

## **PARTICIPATION AND PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS**

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated pre-service teachers' attitudes toward participation in and perception of community service programmes. One hundred and fifty-four students were administered a structured questionnaire tagged Community Service Participation and Perception Questionnaire (CSPPQ). Frequency, simple percentage, mean, t-test and ANOVA were applied to analyse the collected data. The results of the study indicated that the majority of the pre-service teachers had a negative perception of community service programmes and never participated in such programmes. Important differences were found in the perception of community service programmes in terms of gender, mode of entry into university and type of study. However, in respect of age no noteworthy difference was found. Nor did the findings show any notable relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of students and their participation in and perception of community service. Similarly, no particular relationship existed between participation in and perception of community service ( $r = .076$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Although in a negative sense, type of study was the most potent predictor of student perception of community service. Based on the findings, it is suggested that community service be a formal part of the pre-service curriculum and students' in-school practice.*

**Keywords:** *pre-service teachers, participation, perception, community service*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past few decades, in response to the growing concerns about the pervasive political and social disengagement among young people in the world, it has become expedient in the area of scholarship to give attention to the importance of developing civic values, responsibilities and community involvement. In addition, in fulfilling one of the roles of higher education institutions, community service has become a crucial interest of global concern for debates and discourse. Several universities have made community service an

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essential component of professional development. Institutions of higher education, especially the universities, are established to fulfill a mission which revolves around teaching, research, and community service.

Community service, often referred to as the third element of the academic mandate of a university, has become highly valued in most advanced countries (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000). Scholars are unanimous in their opinion that community service has a positive impact on students' personal, social, ethical, and academic domains (Seider et al., 2011; van Goethem et al., 2014). While many universities in developed countries have established community service as a form of experiential learning, which provides students with the opportunity to engage in authentic activities outside the classroom, their counterparts in developing countries seem not to give similar attention to this. Furthermore, while most studies of community service have tended to focus on people who are not part of the higher education environment, a significant few have focused on university students.

In Nigeria, this third element of the cardinal mission of universities, which is community service, has not been given the attention it deserves in terms of practice and studies, particularly in teacher education programmes. Assessment of students' perception of their community service experiences is important in understanding community service. Few studies are available in this domain of knowledge. As a matter of fact, there is a paucity of studies that explore the perception of pre-service teachers regarding community service. This study was conceived to explore pre-service teachers' perception of community service participation with a view to contributing to the planning of either a new academic programme for Community Service Learning (CSL) or reviewing the extant one. The research questions that are addressed in this study are:

1. To what extent have pre-service teachers participated in community service programmes?
2. What are pre-service teachers' perceptions of community service programmes?
3. What is the relationship between participation in and perception of community service programmes?
4. Are there significant differences in perception of community service by pre-service teachers according to type of study, sex, mode of entry and age?

5. Do sex, age, mode of entry, academic level, type of study and participation significantly contribute to predicting pre-service teachers' perception of community service?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Community service is an integral part of university culture. Universities are statutorily expected to offer service to communities by finding solutions to social, political, cultural, and economic problems. Community service is an activity that engages students with real-life solutions in order to strengthen communities. Universities are supposed to provide students with a wide range of opportunities to get involved with the community and develop a strong tradition of giving back. The ethos of community service should be given cardinal attention in the education of the university students. Graduates will not have a strong commitment to community service if the necessity of community service learning is not emphasized in higher education.

Two perspectives of community service can be identified. First, the co-curricular or social service: community service refers to voluntary activities that a person or group performs for the benefit of their local community without any form of remuneration. Second, in the legal profession, community service is seen as a form of alternative penalty meted out to a person convicted of a crime, to carry out work that benefits their local community and helps the person understand how such actions affect others. Within the context of this study, community service is conceived as tasks, activities, assignments and a host of other contributions made to the immediate society of an individual as a value-adding member. This support in most cases is not formally sought from the service provider.

Community service is not only important for students' development; it is also beneficial to the communities involved (Case, 2011; Spalding, 2013). There is strong consensus among scholars and researchers that there are enormous benefits that accrue to students when they are involved in community service. These benefits include: i) opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world settings and become active members of their community, having a positive impact on society. ii) opportunity to acquire life skills needed to be successful in their career and as community leaders, as well as provide a service to those who need it most. iii) heightened social awareness and a sense of responsibility. iv) enhanced personal knowledge and growth from new experiences, and development of better interpersonal communication skills. Researchers have also shown that participation in community service strengthens students' academic performance, leadership skills, problem-solving capacity,

professionalism and ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds (Clinton & Thomas, 2011; Case, 2011; Spalding, 2013).

