

Rethinking student admission and access in higher education through the lens of capabilities approach

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the scholarship of diversity, equity and inclusivity in higher education. The focus is to advance an understanding of the issues concerning student admissions and access in higher education. The paper will contribute to the debate on student admissions and access in higher education. Among others, the author argues that in the context of higher education, access has different meanings.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper is conceptual in approach and draws from extant literature and the review was used in compiling the paper. Interpretivist approach was used in understanding the topic. Relying on capabilities approach (CA) as a lens in understanding student admissions and access the author argues that higher Education Institutions should consider opportunities (capabilities) for all students to live the lives that they have reason to value (valued functionings). CA works from the premise that human beings share universal capabilities and students' life can be fulfilling if given the opportunity to exercise their capabilities by universities.

Findings – Universities can rely on students' racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and students' disabilities in admitting them. Diversity characteristics can be used as a tool to ensure the heterogeneity of the student population or as an unfair advantage given to students who might otherwise be deemed inadmissible on the basis of their academic or test performance. Factors such as changing demographics, public policy, institutional practices and marketing techniques seem to have a subtle influence on the process of admission. Students may experience challenges because of the "invisibility" of their disabilities due to a breakdown in communication within higher education systems.

Research limitations/implications – The paper relied on literature review only and this is its limitation. Literature review may have been influenced by selection bias of the author and is likely to include only those sources that are most consistent with the author's personal opinion. Selection bias can arise when the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review are not clearly stated and that might bias the findings.

Practical implications – Admission officials in higher education institutions are expected to conduct a diversity needs assessment before admissions with the aim of using the data to identify student population. The needs assessment can look at aspects such as the students' racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and students' disabilities to ensure access and success of all students.

Social implications – Inequities around access and admission for diverse groups of students in higher education are a reality worldwide. There is a worldwide trend within countries to see universities as contributors to economic growth, and many institutions are now increasingly attuned to the money economy. A student's decision to apply on where to study may be influenced by the reputation of the institution.

Originality/value – This concept is relative and has different meanings depending on the nature of the work in question. The paper was compiled through literature review, all the sources used have been acknowledged, and the paper conveys the thoughts, interpretations and ideas of the author.

Keywords Diversity, Accessibility, Inequality

Paper type Conceptual paper



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1. Introduction

In this paper, Fields (2015, p. 1) argues that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have the responsibility to ensure that education is accessible to every deserving undergraduate applicant who has earned the credentials necessary to be admitted. Among others, I argue that in the context of higher education, access has different meanings. Relying on CA as a lens, I argue

further that HEIs should consider opportunities (capabilities) for all students to live the lives that they have reason to value (valued functionings). However, students are different in many ways, and this means that simply providing equal access to equivalent resources does not necessarily lead to equal outcomes, as diverse students are differently able to convert resources into desired outcomes depending on their personal characteristics, social and environmental circumstances. Against this backdrop, students' admission and access ought to have components of financial accessibility, geographical accessibility, academic accessibility and cultural/social/physical accessibility.

Blackmore (2016, pp. 6-8) is of the view that current debates in higher education in many countries around the world has moved from a relatively elite and implicitly understood and agreed conception of its nature and purpose to a much more complex and contested one. There is a worldwide trend within countries to see universities as contributors to economic growth, and so many institutions are now increasingly attuned to the money economy. A student's decision to apply on where to study may be influenced by reputation or prestige of the institution. That is the reason why there are challenges of access to universities. There are walls of whiteness constructed by universities based on structural and cultural foundations when dealing with students' admission. This is the reason why the disparities between dominant and subordinate groups (particularly between whites and blacks), for example, in US society have been documented serially by social scientists for over 100 years now (Brunsma *et al.*, 2012, p. 720).

This paper is organised as follows: the next section presents the purpose adopted by this paper, followed by a section that discusses the literature reviews; the subsequent sections deal with CA; student diversity as a foundation in student admissions and access; students' admission in higher education; inequality of access to higher education; admission barriers and the limitation of social mobility; success in higher education; new approaches to students' admission; contribution to literature; implications for policy and practice; and the last section concludes the paper.

