



Understanding student success in higher education in Azerbaijan: the role of student engagement

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ABSTRACT

Research on student engagement in higher education (HE) has addressed the conceptualisation, measurement and criticism of the phenomenon over the last two decades, predominantly in Western countries. The conceptualisation of student engagement has received little attention in countries of a lengthy association with the Soviet realm. This study investigated student engagement in Azerbaijani universities using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) tool, under licence granted by Indiana University in 2018, to gather data. The survey was conducted among more than 430 students at eight Azerbaijani universities to explore what universities do to engage their students in learning. After a preliminary examination of the data for reliability, only the data from urban universities comprising 266 students were considered suitable for further analysis. The data were analysed to look at descriptive statistics and to identify linkages between student activities and student outcomes in Azerbaijan through bivariate correlation and regression analysis. The study revealed that, according to the NSSE categories, a supportive student environment and the quality of interactions, combined under the campus environment theme, and student–faculty interactions were essential elements for student learning, success, satisfaction and engagement in academically challenging practices.

KEYWORDS: Student engagement, student learning experiences, perceived gains, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), stepwise regression analysis