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Effects of Faculty's Support on Students' Perceptions of Social Responsibility via Community Service Learning: Case Study at a University in Central Vietnam

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Abstract

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an educational approach that has become increasingly popular at many universities around the world for a myriad of benefits to learners, schools and communities. In fact, incorporating CSL into the school curriculum is considered one of the most effective ways to promote students' social responsibility and community engagement. In Vietnam, CSL has been widely applied in the past few years as an integrated experiential learning method, encouraging students to strive to become better citizens. This paper aims to analyse the effectiveness of integrating CSL approach in specialized courses and faculty's support on students' perceptions of social responsibility. The quantitative study employed primary survey data of 173 students, from University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, Viet Nam, having participated in CSL-integrated Interpreting courses. The results of estimation and testing with multi-structure linear model showed that factors of perceived behavioural control [$\beta = 0.343$, $p = 0.000 < 5\%$] and self-efficacy [$\beta = 0.606$, $p = 0.000 < 5\%$] had a direct impact on students' perceptions of social responsibility. Also, faculty's support had no direct yet significantly strong indirect impacts on students' perceptions of social responsibility in their experience with CSL [$R^2 = 75.9\%$]. Accordingly, several recommendations to improve students' perceptions of social responsibility were proposed, namely adjusting learning outcomes of the training program, enhancing faculty's support and cooperation with the community.

Keywords: Community Service Learning, Faculty's Support, Perceived Behavioural Control, Self-efficacy, Social Responsibility.

Introduction

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an educational experience-based approach that integrate students' learning activities with community services (1). The idea of service learning was rooted from John Dewey's theory of education and experience, emphasizing the values of experiential learning and school-community connection (2). Later in 1967, the term "service learning" was coined by Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey, situating authentic community service and intentional academic learning, implying service learning as a curriculum model (3). Operating off campus, service learning aligns learning outcomes with service objectives so that students can broaden knowledge, sharpen skills and improve ethics while addressing community needs (4). This experience-based educational approach has been gradually incorporated into school curriculum since the early 1970s (1) and proved to benefit both participating students and communities in different ways, leading to increasing application in training and research in many countries around the world (5, 6).

As CSL refers to a learner's experience in a community environment (2), to successfully organize CSL-integrated learning activities, it is necessary for teachers, students and communities to coordinate closely and effectively (7). In such contexts, the teacher is a coordinator and supervisor who shapes students' CSL experiences by adapting course contents, aligning tasks between community needs and students' capacity, setting clear goals, and creating supportive learning environments for students to easily engage in community work (2, 8). In fact, teachers are expected to adopt different roles should they include CSL approach in their courses. More importantly, these roles switch gradually towards the end of the course. Previous studies have identified 11 roles of teachers in service learning

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namely: Expert, Supporter, Mentor, Project leader, Coach, Teacher, Communicator, Academic Instructor, Research Assistant, and Facilitator (9). First, teachers play the role of an instructor providing students with necessary knowledge and skills to embark on their journey working with the community. Then, this instructive role is gradually switched to a supporting role as a mentor or a facilitator as students mostly work in groups to solve real-life problems in the community later in the course. In addition to traditional roles of an evaluator and organizer, teachers must be a communicator to bridge the gap between students, communities, and schools, and facilitate mutual beneficial partnerships by communicating CSL processes and results to all related stakeholders. Teachers' tasks are also extended in CSL approach as they must be an expert of the field, both in their trained professional qualifications, knowledge of community issues, and skills to facilitate students' autonomous learning and reflection (6). Accordingly, CSL emphasizes teachers' influence on the development of students' self-efficacy and sense of community responsibility.

