




The Impact of the Service-Learning Program Implemented in the Dormitories at National Taiwan University on the Successful Transitions of Freshmen

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Since 2002, National Taiwan University (NTU) has established a support network for students who live in dormitories with peer group advising and a variety of projects to assist freshmen in their transitions.



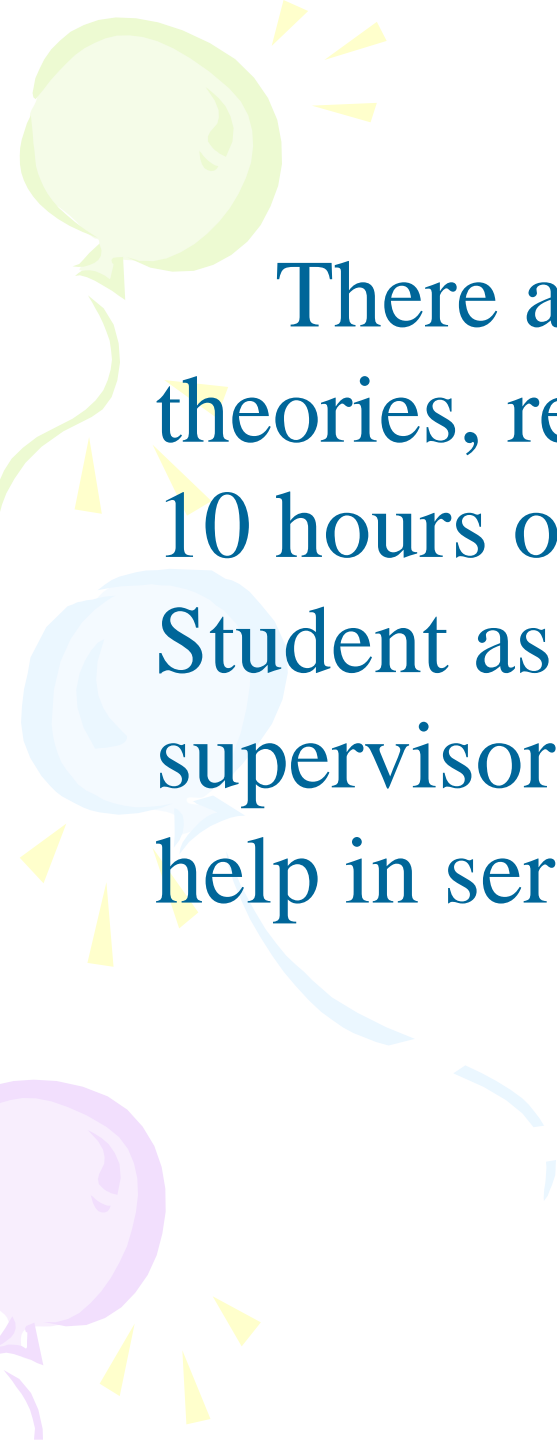
The Service-Learning program at dormitories started in September 2006.

The program consists three categories:

- 1.Life Convention & Peer Support

- 2.Interest Groups & Peer Support

- 3.International Exchange Students.

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There are a total of 6 hours of work in theories, reflections and result sharing and 10 hours of services at the dormitories. Student assistants at the dormitories act as supervisors while peer assistants provide help in services.




The writing form of reflection


**1.What--What did I do? What did I see? What did I hear?
What did I observe or contact with? -----
-----**

**2.So What --What did I think or feel about what I
observe? What did I learn from those experiences? Are
there new ideas or problems about the services?**

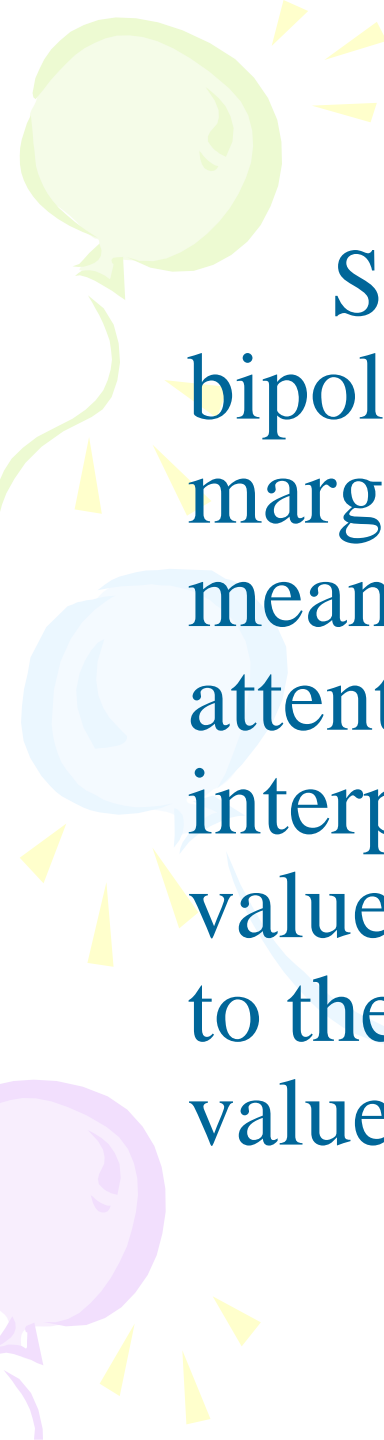
**3.Now What---What are the changes of my point of views
about the world, community services, social justice or
myself from those experiences? What can I do in the
future?**

