

THE ROLE OF CLUB ORGANISATIONS IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: THE CASE OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL.

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Abstract In the context of political changes in Central and Eastern Europe, civil society as well as non-governmental non-profit organisations have developed and become part of global movements and an alternative in providing services, including public services, to community members.

This article analyses the service activities offered by Lions clubs incorporated in the structure of the largest international humanitarian service organisation, Lions Clubs International. Non-profit organizations in this case are mostly service-providing associations (service clubs or clubs organizations), e.g., Lions clubs, Rotary and Kiwanis. These organizations create a space for members to come together to meet their interests and social needs as well as address their concerns in the community. At first glance, it might appear that club organizations (Lions clubs) provide mainly mutually beneficial services - only to their members or a close community of people. However, like many non-profit organizations, service clubs have the provision of collective goods (services) embedded in the organization's mission statement. Lions Clubs International states its mission as "To empower Lions clubs, volunteers, and partners to improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants that impact lives globally, and encourage peace and international understanding".

The purpose of this paper is to empirically investigate the correlations between the amount of service provided in the selected area of assistance offered by Lions clubs and the internationally recognized indices of progress, human development, quality of life, and well-being. Mainly mathematical and statistical methods were used, especially regression and correlation analysis. Initial findings point to multiple, statistically significant relationships, particularly in the area of services with an impact on improving health in the field of eye protection.

Key words public services, service activities, human development index, legatum prosperity index, lions clubs, correlation

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Introduction

The meeting of people with the same interests who organise activities in the form of club activities are characteristic of hiking, sports, motoring, model making, art and pensioners' clubs. Meeting the individual interests of club members is their priority focus. The reason for people to meet voluntarily in clubs may also be to provide a service to the community and thus improve the situation in the community itself. In this case, club members declare "providing a service" as a primary common interest over member benefits such as social opportunities, networking, or personal growth opportunities.

Nonprofit membership associations are defined broadly as formally organized groups, most of whose members are not financially remunerated for their participation (Knoke, 1986; Murray Svidroňová et al. 2016). These associations include a variety of organizations with numerous purposes and membership structures (Tschirhart, 2006). Service organizations - service clubs, therefore, do not necessarily contain an ideological motive to provide services to community members. In the early 20th century, a number of community service club organizations began to emerge in the United States with the primary purpose of serving the public interest and helping to solve problems in the community, thus playing an important role in civil society. Service organizations, social welfare organizations that are not organized for profit, but are operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare, are one of the major types of 501(c)(4) organizations in the United States. (IRC, 2003). Most of these organizations were formed in the early 1900s as a mechanism for business networking and friendly mutual support (Charles, 1993; Hoolwerf & Schuyt, 2010). Later in the 1910s and 1920s, serving the community was adopted as the core philosophy of service clubs (Putney, 1993). Gradually, from one community, city, state, clubs were replicated in other communities, cities, and states until they became worldwide movements. After World War II, service clubs expanded their operation well beyond the border of the United States (Wikle, 1999; Charles, 1993), where serving communities locally and globally became the paramount tenet of service clubs. After 1989, in the context of political changes in Slovakia, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, there was a development of non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) , which became part of global movements and also an alternative in providing not only public services to community members. NGOs have also become important stakeholders in local development (Vitálišová et al., 2021).

Despite the critical role played by service clubs in public service, donation, and advocacy, few studies have examined the quantitative dimension of the activities of these nonprofit organizations. Data on these organizations are largely unavailable. Our study on learning about service clubs provides an analysis of the relevant data collected for the purpose of better understanding this type of NGOs. It can also contribute to improving communication with the public administration or the general public. Quantitative research on secondary data will enable more rational argumentation based on data and facts. The outputs of the study on the socio-economic contribution of service clubs will help to build a more comprehensive picture of the status and capacities of the organisation under study. It is for this reason that we consider the study of the relationship between the volume of service delivery in the aid areas and internationally recognized indices of progress, human development, quality of life and well-being to be important and timely, which was the motivation for undertaking this research.

