

Motivation for Higher Education: An Exploration of Lived Experiences of Students with Disabilities in a Ghanaian University

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Abstract : The social construction of disability in a Ghanaian society has created a restriction on the development of the academic potentials of persons with disabilities. Ghanaian societal perceptions position persons with disabilities as needy, evil, feeble and 'abnormal' that a person with disability cannot contribute anything meaningful to their own development, society, and the nation as well. Almost all Ghanaian cultures believe the Gods visit evil people with disability as such they erect barriers that limit them to select and enroll in education. The few people with disabilities who gain admission to schools drop out due to these barriers erected by the society and institutions. However, there are very few of these students who are able to pursue their education at the higher education level despite these challenges. This qualitative study explores the motivation of students with disabilities to select and enroll in a Ghanaian university. The study used semi-structured interview to solicit information from students with disabilities in a Ghanaian university. Although the quality of students with disabilities experience was affected by culture, discrimination, marginalisation, and lack of support, the prospect of using themselves as role models, employment opportunities and family impingement were among others that pushed them to embark on their educational journey. The findings of this study have implications for societal and institutional levels for restructuring and refining societal perception and institutional policies on disabilities.

Keywords : beliefs, Ghanaian university, social construction, students with disabilities

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