

## Undergraduate Student Skills: A Study compared between Participating and Not Participating in Official Student Clubs in Hanoi, Vietnam

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**Abstract:** The study explored the implications of joining clubs students. Through the process of collecting and analyzing data from both participating and non-participating groups, the research team pointed out the benefits that participating in these activities. The developed skills include two skill groups: Hard skills, Soft skills. In which, Hard skills is consisted of: Professional skills (GPA), Foreign language skills and Basic computer skills such as word, excel, powerpoint, and Soft skills include Communication skills, Leadership skills, Teamwork skills, Presentation skills, Time management skills, Confidence in your ability, Professionalism, Honesty and Work ethic, Adaptive skills in volatile environments. The research conducted a survey with participation of 241 respondents.

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### I. Introduction

Young intellectuals like students play an integral role in the socio-economic development of the country. In the new age, students not only need to strive to study and train, they also need to accumulate other experiences to adapt in a global society. It can be said that although learning is the most important goal of almost students, it should not be the only goal. The incredible pressure of global competition is increasing, students have to be self-aware that they will work in an environment of globalization, continuous development and technological innovation required students to combine knowledge learned with communication skills, teamwork, making decision and flexibility when jobs and environment could be changed in different situations. Therefore, enthusiastic youth should participate more in extra-curricular activities, which is useful and meaningful for themselves and the community. Moreover, participating in extra-curricular activities helps students develop comprehensively both physically and mentally; and gain to perfect some valuable skills to integrate well. Therefore, equipping and developing with soft skills must go hand in hand with the knowledge. Participating clubs or volunteer student teams is one way to help students get there.

A club is known as a type of organization, is a gathering of students with the same passion, interests, and needs for a certain purpose. Adversely, university helps students have specialized knowledge, extra-curricular activities in the club are aimed at helping students develop their vision, help them identify and improve their skills. Issues for new graduates is how to make an impression and assert themselves to employers. Extra-curricular activities can be one of "the launchers" to help students identify future development directions. This activities will help students express themselves, find and pursue their passion. In addition, students can strengthen the specialized knowledge learned in the lecture hall and continue to form, develop their skills: self-improvement, communication, management and adaptation. On the other hand, clubs also help students form the right attitude to life's problems, be responsible for your behavior, fight for the wrong expression, perceive and appreciate the beauty of life.

The study aims to analyze the factors that the clubs affect to the skills of students and the difference of those factors between student groups participating and not participating the clubs. After that, we propose these organizations should promote more positive impacts, expand the scale and improve the quality of them. The research group collected data based on the survey with students in Hanoi, Vietnam. Research data is ensured the representativeness, completeness, and reliability of the collected samples.

### II. Literature Review

Theoretically, Lei Han (2011), hard skills are the skills in which the principles remain the same regardless of organizations or circumstance, this skills is designed and higher upgraded according to abilities and desires. A study of Alison Doyle (2017) showed that hard skills are part of the skills set required for a job, which include professional knowledge necessary for an individual to successfully do the job and specifically listed in job descriptions. Hard skills are acquired through formal training programs, including colleges, apprenticeships, short-term training courses, online courses, certification programs, as well as on-the-job training. These types of skills are learned and can be defined, assessed and measured according to Alison Doyle (2017) pointed out the most crucial hard skills including: Basic computer skills, Professional skills, Foreign language skills.

