

LEARNING THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR EXTENDING EDUCATION BEYOND CLASSROOM WALLS



Editors

Ponmalar N Alagappar
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PENERBIT UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
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Table of Contents

<i>Foreword by the Chairperson of UniCC</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi

THEME 1 Holistic Student Development Through Co-Curricular Activities

Chapter 1	
Exploring the Influence of Students' Character Development, Cultural Intelligence and Co-Curricular Studies at a HEI in Malaysia: A Preliminary Collaborative Action Research Study <i>Faizah Idrus</i>	3
Chapter 2	
Classroom to Community: Cultivating Students' Entrepreneurial Competence Through Co-Curricular Activities in Higher Education <i>Syamsulang Hj. Sarifuddin</i>	41
Chapter 3	
Exploring Undergraduate Students' Self-concept and Communication Abilities in Co-Curricular Activities <i>Mohd Amir Izuddin Mohamad Ghazali, Zuraina Ali and Noraisah Nurul Fatwa Mohd Razali</i>	63
Chapter 4	
The Role of Co-Curricular Activities in Fostering Civic Engagement at the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) <i>Noorfathehah Abdullah Sani</i>	87

Chapter 5

- Netball Explorer: A Community-Based Learning Project Through Volunteerism for Co-Curricular in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak 103
Dyg Norkhairunnisa Abang Zaidel

Chapter 6

- The Perceptions Towards Leadership Courses on Students' Agency at International Islamic University Malaysia 127
Ruzai Syarilili Aiyu Abd Rashid and Bukhari Shafie

Chapter 7

- Fostering Professionalism Through Co-Curriculum Courses with the Community-Driven University Initiative 139
Annie Anak Joseph, Kho Lee Chin, Siti Kudnie Sahari, Ngu Sze Song and Ron Adrino Chan@Ron Bukiing

THEME 2**Innovative Approaches in Co-Curricular Education****Chapter 8**

- Empowering Undergraduate Students with Enhanced Research Skills Through Independent Research 159
Archina Buthiyappan, Ponmalar N Alagappan, Muhammad Aidil Roslan, Nuradila Zahirah Mohd Azmi and Abdul Aziz Abdul Raman

Chapter 9

- Student's Achievement, Course Feedback and Instructors' Challenges in Outcome-Based Education Between Online and Face-to-Face Learning Environment for Cultural Co-Curriculum Program at Universiti Sains Malaysia 189
Siti Zuraidah Md Osman, Mohd Shaparel Haji Salleh, Che Mat Jusoh, Faisal Mohamad Zain, Hilyati Ramli, Norazizah Rusli, Siti Fatimah Manaf, Mohammad Anis, Abd. Ghani, Abdul Hafiz Majid, Hazrina Yusof Hamdani, Azira Razali and Mohammad Haafiz Mohamad Kassim

Chapter 10	
Mapping Extra-Curricular Activities to Co-Curricular Pillars: A Case Study of Dental Students at Universiti Malaya	211
<i>Norintan Ab-Murat, Ponmalar N Alagappar and Faridah Che Husain</i>	

Chapter 11	
Enhancing Student Engagement with a Gamification-Based Approach to Road Safety Awareness	225
<i>Nur Khairiel Anuar, Za'im Ahmad and Rohafiz Sabar</i>	

THEME 3**Assessment and Improvement of Co-Curricular Programs**

Chapter 12	
Student Feedback Survey (SFS) in Co-Curricular Activities: A Case Study at International Islamic University Malaysia	241
<i>Ruzai Syarilili Aiyu Abd Rashid</i>	

Chapter 13	
Implementation of Malaysia Service Learning (SULAM) in Co-Curricular Courses and Its Impact on Students' Generic Skills	289
<i>Mahyuddin Arsat, Muhammad Hamizan Amran, Intan Zaurah Mat Darus, Ahmad Nabil Md Nasir, Muhammad Khair Noordin and Mega Novita</i>	

Chapter 14	
Rethinking Co-Curricular Pedagogy in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions: A Critical Examination for Enhanced Student Engagement	301
<i>Faizah Idrus</i>	

<i>Conclusion</i>	323
<i>List of Contributors</i>	325
<i>Index</i>	329

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this insightful exploration of holistic development in Malaysian higher education on behalf of the UniCC (Malaysia Universities Co-Curricular Council) or in Bahasa Melayu known as *Majlis Kokurikulum Universiti Awam Malaysia*.