Students can participate in community service in different ways. Universities may run volunteer programmes in the community or offer courses that include community service.

Community service and service learning are closely related concepts. However, understanding what service learning is will assist in making explicit the elements that differentiate the two concepts. According to Gray et al. (1999), service-learning is defined as "activities that combine volunteer work with education" (p.4). In the view of Dipadova-Stocks (2005), service learning is "an academically rigorous instructional method that incorporates meaningful community service into the curriculum" (p. 345). Service learning involves a structured approach with intentional learning objectives which integrates community service and academic study in order to produce students or graduates who will be willing and passionate about their community. In service learning, students' service is related to the course objectives and to specific learning outcomes. Community service can be promoted among students through service learning.

In the opinion of researchers, community service is a product of community service learning (CSL). Community service learning is expected to be the vehicle or the channel through which individuals are trained in knowledge, attitude, skills, abilities, norms, values and so forth to be able to fit properly into the wider society where community service is ultimately required, and rendered, for desired growth. It is against this backdrop, that this study was conceptualized. Bringle and Hatcher (1996) explained that the idea of incorporating community service actually enriches the curriculum itself. On the preparation and production of teachers, Harel (1992) posited that service to the community as a learning requirement is, in fact, learning through service, and enriches both the student, (in this case, teacher trainee) and the recipient of the service (the community). In addition, Bringle and Hatcher (1996) found that the inclusion of community service in curricula made them more enjoyable for students and channelled positive new energies into the classes.

There are not many studies that have focused on attitudes towards participation in, as well as perception of, community service and service-learning, nor on the effect of students' participation in these areas on their personal and social development. This includes their skills and knowledge, academic achievement and school performance, sense of direction, social connectedness, and their psychosocial well-being (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Seider et al., 2011; Zaliha & Arshad, 2012; Deck et al., 2017). Researchers have consistently reported that community service/service-learning have a positive impact on students within the

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higher education environment. Service-learning is said to benefit students by helping them in their understanding of course material, in developing critical thinking skills and social skills as well as enhancing self-esteem (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000).

In their study, Prentice and Robinson (2010) reported that students gained more knowledge and skills and are able to apply their theoretical knowledge through community service-learning, thus making them become substantially skilled in their professional practice. In another study, Singh et al. (2017) posited that for health sciences and medical undergraduates, community service learning provides a platform for community engagement and not merely a living laboratory to deliver health promotion, prevention and intervention services to the community. In addition, Clinton and Thomas (2011), in their study, concluded that community service was a positive experience for students, increasing their confidence in themselves and their ability to work with others. This is in spite of the fact that interpersonal skills for working in teams was mentioned by fewer than 20 percent of the students in this study. However, more than 24 percent said that they had learnt to work with people whose backgrounds were different from their own. Thirty-four percent felt that they had grown in confidence in their own abilities in some way. The students also reported that they were developing the attributes of graduates that are considered important by their own university through their community service experience.

On their part, Flanagan and Levine (2010) evaluated the effect of youth community participation on the participants' personal and social development, such as skills and knowledge, academic achievement and school performance, sense of direction, social connectedness, and their psychosocial well-being. On the variable of attitude towards community service, considering university students' participation in community service activities, the study by Abrokwhah et al. (2010) revealed that students were uninterested in voluntary activities. Students' knowledge and experience were found to influence their attitude towards, and perception of, community service. Bachar and Ofri (2009) examined how Israeli pre-service art teachers have been directly and professionally influenced by their participation in arts-based community service programs in prison. Participants reported they believed the encounters helped improve their professional perspectives, provided more teaching experience, enhanced participation in their society and offered connections with non-mainstream communities.

Several factors determine participation in community service. These include gender, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, and academic level (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Hamzah et al., 2016). Some studies specifically reported that females participate in community service

more than males (Dote et al., 2006; Metz & Youniss, 2003; Niemi et al., 2000; Oesterle et al., 2004). Dugan and Komives (2010) found that participation in community service was a significant predictor of socially responsible leadership outcomes among college students. In another study, Dugan (2006) examined students' participation in community engagement and found that college students who were involved in community service scored higher in the six measures of socially responsible leadership – congruence, consciousness of self, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, and citizenship – than those that were not involved. A later study by Soria et al. (2013) examined the relationships between students' socio-demographic characteristics (classes, student organizations, work study) in relation to engagement in community service and development of socially responsible leadership. The results suggested that students who participated in community service reported higher socially responsible leadership.