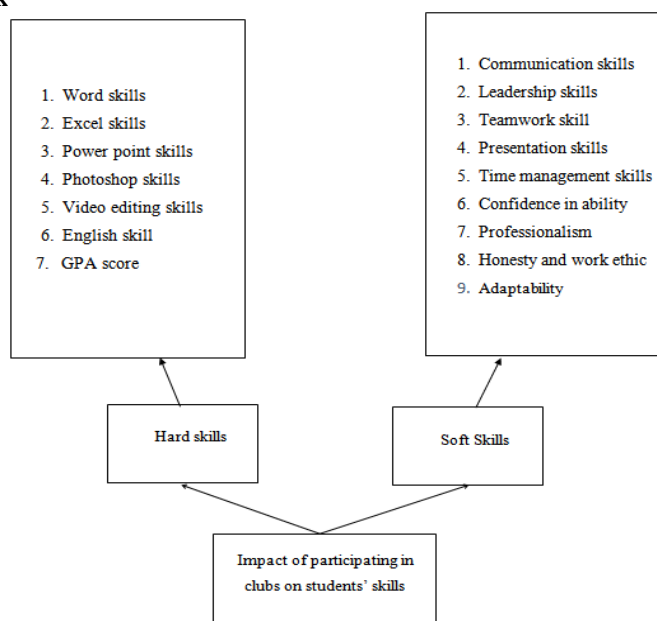
Marcel M. Robles (2015) defined soft skills is a human quality, human skills or personal attributes. "Employers consider soft skills to be a vital factor for job applicants. Employers look for their candidates to have strong soft skills compared to hard skills". A study of Mitchell, Skinner, & White (2010) resulted technology had a profound impact on the applicant's skills which employers are seeking from economic students. The transition from an industrial economy to an information society and many recent works emphasizes: honesty, communication and adaptability followed by Zehr (1998). In today's working environment, professional skills are not enough and businesses with enough employees will need to cut

different positions (James, 2004). Nealy (2005) pointed that soft skills is a key determinant of production efficiency in today's working environment, and business leaders in the future are emphasizing development of soft skills. A research of Kalus (2010) illustrated 75 percent of success in temporary work depends on soft skills, but only 25 percent depends on professional skills. Due to Watts (2008), hard skills contribute 15 percent to success, while 85 percent due to soft skills. M. Robles (2015) identified the 10 most important soft skills in his research: Communication, Politeness, Flexibility, Integrity, Positive attitude, Professionalism, Accountability, Teamwork, Work ethic. In another study by Thomas Farrugia (2015) on students' perceptions of career development. This study showed that leadership skills mostly benefited from engaging in extracurricular activities, while communication skills and motivation skills to improve yourself moderately, and time management skills are less developed in the target groups.

A study of Camp (1990) found a significant effect on academic achievement when students participated in extracurricular activities. He did an effect size calculation that found a scale effect for student achievement compared to extracurricular activities that were twice as effective as the size effect for student achievement compared to learning habits. However, according to Eccles (2003), engaging in social-related activities and learning successfully, excessive participation could be extremely stressful for young people because of over much consumption of free time. In particular, Brooh (2002) argued that participation in clubs is related to improve GPA, higher academic aspirations, increase attendance and reduce absence. A research of Anna Reva (2012) showed that students would have more motivation to participate English classes in the classroom, and they will make more efforts to improve their personal language skills. Following Michael Corbett (2015) pointed out importance of participating in clubs such as discovering yourself, developing soft skills, teamwork skills, enlarging relationships, relaxation and finding hobbies and passions. On other hand, Eccles and Barber (1999) noted possible negative consequences: spending a lot of time on participation, distracting from class learning, and costly participation in these activities. James Roland (2016) also showed two negative impacts not-control time, over plans in a short term.

### III. Methodology

#### 3.1 Theoretical framework



**Figure 1:** Diagram of impact of participating in official clubs on students' skills

#### Hypotheses

##### Hard skills group

- H1a: Word skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H1b: Excel skill of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H1c: Powerpoint skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating.
- H1d: Photoshop skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating.
- H1e: Video editing skill of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H1f: English skill of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H1g: GPA score of participating group is higher than that of not participating .

##### Soft skills group

- H2a: Communication skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H2b: Leadership skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating group.
- H2c: Teamwork skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating .
- H2d: Presentation skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating.
- H2e: Time management skills of participating group is higher than that of not participating.
- H2f: Confidence in ability of participating group is higher than that of not participating.
- H2g: Professionalism of the participating group is higher than that of not participating.

H2h: Honesty and work ethic of participating group is higher than that of not participating .  
 H2i: Adaptability of participating group is higher than that of not participating.