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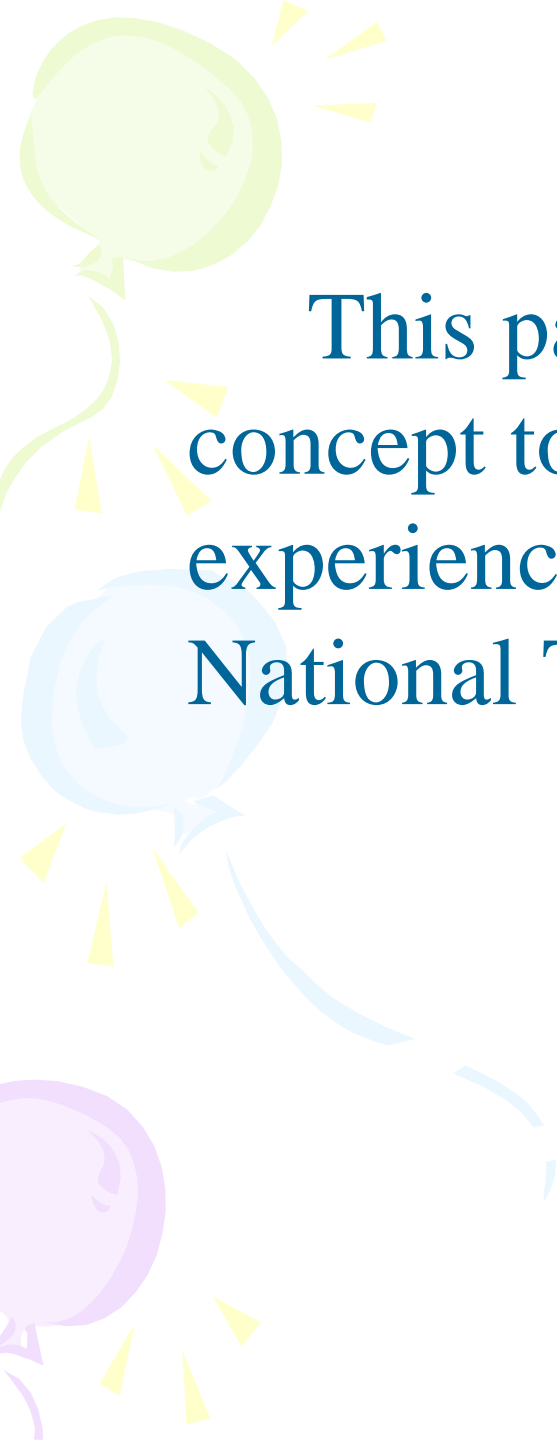
Although the methods to implement these three service-learning categories are different, they all encourage the **involvement of students in dormitory affairs.**

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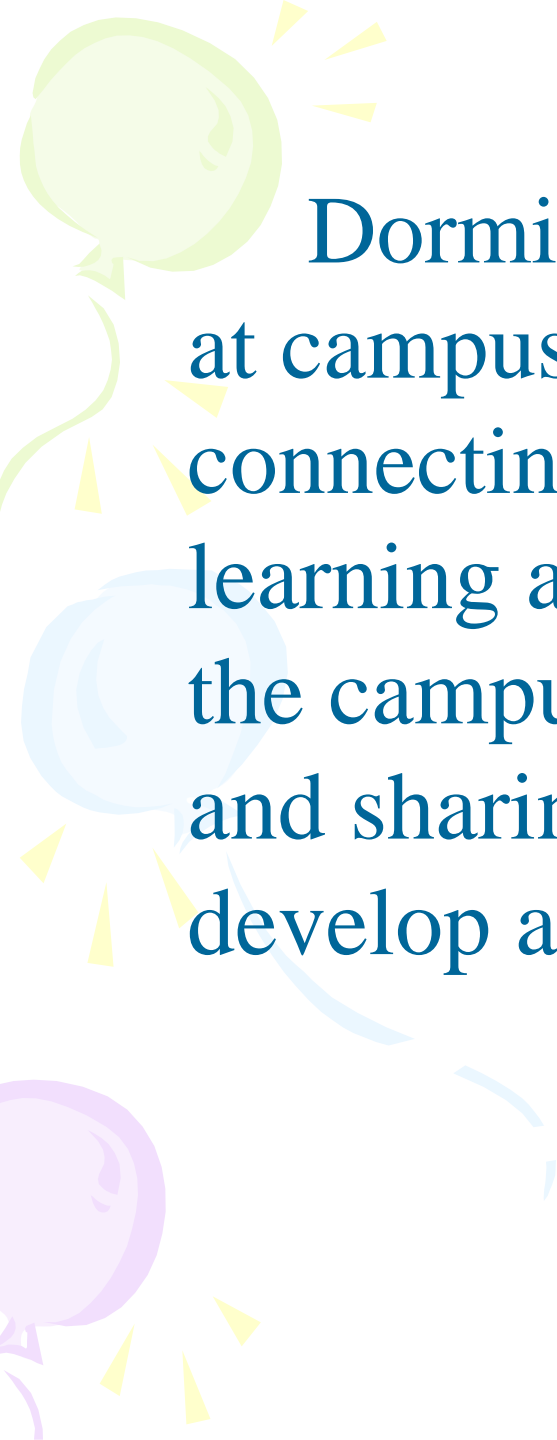
The purpose of this research is to compare freshmen involved in the dormitory service-learning projects with those without. The differences between dormitory involvements, mattering and success in transitions are the benchmark to measure the effectiveness of the program.



