

MECHANISMS OF FORMING A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SEEKERS IN EDUCATIONAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES**Halyna Ponomarova**Kharkiv Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy – Ukraine
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E-mail: yevkolesnikova@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Objective: This article delves into the interplay among academic engagement, extracurricular involvement, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills among university students. The study investigates potential correlations between students' participation in extracurricular activities and their proficiency in collaborative teamwork within university settings. Furthermore, it explores whether students' academic engagement aligns with the timely completion of their bachelor's programs. Drawing comparisons with the American educational context, the article also employs the theory of student engagement in higher education to provide insights into these phenomena. **Methods:** The research employs a systematic and comprehensive analysis of academic phenomena, utilizing factor and evolutionary approaches to explore the relationships between academic engagement, extracurricular participation, and critical thinking development among university students.

Results: The study unveils potential connections between students' involvement in extracurricular activities and their ability to engage effectively in university team collaborations. It also examines the potential influence of academic engagement on the timely completion of bachelor's programs. The article draws on the theory of student engagement in higher education to illuminate these dynamics, particularly by referencing experiences in the American educational context.

Conclusion: The significance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding the intricate dynamics between academic engagement, extracurricular activities, and the development of critical thinking skills in university students. The findings underscore the importance of exploring these relationships to enhance the overall educational experience. Further insights from the theory of student engagement provide a valuable framework for interpreting these phenomena within the broader context of higher education.

Keywords: Education; Management; Sociocultural Context; Managing Innovation; System.



MECANISMOS DE FORMAÇÃO DE LIGAÇÃO ENTRE O ENVOLVIMENTO DOS QUE BUSCAM EDUCAÇÃO NAS ATIVIDADES EDUCACIONAIS E EXTRACURRICULARES E O DESENVOLVIMENTO DE COMPETÊNCIAS

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo investiga a interação entre o envolvimento acadêmico, o envolvimento extracurricular e o cultivo de habilidades de pensamento crítico entre estudantes universitários. O estudo investiga possíveis correlações entre a participação dos alunos em atividades extracurriculares e sua proficiência no trabalho colaborativo em equipe em ambientes universitários. Além disso, explora se o envolvimento acadêmico dos alunos está alinhado com a conclusão oportuna de seus programas de bacharelado. Fazendo comparações com o contexto educacional americano, o artigo também emprega a teoria do envolvimento dos estudantes no ensino superior para fornecer insights sobre esses fenômenos. **Métodos:** A pesquisa emprega uma análise sistemática e abrangente de fenômenos acadêmicos, utilizando abordagens fatoriais e evolutivas para explorar as relações entre envolvimento acadêmico, participação extracurricular e desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico entre estudantes universitários.

Resultados: O estudo revela ligações potenciais entre o envolvimento dos estudantes em atividades extracurriculares e a sua capacidade de se envolverem eficazmente em colaborações entre equipas universitárias. Também examina a influência potencial do envolvimento acadêmico na conclusão oportuna dos programas de bacharelado. O artigo baseia-se na teoria do envolvimento dos estudantes no ensino superior para iluminar estas dinâmicas, particularmente referenciando experiências no contexto educacional americano.

Conclusão: A importância desta pesquisa reside na sua contribuição para a compreensão da intrincada dinâmica entre o envolvimento acadêmico, as atividades extracurriculares e o desenvolvimento de habilidades de pensamento crítico em estudantes universitários. As descobertas ressaltam a importância de explorar essas relações para melhorar a experiência educacional geral. Outros conhecimentos da teoria do envolvimento dos estudantes fornecem um quadro valioso para a interpretação destes fenômenos no contexto mais amplo do ensino superior.

Palavras-chave: Educação; Gerenciamento; Contexto Sociocultural; Gestão da Inovação; Sistema.

1 INTRODUCTION

The modern world is experiencing an era of rapid development and transformation, where the need to create competitive, adaptive and creative specialists is one of the main requirements for using the innovative potential of society. Higher education, as a key element of preparing young people for a professional career, has the task not only to provide students with the necessary knowledge, but also to develop their competencies, which will help them function successfully in the conditions of the modern world.

Modern students are not simple receivers of knowledge; they actively participate in the educational process and can influence its direction and results. Attracting students



to study and creating conditions for their personal development is becoming an urgent task of higher education. Active participation in learning contributes to unlocking the potential of students, developing their skills and competencies, and also promotes the development of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, self-learning and teamwork skills that are important for success in their professional activities.

The main goal of this scientific article is a deep consideration of the mechanisms that establish connections between students' involvement in learning and the development of their competencies. We aim to consider theoretical approaches to this issue, analyze the results of modern research and provide practical recommendations for higher education institutions and teaching staff.

