Proposal for a [Poster Presentation]

Exploring Reciprocity in Partnerships:
The Case of Japan Summer Service-Learning at ICU

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Abstract:

1.   Introduction

International Christian University (ICU) of Japan has over 20 years of experience in integrating International Service-Learning (ISL) in undergraduate education. As a pioneer of service-learning, ICU led the path of formation of Service Learning Asia Network (SLAN) initially and developed partnership with many universities and institutions on service-learning activities in Asia. In recent years, however, reciprocity in partnerships has been highlighted as a means to overcome the liner development model and savior complex. Thus, ICU developed an inbound Service-Learning program called Japan Summer Service-Learning (JSSL), together with the Center for Community Engagement at Middlebury College of the United States. JSSL is a short-term (30days), community connected, cohort program in the summer tailored for incoming students from the SLAN partner universities, Middlebury College, and ICU students. The participating students deepen their understanding toward Japanese society through serving together in the local communities both in the urban and rural areas.

In this presentation, we attempt to examine how JSSL helped improve reciprocity and partnership, by using the SOFAR model and E-T-T model (Bringle et al., 2009) and try to understand where we stand in these models as to know if there is any area of improvement. By doing this exercise, we hope to find directional input for the improvement of ICU's service-learning program and draw some implications for other institutions that pursuit reciprocity of partnerships.

2.   Theoretical framework/literature review

Reciprocity does not take place just between the server and the served or by the two entities such as the partner university and ICU, but it can take place various forms, such as between the students and the beneficiary, community organizations, between the practitioners of institutions and the staff of receiving organizations. Indeed, JSSL enabled the reciprocity to take place in many layers of service-learning stakeholders. Partnership does not just take place between the two categories of parties such as university and the community, but can take place in the sub categories as well, such as faculty, students and practitioners or community representatives and community members.

To explore how JSSL program has developed reciprocity in the past activities, we firstly identify characteristics of JSSL program in the five categories and ten dyadic relationships of

SOFAR model, and then analyze the depth of relationship and partnership through adopting E-T-T model(Bringle et al., 2009).

SOFAR model (Bringle et al., 2009) delineated the structure of relationships in sub sets. It is a structural framework for relationship with five constituencies, namely **S**tudents, **O**rganizations in the community, **F**aculty, **A**dministrators on the campus, **R**esidents in the community. Bringle et al. (2009) demonstrate a total of ten dyadic relationships between the five constituencies (as shown in Figure 1. below left). E-T-T model on below right in Figure 1 shows the degrees of relationship from exploitve, to transactional, and to transformational.
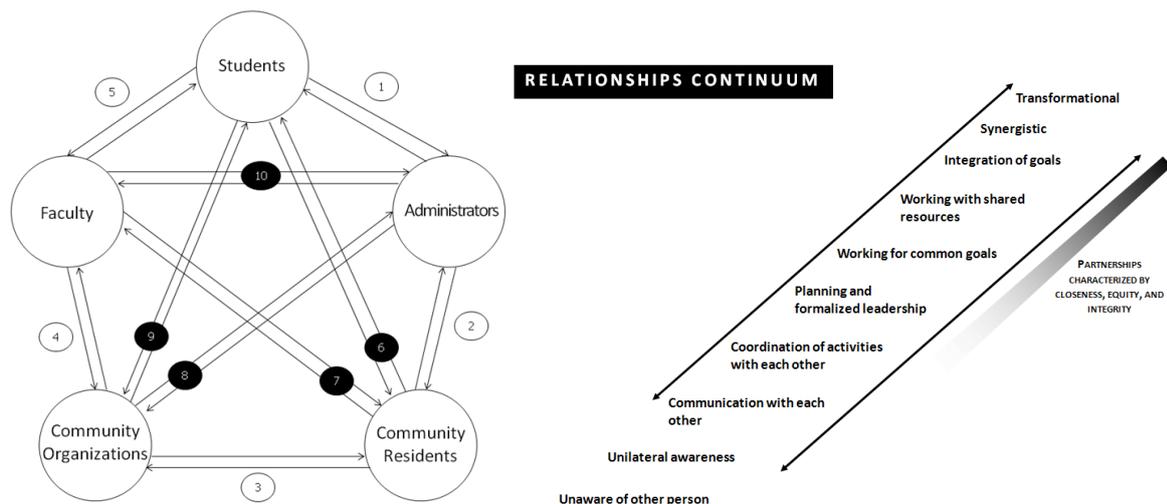

Figure 1. SOFAR Model (left)
Figure 2. E-T-T Model (right)

3. Methods/analysis

Since the SOFAR model is useful to articulate mutual relationships between the five stakeholders (i.e. students, administrators, community residents, community organizations, and faculty), we will interpret the program contents in the framework of SOFAR model and attempt to examine how the JSSL program has functioned to improve reciprocity. In more concrete terms, we attempt to examine 1) how the JSSL program has contributed to building reciprocity among the stakeholders, and 2) what type of evaluation the program needs further development for to ensure reciprocity.