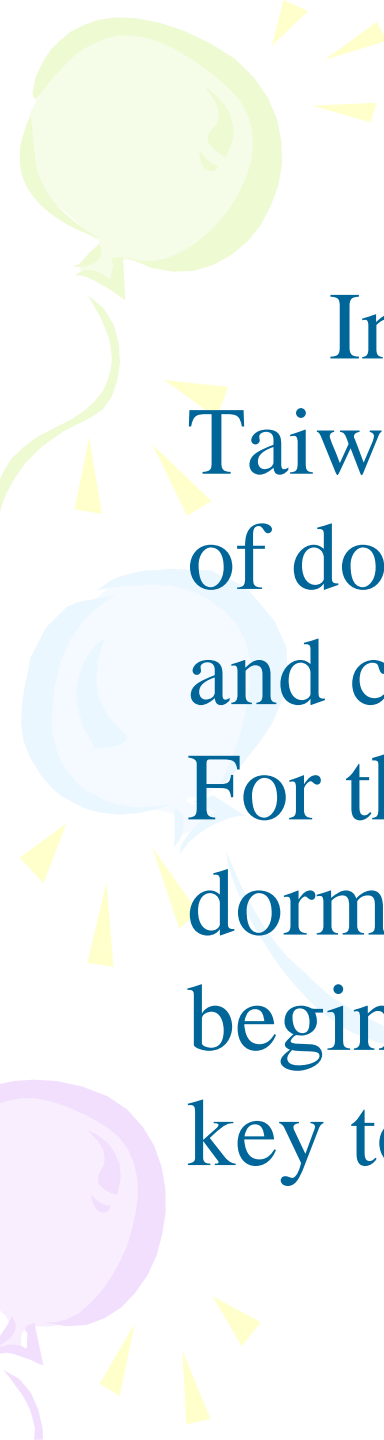
Schlossberg (1989) proposes the bipolar conceptual architect of marginality vs. mattering. **Marginality** means that students do not receive attentions, do not have interdependent interpersonal relationships, or do not feel valued by their schools. **Mattering** refers to the perceptions of being cared about, valued, relied on and complemented.

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This paper uses marginality-mattering concept to understand the transition experience of dormitory freshmen at National Taiwan University.

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Dormitories are a smaller community at campus. They play an important role in connecting students with all kinds of learning and activities within and without the campus. With frequent interactions and sharing of experiences, students will develop a sense of belonging

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In Taiwan, especially at National Taiwan University, approximately 95% of dormitory freshmen come from cities and counties outside the Greater Taipei. For the students that leave home to live in dormitories, the first 6 to 8 weeks at the beginning of their first semester is the key to the transition.

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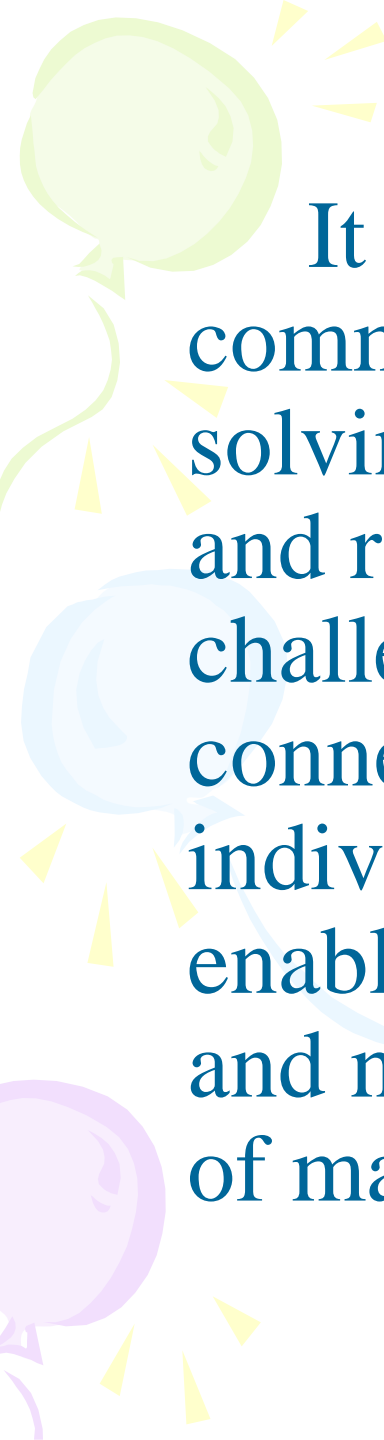
The establishment of new roommate relationships is a difficult task in its own right. If the orientation programs in universities or at dormitories do not offer consultations or supporting services, the impacts of the first cultural shock may continue into the adaptation period. This may trigger frustrations or sense of marginality.