In 2016, Hamzah et al. explored why Malaysian youth participated in volunteering activities and what variables predicted their participation. A total of 251 respondents participated in that study which was based on the Social Exchange theory. The findings showed that using leisure time meaningfully, getting new experience, improving confidence and self-esteem, attaining emotional stability, and getting a better understanding of the realities of life were reasons for participating in volunteering activities. The study also reported positive relationships between the participation in and benefits, needs and reasons to volunteer were found to be the strongest predictors of the youth becoming volunteers in that country. In the meantime, in a study on the impact of community service on the attitude and perception of dental interns in King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, Nowaiser et al. (2015) found that there was no statistically significant difference based on gender, marital status and Grade Point Average.

In terms of self-awareness, Odongo (2018) revealed that participants reported having become aware of various social issues in different communities. Students realized that it was important to understand people's problems without judging them to help them to improve, and that a person needed the community in order to succeed. Meanwhile, several participants reflected that as they went through the experience and got the opportunity to help someone who was appreciative of the help, they felt fulfilled and began to experience a willingness to offer services without expecting anything in return. On change of attitude, the same set of participants reported that their attitudes had changed after participating in the Community Service Programme (CSP) and that they continued to be engaged in activities to help the needy. This in a way made the participants realize that they could change a person's life by just being supportive and by doing simple things, such as cleaning the rooms of the needy and cooking for them.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There are various theoretical frameworks which exist that can be and have been used to guide a study of this nature. They include involvement theory and students' engagement theory. However, the theoretical basis underpinning this study is involvement theory developed by Astin (1984). The theory has been the most frequently used in research on community service in higher education in the last two decades (Grier-Reid et al., 2008; Foreman & Retallick, 2013). The theory argues that involvement in community service is important in student retention and graduation in higher education. It posits that several educational outcomes of students are a function of the quality and quantity of their involvement in a variety of activities and experiences – classroom, laboratories, other curricular and co-curricular experiences. The theory of student involvement was built on certain principles:

- (a) involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects;
- (b) regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum;
- (c) involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features;
- (d) the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational programme is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that programme;
- (e) the effectiveness of any educational policy is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (Astin, 1999, 519).

This study is focused on the quality and quantity of the training received in relation to what the undergraduates are able to plough back into the wider society after graduation from a higher institution, in the form of community service in order to advance societal growth and development.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The Faculty of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State in Nigeria has an average undergraduate student population of about 3,000, with 46.4% males and 53.6% females. Of the total student population, about 500 were 4<sup>th</sup> year students across five departments. Purposive selection procedure was used to identify 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The

population of participants for this study was stratified into full time and part time. There were 321 full-time and 105 part-time students in the final year at the time of conducting the study. Two hundred undergraduates participated in the study. From each of the populations (part-time and full-time), 100 were randomly selected for the study. However, 154 students (i.e. 77%) adequately completed the questionnaire which was used for the analysis.

We designed a questionnaire tagged “Community Service Participation and Perception Questionnaire” (CSPPQ). The questionnaire had Section A: demographic data of the respondents, such as age, sex, marital status, mode of entry (into the university), academic level and mode of study (that is, whether full time or part time). Section B covered awareness, previous experience and participation in community service, and Section C: perception items. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses to the items in Section 3 of the questionnaire. The responses varied from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (5).

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted two months prior to data collection. It was designed to measure the internal reliability for instrument scales using Cronbach (1951). Reliability for the scale was ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ), which is within the acceptable values of 0.70 to 0.95 (Cronbach, 1951).

The questionnaire was personally distributed to the students during one of the general education courses taught by the researchers at both full-time and part-time classes. The students were permitted to go with the questionnaire while those that could complete it after the lecture were allowed to do so and return it.

Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to determine if there were significant differences in the perception of the respondents according to their demographic characteristics. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to confirm the relationship between participation in, and perception of, community service, while multiple regression analysis was employed to explore whether students’ demographic characteristics and participation in community service might affect perception of community service.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The demographic profile of the respondents ( $n = 154$ ) is shown as frequencies and percentages in Table 1. The profile includes respondents’ age, sex, mode of entry and type of programme for which they registered and were pursuing in the university.