We use qualitative data which reflect the voices of the participants and partner institutions. These data include 1) evaluations from student participants of JSSL, 2) questionnaires distributed at an international conference which was held at ICU in March 2019, 3) written reports submitted by students after JSSL.

In addition to SOFAR model, we use E-T-T model to assess the quality of the dyadic relationships between the stakeholders, seeking to figure out how they are exploitative, transactional, or transformational (Bringle et al., 2009.). By coding the qualitative data according to the two models designed for service-learning analysis, this presentation examines the current position of the JSSL program in accordance to the category of each stakeholder.

4. Results and Discussion

By applying JSSL into the SOFAR model, using the qualitative data, we found that four types of the dyad relationships of JSSL program as below to be more prominent.

1. Students and administrators: (dyad numbered as 1)
   Although their role is to coordinate the program, the relationship between students and administrators tends to become more than "communication with each other" (Blingle et al, 2009, p4) as the program proceeds. For example, one of the participants commented,
   "I received so much hospitality from people around us, including SLC staffs....Those experiences brought me to a completely different world from what I had seen a month ago, made us able to have a connection with community people, and made me open minded."

   Multicutlural interaction enriches communication and generates mutiple perspectives. The interaction between Asian students and Middlebury staffs also enable students to learn reflections from a different perspective in their rich experiences.

2. Community organizations and students   (dyad numbered as 9)
   During summer, JSSL participants have service activities in both Mitaka city and Tenryu village. In Mitaka, students can design their activities in Mitaka city for about three weeks. In the past programs they engaged in community service activities at several institutions such as agricultural association and elementary schools. Tenryu village is a rural and mountainous village in Nagano prefecture, where the elderly accounts for more than 60% of the population. The relationship with them was initiated by ICU students who did a community served learning in the village in summer 2015. After their service activity, they thought a way to maintain their relationship, and started JSSL program together. This is an example of coordinating or planning each other (ibid.).

   In addition, students' activities at these organizations facilitate communication to administrators. Although there is no feedback from the organizations, community service is expected to strengthen the relationship between administrators and organizations.

3. Community organizations and administrators (dyad numbered as 8)
   For both ICU and visiting students, the interaction with the community people through home visit and home stay in Tenryu village is one of the memorable activities of the participants. During their stay in the village, they learn to communicate with each other better despite their linguistic and cultural differences.

   In addition, they had an opportunity to experience a program called "oral history," which the elder residents tell the history of the village or story of WWII orally to the students. These experiences indicate they reached a deep level of communication with each other, although their interaction might remain a transactional level.

4. Students and community residents (dyad numbered as 6)

For both ICU and visiting students, the interaction with the community people through home visit and home stay in Tenryu village is one of the memorable activities of the participants. During their stay in the village, they learn to communicate with each other better despite their linguistic and cultural differences. Also, they experienced a program called "oral history," which the elder residents tell the history of the village or story of WWII orally to the students. These experiences indicate they reached a deep level of communication with each other, although their interaction might remain a transactional level.

5. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

By applying the SOFAR model and the E-T-T model onto the JSSL program, we could identify the multi-level stakeholder relationships and their reciprocity. It was confirmed that JSSL contains good relationship with four dyads. It became apparent that ICU focuses on the students' learning and well-being and maintains relationships well with community organizations for the sake of running the program smoothly.

For the rest of six dyads, however, there were not much data available to confirm. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there exists a good relationship between faculty and administrators (dyad numbered 10) and community organizers and community residents (dyad numbered 3) as it would have been impossible to carry out the successful JSSL program. Nevertheless, much has to be done to improve reciprocity with community organizers and faculty.

With ICU's sample of applying the SOFAR model and E-T-T model to JSSL, it has demonstrated that the models are viable to know the standpoint or the university in terms of relationship, and can be used for assessment. While JSSL has enhanced reciprocity, engagement, connection to the local community, and inclusivity and participation at the multicultural levels, reciprocity with and engagement of community organizers and faculty needs further development. In addition, the data itself has limitations as feedback was obtained mostly from participating students, leaving the voices of the community and faculty. Thus, our results imply that the SOFAR model and E-T-T model should be incorporated into the designing stage of the service-learning programs to ensure reciprocal relationships at all levels.

Keywords: Keyword 1, keyword 2, keyword 3 (up to 5)

Reciprocity, Partnership, Relationship

References: no more than 10 references.

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Biographical sketch of each presenter

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