This study is grounded in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which posits how people acquire knowledge and behaviours from their social environment. The underlying concept of this theory is that learning is a cognitive process that occurs within social contexts via observation or reciprocal interactions between humans and their social environment (10). Previous studies have confirmed that individual factors, especially self-efficacy (11), help explain why certain individuals have different levels of success despite having similar knowledge or opportunities. This means when a person believes that he can succeed, he will be more likely to stay motivated and persistent in pursuing his goals. In case of CSL integration, teachers' giving action-oriented feedback and breaking tasks into achievable steps help strengthen students' self-efficacy to complete given tasks at communities. For example, teachers act as instructors to advise students on their storytelling scripts and create safe spaces for reflection and dialogue to timely support students should they encounter unexpected incidents in community contexts due to insufficient real-life knowledge. In addition, observational learning, a key element in Social Cognitive Theory, happens when students learn from their exposure to community leaders, tourists, and businesses. Gradually, they are encouraged to develop community-related positive behaviours including awareness of social responsibility. Therefore, teachers are expected to have direct and indirect impacts on improving students' awareness of community responsibility (12).

In Vietnam, CSL approach has also been researched and applied recently at several higher education institutions (5, 7, 13). However, findings related to impacts of teachers' support on students' sense of social responsibility are limited, especially within the theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Previous studies mostly focused on benefits of CSL integration on students' development of knowledge, academic self-efficacy and social responsibility, particularly in the Vietnam higher educational context.

At University of Foreign Language Studies (UFLS), The University of Danang (UD), CSL approach has been piloted in a few specialized courses in two undergraduate training programs since 2023. These courses required students to carry out practical activities with tourists, businesses and communities at tourist destinations including museums, traditional craft villages, cultural heritage and historical relic sites, etc. After 2 years of integrating CSL into three Interpreting courses (with 6 classes totally) (English - Vietnamese, Vietnamese - English) at UFLS, it is crucial to evaluate the efficiency of CSL integration in those specialized courses, with a focus on faculty's support. In this sense, this study aims to examine effects of faculty's support on students' perceptions of social responsibility from their engagement in CSL-integrated courses. The findings will provide reliable empirical evidence for stakeholders to replicate CSL application, improve students' experience and engagement in CSL-integrated courses, especially in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of integrating CSL approach in Interpreting courses (English - Vietnamese and Vietnamese - English) and faculty's support on students' perceptions of social responsibility. Thus, it answers the research question "How does faculty's support affect students' perception of social responsibility in their experience with CSL?"

Accordingly, six research hypotheses have been formulated as follows.

H1: Faculty's support has a positive impact on students' perception of social responsibility in their experience with CSL.

First, in addition to direct impacts, faculty's support also indirectly affects students' perception of social responsibility in their experience with CSL through the factors of self-efficacy and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) (14). Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his capability to achieve academic and community objectives, i.e. to successfully complete given assignments and to make a positive impact on the community in their experience with CSL (8, 15). Teachers help increase students' self-efficacy by providing them with required knowledge, advising on their learning plans, motivating them to learn, promoting their autonomy and responsibility, and consulting on solutions for their end-of-course assignment (15, 16). When students are confident in their abilities to succeed, they will feel more confident in their proposed solutions to address community needs. Accordingly, they tend to improve their perceptions of responsibility for the community (17). The relationship between faculty's support and students' self-efficacy and social responsibility in their experience with CSL is formulated into research hypotheses H2 and H2.1.

H2: Faculty's support has a positive impact on students' self-efficacy in their experience with CSL.

H2.1: Self- efficacy has a positive impact on students' social responsibility in their experience with CSL.

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to students' beliefs in their abilities to control their performance, emotions, time allocation and experience when completing CSL-integrated assignments (18). While students participate in CSL-integrated courses, faculty's support via counselling, orienting and problem-solving will help improve students' ability to regulate their behaviours (8). Once they are confident about levels of behavioural control, their problem-solving skills will be improved, thereby increasing their self-efficacy (7). At the same time, an increase in PBC will also enhance students' engagement with the community, thus, improve their sense of social responsibility (19). The supportive relationship between teachers, PBC, students' self-efficacy and social responsibility are formulated in research hypotheses: H3, H3.1, and H3.2.

H3: Faculty's support has a positive impact on students' PBC in their experience with CSL.