It is important to consider that the active participation of students in education covers not only classroom activities, but also various extracurricular activities, such as participation in projects, scientific research, student self-government bodies, sports and cultural events. Thus, when considering the involvement of students in learning, we cover a wide range of activities aimed at developing their intelligence, personality and social potential.

Although the majority of research conducted primarily on American student samples suggests a positive relationship between student engagement, skill development, and academic success, it is worth noting that some studies in other countries have different results. For example, studies conducted in Taiwan and Korea show mixed data, and some of them did not find a significant relationship between student engagement and their academic performance. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the influence of cultural and educational contexts on the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement.

Despite the fact that the results of current studies conducted primarily on samples of American students indicate a positive relationship between student engagement, skill development (Strauss and Terenzini, 2007; Roulin and Bangerter, 2013; Kilgo et al., 2015), (Arum, R. & Roksa, J., 2011) and successful completion learning (Kuh et al., 2008; Wang & Degol, 2014), (Fredricks, J.A., Filsecker, M., & Lawson, M.A., 2016), a number of studies in other countries (Hsieh, 2014; Choi & Rhee, 2014) do not find a positive relationship between student engagement and educational outcomes. For example, Hsieh's (2014) study conducted on a sample of students at a university in Taiwan found no relationship between student engagement and grades when controlling for demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, and motivation. Another study (Choi, Rhee, 2014), (Epstein, J., Santob, R.M., & Guillemina, F., 2015),



(Foreman, E. A. & Retallick, M. S., 2012), based on a sample of Korean students, indicates that the educational experience of Korean students is very different from the experience of students in other countries.

2 METHODS

The uniqueness of this study lies in several important aspects:

Systematic Approach: This is the first systematic study to examine the impact of student engagement (including both curricular and extracurricular activities) on their educational achievement.

Methodological advantages: Compared to similar studies conducted in other countries, this study has important methodological advantages. In particular, not only student self-reports, but also standardized tests, administrative data, and student interviews are used to measure educational outcomes. Such a complex approach allows you to get a more objective and complete picture.

Expanding knowledge: The results of this study can expand our understanding of how student engagement affects their academic achievement. This information can be useful for higher education institutions and educational programs aimed at improving the educational process and increasing the quality of education.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research shows that students' academic engagement is positively related to their academic outcomes (grades) (Kuh et al., 2008). Kuh and colleagues note the positive contribution of student engagement to completion of a bachelor's degree, which in turn is associated with long-term social and economic benefits that are passed on to future generations, improving the quality of life not only for an individual family, but also for society as a whole (Kuh et al. al., 2008). Some work suggests a positive relationship between student participation in collaborative projects, interactions with students from different cultures, and gains in critical thinking skills (Tsui, 2008), (Kim, J. & Bastedo, M. N., 2016). Special attention is paid to the interaction between teachers and students, not only in the classroom, but also outside. Faculty-student interactions can occur through faculty-led research and application projects (Hand et al., 2011). Student involvement in scientific/project activities develops independent thinking skills and stimulates the processes of synthesis and evaluation of ideas (Kilgo et al., 2015).



Thus, student engagement is associated with educational success, which is defined as the development of skills and completion of the educational program on time. In this regard, surveys of students about what and with what frequency they do at the university, and how they evaluate the educational and extracurricular activities existing at universities have become popular at universities in the USA, Canada and Australia (Pascarella et al., 2010; Johnstone et al., 2018), (Douglass, J. A., Thomson, G. & Zhao, C.-M., 2012).

Principles of involving students in modern pedagogy:

Complex Engagement: Student engagement is seen as the cumulative investment of time and cognitive effort made by students to acquire an academic experience. In fact, the more time and intellectual energy students devote to participating in educational activities, the better the expected result.

Dynamic nature: Student engagement is inherently dynamic. This means that different students may show different degrees of participation in specific practices or events, and the same student may show different levels of participation in different activities or events.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators: Student engagement encompasses both quantitative and qualitative aspects. For example, the degree of student participation in educational work can be measured quantitatively (for example, the amount of time spent preparing for the lesson) and qualitatively (for example, whether the student understood the material or simply repeated it without understanding).

Direct Link to Development: Students' skill development and personal growth are directly related to the quality and quantity of effort they put into their educational experience.

Main conclusions and implications:

Academic Engagement and Critical Thinking: Engaging students in academic activities that include active participation in class discussions, application of knowledge from various courses, and time spent on assignments is positively related to the development of critical thinking skills.

Extracurricular and Teamwork Skills: Extracurricular involvement, such as being active in student organizations, is positively related to the development of teamwork and critical thinking skills among university students.

