Civic Learning Outcomes: Measuring Students' Experiences in Higher Education

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What is Civic Mindedness?

Civic-Mindedness (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010)

- Person’s inclination to be knowledgeable of his/her community
- Feeling a sense of responsibility for a community
- Commitment to involvement in a community

A Subset of Civic Engagement (Holzman, Horst, & Ghant, 2017)

- Civic Engagement – Promoting quality of life in a community
- Necessary condition for being a civically-engaged individual
- Often developed through experiential learning programs
Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (NLA)

- Student-run organization

- Dedicated to educate and prepare students and professionals to be leaders in nonprofit sector

- **Certification** – Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP) Credential

**Mission**

“To strengthen the social sector with a talented and prepared workforce”
Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) Scale

Origin

- Center for Service and Learning (CSL) - Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI)

Goal

“To measure civic learning outcomes by assessing the extent to which respondents perceive themselves to have the capacity and desire to work with others in a democratic way to improve their community or to achieve public goods”
Purpose of the Study

• To assess the civic-mindedness of NLA students specifically analyzing their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavioral intentions

• To examine the difference in the development of civic-mindedness specifically comparing knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavioral intentions of NLA students to non-NLA students
Statement of Problem

• Most U.S. academic institutions do not prioritize civic learning opportunities (Saavedra, 2016)

• General Skepticism of low level of civic knowledge among students (Galston, 2007)

• Inclusion of learning that incorporates the development of students’ civic capacity (Torney-Purta et al., 2015)
Research Questions

• Does participation in NLA impact the development of civic-mindedness in students?

• Is there a difference in the development of civic-mindedness comparing NLA students to non-NLA students?
Null Hypotheses ($H_0$)

- Participation in NLA do not impact the development of civic-mindedness in students

- There is no significant difference in the development of civic-mindedness comparing NLA students to non-NLA students
Significance of this Study

Ability to measure students’ capacity in following domains:

• **Knowledge** - Volunteer opportunities, academic knowledge and technical skills, and contemporary social issues

• **Skills** - Listening, diversity, and consensus-building

• **Dispositions** - Valuing community engagement, self efficacy, and social trustee of knowledge

• **Behavioral Intentions** – Desire to be involved in community services in the future
Conceptual Framework

Intersection of Three Student Attributes

Identity
• Self Understanding
• Self Awareness
• Self Concept

Educational Experiences
• Curricular & Co-Curricular
• Career Preparation
• Pre-Professional

Civic Experiences
• Community Service
• Political Involvement
• Social Advocacy
• Volunteerism

Selected Literature

• Examining civic-mindedness can contribute to student development, planning new programs and revising existing programs (Steinberg, Hatcher, & Bringle, 2011)

• Civic-mindedness serve as a developmental goal and learning objectives for constituencies (Bringle, Clayton, Price, 2009)
  - Academic Administrators
  - Nonprofit Staff
  - Community Residents
Research Design
• Cross Sectional Design
• Non-Parametric Procedure

Measures of Civic-Mindedness
• Knowledge
• Skills
• Dispositions
• Behavioral Intentions

Reliability of CMG Scale
• Chronbach’s Alpha = .96
• Good Temporal Reliability and Internal Consistency
Participants

• 118 university students from a comprehensive Midwestern university
  ➢ 38 NLA Students
  ➢ 80 Non-NLA Students

Independent Variables
• NLA and Non-NLA Students

Dependent Variables
• Measures of Civic-Mindedness

Alpha Level
• .05 (95% confidence level)
Data Analysis

- **Computation of Mean Scores**
  - Condense raw data points

- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**
  - Verify the unidimensionality of the construct
  - Establish construct validity

- **One Sample Wilcoxon Test**
  - Level of Civic-Mindedness (NLA Students)

- **Mann – Whitney U Test**
  - Difference in Development of Civic- Mindedness
    - NLA Students vs. Non-NLA Students
## Validity of CMG Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale (number of items)</th>
<th>Factor Analysis Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge (9)</td>
<td>.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills (8)</td>
<td>.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions (10)</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Intentions (3)</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** (a) Bartlett Test of Sphericity (p < .05); (b) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA (.828); and (C) 5-point Likert-type scale
# Level of Civic Mindedness (NLA Students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale (Measures of Civic-Mindedness)</th>
<th>NLA Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Intentions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: (a) p < .05 is indicated with *; (b) Scale: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Somewhat Agree, 3=Neither Agree or Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree*
# NLA vs. Non-NLA Students

Scale (Measures of Civic-Mindedness) | NLA Students | Non-NLA Students |
--- | --- | --- |
Knowledge | 118 | 62.97 | 57.85 | 539 | .446 |
Skills | 118 | 59.07 | 59.71 | 520 | .924 |
Dispositions | 118 | 67.51 | 55.69 | 493 | .079 |
Behavioral Intentions | 118 | 56.42 | 60.96 | 489 | .496 |

**Scale:** 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Somewhat Agree, 3=Neither Agree or Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree
Discussions & Implications

- Participation in co-curricular activities impacts the development of civic-mindedness

- Students should be encouraged to get involved and become civic-minded (Gassman, 2015)

- Effective structuring of educational opportunities

- Assist academic administrators in identifying educational priorities
References