H3.1: PBC has a positive impact on students perceived social responsibility towards the community in their experience with CSL.

H3.2: PBC has a positive impact on students' self-efficacy in their experience with CSL.

All of the above-mentioned research hypotheses have been coordinated in the following research model.

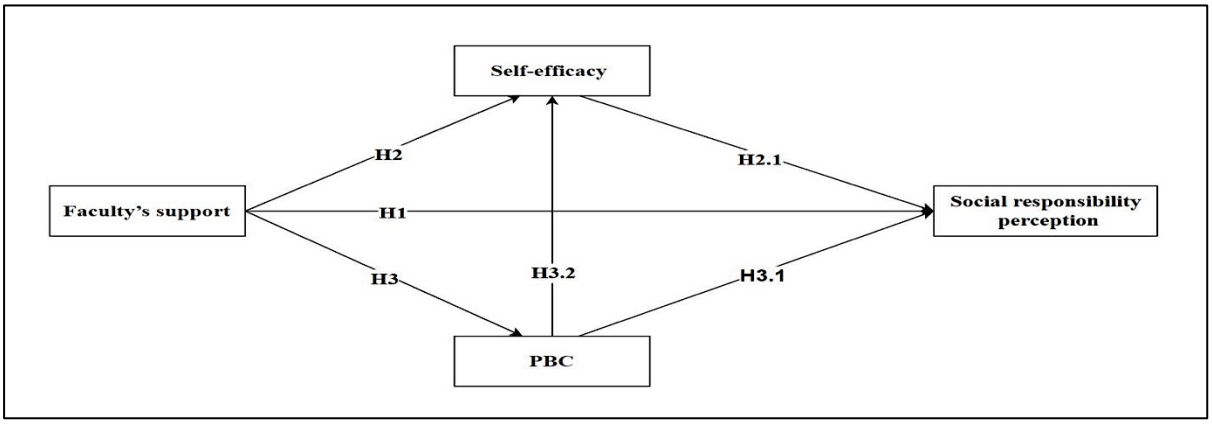

Figure 1: Research Model

This study employed a quantitative method via online structured survey distributed to 181 UFLS students having participated in three CSL-integrated Interpreting courses in two academic semesters (Fall 2024 and Spring 2025). These courses included two required Interpreting courses for juniors and seniors at Faculty of English for Specific Purposes (FESP) and one required Interpreting course for juniors at Faculty of International Studies (FIS) namely Interpreting 3, Advanced Interpreting, and Interpreting 1 respectively. Each course was conducted in a

semester of 15 weeks. After two years of piloting, CSL approach have been integrated in two classes of Interpreting 1, two classes of Interpreting 3 and two classes of Advanced Interpreting with a total number of nearly 200 students.

At the beginning of the 15-week course, lecturers communicated expected course learning outcomes, grading criteria, learning processes and requirements for the 10-week CSL project to ensure students understand what they had to do to survive the course. Students then worked in groups of four and drew lots to select destinations from a given list of popular tourist attractions in Da Nang, a coastal city in the Central region of Vietnam with a population of around 1,3 million in 2024. After the first triweekly of researching the assigned destination and collecting information related to its current situation, challenges and opportunities, students discussed with course lecturers about ideas of their CSL projects. While some groups worked on proposing recommendations to improve tourist attraction efficiency, others focused on solutions to promote environmental awareness towards the destinations. Once their proposals were approved, students were given another three weeks to engage in such activities at the destination as interviewing/consulting residents, businesses and foreign tourists; recording operational activities; interpreting and translating relevant documents from Vietnamese to English and vice versa, etc. At the end of the sixth week, students submitted a drafted video script outlining their storytelling about the destination and proposing recommendations to address the destination problems. Lecturers then had a week to review and advise on these scripts to ensure the alignment between expected learning outcomes, students' safety and community needs. After that, in the final triweekly, students completed CSL project, which were making video clips as end-of-course assignments. More importantly, they were required to post these videos on Faculty social media channels, i.e., Facebook fan page, to communicate their projects to the community. One of the grading criteria considered the number of likes and comments about these videos. In this way, students got feedback from the community about their posted video clips.

