Exploring the Psychological Impact of Virtual Learning on Students with Special Educational Needs

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence "Themes were identified through an iterative coding process, ensuring reliability and depth in capturing the psychological effects of digital education on this population." lacks a detailed explanation of how reliability was ensured. Consider specifying whether inter-coder agreement or triangulation methods were used to validate the thematic analysis.

The description of the semi-structured interview does not specify whether the interview questions were piloted or pre-tested for reliability and validity. Clarifying this would strengthen the credibility of the findings.

The section "The coding process involved an initial open coding phase, followed by axial coding to establish relationships between emerging themes." lacks details on how coding reliability was assessed. Did multiple researchers code the data independently, or was consensus coding employed?

The description of learning retention problems states, "Students reported difficulties in recalling information, particularly when digital platforms lacked accessibility features." It would be useful to specify what accessibility features were most commonly lacking.

The phrase "students struggled to adapt to online etiquette" is somewhat vague. Providing specific examples, such as difficulty with turn-taking in virtual discussions or muted microphones leading to miscommunication, would enhance clarity.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The introduction cites studies (e.g., Colvin et al., 2024; Fitria et al., 2024) but does not explicitly address gaps in existing research. Consider explicitly stating what specific aspect of virtual learning's psychological impact on SEN students has not been previously examined to justify the study's necessity.

The study assumes the reader is familiar with the term Special Educational Needs (SEN) but does not provide a formal definition. It would be beneficial to briefly define SEN based on widely accepted educational or psychological criteria.

The sentence "The research follows an interpretative approach, allowing for an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences." does not clarify how participant selection ensured diverse representation. Did the study account for variations in socioeconomic background, severity of disability, or digital accessibility?

The demographic paragraph states, "Participants' ages ranged from 10 to 18 years, with a mean age of 14.3 years (SD = 2.4)." While mean age and standard deviation are reported, there is no mention of whether age differences influenced the psychological impact of virtual learning. Were younger students affected differently than older students?

The claim "Many participants expressed that the absence of direct teacher support increased their stress levels." would be more compelling if supported by specific participant quotes or comparative reference to in-person learning.

The section "Seeking parental support, self-imposed study schedules, mindfulness techniques, reliance on teacher encouragement" lists strategies but does not indicate which were most effective. A ranking or frequency count could provide additional insight.

The sentence "These findings align with previous research highlighting the adverse effects of digital learning on students with disabilities." should explicitly reference which specific studies support this claim, strengthening the connection between the study's results and the broader literature.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.