Club Organisations and Public services

If we look at the issue of service provision in club/membership organisations from a global point of view, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of members in international movements, i.e. even if they only provide services within their communities, with such a number we can already say that it is a public or generally

beneficial interest. (Strečanský a kol., 2017; Vaceková & Lipovská, 2020). The nature of the services provided can be clarified by defining public goods and club goods. Public goods are one type of market failure. They represent a specific type of goods whose key characteristics are non-rivalry of consumption and non-excludability from consumption. Club goods are at the interface between private and public goods. A public good that becomes excludable is a club good (McNutt, 1996). Collective goods are non-rival in consumption - that is, it costs nothing to provide them to another person (Samuelson, 1954; Mikušová Meričková & Muthová, 2019). Like many non-profit organizations, service clubs that provide collective goods have such provision embedded in their mission statement. For example, Lions Clubs International (LCI) states its mission as follows: „To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs.“ (LCI,2020).

According to the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO), NGOs are classified according to their core activities, with service clubs being membership organizations providing services to members and local communities. In accordance with the above typology by activity focus, service clubs are classified in the 1st main category, culture and recreation in sub-category 1 300, other recreational and social clubs. In their home countries, service clubs are classified according to their main economic activity. In the Slovak Republic, for example, the structure of the non-profit sector according to the focus of activities is difficult to define from the register of non-governmental non-profit organisations, which was created by Act No 346/2018 Coll. on the Register of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations. Civic associations (service clubs) are mostly registered at the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic as 701 - Association (union, society, company, club, etc.), without distinguishing whether it is culture, youth, sport, environmental protection, or any other area in which the association is active.

Lions - service clubs select the method and scope of service activities based on the needs in the communities in which they operate. Service clubs assemble like-minded individuals to support the provision of collective goods. This reduces free riding through self-selection, repeated interactions with other members, and community enforcement (Kandori, 1992). In addition, service clubs can employ mechanisms known or thought to reduce free riding, like devoting a portion of mandatory dues to funding collective goods (Meričková & Muthová, 2019) or bundling warm glow with entertainment in special-event fundraisers.

Lions Clubs International represents an ideal case to examine the aim posed in our study due to its international presence as a well-known service organization. Formed in the United States in 1917, became international in 1920 by establishing the first club in Canada. Mexico followed in 1927, and the 1950s and 1960s witnessed accelerated international growth in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The events of 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution, and the victory of Solidarity allowed LCI to expand into Central and Eastern Europe.

LCI today is the world's largest voluntary service organization with 1.4 million members in more than 48,000 clubs found in more than 206 countries and geographic areas.

In 1925, Helen Keller as an ambassador for the newly formed American Foundation for the Blind addressed the Lions Clubs International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA. She challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." (LCI, 2019). The Lions accepted her challenge and their work ever since has included sight programs aimed at preventable blindness through eye centers and hospitals, medicines and surgeries, eye glasses and eye banks. Lions are working to end preventable blindness and aid the visually impaired. In this study, we will focus specifically on service activities that involve sight conservation activities.

Research Methodology

The aim of this paper is to empirically investigate the interdependencies between the volume of services provided in a selected area of assistance offered by Lions Clubs and internationally recognised indices of progress, human development, quality of life and well-being. The object of the paper is to explore possible solutions to economic and social problems, through the tools (services, activities) brought by NGOs. The object of investigation is club-type NGOs, which are part of the international humanitarian movement LCI, aimed at providing services to the community. Service clubs provide service activities that include activities in the areas of: alleviating the causes and consequences of childhood cancer (Childhood Cancer area), diabetes prevention (Diabetes area), and vision protection (Vision area).

This study uses multiple data sources. The methodological basis consisted of an analysis of literature and documents on various indexes, as well as data from the LCI database. Mathematical and statistical methods, mainly correlation and regression analysis, were used to process the quantitative data of the studied organization as well as international quality of life indicators. Panel regression analysis was performed to find the relationship between the volume of service provision in the aid areas and internationally recognized quality of life indexes.