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The Peer-Support program for freshmen at dormitories of National Taiwan University is an ongoing project since 2002. There have been constant evaluations and adjustments during the process.

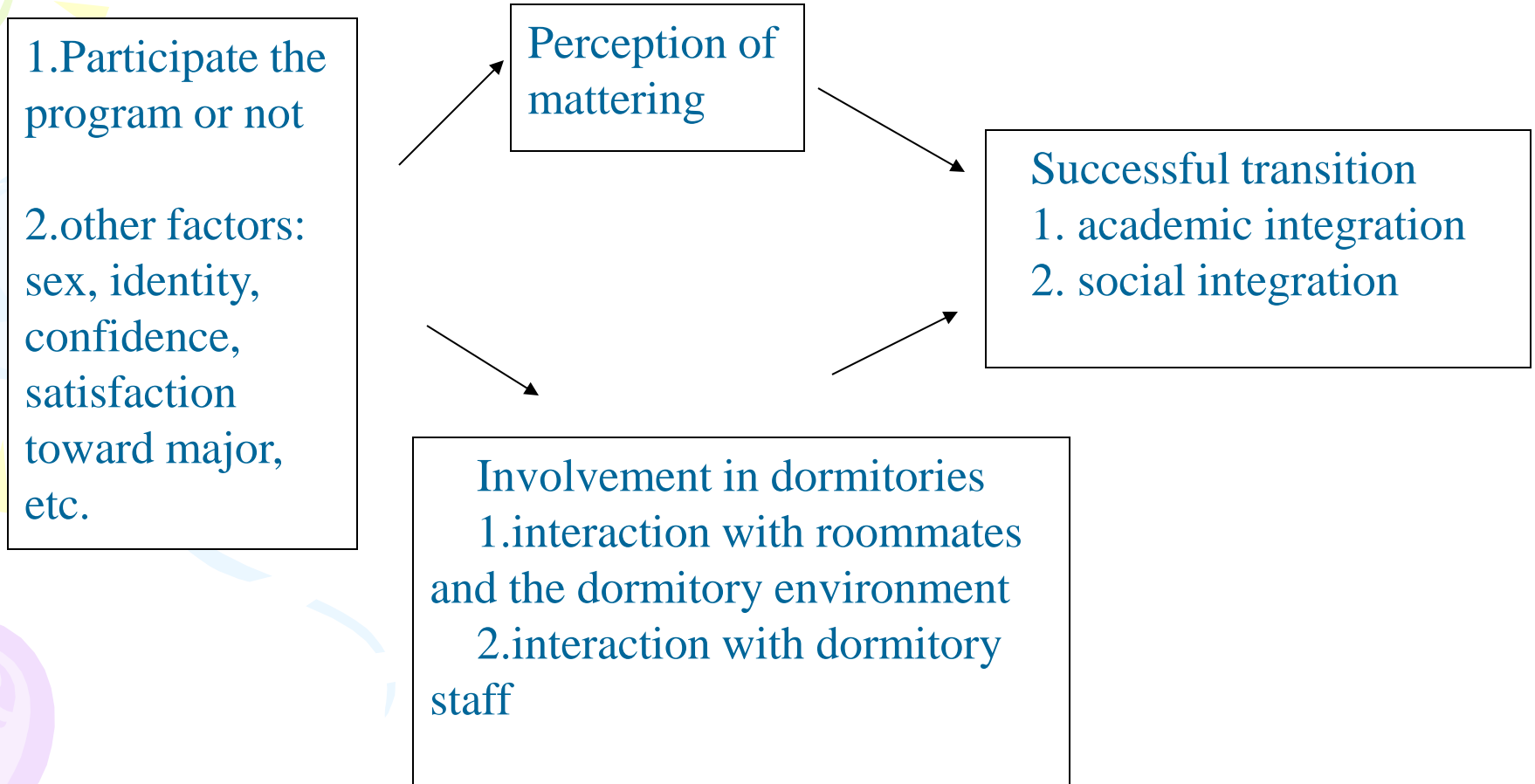
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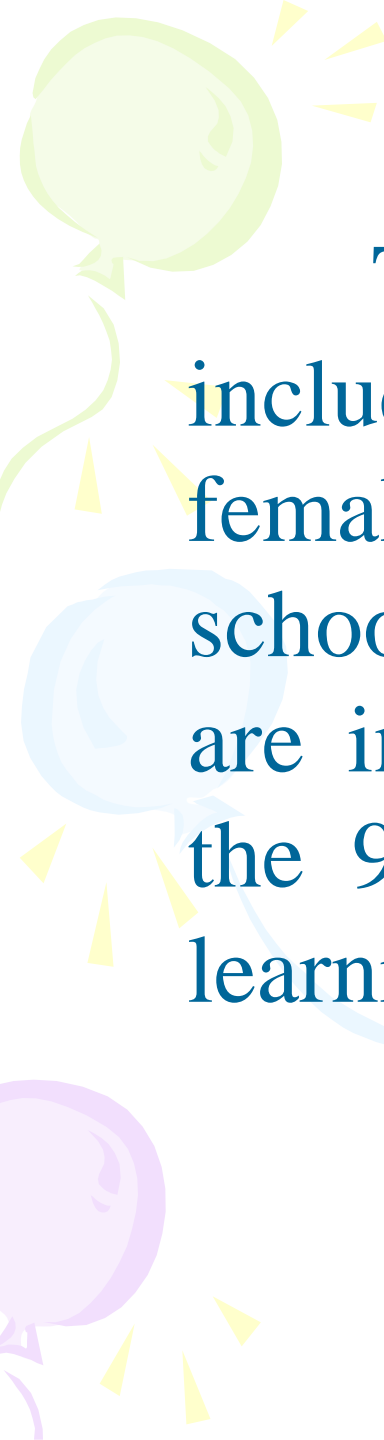
The Service-Learning program at dormitories is a sub-project under the Peer-Support program. The program is a service-learning curriculum, aiming to provide freshmen opportunities to actively get involved in dormitory projects and services.