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**Table 1**

*Demographic profile of the respondents*

| <b>Type of Programme</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Regular                  | 93       | 60.4     |
| Part Time                | 61       | 39.6     |
| Total                    | 154      | 100.0    |
| <b>Mode of Entry</b>     |          |          |
| UME                      | 111      | 72.1     |
| Direct                   | 43       | 27.9     |
| Total                    | 154      | 100.0    |
| <b>Sex</b>               |          |          |
| Male                     | 59       | 38.3     |
| Female                   | 95       | 61.7     |
| Total                    | 154      | 100.0    |
| <b>Age</b>               |          |          |
| Below 18yrs              | 4        | 2.6      |
| 18-24yrs                 | 61       | 39.6     |
| 25-30yrs                 | 58       | 37.7     |
| 31yrs above              | 31       | 20.1     |

### Participation in Community Service Programmes

Results from the data in Table 2 revealed that most of the students (77.9%) have not been involved in community service. Similarly, a high 65.6% of the respondents said that they were not currently participating in any community service. When the respondents were further asked if they had heard of the community service education programme, a little more than half (59.7%) claimed to have heard of the programme before the study. This finding is closely related to that of Odongo (2018) that showed that participants reported that they were aware of various social issues that existed in the community. Meanwhile, the majority of respondents (80.5%) indicated that they would like to do community service related to their teacher training programme.

**Table 2**

*Analysis of participation in community service programmes*

|  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Not sure</b> |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|

|                                                                                                     |               |               |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Have you been involved in community service?                                                        | 23<br>(14.9)  | 120<br>(77.9) | 11<br>(7.1)  |
| Are you currently participating in community service?                                               | 53<br>(34.4)  | 101<br>(65.6) | -            |
| Have you taken courses in community service?                                                        | 31<br>(21.0)  | 122<br>(79.2) | 1<br>(.6)    |
| Would you like to do a community service-related module as part of your teacher training programme? | 124<br>(80.5) | 22<br>(14.3)  | 1<br>(.6)    |
| Have you heard of community service/development education programme before?                         | 40<br>(25.9)  | 92<br>(59.7)  | 22<br>(14.3) |

Table 3 shows respondents' source of information on community service programme/activities, in which approximately 54% of the respondents' claimed that the school was their source of information. This was followed by seven sources such as, television, newspaper/magazine, radio, workshop/seminar, friends/colleagues, billboard and Internet/website which ranged from 7.1%, 5.8%, 5.8%, 2.6%, 2.6%, 1.9% through 0.6% respectively. There was no response to this question by 19.5% of the respondents.

**Table 3**

*Source of information*

|                     | F   | %     |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| No response         | 30  | 19.5  |
| School              | 83  | 53.9  |
| Newspapers/magazine | 9   | 5.8   |
| Television          | 11  | 7.1   |
| Radio               | 9   | 5.8   |
| Friends/Colleagues  | 4   | 2.6   |
| Internet/website    | 1   | .6    |
| Billboard           | 3   | 1.9   |
| Workshop/Seminar    | 4   | 2.6   |
| Total               | 154 | 100.0 |

The implication of the result as reflected in Table 3 is that the school had contributed significantly to the awareness that the teacher-trainees had on community service programmes. It may be concluded that other sources may have to play a greater role in sensitizing teacher-trainees on issues that are community service related.

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### Perception of Pre-service Teachers on Community Service Programmes

The respondents were asked to rate statements relating to community service participation. The results are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Perception of pre-service teacher trainees on community service programmes*

|    |                                                                                            | Mean | SD    |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| 1  | Community groups need the help of others                                                   | 1.86 | 1.029 |
| 2  | There are people in the community who need help from others                                | 1.76 | 1.010 |
| 3  | Volunteer work at community-based organizations helps solve social problems.               | 2.12 | 1.114 |
| 4  | Volunteers in community-based organizations make a difference, if only a small difference. | 2.37 | 1.084 |
| 5  | Student volunteers can help improve their immediate local community                        | 2.11 | 1.111 |
| 6  | Volunteering in community projects can greatly enhance the community resources             | 2.04 | 1.059 |
| 7  | The more people who help others, the better things will get for humanity.                  | 1.81 | 1.040 |
| 8  | Contributing my service skills will make the community a better place                      | 2.02 | 1.122 |
| 9  | My contribution to the community will make a real difference                               | 1.97 | 1.044 |
| 10 | I can make a difference in the community                                                   | 1.82 | .843  |
| 11 | I am enthusiastic about doing something about improving the community                      | 2.03 | 1.081 |
| 12 | I feel an obligation to contribute to the community                                        | 2.08 | 1.041 |
| 13 |                                                                                            | 2.01 | 1.035 |

