

# Review of: "Challenges of Educational Support for Students with Disabilities during Covid-19 Pandemic"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper sets to investigate an interesting and important topic. However, the extent to which this aim was met and the study's value in adding to the existing literature currently appear limited, partly, but likely not entirely, for incomplete reporting. The quality of the paper may likely very much improve with a more in-depth analysis and more thorough reporting.

## Major Issues

### Introduction

The introduction provides a somewhat confused account of the background, with paragraphs on the pandemic intermixed and with paragraphs on inclusive education, but no clear discussion of the connection between the two. It is therefore unclear why and how children with disabilities may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and consequently the justification for the study.

It is also unclear what countries the introduction refers to, for example when talking about a "government" and the fact that not all countries adopted remote learning, while acknowledged at the start, seems forgotten in the rest of the introduction, with vague statements seemingly referring to the whole world. I believe, from a paragraph, that the context of the study may be India, but it is unclear what background refers to this country and what does not.

Finally, several statements appear to lack evidence, unless references at the end of paragraphs are to be considered relevant to the whole paragraph, in which case they should be referenced throughout and not held back for multiple sentences.

### Methods

Qualitative methods were indeed highly appropriate for this study. Several details are lacking or unclear in the reporting of the methods, including:

- where the study was conducted and when (in the case of the study, when is particularly important as the pandemic and its management have been generally different in the past year compared to 2021 or 2020)
- selection and recruitment of participants: how did the researcher find and select participants to contact? how did they decide if they were "well-versed participants on the challenges facing students with disabilities and their access to

education”? who are “resource teachers” in the study setting?

- number and categories of participants: at some point the section seems to suggest 10, although this is within an unclear sentence; the author writes about “two categories of participants” (both teachers) but then states that parents were also included. Moreover, 10 participants is quite a small sample for a qualitative investigation of views of perhaps three different participant categories, and the author does not provide any information on how the size of the sample was decided and whether it appeared to provide sufficiently rich data.
- information on the type of qualitative analysis conducted, steps taken in the analysis and overall qualitative methodology

## Results and discussion

The appropriateness of this section may currently appear limited also due to the lack of information on how the analysis was conducted. However, the general impression is that this is a quick narrative overview of the data, that does not seem to reflect an in-depth analysis. Importantly, the majority of the section seems to refer to general challenges in the education of students with disabilities, with little reference to how the pandemic and/or remote learning may have exacerbated these challenges.

## Conclusion

- The absence of students with disabilities themselves in the study sample is an important limitation. It is advised that the author acknowledges it as such, rather than simply a suggestion for future research, and provides appropriate justification for not including such participants in a study that was directly about them.
- It is currently unclear whether and how recommendations may follow on from the results. This may appear clearly if the analysis is revised.

## Minor issues

- It is usually recommended to avoid using acronyms to label people (e.g SWD), due to the risk of inadvertently dehumanising them. Moreover, in the abstract the author seems to intermix “disabled” and “with disabilities” in a remarkable attempt to accommodate multiple preferences in the disabled community. However, such attempt seems lost in the rest of the report.
- The style of the report is quite informal. While the use of simple lay language is to be applauded, such an informal style appears is likely to have the effect of reducing clarity rather than enhancing it.
- Some sentences are unclear or incomplete, for example “Some facts and opinions about inclusive education for kids with disabilities” at the end of the first paragraph of the introduction.
- In the third paragraph of the introduction, it is recommended that the author defines the UN CRPD
- It is unclear if the intermix of past tense and present tense in the introduction actually reflects statements that refer to the past and the present respectively.
- In the conclusion, it is recommended to explain how the study can have “revealed the challenges faced by students with disabilities across the globe”, or perhaps correct the statement to avoid overstating the relevance of the findings.

