



● **STRATEGIC
NATIONAL
ARTS ALUMNI
PROJECT**

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2

● **High-Impact Educational Practices in the Arts and Post-College Community Engagement**

High-impact practices (HIPs) are educationally purposeful activities that college students experience in and out of the classroom which are found to be positively related to several learning outcomes including: better gain of academic knowledge and artistic skills, recognition of community issues and real-world problems, career success and leadership building, and community engagement. In arts education, HIPs have been gaining attention as a significant learning experience for nurturing future artists and art professionals who contribute to a wide range of organizations and communities. In our analysis of the 2015 – 2017 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) data, a large proportion of former arts students reported that they had at least one HIP in service-learning (78%), working with local artists (74%), portfolio (66%), internship (46%), and study abroad (24%). When arts students engaged in the HIPs as listed above, research evidence supports that they are more likely to engage in community works and develop their career in the arts after graduation ([link1 to the supporting materials](#); [link2](#)).

In our recent study, we examined the association between arts alumni HIP participation and their community engagement outcomes (as defined by whether they volunteered at an arts organization in the past 12 months). In examining the association between HIPs and community engagement, we hypothesized that resource allocations between higher education institutions and community partners are critical in providing community-engaged HIP experiences such as working with local artists, service-learning, or internships. That is, the varying level of arts infrastructure within the

location surrounding the higher education institution may influence arts students' educational experience and opportunities to participate in community-engaged learning activities, as well as be a contributing factor to post-graduate volunteering decisions. To test the hypothesis, we considered the level of community arts infrastructure while students as a factor affecting community engagement of arts alumni. Examples of community arts infrastructure are non-profit arts organizations and arts-related businesses that enhance the visibility of arts resources and provide educational and job-related opportunities to a community. Non-profit arts organizations play various roles across multiple dimensions, including a market-oriented dimension such as seeking revenues from innovative business models and a public service dimension by generating social values through social capital and community engagement (Kim, 2017). At the same time, arts-related businesses are another vital asset driven by a market-oriented model. There is an increasing awareness among arts-related corporations and industries of their social responsibilities through their businesses. This trend can transform the arts students' educational experience and career aspirations by increasing community access to art resources, training, or employment opportunities.

This study has been published in a peer-reviewed journal, Local Development and Society. Jihee Hwang & Junghwan Kim (2022) High-impact educational practices in the arts and post-college community engagement, Local Development & Society, DOI: [10.1080/26883597.2022.2045082](https://doi.org/10.1080/26883597.2022.2045082)

To what extent do the effects of HIPs on volunteering after college vary by community arts infrastructure?

To answer the question, we conducted logistic regression analyses using two data sources: 2015 – 2017 SNAAP data and the Local Arts Index (LAI). The LAI is a publicly available database that includes various indicators of cultural and arts assets at the state and county level. From LAI, we used two variables to operationalize community arts infrastructure: 1) the number of non-profit arts organizations at the county level, and 2) arts and culture establishments that indicate the percentage of arts-related profit-seeking businesses. Five sets of logistic regression analyses were conducted for each of the five HIPs on the survey (service-learning, work with local artists, internship, study abroad, and portfolio).

Figures 1 to 5 below illustrate the odds ratios predicting post-graduate volunteering of baccalaureate degree holders in arts disciplines. All models controlled for student demographics, parental education, perceived importance of skills, type of majors in the arts discipline, Carnegie classification, and institution sector.

The results highlight two findings. First, service-learning participation and working with a local artist during college were the stronger predictors of arts alumni's post-college volunteer activities (Figures 1 and 2), while internship, study abroad, and portfolio had slightly positive effects (Figures 3, 4, and 5). Figure 1 shows that, compared to a student who had no service-learning participation, the odds of volunteering are almost three times higher if a student "often" participated in service-learning and two times higher if a student "sometimes" participated in a service-learning project. Figure 2 shows the significant positive effect of working with local artists, and the effect remained significant after adding community arts resources variables into the model. Compared to a student who had no service-learning participation, the odds of volunteering are almost three times higher if a student "often" participated in service-learning and two times higher if a student "sometimes" participated in a service-learning project. The positive effects of internship, portfolio, and study abroad on volunteering were also significant when they were examined taking community arts resources into consideration.