In this study, we hypothesize that there is a relationship between the activities of service clubs and indexes aimed at measuring the quality of life in the world. This methodology was chosen based on several studies that have examined the relationships between various indicators and indexes. For example, Merickova et al (2017) analyzed the relationship between the size and structure of public expenditure and socio-economic development, Stryzhak (2020) assessed the relationship between the quality of the institutional environment and the level of human development index by correlation analysis, Beslerová and Dzuričková (2014) examined the relationship between the human development index, Legatum prosperity index, the level of economic development and unemployment.

We work with two indexes in this study. The Human Development Index (HDI), compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is an indicator of the development of countries and a comprehensive indicator of people's living conditions. Its results are published by the UN in the form of the Social Situation Report, where it determines the ranking of all states (associated in this world organization) in the field of human development (Popovič, 2011). For the purpose of the study, we will quantify the development of society through the HDI indicator. The Human Development Index (HDI) is considered one of the most widely used statistical indices aimed at measuring the quality of life in the world. The HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: long and healthy life, information and a decent standard of living. The second index tracked is the Legatum Prosperity Index (LPI), which was created by the Legatum Institute in 2007. The index is based on two domains - income and well-being. The LPI model consists of all examined variables which are categorized into eight sub-indices.: Economy (growth and financial sector performance Macroeconomic policies, economic satisfaction and expectations), Entrepreneurship Opportunity (business environment and innovation), Government (law enforcement, effective and accountable government, fair elections), Education (access to education, quality of education and human capital), Health (basic health outcomes, health infrastructure and mental health satisfaction), Safety & Security (national and personal security), Personal Freedom (degree of individual freedom and social tolerance), and Social Capital (social cohesion and involvement, community and family relationships) (Beslerová, Dzuričková, 2014). The LPI examines and measures a level of life quality in 142 countries around the world based on 89 variables.

In order to investigate the relationships, we chose the LCI indicator of the surveyed organization reflecting the clubs' activities (eye care services) and two indicators of quality of life indices (HDI and LPI). Table 1 lists the

variables used.

Table 1 Variables used in descriptive, correlation and regression analysis

Variable	Description
HDI19	The Human Development Index for 2019
LPI-H19	The Legatum Prosperity Index, Health sub-index for 2019
LCI-V19_pc	The number of people served in area a vision protection and prevention for 2019 / per capita

Source: HDI(2020), LPI(2020), LCI(2019)

In this study, we examine whether the variables are dependent and, if so, the strength of this dependence. For this investigation, the pairwise correlation coefficient is the most appropriate. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is widely used in economics, social sciences, medicine etc. as a measure of linear relationship between two variables X and Y. The mathematical formula for this coefficient, was developed by Pearson in 1895. As Rodgers and Nicewander (1988) point out, the Pearson coefficient can be described as a standardized covariance. The closer the value of "r" is to +1 or -1, the stronger the association between the two variables X and Y; the closer the value of "r" is to 0, the weaker the strength of the relationship. In many statistics textbooks, the interval [-1, 1] is divided into subintervals; the strength of the relationship between X and Y is interpreted according to the subinterval to which "r" belongs. However, the specific value of the Pearson coefficient is difficult to interpret. Different analyses of what is communicated by the Pearson coefficient must be presented with caution because the similarities between some interpretations are subject to specific limitations (Falk and Well, 1997).

Thanks to the quality theoretical basis, which has been verified in practice for years, regression and correlation analysis procedures are among the most commonly used multivariate statistical methods. The data analysis method uses causal analysis. This model includes and tests the variable LCI-V19_pc, which we hypothesize to influence HDI19 and LPI-H19. Causal models typically use correlation analysis to determine the strength of the correlation between variables. The data analysis method used in this study uses a linear regression equation, and we will estimate its parameters using the Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS) program. The causal model analysis in this study uses a simple paradigm in which there are only two variables, as shown in Figure 1.