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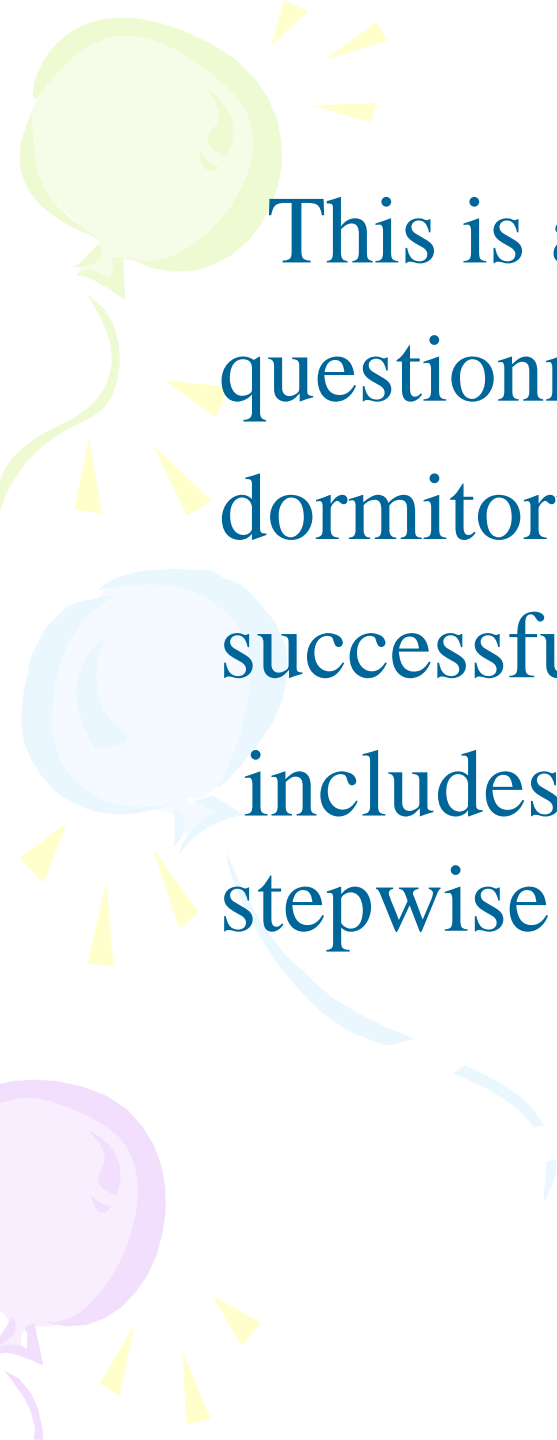
It is hoped that during the process of communications, coordination, problem solving and access to diverse experiences and reflections, students come to challenge their values and develop deep connections with the groups and individuals at dormitories. This will enable them to realize that they matter, and not in a marginal position. Perception of mattering

Research Architecture



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The number of valid samples is 378, including 197 male students and 181 female students. They come from 11 schools of NTU. A total of 97 samples are involved in the program and 41 of the 97 samples are taking the service-learning class.

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This is a questionnaire survey. These questionnaires include basic data, the dormitory involvements, mattering and successful transition scales. The analysis includes factory analysis, t-test and stepwise regression analysis.



