Moffat, 2015).

Regarding the speculation on whether the students were INVOLVED for the sake of the participation marks, the recent 2018 July batch of 97 were asked in the feedback to elaborate on what made them keep coming for the sessions, despite their other heavy academic modules. Some qualitative statements were noted.

Extended Qualitative Comments from Q3: What kept you coming?
"To know more about society and things not covered in other textbooks. Participation is important"
" The class not boring, got many activities that were connected to the topics on social concerns"
"Learning issues affecting the community that most of us are ignorant of kept me curious
"Exciting activities conducted in class. Builds character"
"The weekly participation marks" (3 x)
"Creating awareness and expanding a student's mind that university is not all about books. Informative"
"The interactive activities and games. There is always a surprise in every session."
"Although I come for the attendance, but I have fun in the in-class activities. Don't feel stressed."

"Learning something new weekly enhance my knowledge. Good content"
"The participation in class helped me know more about social issues outside the world."
"Real–life current issues that needs attention and can be related to my life"
"Understanding of scope of social responsibility and to appreciate the challenges."
"Group activities. The discussion about social problems and critical thinking required."

- The qualitative comments were to assess whether the students got INVOLVED because of participation marks alone and their statements showed that there was evidence of involvement other than the motive of marks attainment.

The Assessment (The Proposal and Project)
Table 8
QUESTION 2: Overall, how was your experience for the entire module in terms of the Assessment Project
Reflective on students' perception in their output of ACTION (deliverable) the planning and execution of an awareness campaign or a community engagement

BATCH	SUMMER 2014/2015	JULY 2015	SUMMER 2015-	JULY 2016	SUMMER	FEB 2017	JULY 2017	SUMMER 2018	FEB 2018	JULY 2018	TOTAL	%
Excellent	22	12	21	5	21	22	13	22	15	35	**188**	**33**
Good	26	29	22	5	30	40	28	18	45	44	**287**	**50.4**
Satisfactory	1	4	2		6	8	9	8	11	13	**62**	**10.9**
Poor					1	3	2	1	2	1	**10**	**1.76**
Did not answer	2	3	2		1	2	4		3		**17**	**2.98**
	51	**48**	**47**	**10**	**59**	**75**	**57**	**49**	**76**	**97**	**569**	

*Students were to group up and pick a cause of them to either do a Social Awareness Campaign or a Community Outreach or have both elements
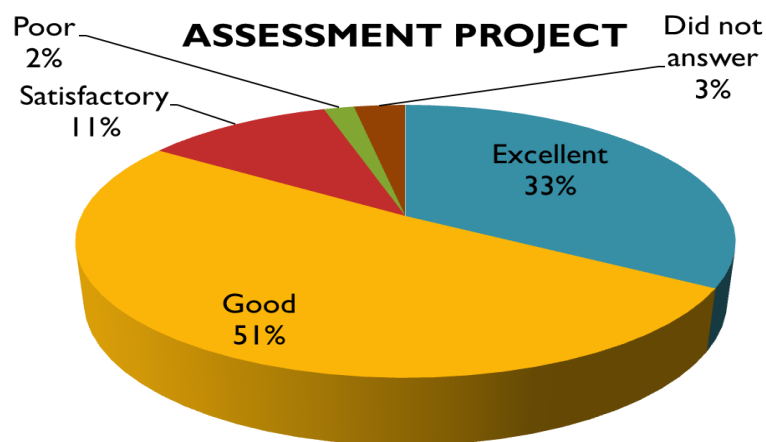

Figure 5. Assessment project.

Implications

Most of the students had a good and excellent experience for the Project Assessment which was either a community engagement or a campaign or both that the students could select which issue they wish to address or advocate. Kaye(2012) specifically identifies action in service-learning as the implementation of the plan that usually takes the form of direct service, indirect service, advocacy, or research.

Brown (2000) articulated that net learners have a "bias toward action". The Project itself was aimed to ignite **action** through execution of own initiatives where students were urged to use creative approaches, forge collaborations with existing community partners/NGOs and utilize connections with peer groups and clubs. This leads to a systematic reflection exercise to capture the learning experience throughout. Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi (2015) asserts *Millennials* like having flexibility and are team oriented, enjoy working with others . This could explain why the project is well received. Ukleja and Jackson (2015) states that the younger generation value leadership that takes a personal interest in their ideas, and an environment that welcomes them to share in decision making.