Second, across the five logistic regression models, we found that the positive effects of HIP participation on volunteering remained significant, regardless of the community arts infrastructure including the number of non-profit arts organizations and arts-related businesses and industries. In three sets of logistic regression models that examined internship, study abroad, and portfolio effects on volunteering, the percentage of arts-related profit-seeking businesses was found to be negative. That is, higher visibility of arts businesses or profit-seeking arts industries in a community may lower the probability of volunteering as alumni, even if they participated in an internship, study abroad, or portfolio project as students. In the absence of community-engaged HIPs such as service-learning or working with local artists, the local business and profit-seeking industry might shape the alumni's view on arts from a more professional and career-seeking perspective. We concluded that HIPs in the arts in higher education can be conceptualized as a rigorous educational practice to nurture community-engaged artists. All of the five HIPs had significantly positive effects on volunteering after college, and the effects did not disappear when taking into account the level of community arts resources. This finding provides implications that the importance of arts students' experience in HIPs is substantially stronger than the level of local arts infrastructure and resources. The co-curricular activities provided by arts degree programs in four-year colleges and universities play a significant role in nurturing community engagement readiness for art students after graduation. These findings support the idea that arts programs, which aim to enhance community service and engagement as program learning outcomes, are encouraged to provide service-learning or working with local artists as co-curricular activities to strengthen student learning outcomes in the area of community service and engagement. Thus, it is important to provide funding and other resource allocation to continue these programs and increase access and participation for all types of students in the arts.

Note for all figures: Details on statistical analyses are available upon request.



****** $p < .01$, ***** $p < .05$

Note: Control variables are male, white, parental education (high school diploma), major (arts education), institution sector (private), Carnegie classification (research four-year), worked with a local artist (never), service-learning (never).

Figure 1. The odds ratios predicting volunteering after college: Service-learning participation and community arts infrastructure ****** $p .01$, ***** $p .05$

