

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Self-Advocacy and Engagement as Central

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Abstract : This study aimed to investigate the contribution of self-advocacy and engagement in the inclusion of SWDs in HEIs. A convergent parallel mixed methods design was employed. This article reports the quantitative strand. A total of 246 SWDs were selected through stratified proportionate random sampling technique from five public HEIs in Ethiopia. Data were collected through Self-advocacy questionnaire, student engagement scale, and college student experience questionnaire and analyzed through frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation, one sample t-test and multiple regression. Both self-advocacy and engagement were found to have a predictive power on inclusion of respondents in the HEIs, where engagement was found to be more predictor. From the components of self-advocacy, knowledge of self and leadership and from engagement dimensions sense of belonging, cognitive, and valuing in their respective orders were found to have a stronger predictive power on the inclusion of respondents in the institutions. Based on the findings it was concluded that, if students with disabilities work hard to be self-determined, strive for realizing social justice, exert quality effort and seek active involvement, their inclusion in the institutions would be ensured.

Keywords : self-advocacy, engagement, inclusion, students with disabilities, higher education institution

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