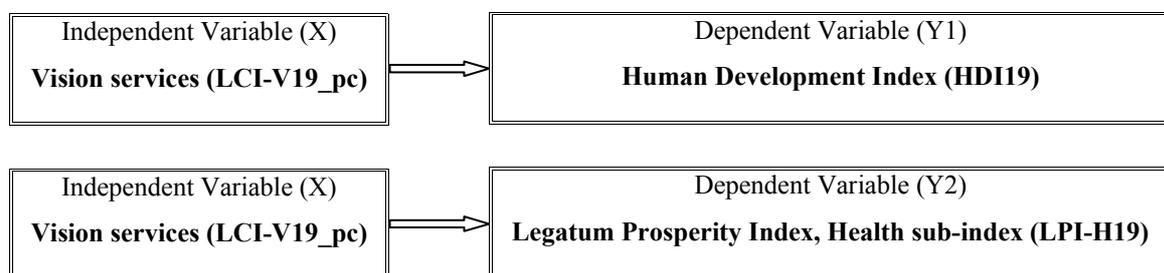


Figure 1 Research Model

This study analyses 2019 on HDI19 and LCI-V19_pc and LPI-H19 and LCI-V19_pc data objects, respectively, for all available countries in the world (N=135). As part of the first analysis, the above relationships were also evaluated in subgroups of countries: CEECs (N=12), Americas (N=22), Africa (N=44), EU excluding CEECs (N=33), Asia (N=21), and Australia (N=3). Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) is the OECD term for a group of countries comprising Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (OECD, 2001). Secondary data come from reports

of international institutions and the international organisation under review. We used published Human Development Index (UNDP, 2020) data from the United Nations Human Development Programme and published Legatum Prosperity Index (Legatum Institute, 2021) data from the Legatum Institute for 2019. The variable LCI-V19_pc, which represents the number of vision prevention and protection services provided per capita in a given country, is the "Vision - People Served" data from the Service Activities Drilldown Report of the LCI tracked organization for 2019. We used a significance level of 0.05 to test the significance of the regression coefficient. Statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0 software.

Conclusion

Lions - service clubs provide an alternative approach to vision prevention and protection services. By providing services, they contribute to addressing the needs of communities thereby contributing to an improved quality of life. In this context, the results of an empirical investigation of the interdependencies between the volume of vision services provided and internationally recognized indices for measuring quality of life, namely the Human Development Index and the Legatum Prosperity Index, we observe a linear relationship between them. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the LCI-V19_pc variable for all countries and six subgroups studied.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the variable LCI-V19_pc models

Model	N		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Percentiles		
	Valid	Missing				25	50	75
World	135	0	1.5127297	0.3383026	3.1171484	0.0089223	0.3383026	1.3547383
CEECs	12	0	0.5019756	0.3682045	0.5639314	0.0594036	0.3682045	0.8326702
Amerika	22	0	4.0190290	1.7075162	4.7969547	1.3495398	1.7075162	5.5114702
Afrika	44	0	0.4096565	0.0904979	0.9804362	0.0022213	0.0904979	0.4608039
Europe (-) CEECs	33	0	1.0121403	0.0476438	2.5647511	0.0000000	0.0476438	0.6349067
Asia	21	0	1.4796804	0.4985247	1.8291955	0.0834147	0.4985247	2.7585680
Australia	3	0	9.0924515	12.9673848	7.4804500	0.4694930	12.9673848	

Source: output from SPSS

The results of using regression and correlation analysis are shown in Tables 3 and 4 for the dependent variable Human Development Index (Y1) and Tables 5 and 6 for the dependent variable Prosperity Index Legatum (Y2). Correlation is a measure of the relationship between the variables under study. Tables 3 and 5 show the Pearson correlation coefficient, based on which we can conclude that there is a linear direct dependence between the variables of the study except in one case, which is the CEECs, in this case the dependence is indirect.

Table 3 Pearson's Correlations (R) between the variables LCI-V19_pc and HDI19

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
World	,275 ^a	0.075	0.069	0.156517
CEECs	-,675 ^a	0.455	0.401	0.027675
America	,446 ^a	0.199	0.159	0.087952
Africa	,538 ^a	0.289	0.272	0.094034
Europe (-) CEECs	,182 ^a	0.033	0.002	0.072297
Asia	,039 ^a	0.002	-0.051	0.127667
Australia	,994 ^a	0.988	0.976	0.019636