1.1 Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the scholarship of diversity, equity and inclusivity in higher education. Its aim is to advance an understanding of the pedagogical issues concerning students' admission and access through literature review. In this paper, I argue that HEIs should admit every deserving student, because not all students can access HEIs due to admission criteria. In addition, the paper will contribute to the debate on students' admission and access in higher education. The paper by Shochet (1994), titled: *The Moderator Effect of Cognitive Modifiability on a Traditional Undergraduate Admissions Test for Disadvantaged Black Students in South Africa* sparked the researcher's interest in rethinking students' admission in higher education. According to Shochet (1994), universities in South Africa are faced with the problem of finding admission criteria, other than high school grades that are fair and valid for black applicants. The use of traditional intellectual assessments and aptitude tests, for example, the Scholastic Aptitude Test for disadvantaged and minority students remains controversial as a fair assessment, in that these tests do not take account of potential for change. The Capability Approach is relevant in this case because students have different capabilities and need to be given the opportunity to prove themselves in higher education. The next section deals with literature reviews.

2. Literature reviews

Fink (2019, p. 7) is of the view that literature review is a systematic, explicit and reproductive method for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners. Similarly, Xiao and Watson (2019, p. 93) view literature review as an essential feature of academic research.

Fundamentally, knowledge advancement should be built on prior existing work. They further assert that to push the knowledge frontier, we must know where the frontier is. Therefore, by reviewing relevant literature, we understand the breadth and depth of the existing body of work and identify gaps to explore. They think that by summarizing, analysing, and synthesising a group of related literature, we can be able to evaluate the quality of existing work against a criterion to reveal weaknesses, inconsistencies, and contradictions. In this paper, literature review is done for intellectual reasons because I want to understand what is currently known about students' admission in higher education. The next section explores capabilities approach.

2.1 The Capabilities Approach

CA is an explicitly normative framework with social justice orientation at its core, and as a tool, it allows the assessment of individual well-being as well as social institutions, policies, and contexts that may influence individual student's well-being in accessing HEIs (Kato *et al.*, 2017, p. 4). On the other hand, Gasper (2007, pp. 335-341) describes CA as the full set of attainable alternative lives that face a person. Capabilities in the plural refer to the particular functionings that may be attainable for a person; for example, the ability to speak up about one's rights. Because CA is attentive to diversity, equity, and inclusivity in abilities to transform means into achievements, it is preferable to views that focus on equality of means. Therefore, CA aims to obtain outcomes that people will value while empowering them. It perceives the issue of "who decides" students' admission as equally important as to "what is decided" by HEIs in their admission policies. CA recognises the fact that the process of students' admission might not lead to the best choice of students, but that discussion is an effective means to separate the "better" from "worse choices" and reasoned deliberation is supported for consideration of advantage and interpersonal comparisons (Frediani *et al.*, 2019, p. 12). I argue that the benefits of applying CA in rethinking students' admission in HEIs are that it encourages empowerment and institutions can set their own objectives. In addition, CA is sensitive to local cultural values because it acknowledges that people can influence the initiatives, in this case, the students' admission in all stages.

On the contrary, Howaldt and Schwarz (2017, p. 168) argue that students' admission and access to HEIs are social practices which are always present, are reproduced and changed by those acting subjects, by creating anew what already exists in the continuity of practice, again and again. Whether repeated or newly created admission requirements, institutional access practices themselves are public challenges and thus observable. In support of students' admission, Yeung (2018, p. 1599) asserts that, in admitting students to HEIs, their knowledge and intellectual skills must enable them to generate ideas through the analysis of abstract information and concepts. In so doing, their knowledge must enable them to analyse, reformat and evaluate a wide range of information, critically analyse, evaluate and/or synthesise ideas, concepts, information and issues. After being admitted, students must be able to accept responsibility and accountability within broad parameters for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; deal with ethical issues, seeking guidance of others where appropriate. Howaldt and Schwarz (2017, p. 174) argue further that the CA emphasises the ethical dimension. On the other hand, a people-centred capability approach puts human support at the centre of the stage rather than organisations such as HEIs. In support of CA, Huang *et al.* (2018, p. 172) are of the view that "punctuated equilibrium theory" can also help in describing the occurrence of dramatic shifts that occur as unexpected events rather than the gradual and systematic development that normally occurs in changing HEIs admission processes. According to them, Punctuated Equilibrium Theory view punctuated equilibrium as the process of interaction between beliefs and values in respect to a particular policy within existing institutions where authoritative decisions are made. This punctuated equilibrium theory also focuses on the mechanisms

that lead to policy change. Students are expected to be able to use a range of IT applications to support and enhance their learning. The next section deals with student diversity as a foundation in student admissions and access in higher education.