|    |                                                                                                        |      |       |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
|    | Improving communities is important to maintaining a quality society.                                   |      |       |
| 14 | Our community needs sound volunteers.                                                                  | 1.84 | 1.057 |
| 15 | All communities need quality volunteers.                                                               | 1.88 | 1.053 |
| 16 | When I meet people who are having a difficult time, I imagine how I would feel if I were in such shoes | 2.00 | 1.072 |
| 17 | I feel concerned that some community members are suffering from a lack of resources                    | 1.89 | .943  |
| 18 | Without community service, today's disadvantaged citizens have no hope                                 | 2.51 | 1.309 |
| 19 | It is critical that citizens become involved in helping their communities.                             | 2.27 | 1.128 |
| 20 | Community service is a crucial component of the solution to community problems.                        | 2.11 | 1.063 |
| 21 | I would always feel happy to do service-learning activities.                                           | 1.88 | .963  |
| 22 | I will participate in a community service project in the coming year                                   | 2.15 | 1.103 |

The mean ranged from 1.76 (SD =1.01) to 2.51 (SD =1.309). It can be observed that none of the 22 items used to measure the variable has a mean score above 3.00. It is therefore concluded that the students possess a negative perception of community service and were not participating in community service. The finding contradicts that of Odongo (2018), who found the students showed a positive attitude and desire to participate in community service. However, it might be worth considering that these same respondents can develop a positive perception if they become exposed to or get involved in community service. This

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position can be likened to that of Abrokwah et al. (2010) who adduced different reasons for making university students participate in community service.

**Table 5**

*Analysis of differences using demographic characteristics of respondents and their perception of community service programmes*

| <b>Mode of Entry</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. D</b> | <b>t</b> | <b>Sig</b> |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| UME                  | 111      | 62.33       | 15.95         | .868     | .387*      |
| Direct               | 43       | 59.91       | 14.50         |          |            |
| <b>Sex</b>           |          |             |               |          |            |
| Male                 | 59       | 63.24       | 15.64         | .994     | .322*      |
| Female               | 95       | 60.67       | 15.49         |          |            |
| <b>Type of study</b> |          |             |               |          |            |
| Full Time            | 93       | 62.76       | 15.79         | 1.092    | .277*      |
| Part Time            | 61       | 59.97       | 15.14         |          |            |

\*Not Significant

Table 5 presents the results of the independent samples t-test that were run to explore differences between respondents in the demographic categories. These results revealed that there is no noteworthy difference in perception of community service between female and male undergraduates ( $t_{152} = .994$ ;  $p = .322$ ). There is also no significant difference observed between University Matriculation Examination (UME) entrants and those who enrolled by Direct Entry students ( $t_{152} = .868$ ;  $p = .387$ ), nor between full-time and part-time students ( $t_{152} = 1.092$ ;  $p = .277$ ).

This study's results are consistent with those of Nowaiser et al. (2015) which showed no significant difference regarding sex and students' participation in community service in the university.

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of variance conducted to test significant difference in perception of community service participation according to age.

**Table 6**

*ANOVA showing differences between age of students and perception towards community service*

| Perception*Age | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 737.079        | 2   | 368.539     | 1.534 | .219 |
| Within Groups  | 36273.681      | 151 | 240.223     |       |      |
| Total          | 37010.760      | 153 |             |       |      |

One-way ANOVA results indicate no significant difference in the respondents' perception of community service participation across age ranges ( $F_{(2,151)} = 1.534$ ;  $p > .05$ ). There are no differences between and within the groups' mean scores: 18yrs-24yrs ( $M = 60.923$ ), 25yrs-30yrs ( $M = 64.206$ ) and 31yrs-above ( $M = 58.419$ ). This suggests that the students' perception of community service was very similar, regardless of age.

This finding does not agree with the study of Abrokwah et al. (2010) which revealed that a high percentage of the university students across faculties, age range, levels of study and marital status, valued and cherished participation in community service. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the students involved in the study would not yet have been exposed to community service in the process of their academic studies as undergraduates.

