

Exploring the Role of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) in Fostering University Students' Soft Skills

Authors : Hanae Ait Hattani, Nohaila Ait Hattani

Abstract : Globalization, with the rapid technological progress, is affecting every life aspect. The 21st century higher education faces a major challenge in preparing well-rounded and competent graduates to compete in the global marketplace. Worldwide, educational policies work to develop the quality of instruction at all educational levels by focusing on promoting students' qualifications and skills, considering both academic activities and non-academic attributes. In fact, extracurricular activities (ECAs) complement the academic curriculum and enhance the student experience by improving their interpersonal skills and attitudes. This study comes to examine the potential of extracurricular activities as a vital tool for soft skills' development. Using empirical research, the study aims to measure and evaluate the extent to which university students' engagement in extracurricular activities contribute in positively changing their learning experience, fostering their soft skills and fostering their behaviors and attitudes. Findings emanating from a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews add a number of contributions to the literature. They support the assumption suggesting that ECAs can be considered a valuable way to acquire, develop, and demonstrate softs skills that students today need to evidence in a variety of contexts, such as communication skills, team work, leadership, problem-solving, to name but a few.

Keywords : extracurricular activities (ECAs), soft skills, education, university, attitude

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