Preparing well-rounded graduates for a globalized future is a top priority in today's fast-changing landscape. The content within these chapters delves into the crucial connections between cultural intelligence, character development, and co-curricular activities. This examination provides valuable insights to guide educational practices, ultimately empowering students to thrive in an interconnected world.

UniCC is fully dedicated to this mission. Since its establishment in 2011, UniCC has been a platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing among public universities' co-curricular centres. We believe that robust co-curricular programs, alongside academic pursuits, are crucial in equipping graduates with the necessary skills and experiences.

The collaborative action research approach used to develop this book strongly resonates with UniCC's core values. The content, which involves stakeholders including researchers, students, faculty, and administrators, underscores the importance of collective action in driving positive change within our universities.

This book aims to bridge knowledge gaps and offer actionable recommendations for educational institutions worldwide. By prioritizing the development of cultural intelligence, character, and active engagement in co-curricular activities, we prepare students to navigate complexities, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and excel in their chosen professions.

As you embark on this journey through the book's chapters, let us embrace the transformative potential of holistic education. Together, empowered by collaborative efforts like those championed by UniCC, we can equip students for success in a rapidly changing world.

Professor Ts. Dr. Intan Zaurah Mat Darus
Chair of Malaysia Universities Co-Curricular Council (UniCC)
January 2023 to December 2024

Preface

Welcome to “Learning through Co-Curricular: Extending Education Beyond Classroom Wall”. This book brings together a collection of insightful research studies that delve into the diverse dimensions of co-curricular activities and their profound impact on students’ educational journeys. The investigations span a range of subjects, organized into three key themes that highlight the multifaceted nature of co-curricular education.

Theme one touches on Holistic Student Development Through Co-Curricular Activities

Seven different chapters are contained within the first theme. The chapters explore how co-curricular activities contribute to students’ comprehensive growth, encompassing cultural intelligence, character development, self-concept, communication skills, leadership abilities, and civic engagement. From collaborative action research on cultural intelligence to studies on soft skill development and community service, we examine the diverse ways co-curricular activities shape well-rounded graduates.

The first chapter goes into the dynamic interplay between cultural intelligence, character development, and co-curricular studies at a Malaysian higher education institution. Employing a collaborative action research approach, the study engages researchers, students, faculty, and administrators in a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The findings aim to guide higher education institutions in prioritizing cultural intelligence and character

development, providing evidence-based strategies for fostering intercultural understanding and responsible citizenship among students.

The second chapter delves into the *Siswapreneur* subject at Universiti Putra Malaysia, exploring the development of soft skills. Through quantitative thematic analysis, the study uncovers themes such as effective communication, critical thinking, and leadership, offering valuable insights into enhancing students' holistic development. The findings underscore a positive impact on students, enhancing various skills and fostering social responsibility.

Moving forward, the third chapter unveils the positive correlation between self-concept and communication abilities in students engaged in co-curricular activities. While gender-based differences remain inconclusive, the study emphasizes the importance of co-curricular involvement in enhancing these skills, suggesting future research should incorporate qualitative methods.

The fourth chapter focuses on the increasing incorporation of co-curricular activities in contemporary higher education to nurture responsible, civic-minded individuals. Grounded in civic engagement concepts, the study assesses the effectiveness of co-curricular programs in instilling a sense of civic responsibility, shedding light on the benefits and challenges of such initiatives. It employs a mixed-methods approach to identify obstacles hindering civic engagement, offering valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of integrating co-curricular initiatives for fostering civic responsibility in contemporary academia.