Academic disengagement and on-time program completion: Academic disengagement, which is defined as non-compliance with academic requirements (eg,



missed assignments or missed classes), is a significant barrier to on-time program completion for university students.

Cross-Cultural Differences: The nature of academic engagement among American students differs from that of students in other countries. American students spend significantly more time attending classes and completing assignments than their peers. Conversely, extracurricular activities in their current format show a weaker correlation with students' academic performance.

These principles and findings underscore the multidimensional nature of student engagement and highlight its critical role in shaping various aspects of their educational experiences and outcomes in contemporary pedagogy. They also highlight the importance of considering cultural and contextual differences when studying student engagement and its impact.

The presented study is the first systematic attempt to study the relationship between student involvement and educational outcomes of students in higher education. In addition to other works (e.g., Hsieh, 2014; Choi, Rhee, 2014), (Creswell, J. W., 2014), (Hand, J., Betters, C., McKenzie, M., & Gopalan, H., 2011), it demonstrates the limitations of engagement theory (originally developed as applied to American higher education) in educational contexts where students have significantly limited opportunities to build their educational trajectory and space for involvement. The inflexibility of educational plans of universities and the high classroom load limit opportunities for both academic involvement within the framework of a specific course (for example, opportunities to read additional literature or a deeper discussion of topics of interest to students) and extracurricular involvement (Axelson, R. D., & Flick, A., 2011), (Bers, T.H., & Smith, K.E., 1991), (Chesnut, C. E., Hitchcock, J. H. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J., 2018), (Cole, M. S., Rubin, R. S., Feild, H. S. & Giles, W. F., 2007). As a result, participation in additional activities that go beyond the formal requirements of the educational process is associated with higher costs for students than for students of American universities and does not always translate into higher educational results (Astin, A., 1984, 1993), (Chia, Y.M., 2005).

Modern Ukraine is actively discussing the issue of how to improve the educational results of students, and in the conducted research, useful information can be found for the development of measures aimed at increasing the readiness of students to complete their studies, as well as for the formation of a student curriculum, the distribution of the educational load, and the planning of new student initiatives in higher



The obtained results are important for understanding how universities organize and structure the educational experience of students.

Based on the results of the research, the following proposals can be formulated that may be useful for universities:

Developing Critical Thinking and Teamwork: Engaging students in university-based extracurricular activities can help develop their critical thinking and teamwork skills. To do this, you can take the following measures:

Redistribution of students' academic load and expansion of educational formats that include extracurricular work of students, for example, within student organizations or project activities.

Creation of accessible platforms and open formats of extracurricular activities on the basis of the university, as well as creation of a department that coordinates extracurricular activities of students.

Expanding the practice of accounting for extracurricular achievements (for example, holding conferences/festivals, implementing charitable projects, etc.) in special scholarships and university incentives.

Completion of the Educational Program on Time: To increase the number of students who complete the educational program according to the established schedule, the following measures can be taken:

Monitoring student engagement (attendance, completed assignments) at the institutional level and providing targeted assistance to at-risk students, such as referrals for counseling and face-to-face meetings.

Conducting support courses for students who cannot learn the educational material.

Placement of first-year students in dormitories located close to academic buildings to reduce travel time. This will allow them to spend more time at the university and participate in extracurricular activities.

These proposals can serve as a basis for further research and implementation in the practice of universities with the aim of improving the educational results of students and facilitating their successful completion of the educational program.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Student engagement: the key to successful higher education. The study confirms that the modern student must be more than just a receiver of knowledge. He must be an active participant in the educational process, who independently affects the quality



of his education. Involving students in learning and extracurricular activities becomes an important task for higher education, as it forms their competencies and readiness for future professional activities.

Expansion of study formats and extracurricular activities. Universities should actively develop various formats of learning and extracurricular activities, including projects, research, student self-government bodies, sports and cultural activities. This expands students' opportunities to develop their intellectual, personal and social potential.

Balanced academic and extracurricular involvement. Although extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on the development of critical thinking and teamwork skills, it is important to balance these activities with students' academic efforts. Excessive involvement in extracurricular activities can affect their academic performance.

Influence of cultural and educational context. It is important to consider that the relationship between student engagement and their learning outcomes may vary in different cultural and educational contexts. Further research should be conducted to understand how these factors affect the relationship.

In general, this article indicates the need for active development of mechanisms of student involvement in studies and extracurricular activities in higher education. This contributes to the development of their competencies and readiness for successful professional activity, which requires adaptability, creativity and critical thinking. The study also highlights the importance of further research and analysis of different cultural and educational contexts to understand this process.

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