Table 9
QUESTION 10: Does it honestly influence or inspire you to do more for the community in future?
*This question was an addition in the later semesters with 182 respondents
Measures students willingness or openness to serve the community in future in any capacity

SUMMER 2017	SEM 2 2017	Feb 2018	TOTAL
49	57	76	182

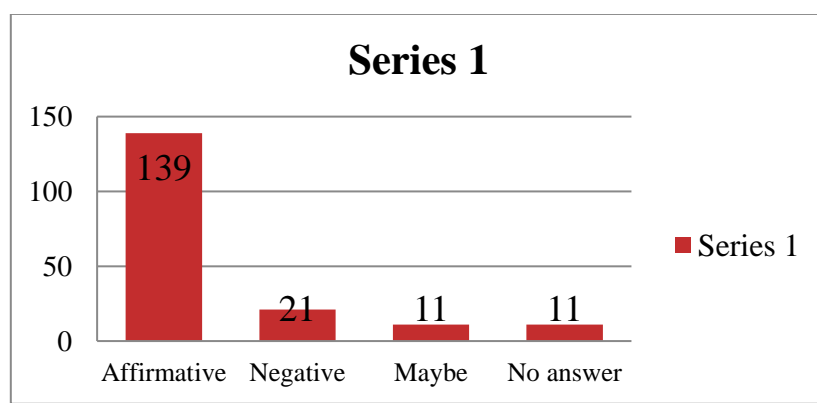|	**Summer 2017**	**Sem 2 2017**	**Feb 2018**	**TOTAL**
Affirmative	36	44	59	139
Negative	7	7	7	21
Maybe	3	3	5	11
	3	3	5	11
	49	**57**	**76**	**182**

Figure 6. Series 1.

Respondents were very much willing and open to do more for the community with 139 of 182 who answered this stating affirmative statements . They were either inspired to do more or have already been doing volunteer work and will continue. Poon, Chan and Zhao (2011) revealed that students who participated in service learning programs showed an

increase in sense of responsibility and ethical behaviour. There is a personal connection with the community, find their projects more meaningful. They find the service-learning meaningful when the service they provide meets an important need of the community (Jordaan, 2014).

The negative statements were mostly not explained further as to why they were not considering to do more for the community.

Table 10
QUESTION 8: Rate how much you think SICE can help potential graduates in the following areas
(Measures students' perception on Service-Learning contribution and link to their employability and emotional intelligence)
Sample size of 2018 July Sem batch of 97 students to examine the link with the execution of Service-Learning module to addressing employability gaps and expectations.

FEATURES/ RATINGS	1	2	3	4	
Project Management	0	5	18	74	
Personal Development &Self Awareness	1	2	19	75	
Employability skills	0	5	27	65	
Values of empathy and humility	0	3	11	83	
*4 being very helpful and 1 does not help					

It was the direct intention of learning outcome for the service-learning module to attempt to shape or enhance values which most rated highly. Skills and values attainment was what the researchers were attempting to investigate and social consciousness would closely relate to values of empathy and humility. This recorded the highest number of frequency for being helpful.

Qualities young people value, according to the authors are humility, empathy, commitment to the growth of followers, development of new skills (Ukleja and Jackson, 2015),

Mouton et al (2005) affirms after the completion of a service-learning module, students indicated that they had acquired leadership and project management skills.

Employability skills were mostly emphasized in other modules especially at the Sunway VU Programs, a progressive module called Integrated Business Challenge caters to delivering skills of teamwork , leadership and problem solving. Encouraging to note that the students did agree that it improved their personal development Jordaan (2014) says, students reflect on the service-learning module as valuable, useful, and relevant to their future careers and self-development.

Conclusions and Recommendations
As Butin (2006) concluded that the study was to 'expand transformational potential of service learning', this research was produced with similar intentions and more, especially in

addressing existing implications of tapping potential of the younger generation to propel social consciousness. The study also acknowledges the emergence of identifiable outcomes from the service learning experience captured. This indication of outcomes were interestingly from the students perspectives and asserts that students go through a process. However, further in-depth study to measure these outcomes could be conducted to affirm the notion of the framework proposed.

To draw some conclusions from the findings of this this study, for a student to sustain engagement and become socially conscious, it is suggested that community related modules adopt a more service-learning approach with content specifically designed to address several conditions through a process. These include.

i.   To spark Awareness of various real and relevant social issues.

ii.   To develop a more holistic viewpoint on the Understanding of those issues. This would involve collaborating with a community partner or an expertise.

iii.   To invoke Involvement of the students in the experiential learning activities.

iv.   To inspire Action in the students chosen issue for the project, from planning to execution.

v.   To encourage Reflection on self, group, and project subject matter.

In view of long-term effectiveness to engage students to instill prospects of commitment to community, higher learning institutions could adopt a greater focus to breakdown current community related modules and design module content with scope of service-learning elements such as experiential learning and building relationship with community partners. Students would benefit intrinsically throughout the process or stages of deliverables as Ramachandra (2014) puts it university students participate with the community through 'journey of engagement'. Most countries in the world, especially Malaysia and developing countries see universities as important social institutions in society. Based on that premise, the position of the university is considered to have a noble position (Yacob etal,2002).

The key ingredient for a buy-in from student on turning community modules compulsory for students is an 'awakening' approach to linking subject content to their reality. It is to supplement global and practical knowledge that they may not find in other academic modules and allowing their collective input to serve the purpose of the course.

In a nutshell, community related modules do not have to be about a mere obligation to fulfill or a grade to make up for. It could and should reach greater heights of rewarding outcomes for parties involved, the students, the community, and the institutions if greater at attention and focus is given to ensuring the right conditions for those outcomes prevail.

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