

Proposal for a Paper Presentation

Transforming college students through an International Service Learning project: An evident from Indonesia

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Abstract:

1. Introduction

This research is about the evaluation of a Community Outreach Program (COP) that has been done by a private university in Indonesia or the case campus for more than forty years. Starting from 1996, the COP has evolved into an international service learning activity. The last COP in 2018 as the context of this research involved undergraduate students coming from South Korea, The Netherland, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Japan and Australia. In the COP, the Indonesian students of the case campus and the international students will live in a village in Indonesia for six weeks and work on community projects that can be categorized into two categories: physical projects and educational projects. The physical projects deal with the design and development of public facilities like public toilets, bridges, school building and parks. The educational projects involve the provision of training by the students in the following areas: English, entrepreneurship, agriculture and foreign cuisine.

The campus expects that through the COP or the international service learning project, students will be transformed into individuals who know how to apply what they have learned. However, the recent era of industrial 4.0 has demanded that students have their competency including their personal and relational competency, the leaders of the university expects that the COP is not only enabling the students to know the meaning of their learning but also the meaning of their lives.

This evaluative research which aimed to answer whether the COP has achieved its deeper purpose, has two research questions: 1) Does the COP change the students significantly. The changes will be evaluated in four aspects: spiritual, intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional. 2) Which aspect of the students that has been changed the most? This research is very important as its result will inform the university and other higher educational institutions on the transformational ability of a service learning project. Besides the practical benefit, this research is important to inform the deeper benefits of doing an international service learning project like the one conducted by the case campus.

2. Theoretical framework/literature review

COP is widely known as one of the service learning projects. Service learning as one of the school activities has been known as an educational journey that transforms. Sax (1997) argues that service work encourages students to become more socially responsible, more committed to serving their communities, more empowered and more committed to education. Su, Pan and Chen (2014) argue that service learning helps its learners to find their meaning of life as they understand themselves and others better through the altruistic project. Vaughn (2015) suggests that service learning enables its learners to find the value in group projects.

This research evaluates the transformation of learners of service learning projects in terms of four aspects: spiritual, intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional. Spiritual aspect explains the aspect where the learners find the meaning of their life through the concepts of transcendental spirituality. Inspired by the theory of servant leadership behavior, transcendental spirituality explains about the learners' inner conviction that something or someone beyond self and the material world exists and makes life complete and meaningful (Sendjaya, 2015). Intrapersonal aspect explains about how the learners understand themselves as accurately as possible.

The concept of intrapersonal aspect is inspired by Sendjaya's (2015) concept of authentic self; a true self which for a servant leader should be described in terms of humility, integrity, accountability, security, and vulnerability. Furthermore, intrapersonal/personal development is one of the goals that can be expected out of a service learning project (Eyler and Giles, 1999). Interpersonal aspects explain about the relational aspect of the learners. There are many studies that link intrapersonal and interpersonal development of the learner (Wheeler, 2012). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) explain that an act of service will drive the actors to be individuals who understand others.

Institutional aspects in this research explains the practical change expected by the institution who has initiated and carried out the service learning. In this case the academic changes expected from the learners as they conducted the service learning as Jordan and Schraeder (2011) argue that service learning will enhance the students' academic ownership as they see the implementation of their learning. Eyler and Giles (1999) explain that a service learning will improve the learning of the students in several areas: knowledge understanding and application, engagement and reflective practice, critical thinking and perspective transformation. These four aspects were blended under the work of Wong and Page (2003) that profile the service providers or servant leaders into four measurable aspects of character-orientation, people-orientation, task-orientation and process-orientation.

3. Methods/analysis

To answer the research questions, the researchers will use the survey methodology which involved two self-administered questionnaires where every invited participant was asked to answer a questionnaire twice: before and after his or her participation of the COP. There were 278 participants of the COP through the simple random sampling, 208 participants were invited to fill in the questionnaire. However, there are 161 paired-questionnaires (pre and post) that were

valid to be processed. Survey methodology is being used and in processing the data the researchers utilized the descriptive statistics and paired sample t-test. Given the statistical significance standard of 95%, the result is robust enough to confirm whether the participants have experienced a significant change after joining the COP. To answer the second research question, the researcher has compared the changes of the means of the four aspects measured in this study.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the paired sample t-test, there are three aspects of the students that have been changed significantly after they joined the international community outreach programs. These aspects are the spiritual aspect, the intrapersonal aspect and the interpersonal aspect. This means the institutional aspect of the students was not changed significantly. Among the significantly changed aspects, interpersonal aspect has the highest mean difference and thus can be inferred as the aspect of the students that has been changed the most. The significance of spiritual aspect confirms that a community-based service learning enables the students to reflect on their lives and to put meaning on what they have been doing.

The international service learning has triggered the students to understand who they are and what they can contribute for others. The significant change on the interpersonal aspect explains that the international service learning has changed the way the students look at their peers and those who they have served. However, the fact that their institutional aspect is not changed much tells that there must be an in-depth evaluation on the projects that they have done. The evaluation should explain whether the students have implemented their on-class room learning or whether they feel that they have contributed significantly to the well-being of the community.

5. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

This research is about evaluating an international service learning project called Community Outreach Program. The focus of the evaluation is on the changes of aspects of the students. The researchers hypothesized that there are four aspects that should be changed significantly. However, there are three aspects that have been proven to be significantly changed due to the international COP: spiritual, intrapersonal and interpersonal. Interpersonal aspect happens to be the one aspect that has got the biggest margin of change.

This research confirms that service learning has the potential to change the spiritual, intrapersonal and interpersonal aspect of its learner. The findings have answered the question of the campus' leader that the international service learning of the campus is significant in changing the three important aspects of the students. However, the campus has to evaluate of why the institutional aspect that is the academic lived-in performance of the students was not significantly changed. This might inform that the technical aspects of the projects being done might have a weak relationship with the students learning. In other words, the students felt that they did not see that what they have learned have been implemented significantly during the COP program. The research can be used as the launchpad to conduct a research that tries to know whether there is a relationship between spiritual aspect and the other aspect of the learner of a service learning.

Keywords: International Service Learning, student transformation, spiritual, intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional

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Biographical sketch of each presenter

Please send the biographical sketch of the presenters together with the proposal using the following format:

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Ricky has been serving as lecturer of Petra Christian University for more than twenty years. His research interest is in business and educational leadership. He completed his Doctorate of Education degree from the University of Birmingham in United Kingdom. His master degree is in Real Estate Management from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. He is currently serving as the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics.

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Juliana Anggono is the Dean of the Faculty of Industrial Engineering. Dr. Anggono completed her Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Manchester in United Kingdom. Her Master degree was also completed at the same university. She received her first degree in Metallurgy from University of Indonesia. Her research interest is on natural fiber composites and ceramic synthesis. She has also an interest in studying the impact of S-L on students' learning.

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