The research procedure began with questionnaire design with reference to previous studies (20-29). The questionnaire, as shown in the Appendix 1, was divided into 3 main sections: Section 1: An overview of the CSL approach; Section 2: Questions about impacts of CSL on students' self-efficacy, social responsibility perception, PBC; Section 3: Respondents' information. The final questionnaire included 20 question items and was delivered to over 200 students of FESP and FIS having attended six CSL-integrated Interpreting courses in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.

The proposed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) research model was selected because faculty's support (independent variable) had both direct and indirect impacts (via PBC and self-efficacy mediator variables) on students' social responsibility (dependent variable) to ensure testing reliability and model fit (30). All statistical analyses were conducted using Smart PLS 3.0 software.

Results and Discussion

Among 181 responses collected, after clearing and analysing missing data, useable responses were 173, which satisfied both the 5-times rule and 10-times rule. Regarding the 5-times rule, with a sample size in factor analysis of 100 observations or larger, for 17 question items in the questionnaire, the minimum sample size of 17 x 5 would be 85 (31, 32). This sample size of 173 also exceeded the 10-times-rule for the number of structural paths which is 60 [6*10=60] (30). Therefore, this sample size ensured the representativeness of the total number of UFLS students having participated in CSL-integrated courses to conduct the estimation and testing in this study (30-32).

Regarding gender, 23 respondents identified as male students (accounting for 13.3%) and 150 as female students (86.7%) which reflects the current student ratio at UFLS - where female students account for 90% of the total number of students. Regarding English proficiency level, half of respondents have a B2 (CEFR)/IELTS 5.5-6.5 level [91 respondents, 52,6%].

Table 1: Research Sample

Variables		Frequency (person)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	23	13.3
	Female	150	86.7
English proficiency level	B1/IELTS 4.5-5.0	65	37.6
	B2/IELTS 5.5-6.5	91	52.6
	C1/IELTS 7.0-8.0	16	9.2
	Over C1/IELTS >8.0	1	.6
Years of studying English	8-9 years	40	23.1
	10-12 years	66	38.2
	13-15 years	51	29.5
	Over 15 years	16	9.2
Total		173	100

In terms of years of learning English, most of them have studied English for over 10 years [76.9%], ensuring their success participating in an interpreting course. The total number of students with less than 10 years of studying English (40 students, accounted for 23.1%) and those with 10 years and over (133 students, accounted for 76.9%) is consistent with the current situation of Vietnamese learners of English, particularly at UFLS.In Vietnam, foreign language programs used to be mandatory from grade 6 in the General Education system, however, since 2018, these programs have been taught for students from grade 3 to grade 12 (33). Therefore, the sample structure by gender, foreign language proficiency, and English study time, as shown in Table 1, is reliable and consistent with the current characteristics of students having participated in CSL-integrated Interpretating courses at UFLS.

Scale Reliability Assessment

Table 2: Results of Reliability Testing of Factor Scales

Factors	Code	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Faculty's support	FS1	0.931	0.913	0.945	0.852
	FS2	0.925			
	FS4	0.913			
Self-efficacy	SEA1	0.810	0.885	0.916	0.685
	SEA2	0.865			
	SEA3	0.832			
	SEA4	0.818			
	SEA5	0.811			
PBC	PBC1	0.703	0.793	0.881	0.714
	PBC2	0.902			
	PBC3	0.912			
Social responsibility perception	SRA1	0.798	0.876	0.910	0.670
	SRA2	0.839			
	SRA3	0.857			
	SRA4	0.769			
	SRA5	0.826			

Data of 4 factors (4 variables: 1 dependent variable (Social responsibility perception); 1 independent variable (Faculty's support); 2 mediators (Self-efficacy) and (Social responsibility perception) in the research model, as depicted in Figure 1, were measured using 5-point Likert scales with reference to question items previously tested by other authors (20-29). Results of final sequential analysis, as demonstrated in Table 2, had an Outer Loading value of [0.703 - 0.931]; Cronbach's Alpha value of [0.793-0.863] and Composite Reliability (CR) values of [0.881-0.945] which were all greater than 0.7 - indicating good internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value was [0.670-0.852] - greater than 0.5 (meaning the explanation level of extracted variance of each factor was greater than 50%), indicating adequate convergent validity (34).