Dormitory Involvement Questionnaire

Factor analysis of the Dormitory Involvement Questionnaire gave two sets of factors: "Interaction with roommates and the dormitory environment", and "Interaction with dormitory staff".



1.The first set of factors included: "interaction with roommates", "facility utilization", and "active involvement".

2.The second set of factors included: two student governance factors ("organizational improvement", and "general participation"), two student assistant factors ("enthusiasm and responsibility" and "knowledge and skills"), and two dormitory advisor factors ("approachability" and "administrative management").

the reliability coefficients for the individual sections of the questionnaire ranged from .56 to .94.

Mattering Perception Questionnaire

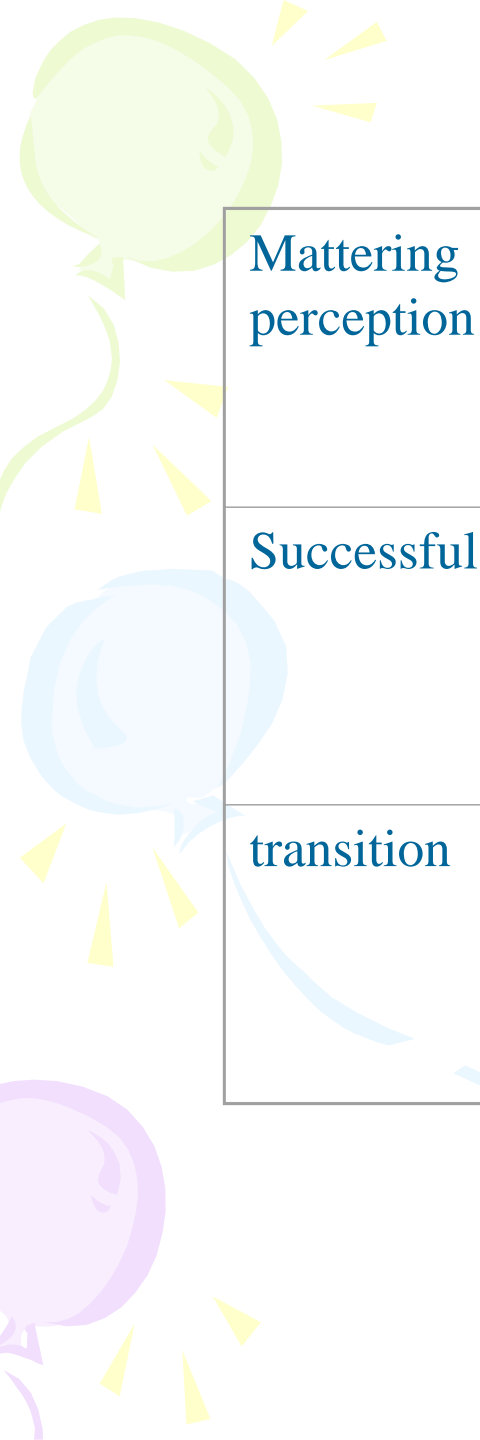
The Mattering Perception Questionnaire was designed to gauge students' perception of the extent to which they were valued. Factor analysis of this questionnaire gave one factor: "mattering perception". The Cronbach's α reliability coefficient for the Mattering Perception Questionnaire was found to be .79

Successful Transition Questionnaire

Factor analysis of the Successful Transition Questionnaire gave two factors: "interpersonal integration" and "academic integration ". The Cronbach's α reliability coefficient for the Successful Transition Questionnaire was found to be .89; the reliability coefficients for the individual sections of the questionnaire ranged from .56 to .92.

Comparison of Students Who Took Service-Learning Classes and Those Who Did Not

Factors		N	Mean	SD	t-value
Dormitory involvement	Interaction with roommates	41 337	3.63 3.25	.74 .75	3.07**
	Active involvement	41 337	4.10 3.75	.60 .59	3.58***
	Administrative management of dormitory adviser	41 337	3.98 3.54	.59 .67	4.05***
	Closeness to dormitory adviser	41 337	3.81 3.21	.87 .83	4.36***
	Enthusiasm and responsibility of fellow student	41 337	3.90 3.54	.65 .63	3.42***



Mattering perception	Mattering perception	41 337	3.83 3.51	.61 .54	3.46***
Successful	Social integration	41 337	4.02 3.80	.59 .57	2.26*
transition	Academic integration	41 337	3.75 3.49	.60 .53	2.98**

Comparison of Students Who Participated in the Service-Learning Program and Those Who Did Not

Factors		N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -value
Dormitory involvement	Facilities utilization	97 281	3.34 3.19	.54 .50	2.53*
	Organizational improvement of student government	97 281	3.60 3.45	.60 .52	2.19*
	Administrative management of dormitory adviser	97 281	3.46 3.21	.95 .81	2.27*
	Closeness to dormitory adviser	97 281	3.72 3.54	.68 .67	2.34*
	Enthusiasm and responsibility of fellow student	97 281	3.76 3.52	.72 .59	3.33***
	Knowledge and skill of fellow student	97 281	3.38 3.15	.71 .58	2.86**
	Academic integration	97 281	3.66 3.47	.58 .52	3.09**
Successful transition					


The stepwise regression analysis results of successful transition

The results of stepwise regression (table 3) showed that, of the four independent variables, the factors that had the most impact were, in order: mattering, satisfaction with major, dormitory involvement, and participation in the Service-Learning program. Mattering had the highest predictive power, with an R^2 value of 0.525. If the four factors having the most impact were added into the model stepwise, the R^2 value was 0.559, representing on a very slight increase in explanatory power.