2.2 Student diversity as a foundation in students' admission and access in higher education

In 2011, for the upcoming 2012 academic year the Ontario University Application Centre listed eight Teacher Education faculties, including Brock, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, York, Queen's, Trent, Wilfred Laurier, Windsor and Nippissing as using racial or Indigeneity identification categories in Teacher Education applications in Ontario. These faculties indicated racial identity as a factor in admission decisions because of the Ontario Ministry of Education's admission policy (Abawi, 2018, p. 40). Admission officials in HEIs are expected to conduct a diversity needs assessment before admissions with the aim of using the data to identify student population. The needs assessment can look at aspects such as the students' racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and students' disabilities. A court case in the USA is an illustration on how HEIs are expected to deal with inequality around the issue of access. This case can help HEIs on how to deal with inequities around access and admission for diverse groups of students (US Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017, p. 1). For example, in dealing with student diversity as a foundation in student admission and access, in *Grutter v. Bollinger and Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003, the Court rule regarding the two University of Michigan admissions policies, concluded that the educational benefits of diversity are a "compelling interest" that can justify the limited use of race in higher education admissions. Then, with respect to the means of achieving that interest, the Court (in a law school setting) approved that the individualised, holistic review of applicants, where race is one factor among many (in an undergraduate setting) be struck down as it is an overly mechanical and rigid process of awarding 20 out of 150 possible admissions points. This was based on the status of students' who were underrepresented minority students (Coleman *et al.*, 2008, p. 1). Diversity in Higher education can be accommodated without discriminating students on the basis of race. The expectation is that HEIs are expected to admit students and serve their educational requirements without discriminating against them. The next section deals with students' admission in higher education.

2.3 Students' admission in higher education

In terms of breaking down/pushing through the spatial walls of whiteness on campus, research has found that white students often voice resistance to "participation in diverse learning communities". It has been found that at historically white colleges and universities (HCWUs), walls of whiteness spatially separate white and non-white students. In addition, race has functioned as a central axis of social organisation in white supremacist societies. Thus, affirmative action policies can produce a "welcoming" effect for students of colour. It stands to reason that affirmative action policies are needed for students to access HEIs. Affirmative action has been an important policy for challenging past and present discrimination in admission for black students to historically white colleges and universities (Brunsma *et al.*, 2012, pp. 720-724). Brown *et al.* (2016, p. 13) assert that different forms of tests for admission have existed for centuries. In addition, admission to HEIs testing methods discriminating correctly for every student's admission may not exist. Characteristics of the situation such as test type (open-ended vs closed questions) and level of difficulty of the test have an important influence. The demand for higher education and the competition for seats in the HEIs had left admissions officers with the daunting task of choosing the most meritorious from an excess of highly qualified candidates. Selective HEIs seek to admit students with demonstrated high levels of academic talent who will succeed in rigorous and demanding academic programs (Giancola and Kahlenberg, 2016, p. 18).

In addition, diversity characteristics can be used as a useful tool to ensure the heterogeneity of the student population or as an unfair advantage given to students who might otherwise be deemed inadmissible on the basis of their academic or test performance. On the other hand, test scores (without the use of a student's race or ethnicity as a factor) might reduce the racial and ethnic diversity of the admitted student population at HEIs (Clarke and Shore, 2001, p. 4). Frawley *et al.* (2017, p. 8) agree with the notion that engagement that supports admission and access in HEIs ought to be characterised by engagement through teaching and learning, curriculum design, policies, research, external relations, social and cultural engagement, partnerships with school and HEIs providers, economic engagement, and organisation and participation of students. HEIs are not for everyone, but they should be for everyone. For example, not all students can access HEI because of admission criteria. To a certain extent, the choice not to participate in higher education should be respected given that there are other avenues and reasons to participate in education and employment that are culturally, socially and/or economically important for society (Frawley *et al.*, 2017, p. 3).