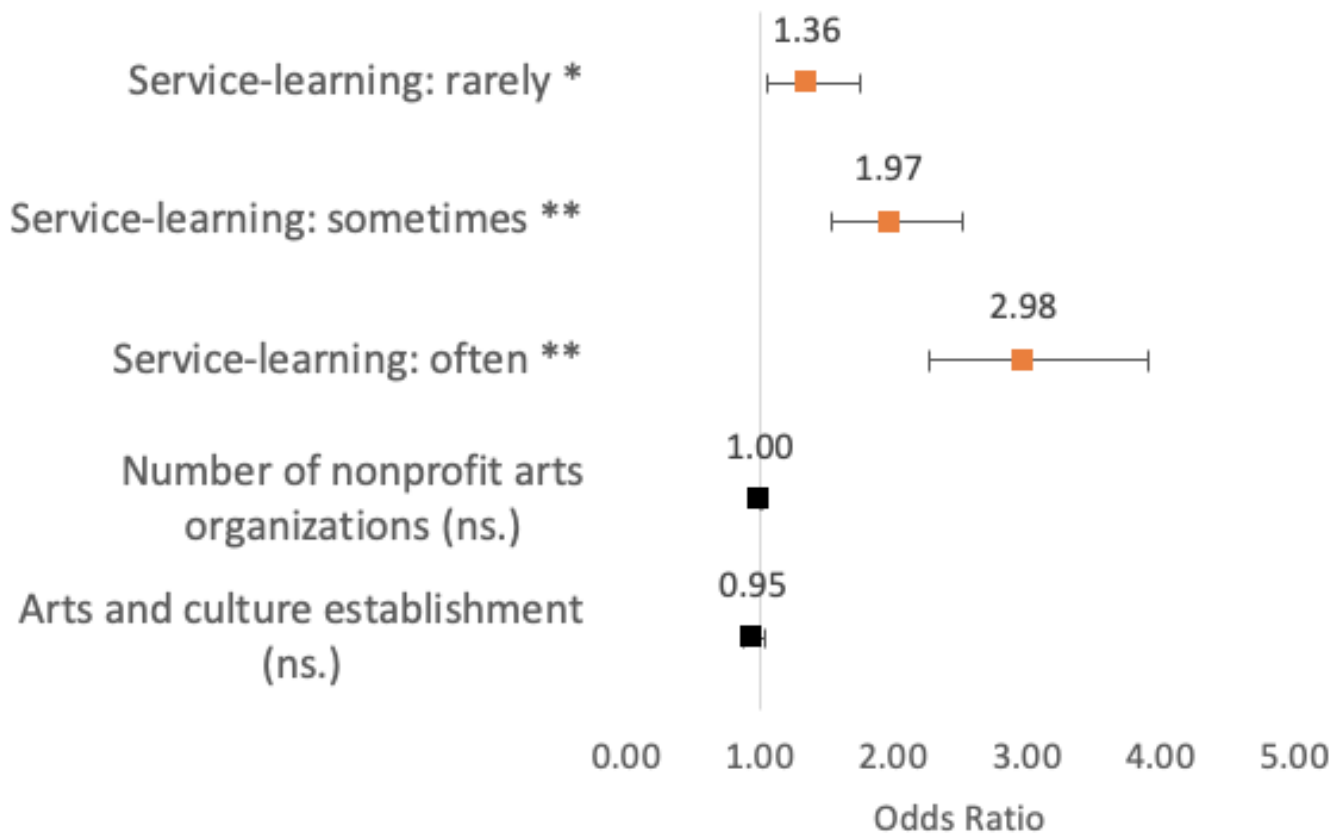


Figure 2. The odds ratios predicting volunteering after college: Working with a local artist and community arts infrastructure ****** $p .01$, ***** $p .05$