In addition, results of factor discrimination test were reliable because the test value according to Fornell-Larcker standard, as shown in Table 3, was the largest on the main diagonal (35), indicating discriminant validity of the measure.

Table 3: Results of Discriminant Validity Test (DV)

Factors		PBC	Self-efficacy	Social Responsibility Perception	Faculty's Support
Fornell-Larcker	PBC	0.845	-	-	-
	Self-efficacy	0.750	0.827	-	-
	Social responsibility perception	0.775	0.804	0.818	-
	Faculty's support	0.800	0.738	0.717	0.923
VIF	PBC	-	3.830	1	-
	Self-efficacy	-	-	2.494	-
	Faculty's support	1.000	3.830	4.130	-

Values of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) coefficients were in the range [1.000-4.347], less than 5, indicating no multicollinearity phenomenon between independent variables, so the data used to test and estimate proposed research hypotheses, as depicted in Figure 1, was reliable (35).

Table 4: Results of Testing Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis			Original Sample (O)	P Values	Conclusion
Direct Effects	H1	Faculty's support → Social responsibility	-0.026	0.763	Rejected
	H2	Faculty's support → Self-efficacy	0.359	0.003	Accepted
	H2.1	Self-efficacy → Social responsibility perception	0.606	0.000	Accepted
	H3	Faculty's support → PBC	0.860	0.000	Accepted
	H3.1	PBC → Social responsibility perception	0.343	0.000	Accepted
	H3.2	PBC → Self-efficacy	0.441	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effects		Faculty's support → Social responsibility perception	0.723	0.000	Accepted
R Square		Social responsibility perception		0.759	
		Self-efficacy		0.595	
		PBC		0.739	