In admission of students the below mentioned aspects are significant for ensuring that students are given equal opportunities to be admitted in Higher Education. US Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017, p. 3) asserts that student diversity needs assessment must include aspects such as the following, namely:

- student demographic and academic outcome data for the target HEIs;
- test scores disaggregated by student groups; however, test scores alone cannot give a full picture of access to a well-rounded, high-quality education;
- data related to student access to resources;
- data on the interface between race, ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status and students with disabilities;
- census data, which can be used to determine poverty, racial or ethnic diversity in the HEI; and
- data related to families' socioeconomic status, which can be explained as one's access to financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources and includes three core components: family income, parental educational attainment and parental occupational status.

Fields (2015, pp. 24-25) is of the view that pre-orientation programs can enhance an undergraduate student's sense of belonging and can provide a solid foundation for the start of their academic career. However, pre-orientation programs are fee-based and many low-income and first-year students may not have the funds to register for these programs. They may not appreciate their value due to the expense and may not recognise their potential importance due to lack of previous, related experiences. In support of Fields (2015), Iannelli *et al.* (2016, p. 563) are of the view that standardized systems of admission to HEIs may produce a more egalitarian educational outcome. While stratification, which is measured by the divide between vocational and academic tracks in HEIs and the time at which selection into tracks occurs, tends to increase social gaps in achievement and thus reduces the chances of working-class individuals progressing to further their studies and achieving better occupational outcomes. For example, international students planning to study in Australia are receiving a clear message that there are "low" and "high" level universities "with the lower level universities" generally more prepared to ignore low proficiency in English tests. Such levels and scores in relation to these tests and other entry measures are the results of decisions of an administrative nature, which are based on available university places and not on students' language ability for university study (Coley, 1999, pp. 8-13). This means that the majority of

Australian HEIs make decisions to admit or reject on academic grounds. Hence, a minority of them make an initial assessment of acceptability, but take the final decision to admit a student with a disability only after they have checked their policies and an “assessment” is made of their abilities and the institutions’ facilities. Students are selected based on their language abilities than on their disabilities. Other HEIs will only admit a student if they are convinced of the student’s ability to cope with their disabilities irrespective of their level of academic achievement (Borland and James, 1999, p. 88). The next section will be dealing with inequality of access to higher education.

2.4 Inequality of access to higher education

This section explores the idea that the admission practices of HEIs, as well as the policies that regulate them, are key aspects for understanding the admission and access nature of HEIs’ systems. Carrasco *et al.* (2017, p. 643) are of the view that much less, attention is given to the role of student admission criteria used by education systems and HEIs, and the rules that regulate this process. Student selection practices are not only relevant due to their implications for HEIs’ intake composition, but also for understanding the dynamics of admission and access between HEIs and the quest to improve reputation and performance. A probable reason is that most educational systems have a long tradition of centralised admission systems. Factors such as changing demographics, public policy, institutional practices and marketing techniques all can have a subtle but important influence on the HEIs-choice process and admission. Students and parents from upper-middle-class and upper class families look carefully at HEIs’ rankings to see which institutions attract the top students (Kinzie *et al.*, 2004, pp. 2-3). For example, the Boston public higher education admission system uses an algorithm, which operates as a lottery to admit and distribute students to institutions.

In some of these educational systems, local agencies receive the applications and follow the criteria set out by the law, and they exclude any discriminatory or prohibited methods. The best example of this method is the UK. Since 2001, this country has changed its legislation and regulatory context. Families apply through the local educational authorities (LEA), and institutions participate in the process in a ranking based on the criteria (Carrasco *et al.*, 2017, pp. 546-645). In English-speaking academic contexts, it is often assumed that access to higher education is solely a concern for the privileged Western or Global North world (Lenette, 2018, p. 224). The next section deals with admission barriers and the limitation of social mobility.

2.5 Admission barriers and the limitation of social mobility

Each university has the legal authority to decide which students it will admit, but needs to do so on the basis of a published and transparent set of criteria the HEI will employ in making a decision on which students will be admitted. The first step in the admissions process ought to be the determining of eligibility of applicants. Each HEI is expected to set out the minimum requirements that a student must meet to be considered for admission to it (Higher Education South Africa, 2011, p. 6). Eligibility for guaranteed admission at the end of 11th grade at times increases the likelihood of attending a flagship HEI. Students may face strong incentives during the first three years of high school to excel and attend a selective HEI. However, upon receiving grades at the end of 11th grade, performance incentives all but seems to disappear for eligible students. At times HEIs’ admission processes may be filled with uncertainty for both students and the institutions. For example, if students are guaranteed admission before their senior year, they may take the risks by reducing their performance effort, then the cost of this behaviour is not fully borne by students, as many HEIs may provide costly remedial services to students who show up on campus underprepared (Leeds *et al.*, 2017, pp. 233-234).