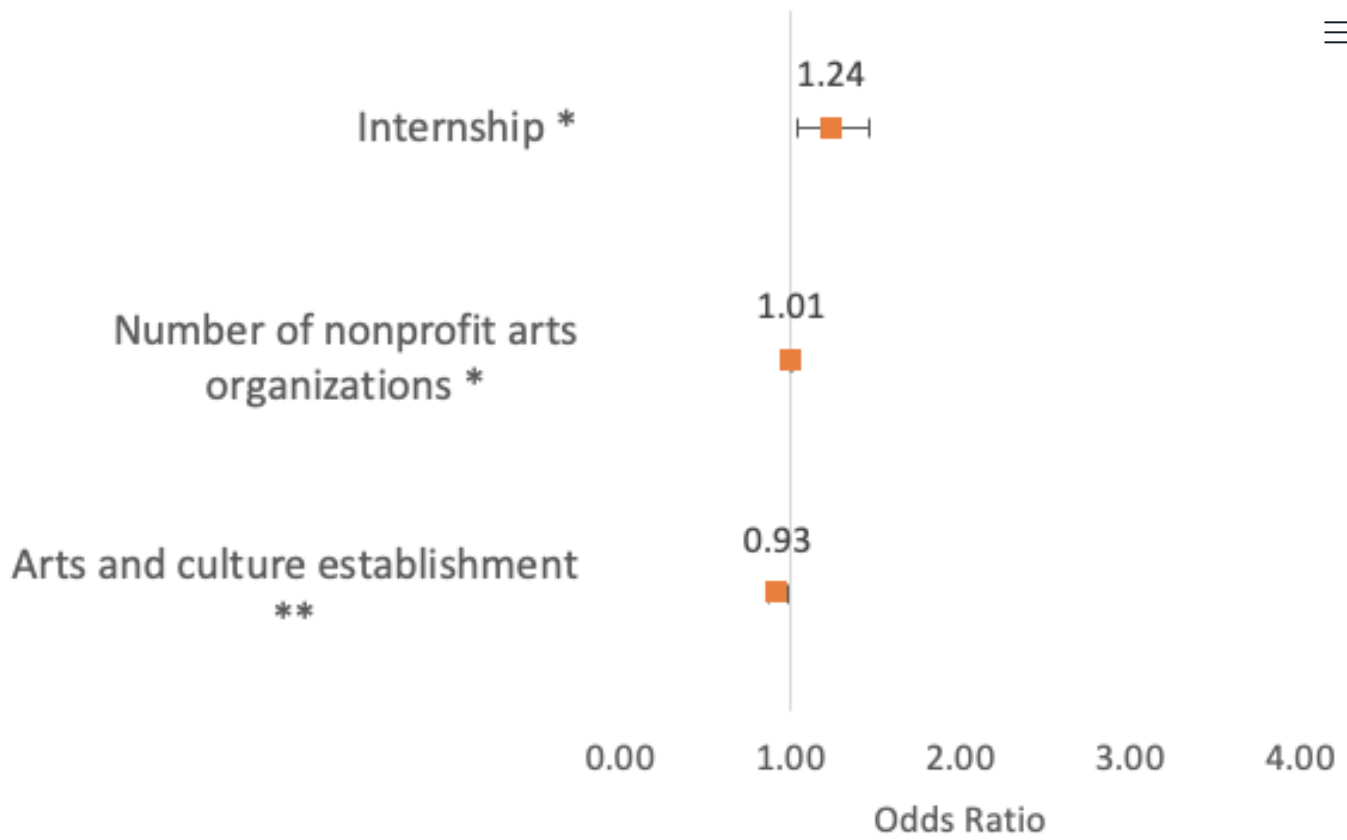


Figure 3. The odds ratios predicting volunteering after college: Internship and community arts infrastructure **p .01, *p .05