**3.2 Data collection and Questionnaire**

Most of the questions in the survey were designed based on the Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed based on Likert scale with 2 highest levels of 1 and 5 respectively with “strongly disagree” “and strongly agree”. The sample size is 241 students. The team used SPSS version 20 software through the following steps

- Dividing primary data collected into two groups, participating and not participating in clubs.
- Descriptive statistical analysis: The group conducted descriptive statistical analysis for all 16 observed variables in the model for two target groups with the criteria: average value, standard deviation. The team analyzed percentage difference, number, average value between the two groups of objects to see the differences.
- Using the Independent-Sample T-Test observed variables in two participating and non-participating groups to find observed results with statistical significance. The meaning of the Independent - Sample T-Test is to help us determine whether there is an average difference in quantitative variable for different values of a qualitative variable. Specifically, difference between the skills of two target groups participating and not participating in clubs. The difference was statistically significant with 95% confidence (or significance level Sig. <0.05).
- The value of sig T-Test <0.05 group concludes: There is a statistically significant difference between two groups of objects of observed variable.
- The value of sig T-Test > 0.05 groups concludes: There is no statistically significant difference between two groups of objects of observed variables.

**IV. Result**

Hard skills	Average value of participating	Average value of not participating	Sig value T-Test
Word skills	3.22	2.76	0.000
Excel skills	2.94	2.55	0.002
Powerpoint skills	2.98	2.68	0.021
Photoshop skills	2.27	2.17	0.456
Video edit skills	2.31	2.22	0.485
English Skills	2.66	2.66	0.942
GPA	2.76	2.63	0.353

**Table 1 Description Statistic and T-Test of Hard Skills**

Soft skills	Average value of Participated	Average value of not participated	Sig value T-Test
Communication skills	3.14	2.74	0.000
Leadership skills	2.98	2.66	0.000
Teamwork skills	3.26	2.82	0.000
Presentation skills	2.95	2.68	0.015
Time management skills	2.91	2.81	0.000
Confidence in ability	3.16	2.78	0.000
Professionalism	3.24	2.03	0.021
Honesty and Work Ethic	4	3.82	0.039
Adaptability	3.59	3.3	0.003

**Table 2 Description Statistic and T-Test of Soft Skills**

From the above data table, it can be observed that there are 5 observed variables with sig value > 0.05:

- GPA score: Sig = 0.351
- English skills: Sig = 0.942
- Video editing skills: Sig = 0.485
- Images editing skills: Sig = 0.456
- Time management skills: Sig = 0.3

Sig value > 0.05 so these observed variables are not statistically significant. The remaining 10 variables have sig value <0.05, so the results are statistically significant.

**V. Discussion And Recommendation**

The results of the research showed a total of 10 skills that clubs have developed for their members. For these skills, clubs need to develop stronger. At present time businesses are very demanding with candidates on this issue. For hard skills,

the team proposed clubs to be more active in opening their member training sessions on how to use basic computer software. In such sessions, older members may attach younger members directly. This way not only helps you consolidate your knowledge but also makes it easy for young members to improve their ability to use basic computer software.

**- Hard skills**

According to research results, English skills and GPA do not differ between the two groups participating and not participating. However, these are two very important criteria that the team hopes the clubs will improve in the future. Through qualitative research, the observing group members in academic clubs often have a higher GPA than members in other clubs. The reason is that in academic clubs they often have learning movements and the members are also very aware of learning. Therefore, the team's proposal is that clubs should organize exams and share knowledge at their clubs near the exams.

Currently, in some typical clubs, there is an English study group. However, this form only appears in a minority of clubs and even within these clubs, the effectiveness is still not high. Therefore, besides the main activities, clubs should be more active in improving English for their members.

**- Soft skills**

For this skill group, clubs can also organize mentoring sessions. However, the research team thinks that with the specific characteristics of the skills in this group, there should be other more effective forms. Clubs are currently doing quite well this. Any club aims to develop soft skills for members. The evidence is that clubs have a lot of activities both internally and externally to facilitate their members. Therefore, according to the research team, clubs only need to actively promote their strengths to be more active in organizing events to help their members grow further.

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