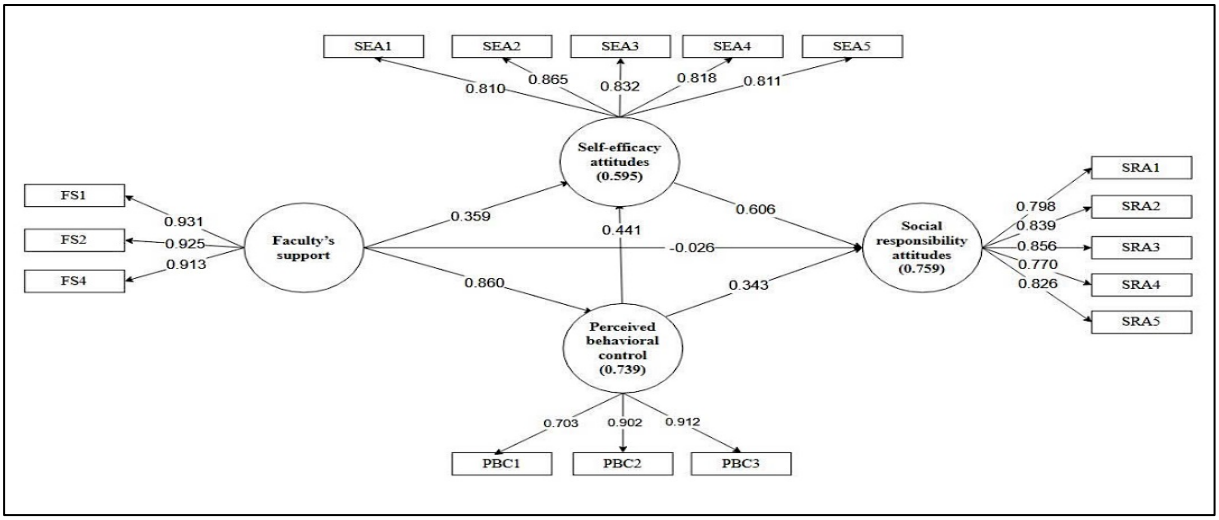

Figure 2: Model for Estimating Social Responsibility Perception

With data from Figure 2 and Table 4, R Square of the factors reflecting: Self-efficacy and PBC had a direct impact on UFLS students' social responsibility perception in their experience with CSL [with 75.9%], indicating a very strong impact. Similarly, faculty's support had a strong direct impact on PBC with 73.9%. Followed by faculty's support and PBC which both influenced UFLS students' self- efficacy in their experience with CSL [with 59.5%]. Values of 3 coefficients of

determination were all high [greater than 50%], demonstrating that the research results were reliable in explaining the impact of factors on students' social responsibility perception in their experience with CSL.

This paper studied effects of faculty's support on students' perception of social responsibility at a university in Central Vietnam region. The research results are consistent with the above-mentioned literature and provide context-specific findings that further support teachers' roles in CSL approach.

Among the proposed hypotheses, the research hypothesis H1 was rejected because its P value was 0.763, greater than 5% - meaning faculty's support had no direct impacts on students' perception of social responsibility during their CSL experience. In fact, in the process of organizing CSL-integrated course, lecturers' engagement was only limited to adapting course content, timetables and advising on students' end-of-course assignment, without in-person presence in the community. This well explains little direct impacts on student's sense of social responsibility after the course (8). Also, students' perception of social responsibility arose from their direct engagement with the community rather than indirect support from their lecturers (36). However, faculty's support had very strong indirect impacts on students' perception of social responsibility via factors of self-perception and PBC, reflected in the acceptance of 5 research hypotheses (specifically H2, H2.1, H3, H3.1, H3.2) whose P values were all less than 5%.

The research hypothesis H2 has an estimated coefficient of 0.359, reflecting relatively positive impacts of faculty's support on students' self-efficacy in their CSL experience. In fact, at UFLS, although lecturers did not directly participate in the CSL experience with students in the community, their on-going assistance in adapting course content and paying considerate attention to students' stories led to students' peace of mind and increasing learning autonomy. Students would also become more confident in their own values, strengths and weaknesses, thus, improved their decision-making and problem-solving skills in working with the community (15, 16). The estimated coefficient corresponding to research hypothesis H2.1 was 0.606, showing that students' self-efficacy had a strong impact on their perception of social responsibility during the CSL experience. Consequently, the training program at UFLS and faculty's support increased students' self-efficacy, leading to their initiative in executing social responsibility during the CSL experience. This result is consistent with the findings of previous research (8, 17, 36).

The estimated coefficient of research hypothesis H3 was 0.860, showing a very strong level of influence from faculty's support on students' PBC. The CSL-integrated Interpreting courses at FESP and FIS were specialized courses, so students had to refer to lecturers' targeted instructions on access to relevant resources to apply acquired knowledge in their CSL experience. In this sense, students felt more confident in their knowledge and ability necessary to control their CSL participation (14). UFLS training plan is always publicly communicated before the new academic year begins, giving lecturers plenty of time and autonomy in adapting CSL-integrated content for students. In addition, lecturers' willingness and flexibility in time allocation for supporting students not limited to official schedule also gave students confidence in controlling their time participating in CSL activities. Besides, lecturers' accompanying students with unexpected problems arose throughout the course resulted in positive emotions for students to overcome challenges during the CSL experience. This enhanced students' PBC during their time with CSL-integrated community tasks. This result is consistent with findings of previous research (37).