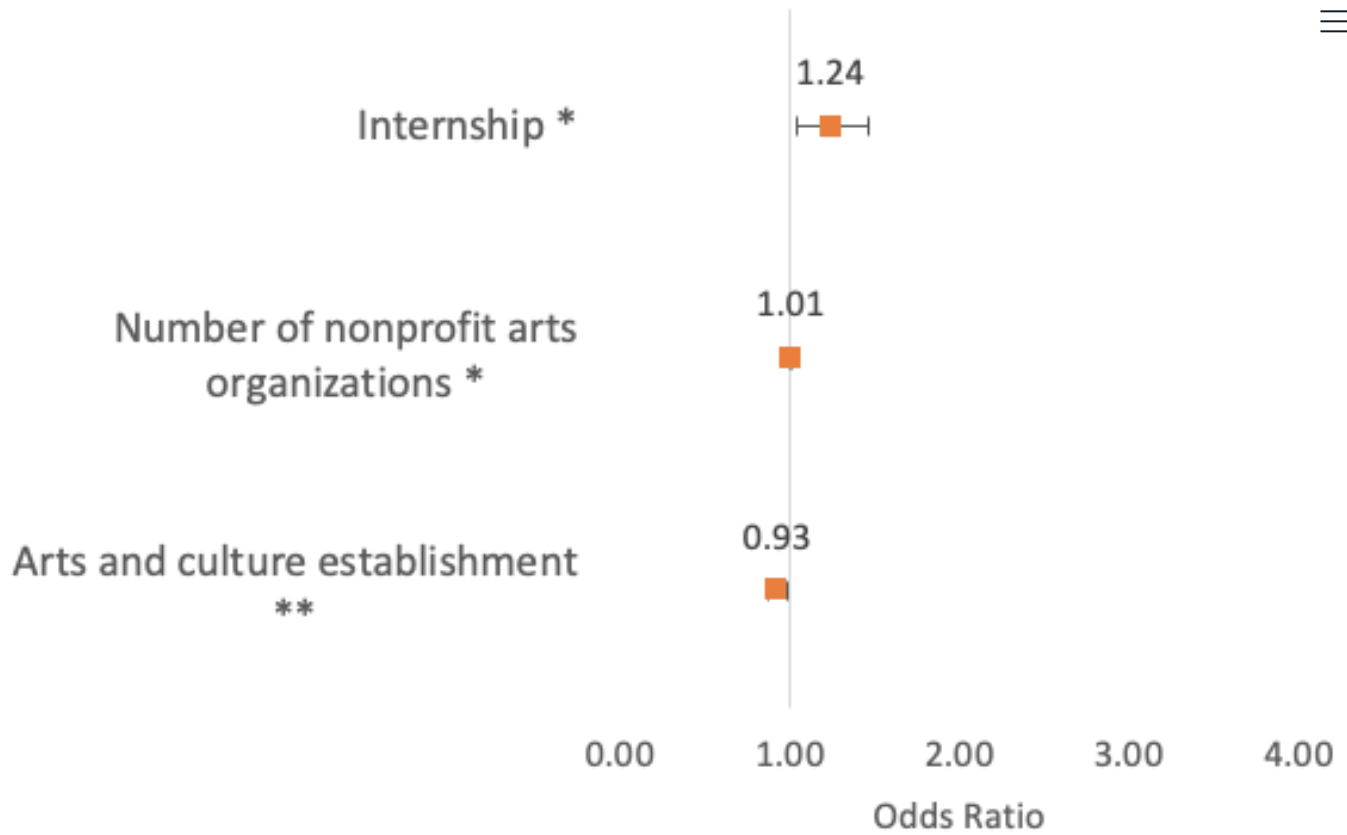


Figure 4. The odds ratios predicting volunteering after college: Study abroad and community arts infrastructure **p .01, *p .05