This fifth chapter explores the transformative impact of co-curricular activities, specifically the Netball Explorer program, on first-year university students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. By engaging in a variety of community-based projects, including netball, Zumba, and mural painting, students not only enhanced their leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills but also developed a strong sense of teamwork and dedication. The findings highlight the potential of co-curricular activities to address the prevalent challenges faced by first-year students and foster their growth as well-rounded individuals.

The sixth chapter investigates the effectiveness of leadership training programs in fostering student agency and self-efficacy within higher education institutions. By examining the perspectives

such as leadership, teamwork, communication, and entrepreneurship. Through a variety of co-curricular activities, including cultural events, mentorship programs, and community service projects, the study demonstrates the significant contribution of these pursuits to the development of well-rounded graduates. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating co-curricular activities into dental education to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess the essential skills and competencies required to succeed in their professional and personal lives.

The eleventh chapter researches the application of gamification in the field of education to enhance student engagement and active participation. A cooperative learning exercise was implemented, requiring students to design a game focused on promoting road safety awareness. By applying their classroom knowledge to a practical game, students demonstrated increased engagement and satisfaction with the gamification approach. Peer observation and reflection further reinforced the positive impact of gamification on student interaction and learning outcomes.

Theme three delves into the Assessment and Improvement of Co-Curricular Programs

Continuous improvement is key to the success of co-curricular programs. This section examines various approaches to gathering and implementing student feedback, assessing the impact of co-curricular activities, and addressing the challenges in their implementation. By analysing student attitudes and experiences, we provide insights into enhancing the quality and effectiveness of cocurricular offerings in higher education.

The twelfth chapter examines undergraduate students' attitudes toward credited co-curricular subjects, identifying areas for improvement and enhancing overall learning quality. With valuable feedback from students, this chapter provides insights into the effectiveness of lecturers in teaching skill classes and offers recommendations to improve instruction quality.

The thirteenth chapter explores the impact of service learning on developing generic skills in students. It investigates the effectiveness of service learning in enhancing skills like communication, leadership, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, and global awareness.

Through survey-based research, the study finds that service learning significantly contributes to acquiring these essential skills, making students more employable and prepared for career growth. The findings suggest that integrating service learning into the curriculum can provide an effective experiential learning environment for developing generic skills.

The final chapter proposes a new framework for co-curricular pedagogy in Malaysia. It aims to address the limitations of current approaches and foster greater student engagement. The framework is grounded in the country's cultural context and incorporates global best practices. Through a pilot implementation and feedback process, the research seeks to refine the framework and provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers. Ultimately, this study aims to create a more transformative and meaningful educational experience for Malaysian students.

Together, these research studies contribute to our understanding of the multifaceted benefits and challenges of co-curricular activities, emphasizing their crucial role in extending education beyond traditional classroom boundaries. We hope this collection sparks conversations, inspires further research, and enhances the educational experiences of students worldwide.

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LEARNING THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR EXTENDING EDUCATION BEYOND CLASSROOM WALLS

"Learning through Co-Curricular: Extending Education Beyond Classroom Walls" is a rich compilation of research studies that systematically investigate the profound impact of co-curricular activities on students' holistic development and educational experiences. Engaging in extracurricular pursuits such as clubs, sports, and community service fosters skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability. These activities offer a dynamic platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, enhancing their interpersonal and problem-solving abilities. The experiential nature of co-curricular involvement cultivates a well-rounded skill set, equipping students with the competencies essential for success in both academic and professional realms.

The experiential nature of co-curricular activities enables students to navigate uncertainties, make decisions under pressure, and adapt to diverse environments. These real-world challenges contribute to the development of problem-solving skills, adaptability, and a proactive approach to learning. For example, participation in clubs and organizations fosters teamwork, communication, and leadership skills. In group settings, students learn to collaborate effectively, navigate diverse perspectives, and collectively work towards common goals. These experiences transcend the theoretical confines of the classroom, offering practical insights into interpersonal dynamics. As students navigate these experiences, they not only enhance their academic journey but also build a foundation of soft skills crucial for personal growth, career success, and meaningful contributions to society.

