

Deepening critical thinking skills through civic engagement in Malaysian higher education

ABSTRACT

Developing critical thinking skills among undergraduates has been set as an aim in the higher education for years. In recent times, it has become more crucial in implementing this aim to improve students' commitment to civic engagement. Thus, this study examined the association between civic engagement and critical thinking skills of Malaysian undergraduates. Based on related literature, this study is quantitative in nature where a total of 400 regular university students were chosen as participants. The results have proved that civic engagement has an impact on the students' critical thinking skills and its sub-domains can explain about almost half of the variance in critical thinking ability in the Malaysian context. Although civic skills have superior impacts on critical thinking skills, civic disposition seems to have less importance on it. The results also reveal the negative association between civic knowledge and critical thinking skills. It is hoped that this study can also provide the necessary resources for university faculty and administrators who are also interested in implementing civic engagement within the higher education context to build bridges between the university and its communities.

Keyword: Critical thinking skills; Higher education; Civic engagement; Civic skill; Civic knowledge; Civic disposition