In addition, many students may experience challenges because of the “invisibility” of their disabilities due to a breakdown in communication within the HEIs. Students may have the assumption that HEIs, knowing of their disabilities, would not offer them access if it could not provide the necessary support (Borland and James, 1999, p. 89). Research HEIs face important challenges to realign their undergraduate mission and environment in support of diverse number of student population and specifically in support of the adult undergraduate students who happen to have undetected disabilities. According to Kasworm (2010, p. 144), past limited research has recommended that the research universities have attempted to maintain their historic ethos to serve the young, residential undergraduate and had refused to acknowledge their xenophobic culture and customs significantly affecting adult student population’s in participating in HEIs.

There are specific factors in different contexts that make dimensions of students’ admission distinct (e.g. whether discrimination occurs because of gender, social class, race/ethnicity, etc.), affecting in turn the strategies adopted in response to admissions and access to higher education. In addition, there may not be sufficient resources in all countries to fund the kind of students’ admission systems that these principles would require: nevertheless, lack of resources at HEIs should not constrain the reasoning around a just admission and access criteria to them (McCowan, 2016, p. 646). In some instances, after going through entry tests students have to face challenges for selecting their preferences among different categories due to no knowledge of intake merits of preceding years. For example, a problem arises when students are waiting for admission in specific HEIs, meanwhile, others have finished their admission processes and have select eligible students, but some students cannot take admission in any HEIs because there is no prediction system for admission in HEIs (Usman *et al.*, 2017, p. 5501). The next section deals with success in higher education.

2.6 Success in higher education

The principle of effective retention programs and assuring student success in higher education institutions can be attributed to institutional commitment to students. According to Guilbault (2018, p. 297), the way institutions respond to students is of primary importance to retention, persistence, and completion in higher education institutions. Despite increasingly diverse student populations in higher education institutions, the overarching academic culture continues to assume traditional young, white, middle-class students, thus making navigation more challenging for others. For students whose embodied practices are not equally valued, institutional habitus can lead to their alienation (Kahu and Nelson, 2018, p. 62). Universal desires for social betterment can be articulated through HEIs students’ admission systems. However, the opportunities that education is meant to bring are not universal. Even in capitalist societies (in low-, middle- or high-income), people are stratified by unequal earnings and hierarchical power, in which at any given time, there is an absolute limit to the number of socially advantaged positions that can be provided. High participation in HEIs cannot bring every student what it seeks. In addition, when participation becomes universal like in elementary and secondary education worldwide, students will gain no material betterment at all, though they may still gain forms of personal development. In short, relative advantage is crucial. Therefore, socially, HEIs should function for positional good (Marginson, 2016, p. 415). For example, between 1970 and 2013, the world number of admitted students in HEIs multiplied by 6.12 while global population multiplied by 1.93, and this is a challenge for students to get access in HEIs (Ibid, 2016, p. 416). So, Younger *et al.* (2019, pp. 742-773), found that a change of legislation in Texas by introducing a law aimed at guaranteeing a place at state university for the top 10 per cent of academic performers in high school, increased university attendance for ethnic minority groups. The next section explores new approaches to students’ admission.

2.7 New approaches to students' admission

No stone should be left unturned in the search for a new approach to students' admission. I argue that HEIs should be for everyone, because not all students can access HEIs due to admission criteria. I argue for Kyllonen (2012) non-academic criteria in students' admission as part of the twenty-first century skills because students should possess them to compete in the labour market. Furthermore, I support the fact that HEIs should admit students using non-academic criteria as suggested by (Hossler *et al.*, 2019, p. 9), namely:

- (1) Basic personality factors (extroversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness/intellect, circadian type);
- (2) Affective competencies (creativity, emotional intelligence, cognitive style, metacognition/confidence);
- (3) Performance factors (domain proficiency, general proficiency, effort/ motivation/ engagement, discipline/professionalism, teamwork, leadership, and management/ organisation skills);
- (4) Attitudinal constructs (Self-concept, self-efficacy, attribution tendencies, interests, social attitudes/values/beliefs, ethics/morality, intercultural sensitivity, adaptability/ flexibility); and
- (5) Learning skills (Study habits, organisation, time management, test anxiety, and stress/coping). The next section deals with contribution to literature.

