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ABSTRACTS

POSTERS



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Theme 1. The Digital Revolution

Navigating the nexus: AI technologies and robust quality assurance in higher education

Authors:

Hanna Rahma Abdelwahab, Rauf Abdul, Kriszta Kaspers, Natalia Lekareva

Abstract:

Recent trends show that universities are searching for new solutions to improve their quality assurance effectively, for example by integrating artificially intelligent technologies in such systems. For the competitive edge incorporation of such technologies that improve efficiency and effectiveness is indispensable and must include key stakeholders in order to conduct risk analysis to develop an effective IQA approach that ensure short and long-term sustainability of the education quality. This research explores the evolving excellence in quality assurance frameworks within higher education institutions (HEIs), in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. As AI reforms curriculum development, assessment methods, and teaching delivery and pedagogy, understanding its implications for IQA practices in more robust ways becomes paramount. This research aims to study how HEIs are adapting their quality assurance processes in the backdrop of rapid AI technologies development, focusing on curriculum development and education delivery. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, face-to-face and online semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty, curriculum experts, and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) teams across various universities in the Netherlands and Spain. This approach facilitates a deep dive into the extent to which educational or curriculum changes are AI facilitated. This paper contributes to the growing discourse on the crossroads of AI advancement and robust quality assurance in higher education to manage latest trends affectively. It delivers insights into how HEIs can leverage AI technologies to foster sustainable IQA systems. It is hoped that the findings can shed more light on the significance of holistic approaches in metamorphosing quality assurance frameworks to the evolving educational landscape due to AI technologies.



Theme 5. Environmental Challenges

Growing role of sustainable finance in tackling unprecedented environmental challenges

Author:

Muhammad Ashfaq

Abstract:

Sustainable finance, also known as green finance or ethical finance, refers to the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria into financial decision-making. Sustainable finance is an emerging field that seeks to promote financial practices that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, and financially sound.

Sustainable Finance is an important area of research as the world faces increasingly urgent challenges related to climate change, social inequality, and economic stability. At the global level, countries need to spend at least \$3.5 trillion annually to achieve the net-zero targets by 2050. The European Union (EU) is aspiring to transition the economy as a climate-neutral and sustainable economy by the end of 2050.

Below are some key reasons why sustainable finance is important:

1. Environmental Impact:

- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Sustainable finance contributes to funding projects and initiatives that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to renewable energy sources, and promote energy efficiency. This helps combat climate change and its adverse effects.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Funding is directed towards projects that promote sustainable land use, protect ecosystems, and support biodiversity conservation. This helps preserve natural resources and ecosystems.

2. Social Responsibility:

- **Inclusive Development:** Sustainable finance emphasizes investments that promote social inclusion, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. It can support projects that provide social benefits, such as affordable housing, education, and healthcare.
- **Labor Standards:** Investors increasingly consider the social impact of their investments, including adherence to fair labor practices and human rights.



Sustainable finance encourages businesses to uphold high labor standards and treat employees ethically.

3. Risk Management:

- **Long-Term Value:** Companies and investors incorporating sustainable practices are better positioned for long-term success. By considering ESG factors, financial institutions can identify and mitigate risks associated with environmental and social issues, which could affect the performance and reputation of businesses.

4. Regulatory Compliance:

- **Legal and Regulatory Landscape:** Governments and regulatory bodies are implementing measures to encourage sustainable practices. Financial institutions that integrate ESG considerations are more likely to comply with evolving regulations and standards, reducing the risk of legal and regulatory challenges.

5. Investor Demand:

- **Growing Interest:** Investors, including institutional investors and individuals, are increasingly interested in aligning their investments with their values. Sustainable finance provides options for investors seeking financial returns while supporting environmentally and socially responsible practices.

6. Innovation and Technology:

- **Technological Advancements:** Sustainable finance drives innovation by supporting investments in clean technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture. This contributes to the development and adoption of technologies that address environmental and social challenges.

7. Brand and Reputation:

- **Corporate Image:** Embracing sustainable finance practices can enhance a company's brand and reputation. Consumers and stakeholders are increasingly valuing businesses that demonstrate a commitment to environmental and social responsibility.

8. Global Collaboration:

International Cooperation: Sustainable finance encourages collaboration between governments, businesses, and financial institutions on a global scale. This collaborative effort is essential for addressing complex and interconnected challenges such as climate change and social inequality.



