

Exploratory study on the implementation of Time Banking in Taiwan: Perspectives from Social Network Analysis

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Abstract

Time Banking was designed in the 1980s aiming to focus not only on reciprocity during the process of services exchanges but also on attempts to build and expand the social network within a community. Since 1995, passing twenty-two years, although less extensively, Time Banking has been continually implemented in Taiwan by non-profit organizations and the public sector. An increasing number of scholars became interested in studies on the social network, and Social Network Analysis (SNA) has now become the most common method to analyze the type and relationship of a network. However, the existing literature related to Time Banking in Taiwan mostly focuses on concepts and theories or factors influencing participants involved rather than exploring the network relationships. Therefore, this article used SNA to explore the experience of implementing Time Banking and the network relationships it fostered within eight communities in Taiwan. The results show that the total hours of services exchanges within each community were varied due to differences in the period for which Time Banking was implemented. The quantitative data revealed that, for the degree centrality or betweenness centrality the time broker, community leaders or volunteers were key persons within most

communities. Moreover, the direction of services exchange in some communities was found to be more one-way than reciprocal. In other words, most community residents only received or provided services. Regarding the type of service exchanges, most belonged in the category of instrumental support. For the centralization, most networks were decentralized rather than over-centralized. Based on above, the following were discussed: the strength of using SNA, the role of Time Banking brokers, the meaning of instrumental support, and the manners in which services exchanges were documented.

Keywords: Time Banking, Community development, Social network analysis