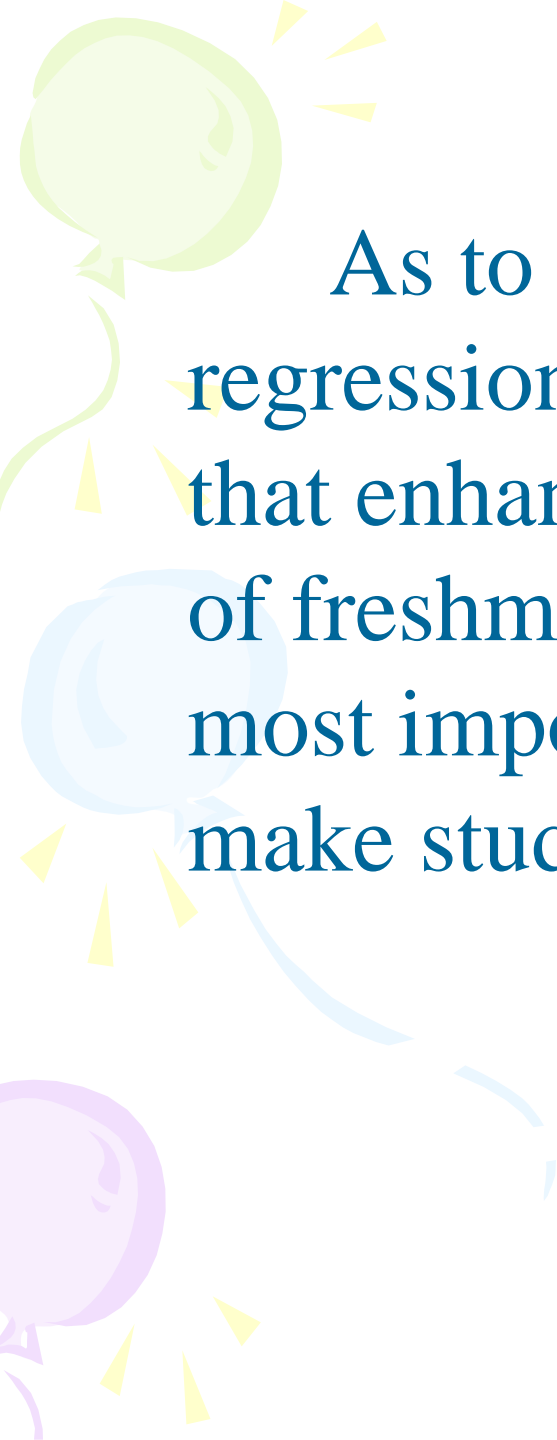
Discussion & Recommendations

➤ The taking of the Service-Learning courses and participation in the Service-Learning program both had a significant impact on student integration, whether in terms of successful transition, mattering perception or dormitory involvement. Students who had taken the courses or participated in the program also tended to display a more positive attitude with respect to the fellow students and dormitory advisors




It would thus appear that the Service-Learning program can indeed be implemented effectively, and that the university would be advised to continue implementing this program.

