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Impact of Online Classes on Students with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract: ***Online learning can improve access to educational materials, but it may also create additional demands for school-aged learners who experience learning disabilities. This study examined perceived academic, emotional, behavioural, and adaptation-related outcomes of online classes among students in Grades 1–10 with learning difficulties, drawing on student, parent, and teacher reports. The dissertation describes a quantitative, cross-sectional survey involving 95 participants and the use of the Learning Disabilities Checklist (LDC), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Online Learning Readiness Scale (OLRS), and a researcher-developed questionnaire. Reported findings indicate difficulties with attention, comprehension, task completion, and motivation in online settings, alongside lower perceived academic performance than in traditional classrooms. Parent and teacher reports were associated with students' reported learning difficulties. A significant association was reported between student and teacher reports, $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 20.5$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .465$; a similar association was reported for student and parent reports, $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 21.0$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .471$. Student and parent reports of emotional wellbeing were also positively correlated, $\rho = .674$, $p < .001$. The findings suggest that online learning requires structured routines, accessible teaching materials, trained educators, and coordinated family–school support to better accommodate learners with learning disabilities. Results should be interpreted cautiously because detailed descriptive scores and an effect estimate for the academic comparison were not reported consistently in the dissertation.***

Keywords: learning disabilities; online learning; academic performance; emotional wellbeing; inclusive education; parental support.

1. Introduction

Online learning has become a regular component of school education, offering flexible access to lessons, recorded materials, and digital learning tools. These features may benefit some learners by allowing them to revisit content and work at an individual pace. However, students with learning disabilities—including difficulties associated with reading, written expression, mathematics, and attention- may require explicit instruction, frequent feedback, predictable routines, and tailored learning materials. A virtual classroom can make these supports harder to deliver when learners face home distractions, limited direct interaction, screen fatigue, or barriers to using digital platforms.

Learning difficulties can affect more than academic attainment. Repeated difficulty completing tasks or following lessons may contribute to frustration, anxiety, reduced confidence, and withdrawal from classroom participation. Online learning readiness and the availability of adult support may therefore influence how learners experience remote instruction. The present study focused on students in Grades 1–10 and considered academic experiences alongside emotional and behavioural adjustment and the perspectives of parents and teachers.

The study aimed to identify challenges experienced during online learning, compare perceived academic performance in online and traditional classrooms, examine emotional and behavioural outcomes, assess readiness for online learning, and consider the role of parent and teacher support. It also tested whether student-reported difficulties aligned with parent and teacher observations.

2. Methodology

Research design and participants

The dissertation describes a quantitative, survey-based, cross-sectional design. The target population was school students in Grades 1–10, approximately 5–15 years old, with diagnosed or suspected learning disabilities, including dyslexia, dyscalculia, and attention-related difficulties. Parents and teachers also contributed observations. The reported analytic sample was N = 95. The dissertation describes the sampling approach inconsistently in different sections—as purposive sampling in the abstract and stratified random sampling in the methodology. This discrepancy should be resolved against the original data and sampling records before journal submission.

Measures

The reported measures were: (a) the Learning Disabilities Checklist (LDC), used to identify indicators of learning difficulties; (b) the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), addressing emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationships, and prosocial behaviour; (c) the Online Learning Readiness Scale (OLRS), covering aspects of digital self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, motivation, and online communication; and (d) a researcher-developed parent/teacher questionnaire concerning academic engagement, learning challenges, and behaviour. The dissertation describes online administration through Google Forms, with age-appropriate assistance for children where needed.

Procedure and analysis

The dissertation reports that parent/guardian consent, institutional permission, and age-appropriate child assent were obtained. Responses were collected over approximately

two months and organised for analysis. Descriptive summaries, chi-square tests of independence, association coefficients, and Spearman's rank correlation were used to examine agreement between student reports and parent/teacher observations. Academic performance and online readiness were also considered descriptively. The article reports only statistics available in the dissertation text; detailed score distributions and full comparative statistics were not consistently provided.

3. Results

The dissertation's narrative findings indicate that students experienced difficulty sustaining attention, managing distractions, understanding lesson content, completing tasks, and maintaining motivation during online classes. Perceived academic performance was described as lower in online learning than in traditional classrooms. The report also describes increased frustration, irritability, anxiety, and reduced social engagement, while online readiness varied and many students reportedly needed help with self-management and technology use.

Student–teacher reports of learning difficulties were significantly associated, $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 20.5$, $p < .001$, with $\varphi = .465$ and Cramér's $V = .465$, indicating a moderate association. Student–parent reports were also significantly associated, $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 21.0$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .471$ and Cramér's $V = .471$. These findings suggest that students' reported difficulties were often recognised by adults supporting or teaching them.

A positive association was reported between student and parent ratings of emotional wellbeing, Spearman's $\rho = .674$, $p < .001$ (reported $df = 93$). This indicates substantial correspondence between the two perspectives. The dissertation states that consistent parental and teacher guidance was linked with fewer reported learning and emotional difficulties; however, the information available does not establish a causal effect.

4. Discussion

The findings portray online learning as a mixed experience for students with learning disabilities. Digital platforms can offer flexible pacing and access to visual or assistive resources, but these benefits do not automatically translate into effective learning. Students who need external structure, repeated explanation, and immediate feedback may find it harder to stay engaged when instruction relies heavily on independent work and home-based supervision.

The significant associations between student reports and adult observations are practically important. They suggest that children's accounts of difficulty should be taken seriously and considered alongside parent and teacher assessments. The positive correlation between student and parent emotional-wellbeing reports similarly supports the value of communication between home and school. Nevertheless, agreement between reporters does not by itself establish that online classes caused the reported emotional difficulties.

The reported challenges are consistent with the need for inclusive digital pedagogy: short and clearly sequenced lessons, frequent comprehension checks, predictable schedules, reduced distraction, accessible formats, opportunities to respond in different ways, and timely individual feedback. Text-to-speech, speech-to-text, captioning, visual organisers, recorded explanations, and extra time may be useful when matched to each learner's needs. Teachers also require practical training in adapting materials and monitoring engagement online. Parents can support routines and communication, but should not be expected to replace specialist teaching.

Several limitations constrain interpretation. The sample is relatively small and its sampling method is inconsistently described. The study relies substantially on questionnaire reports, and the article source does not provide enough information on participant characteristics, instrument scoring, missing data, reliability, or detailed academic comparison statistics to independently evaluate every outcome. The cross-sectional design cannot establish causality or long-term effects. Future studies should report transparent recruitment procedures, validated scoring, effect sizes and confidence intervals, and direct academic indicators; longitudinal or mixed-method designs could also clarify how support, disability profile, and learning context shape outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study suggests that online classes may create substantial academic, attentional, and emotional challenges for students with learning disabilities when individualised support and structure are insufficient. Student reports were significantly associated with parent and teacher observations, highlighting the value of coordinated monitoring. Online education should therefore be designed around accessibility rather than assuming that a digital platform is inherently inclusive. Structured lessons, assistive technology, teacher training, and planned family–school collaboration are recommended. These conclusions remain provisional until inconsistencies in sampling information and the reporting of academic outcomes are checked against the original dataset.

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