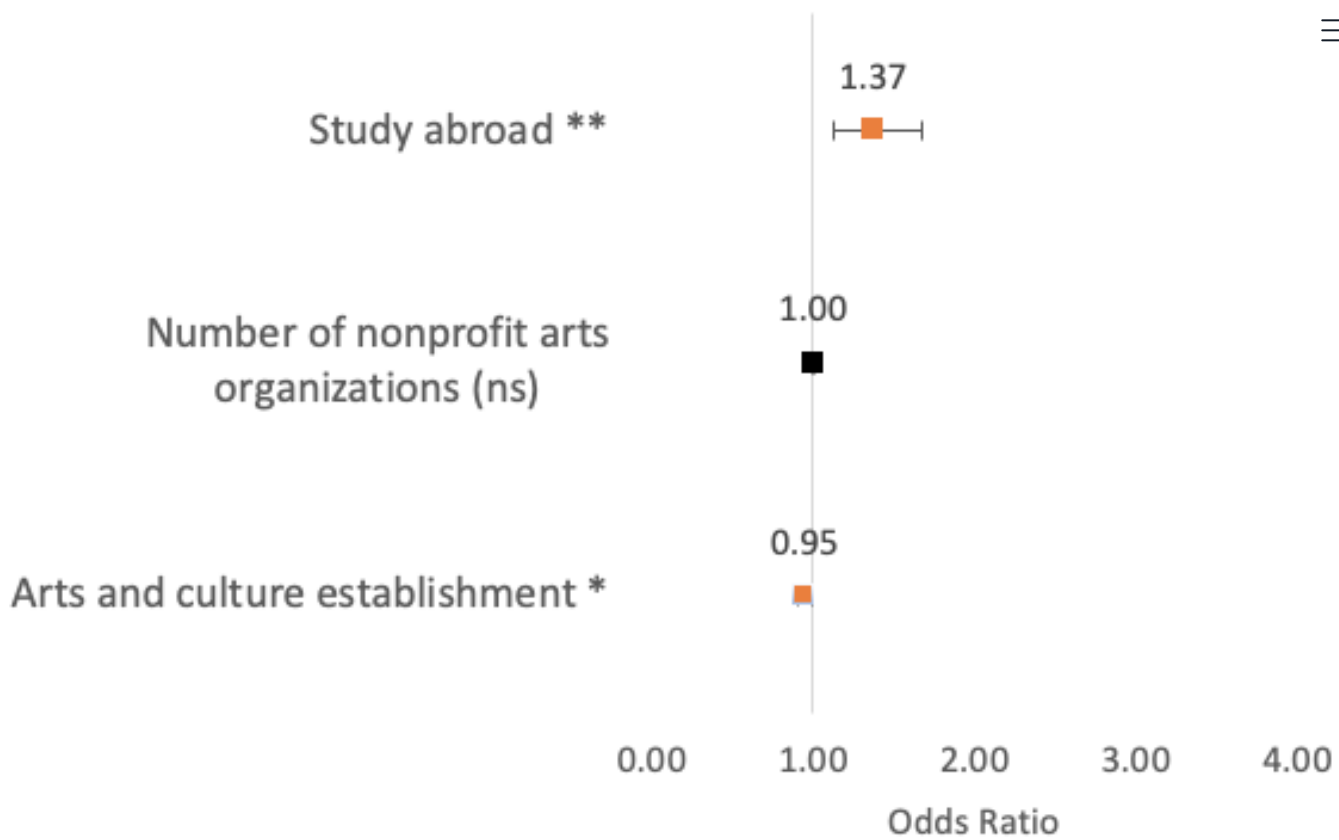
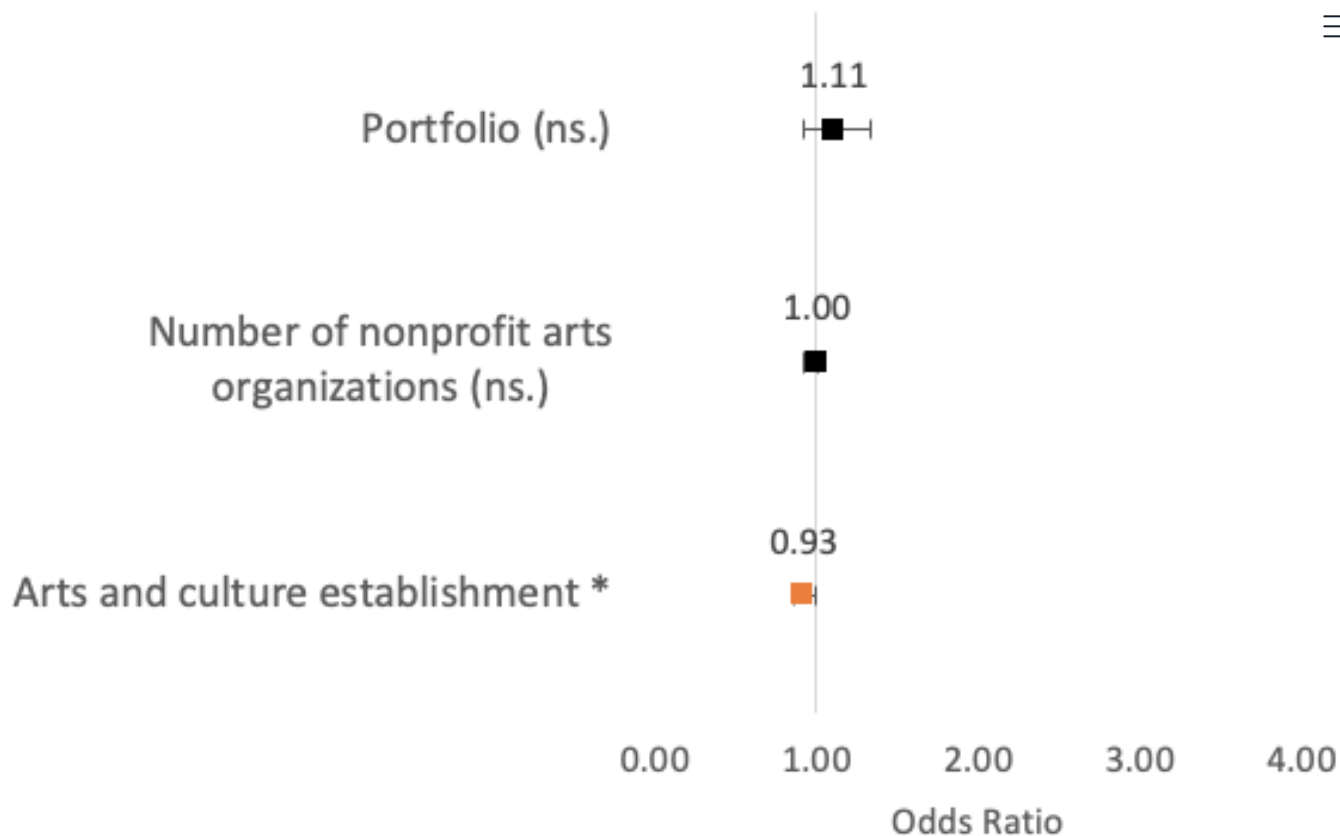


Figure 5. The odds ratios predicting volunteering after college: Portfolio and community arts infrastructure **p .01, *p .05



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