Commercialization of schooling as a factor that supports disparities in quality and performance: A case study of the Albanian education system

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Education for social and cultural diversity	**Number of the paper: 65**	

Abstract

The commercialization of schooling is a reality that we are encountering more and more in the field of education. In this race to turn schools into markets, it seems that Albania needs to stop and analyze what is happening to schooling, at all levels. The collapse of the communist system and the attempt to build a market-based system did not spare the education system either. Albania is an agricultural country, but there is only one Agricultural University, while in all major cities you can find private for-profit educational institutions and centers of different types, such as pre-university schools, after-school learning centers, and kindergartens. The article deems that the commercialization of education affects negatively on the quality of education, and the mission of education, as a place of symmetric distribution of opportunities. In the Albanian case, this study examines the commercialization of education through four factors: 1. the private universities and schools as business company and with a for-profit status; 2. the performance card for school rankings; 3. the market for textbook publications; and 4. professional development for in-service teachers. The sharpest criticism of the Albanian education system is its high level of commercialization and absence of awareness surrounding it. The appeal is for more resistance from state. The conclusion is that the state, by applying market principles in education, has lost the race with itself to work for the greater part of the population and raises as imperative the need to limit as much as possible the commercialization of education.

Key words

commercialization of schooling; disparity; market; performance; quality; teachers

Revizija #8
Stvoreno 12 rujna 2024 11:01:24 od Marijana Kardum
Ažurirano 21 rujna 2024 11:13:38 od Martina Gajšek