

Effects of market forces on the academic performance of students with disabilities in public secondary schools in Kamuli municipality

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative exploratory study assessed the implications of market forces on the academic performance of students with disabilities in public secondary schools in Kamuli Municipality. Specifically, the availability and accessibility of instructional materials influence the academic performance of students with disabilities, the availability of competent teachers on the academic performance of students with disabilities, and the influence of external support from different stakeholders on the academic performance of students with disabilities. Using Interviews, responses from teachers and selected students were acquired. Findings indicate that access to instructional materials, assistive technology, and individualised education programs significantly improve academic performance for students with special needs. External forces, such as government and parental partnerships, play a crucial role in providing these resources and training teachers. Schools should foster collaboration among teachers, parents, and students to implement individualised education programs. Investing in teacher training, resources, and partnerships with external organisations can create an inclusive environment. The study concluded that market forces, specifically instructional materials, competent human resources, and external support, have a significant influence on the academic performance of students with disabilities. The study recommends that stakeholders should work towards ensuring that students with disabilities in secondary schools study in a conducive environment.

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Introduction

The idea of “market forces” in education is a controversial topic across the globe in the field of Education (Urquiola, 2023). Market forces can be defined as economic factors that affect or determine the education context, which determine the availability and access to quality or reliable education. On the other hand, academic performance, or, at times, by some scholars, academic achievement, is the learner’s successful completion of the education cycle at the level taught. It can also be seen as the successful passing of set examinations at the micro or macro levels. The performance in the Ugandan context, and also where in the world, is usually measured by the certificate, grades or the scores achieved. In most cases, most reflections and studies on students’ performance are skewed to students who the public refers to as “normal” and quite often ignore students with disabilities.

According to United Nations convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (UNECKPD 2024), disabilities is defined as any long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and effective participation of disabled people in society from participating or achieving their full potential in the context of the school apart from physical disabilities, there are a number. Learning disabilities are categorised under dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. By dyslexia, we imply sensory impairments. Such as hearing, visual, and other physical impairment. On the other hand, dysgraphia is an impairment in which a student has difficulty turning his or her thoughts into written material. Such children can’t think well despite their age. On the other

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