3. Contribution to literature

The paper contributes to the current literature on students' admission in three ways: advance an understanding of the pedagogical issues concerning student admissions and access in higher education. This contribution highlights the importance of knowing the students' needs in education. Contribute to the debate on student admissions and access in HEIs by examining the admission barriers and the limitation of social mobility. This contribution highlights the challenges and the obstacles of HEIs on student admissions. It applies a CA to students' admission in higher education. This contribution highlights that students should be admitted based on their strengths. While there is a wide range of biases in individuals' decision making regarding admission, the paper focussed only on biases with regard to inequality in students' admission. The next section deals with implications for policy and practice.

4. Implications for policy and practice

Unfortunately, limited resources and space availability often take precedence over students' admission in HEIs. This paper carries important implications for managing students' admission in HEIs. It suggests that attention and resources should be devoted to the plight of those students who are unable to get access in HEIs. The researcher is aware that opportunities that education is meant to bring are not universal. Therefore, there is a limit to the number of spaces that HEIs can provide for students. Generally, high participation in HEIs cannot bring every student what it seeks. Therefore, literature reviews indicate that HEIs are not for everyone. In this paper, the researcher argue that HEIs should be for everyone, because not all students can access HEIs due to admission criteria. The negative impact of allowing all students access into HEIs would be overcrowding and shortage of spaces. There is a need to maintain affirmative action and race-sensitive students' admission policies. Similarly, public HEIs and governments' policymakers need to invest more financial resources in programs that seek to increase access and success of students. HEIs admissions officers should engage stakeholders across communities in collaborative strategic planning processes to increase

student enrolments. Accountability, retention and graduation rates of HEIs should be tied to standards by which performance will be assessed and used in accreditation. More resources (e.g. financial and otherwise) ought to be provided to those HEIs that strive to increase students' admission. The next section concludes the paper.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the scholarship of diversity, equity, and inclusivity about students' admission in higher education. Literature review was done for intellectual reasons. CA recognises the fact that the process of students' admission might not lead to the best choice of students. The use of diversity as a foundation in students' admission and access in higher education, in *Grutter v. Bollinger and Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003, the Court ruled that students should be admitted without discriminating them on the basis of race. Affirmative action policies are needed for students to access HEIs. Factors such as changing demographics, public policy, institutional practices and marketing techniques all can have a subtle but important influence on the HEIs-choice process and admission. Each university has the legal authority to decide which students it will admit, but needs to do so on the basis of a published and transparent 'set of criteria the HEI will employ in making a decision on which students' will be admitted. Universal desires for social betterment can be articulated through HEIs students' admission systems. I propose the use of non-academic criteria in students' admission in higher education. This paper contributes to the debate on students' admission and access in higher education. Implications for policy and practice is that public HEIs and governments policymakers need to invest more financial resources in programs that seek to increase access and success of students.

Finally, I argue that diversity characteristics can be used as a useful tool to ensure the heterogeneity of the student population or as an unfair advantage given to students who might otherwise be deemed inadmissible on the basis of their academic or test performance. Again, factors such as changing demographics, public policy, institutional practices and marketing techniques all can have a subtle but important influence on the HEIs-choice process and admission. In addition, students may experience challenges because of the "invisibility" of their disabilities due to a breakdown in communication within the HEIs. Therefore, high participation of students in HEIs cannot bring every student what it seeks. Wilson-Strydom (2015, p. 3) is of the view that broadening access without meaningfully providing conditions for success is injustice. Therefore, student admissions is problematic and an unjust issue within most universities across the world. Arguably, in this paper, in rethinking students' admission and access in higher education, non-academic criteria such as the basic personality factors, affective competencies, performance factors, attitudinal constructs and learning skills should be used for students' admission. Moreover, CA acknowledges that HEIs can rethink new approaches for students' admission and they can easily influence policy.

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