Theme 7. The Future of Work

Evaluating and Enhancing Sales Competitions in Educational Settings: A Critical Examination of Their Role in Developing Key Sales Skills

Authors:

Alexander Bauer, Myra Qiu, Raymond Dettwiler

Abstract:

Sales competitions in higher education are pivotal in cultivating the sales acumen required for real-world business scenarios. This study examines how such competitions serve as effective pedagogical tools to develop key sales skills among students, incorporating the analysis of Big Five personality traits and their correlation with students' negotiation capabilities. The objective is to find out, how sales competition within higher education can serve as a platform to develop essential sales skills among students and how educators can help students to develop those.

Method:

During role-play sales scenarios, quantitative and qualitative data is collected from students. By integrating quantitative data from personality assessments and qualitative feedback from student self-reflections, we identify core competencies and areas needing enhancement within these competitive settings. In a role-play sales scenario, 73 completed data sets of self-reflection and personality assessments has been collected and lead to preliminary findings. The researchers will use the survey tool in another role-play scenario again to verify the findings, deepen understanding and to find out possible discrepancies.

Preliminary Findings:

Engagement Prerequisites: Essential prerequisites for effective participation include foundational knowledge of sales principles, high emotional stability, and intrinsic motivation, which facilitate deeper engagement in competitive environments (Ricks et al., 2008).

Influence of Personality and Team Dynamics: Personal traits, notably Openness and Conscientiousness, significantly influence students' ability to perform under competitive stress (Barrick & Mount, 1991).



Skills Application and Real-World Alignment: Active listening, problem-solving, and strategic communication are among the skills honed through role-play scenarios. These skills closely align with those required in professional sales roles, underscoring the practical relevance of sales competitions (Knight et al., 2021; Viosca & Cox, 2014).

Structural Best Practices: Implementing continuous feedback loops, peer evaluations, and structured self-reflection sessions are best practices that enhance learning outcomes and ensure continuous skill improvement (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bateson, 1964).

Maximizing Student Potential: Tailored training programs that consider individual personality profiles can maximize the developmental benefits of sales competitions, preparing students not only to win in competitions but also to excel in professional sales environments (Handley et al., 2017).

Conclusion: Sales competitions are not only extracurricular activities in higher education; they are a critical component of business education that bridges theoretical knowledge with practical application. This study suggests that by understanding and integrating student personality traits and providing structured feedback mechanisms, educational institutions can significantly enhance the effectiveness of these competitions, thereby producing more competent and skilled sales professionals.

Theme 10. Education in a Globalised Era

Infusion of the Socratic Method into Teaching in Higher Education for Sustainable Education: A Case Study of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

Authors:

Hanna Rahma Abdelwahab, Fjorentina Muco, Vanessa Menezes

Abstract:

Sustainable Education or Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a form of education that aims to empower students with theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, values and perspectives, for a long-term utilisation (UNESCO,2024). To achieve this goal in a business learning environment in the tertiary education, specifically, in the Applied Sciences Education, it is crucial to develop teaching approaches, which will promote



critical thinking required not only for a well-structured thinking pattern but also for effective decision making and problem solving when time requires. One of these approaches is the Socratic method of teaching, defined as "an enquiry-based learning approach that stimulates the thinking process in students and motivate them to further develop their cognitive, effective and meta-cognitive skills" (Paul and Elder, 2008, p.1036). According to Sorvatzioti (2012), the Socratic method is a dialectic teaching approach, which encourages and promotes critical thinking leading to well-reasoned conclusions. Furthermore, this research revealed that infusing the Socratic method as a dialectic method into learning processes may result into productive dialogues among students and therefore, enhanced performance of critical thinking. This study aims at investigating on the infusion of the Socratic Method into teaching practices such as teaching presentations, in a multidisciplinary learning setting which can be an effective learning tool that contributes to sustainable education, since the students will be exposed to questions that will engage them with a self-evaluative process and generate answers that will be maintained and applied in lifelong related activities. The methodology used for this study will be a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, using online questionnaires. The study targets students who participate in Intercultural Business Communication for Managers, a final- year course, situated at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, in the Netherlands. The expected result of this study is to equip business students with an enquiry-learning pattern to be applied in their academic studies and business practices. This research is hoped to increase the existing body of knowledge in the field of sustainable education and its impacts on teaching pedagogy at higher education institutions.