The estimated coefficients of research hypotheses H3.1 and H3.2 were 0.343 and 0.441 respectively, showing that PBC had a positive impact on students' self-efficacy and perception of social responsibility during the CSL experience. When students felt that they had adequate knowledge, sufficient time and ability to control personal emotions, they felt more confident in their proposition and role in carrying out CSL activities for the community (23). In practice, students' end-of-course products (video clips) were not only used for course grading but also communicated to the community, *i.e.* businesses and residents at assigned destinations for reference in improving tourist attraction efficiency. In addition, these video clips were posted on social media channels of FESP and FIS to promote tourist destinations, contributing to preserving traditional cultures and developing the community. The number of likes,

shares and complimentary comments on these video links encouraged students' self-efficacy and social responsibility. It also reflected the success of application of CSL activities in six Interpreting courses. This result is similar to findings of previous research (36).

Conclusion

The research findings based on quantitative data analysis of 173 respondents having participated in three CSL-integrated Interpreting courses (6 classes) at two faculties at UFLS-UD showed that faculty's support had no direct influence yet a very strong indirect influence on students' perception of social responsibility via the mediating factors of PBC and self-efficacy with a total estimated weighted value of 0.742, as shown in Table 4. Faculty's support was significant in helping students increase their self-efficacy, strengthen the ability to control their behaviour, thereby enhancing their perception of social responsibility as active citizens.

To further the effectiveness of CSL integration in raising students' perception of social responsibility, UFLS may consider the following recommendations:

a) Development of objectives and learning outcomes of the training program must be aligned with community needs. Encourage the duplication of CSL approach to other specialized courses or regulate a certain number of compulsory CSL-integrated courses in the training program. Build an effective cooperation and communication program about the application of CSL approach for students and the community so that stakeholders can join hands to facilitate the benefits of CSL in tackling community problems and improving students' sense of social responsibility. This creates favourable conditions for students to engage with the community more successfully, thereby, enhance their observational learning. At the same time, develop a feedback mechanism from CSL activities to students to inspire them to participate more in future CSL activities.

b) A mechanism of worthy financial remuneration and timely non-financial recognition should be developed at UFLS to further motivate lecturers to integrate CSL in specialized courses. In addition, appropriate remuneration will give lecturers more time and chances to take part in activities at CSL destinations, which will contribute to improving their direct impact on students' social responsibility during CSL experience.

c) In their assistance to students in experiencing CSL, it is necessary for lecturers to orient students on the significance of community development, their actions and responsibility in such development. Also, lecturers should be encouraged to promote autonomy and creativity in developing content and ideas for CSL activities, motivating students to adopt positive community behaviours.

d) This study has successfully applied Social Cognitive Theory into testing impacts of faculty's support on students' social responsibility. In addition, it is one of the pioneering studies that successfully employed a linear multi-structural model to measure the effectiveness of applying CSL approach in higher education curriculum with a focus on faculty's support. This study is also novel in terms of testing factors having direct and indirect impacts on students' social responsibility upon participating in CSL activities at communities. This will lay a foundation for future research on CSL approach integration that employs the linear multi-structural model to measure other direct and indirect impact factors such as support from school and business community on students' knowledge and skill development in CSL application. However, in this study, demographic (gender) and academic characteristics (English proficiency level and years of studying English) were limited to the descriptive analysis of the research sample structure. These variables were not analysed as factors influencing students' social responsibility and structural paths within the research model as depicted in Figure 1. Future studies should consider analysing impacts of demographic and academic characteristics of surveyed students.

Abbreviations

CSL: Community Service Learning, FESP: Faculty of English for Specific Purposes, FIS: Faculty of International Studies, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, UD: The University of Danang, UFLS: University of Foreign Language Studies.

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All authors whose works were cited are duly listed in the references.

Author Contributions

Pham Quang Tin: research design, data analysis, interpreting the results, writing the manuscript, Le Thi Phuong Loan: research design, data collection, writing the manuscript, proofreading the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data availability

Access to online questionnaire responses and YouTube videos of students' CSL projects will be granted upon request.

Declaration of Generative AI And AI Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors declare no use of artificial intelligence (AI) for the write-up of the manuscript.

Ethics Approval

Informed consent was obtained from all survey respondents and course participants.

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