a. Predictors: (Constant), LCI-V19_pc

Source: output from SPSS

Table 4 Regression analysis results for dependent variable HDI19

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
World	(Constant)	0.710	0.015		47.364	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.014	0.004	0.275	3.296	0.001
CEECs	(Constant)	0.883	0.011		80.968	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	-0.043	0.015	-0.675	-2.891	0.016
America	(Constant)	0.719	0.025		29.113	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.009	0.004	0.446	2.226	0.038
Africa	(Constant)	0.533	0.015		34.607	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.060	0.015	0.538	4.133	0.000
Europe (-) CEECs	(Constant)	0.869	0.014		64.098	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.005	0.005	0.182	1.032	0.310
Asia	(Constant)	0.749	0.036		20.696	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.003	0.016	0.039	0.170	0.867
Australia	(Constant)	0.711	0.020		34.973	0.018
	LCI_V19_pc	0.017	0.002	0.994	9.084	0.070

Source: output from SPSS

Table 5 Pearson's Correlations (R) between the variable LCI-V19_pc and LPI-H19

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
World	,259 ^a	0.067	0.060	11.1154056446361

a. Predictors: (Constant), LCI-V19_pc

Source: output from SPSS

Table 6 Regression analysis result for dependent variable LPI-H19

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
World	(Constant)	67.304	1.064		63.249	0.000
	LCI_V19_pc	0.952	0.308	0.259	3.090	0.002

Source: output from SPSS

From the results of using regression models, it is evident that the value of the Human Development Index in 2019 was positively correlated with the volume of vision protection and prevention services performed. If the number of vision protection and prevention services per capita increased by one, then the HDI19 value increased by 0.014, with the HDI being a value that ranges from 0 to 1. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.275) indicates that whenever the per capita amount of services (LCI-V19_pc) increases, then the value of the Human Development Index (HDI) will also increase. There is a direct effect for the America and Africa countries, and both results are statistically significant. The growth in HDI for countries in the America subset is influenced very modestly (0.009) by the impact of the number of services provided. If we increase the number of services per capita by one the increase in HDI would be 0.009. The increase in HDI for countries in the Africa subset is most pronounced (0.06). If we increase the number of services per capita by one, the increase in HDI would be 0.06. The correlation coefficients for the countries in the subset America (0.446) and Africa (0.538) indicate that

whenever the per capita service provision (LCI-V19_pc) increases, then the value of the Human Development Index (HDI) also increases. In the category of CEECs, the dependence is inverse (- 0.043), which may be affected by other influences that act on the HDI that we did not observe or account for in our study. The correlation coefficient for countries in the subset of CEECs (- 0.675) indicates that whenever the per capita service provision (LCI-V19_pc) increases, then the value of the human development index (HDI) decreases.

We will not interpret the results for the regression models for the EU excluding CEECs, Asia and Australia because neither the models nor their regression coefficients are statistically significant.

There is a direct moderate dependence when examining the relationship between the Legatum Prosperity Index and the volume of vision care and prevention services performed. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.259) indicates that whenever the per capita amount of services (LCI-V19_pc) increases, then the value of the Legatum prosperity Index (LPI) will also increase. If the number of services per capita increased by one, then the LPI-H19 value would increase by 0.952, with the LPI-H19 being a value that ranges from 0 to 100. This shows that whenever the amount of services per capita (LCI-V19_pc) increases, then the value of the Legatum Prosperity Index (LPI) will also increase.

The aim of the paper was to empirically investigate the interdependencies between the volume of services provided in a selected area of assistance offered by Lions Clubs and internationally recognised indices of progress, human development, quality of life and well-being. Mathematical and statistical methods were used, in particular correlation and regression analysis. The study provided information that the internationally recognized HDI and LPI (health sub-index) indices are influenced by the amount of eye care services provided by LCI International members in the communities. Regression analysis of the data shows that the vision activities of the surveyed organization are positively associated with the HDI and LPI (health sub-index) indices. The study focuses on service delivery in the area of vision protection and prevention, which can be considered as a limitation of this study, as members of the international service organization LCI also perform service delivery in other areas (Childhood cancer, Diabetes) in the communities. Further research can be conducted on a larger scale to obtain more general conclusions.

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