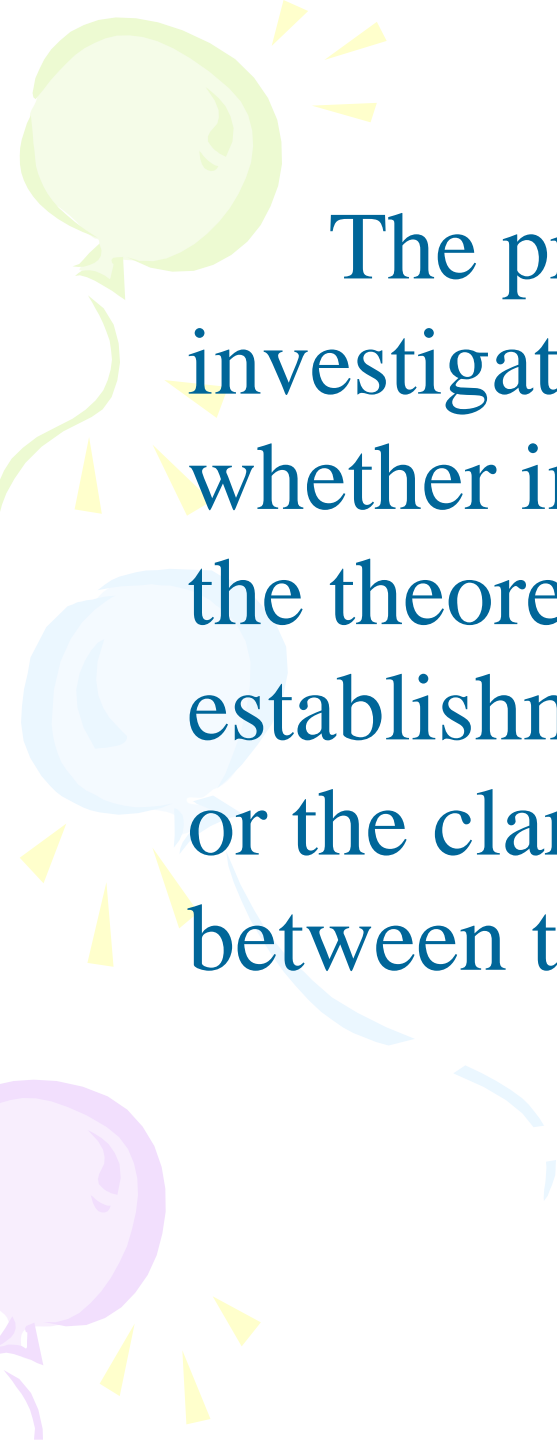
And it is possible that the more structured approach used in the Service-Learning classes is more appropriate for students in their freshman year.

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As to the results of stepwise regression analysis, it would also appear that enhancing the mattering perception of freshmen living in dormitories is the most important work for student affairs to make students successful transition.

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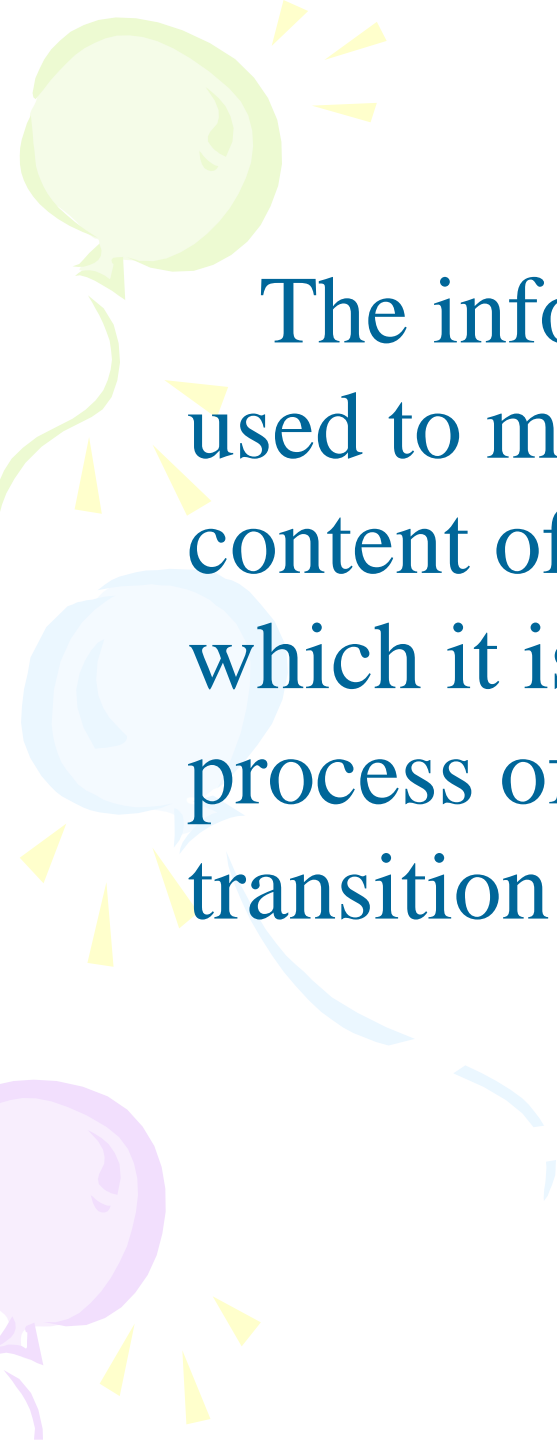
Universities would be advised to integrate a structured course model with the collaborative and mutual support aspects of the program, making the course the foundation for the other project content. In this way, the experience of participating in the program will help freshmen to acquire a sense of belonging, achieve personal growth, and have a successful conversion in terms of both academic work and interpersonal relations.

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The present is only a preliminary investigation. Further work is needed, whether in terms of the establishment of the theoretical foundations, the establishment of the research framework, or the clarification of the relationships between the variables.

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Transition is a multi-faceted, complex, active process. In future research, it should be possible to gain a more in-depth understanding of students' experience of participation in the program by making more extensive use of reflections by the students during and after the program, and in-depth interviews.

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The information obtained could then be used to make adjustments to both the content of the program and the way in which it is implemented, so that the process of ensuring a successful transition can be made more effective.

Thank you for listening

