Academic Review

**Neglect and abuse in the lives of learners with disabilities: evidence from a rural County in Southwestern Kenya**

13 May 2021

Dear Author,

Thank you for the opportunity to review your interesting work. Below please find my review.

**Overview:**

Overall, your work could use greater focus to bring out what is most important about your qualitative findings on what learners with disabilities are experiencing in rural Kenya. An added depth of analysis would require just a bit more work to get your work published and recognized.

Three main recommendations:

1. **Abstract/Introduction:** Define your research question more clearly. What are you trying to show about neglect and abuse of learners with an intellectual disability in rural Kenya? Is it enough to reference stigma and discrimination and add personal statements from individuals of a remote area to the literature? What conclusions can you make that relate your findings to the literature as a whole?
2. **Methodology**: Add more details about the location and the participants to add depth to your findings. Enhance information about the rural area in question and how the research here fills a knowledge gap about a specific place and an aspect of neglect and abuse.
3. **Conclusions/Findings:** Then return to the findings. Now that you will have focused in on a tighter question on what defines neglect and abuse and what aspects of this geographic area are important, conclude your research with a tighter, more precise conclusion.

Also, the total length of the submission should not exceed a total of 5000 words for JARID.

**Clarifying contribution of research:**

Look at other studies in the journals that you are targeting that have similar data and research methods, such as this one:

<https://nasenjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-8578.12360>

You can see that they have a narrow lens, parental involvement. Yours is neglect and abuse in a specific geographic area. Keep the writing targeted on this element. Define neglect and abuse and look at particular research on this subject to see what you are adding. Perhaps you are confirming another study either from a different part of the world (a developed or developing country) that shows similar findings specifically about neglect and abuse. That would be a contribution—to show that in very diverse geographic areas the same issues strike learners with an intellectual disability. Or, conversely, what can you say that is not the same as conclusions on such issues around the world? If you choose the former, you may have research of such a remote area that it will be published. If you choose the latter, you will have more certainty that it would be of novel interest.

**Structure:**

*Abstract:* There is no abstract, which is a key piece that gives an overview of your argument and approach. This needs to be added.

*Introduction:* The introduction is overly broad, including definitions that are very common (for stigma and discrimination). However, the focus of the article is on neglect and abuse, which are not defined. If you want to maintain the idea of stigma and discrimination as enablers, that is plausible, but still a tighter focus should be added.

**Literature review (and relevance):**

I would add the title “Literature Review” above the various sections that are clearly Disability in an African context; Abuse and neglect amongst children with intellectual disability globally and in Africa; Context of Kenya) and then refine the content of these sub-headings.

You have clearly done a great deal of reading and have mastered much of the very recent literature. This aspect of your work seems strong but could benefit from further detail in terms of the subject (neglect and abuse among children with an intellectual disability) and also the geographical area. In fact, I would make sure to have covered as much of the literature on *people with a disability* *in Kenya* as possible to be comprehensive on the geographic component. I say this as there are probably not a large number of articles referencing Kenya in major journals such as those that you are targeting. You can certainly mention this as well as it is an added reason to publish your work. (i.e. “Of the X number of articles in the Journal of Applied Research on Intellectual Disabilities on Kenya in the last X years, Y of these articles found Y, etc.)” This can show a comprehensiveness that is of interest to the reader and that adds great value to your work. This would not take a great deal of additional work but would add a great deal.

**Methods:**

You could add more details about your methodology to enhance the quality of the research.

*Location*

There could be much more specific information, which you should already have on hand, about where the special schools are located (how many miles away from where most children live?); how many students are in the schools; budget per student (compared with public schools); information from national reports on disability in Kenya about numbers of learners in special schools (if available).

*Participant profiles*

Here, you can be much more precise about who the participants were (if you noted this information). Ages? Genders? For the teachers, years of experience teaching?

*Context*

One of the key missing elements is a recognition of poverty levels of learners with an intellectual disability in Kenya. Many of the issues that arise are related to poverty as much as they are related to the specific treatment of learners with disability. How can you differentiate from the effects of being poor from having an intellectual disability? Perhaps not, but you could include very general information on poverty levels in the region you are working in.

**Findings:** Again,the word of the day is “tightening”. Once the various sections are pulled together more precisely, the findings should emerge readily.

Take the time to reflect on what you really think is of interest from your study. Dig deep! You should be able to say in just a sentence or two why your findings are of interest. What is it about rural Kenya that can teach readers something new? Or is the fact that their lives are similar to other people with an intellectual disability around the world is of interest?

**Aside...**

Don’t shy away from carefully reading the submission requirements for the two journals that interest you. There is a lot of free advice and recommendations available there!