Bivariate correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between respondents, socio-demographic characteristics and participation in and perception of community service.

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**Table 7**

*Correlation analysis of socio-demographic variables on participation and perception of community service*

|                | Sex   | Age     | Mode of entry | Type of study | Participation | Perception |
|----------------|-------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Sex            | 1     |         |               |               |               |            |
| Age            | .007  | 1       |               |               |               |            |
| Academic Level | .041  | .345**  |               |               |               |            |
| Mode of entry  | -.016 | .391**  | 1             |               |               |            |
| Type of study  | -.017 | -.480** | -.238**       | 1             |               |            |
| Participation  | -.026 | .001    | .006          | .076          | 1             |            |
| Perception     | -.080 | -.067   | -.070         | -.088         | .060          | 1          |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that there was no significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of students and their participation in and perception of community service. Similarly, no significant relationship existed between participation in ( $r = .076$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and perception of community service. Also, no correlation existed between gender, age, type of study and mode of entry. This suggests that the demographic characteristics of students have nothing to do with their perception of community service. These findings contradict those of previous studies that reported a relationship between some socio-demographic factors and participation in and perception of community service (Abrokwah et al., 2010; Clinton & Thomas, 2011; Soykana et al., 2015).

Multiple regressions were conducted to determine the predictive variables of perception of community service.

**Table 8**

*Multiple regression analysis of socio-demographic characteristics as predictor of participation in and perception of community service*

|                           | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |        |      |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                           | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | t      | Sig. |
| (Constant)                | 86.910                      | 15.278     |                           | 5.689  | .000 |
| Sex                       | -2.518                      | 2.577      | -.079                     | -.977  | .330 |
| Age                       | -1.786                      | 2.017      | -.092                     | -.885  | .377 |
| Academic Level            | -2.666                      | 3.308      | -.070                     | -.806  | .421 |
| Mode of entry             | -2.476                      | 3.052      | -.072                     | -.811  | .418 |
| Type of Study             | -5.169                      | 2.943      | -.163                     | -1.756 | .081 |
| Participation             | .465                        | .554       | .068                      | .840   | .402 |
| R=                        | .195                        |            |                           |        |      |
| R <sup>2</sup> =          | .038                        |            |                           |        |      |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = | .006                        |            |                           |        |      |
| F (5,148) =               | 1.171 $p < .001$            |            |                           |        |      |

a. Dependent Variable: Perception

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Sex, Academic Level, Mode of entry, Type of study

The results in Table 8 reveal that there is a significant influence of sex, age, academic level, mode of entry, type of study, and participation in the prediction of perception of community service programmes ( $R^2$  (adj) = .006;  $F_{(5,148)} = 1.171$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This indicated that sex, age, academic level, mode of entry, type of study, and participation accounted for 6% of the variance in the perception of community service programmes of pre-service teachers. Results showed that type of study is the most potent in the perception of community service ( $\beta = -.163$ )  $t = -1.756$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ , above sex ( $\beta = -.079$ )  $t = -.977$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$  and age ( $\beta = -.092$ )  $t = -.885$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ . However, all of them are negative predictors of perception of community service. These findings are consistent with Abuiyada (2018) who reported that gender and major field of study of undergraduate students can be predictors of perception of community service.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study showed that a relatively high concentration of the participants had not been involved in community service. In the same manner, a high percentage of the respondents were not currently participating in any community service. In our opinion, this can be interpreted to mean that many of the respondents failed to tap into the various community service platforms that exist in the university.

## Participation and Perception of Community Service Programs

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The results further indicated that the students possess a negative perception of and were not participating in community service. On further enquiry, it was shown that there was a significant difference between females and males in the perception of the community service of undergraduates. All of these may have resulted from the environmental condition that exists in the university which does not support mandatory participation in community service in a variety of ways. If the university considered community service as a prerequisite for graduation, perhaps the outcome would have been different.

A pertinent implication of this study is that the University Senate through the appropriate organs (such as the Counselling Unit, Directorates of Academic Planning and Student Affairs) of the institution, should set in motion the machinery to examine the present situation and come up with innovative ideas to redesign the curriculum of the teacher-trainees towards preparation for community service participation as a part of the academic programme.

The university should encourage students to get involved in community service as part of the teaching practice exercise. This would be a good avenue to prepare students for a year-long mandatory youth service scheme in which they would engage in one form of community service or the other.

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