

6-18-2022

University Students' and Teachers' Wellbeing During COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Enquiry

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Recommended APA Citation

Sultana, S., Roshid, M., Haider, M., Khan, R., Kabir, M., & Jahan, A. (2022). University Students' and Teachers' Wellbeing During COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Enquiry. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(6), 1635-1655. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5265>

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University Students' and Teachers' Wellbeing During COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Enquiry

Abstract

The wellbeing of teachers and students has emerged as a common concern in research studies in recent times, specifically during the critical period of COVID-19. Based on the findings drawn from the qualitative data through focus group discussions of five groups of teachers (16 females and 8 males) and students (10 males and nine females) at the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh, this paper shows that online teaching during COVID-19 is affected by personal and social challenges, and consequently, both teachers and students experience anxieties and stresses. Teachers are anxious because of the university authorities' surveillance, frequent pay cuts, and fear of losing jobs due to students' low enrollment in universities. They also suffer from physical discomforts, such as back pain, blur vision, and headache because of the prolonged engagement with online activities. Students, especially those from a non-privileged background located in peripheral rural contexts, seem to suffer more from contextual realities that are non-conducive for technology-based learning. Increased numbers and various forms of online assessments also seem to become a burden for them. In general, educational experiences of online teaching seemed to have a peripheral role in their conceptualization of wellbeing. The paper concludes that the insurmountable attention given to online pedagogic practices across the world needs to be balanced out by an equal effort in improving the wellbeing of both teachers and students.

Keywords

qualitative enquiry, wellbeing; online teaching, higher education, COVID-19, Bangladesh

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Acknowledgements

The research was conducted by the Research SIG of BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) and funded by BELTA.

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University Students' and Teachers' Wellbeing During COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Enquiry

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The wellbeing of teachers and students has emerged as a common concern in research studies in recent times, specifically during the critical period of COVID-19. Based on the findings drawn from the qualitative data through focus group discussions of five groups of teachers (16 females and 8 males) and students (10 males and nine females) at the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh, this paper shows that online teaching during COVID-19 is affected by personal and social challenges, and consequently, both teachers and students experience anxieties and stresses. Teachers are anxious because of the university authorities' surveillance, frequent pay cuts, and fear of losing jobs due to students' low enrollment in universities. They also suffer from physical discomforts, such as back pain, blur vision, and headache because of the prolonged engagement with online activities. Students, especially those from a non-privileged background located in peripheral rural contexts, seem to suffer more from contextual realities that are non-conducive for technology-based learning. Increased numbers and various forms of online assessments also seem to become a burden for them. In general, educational experiences of online teaching seemed to have a peripheral role in their conceptualization of wellbeing. The paper concludes that the insurmountable attention given to online pedagogic practices across the world needs to be balanced out by an equal effort in improving the wellbeing of both teachers and students.

Keywords: qualitative enquiry, wellbeing; online teaching, higher education, COVID-19, Bangladesh

Introduction

COVID-19 has immensely affected Bangladesh, a small, developing country with a high density of population. The poor economic condition, inadequate medical facilities, and lack of awareness about personal hygiene and mental health have become hurdles to fighting the challenges posed by the pandemic. Social distancing, isolation, quarantine, job uncertainty, financial stress, limited medical facilities and uneven access to remotely conducted education have triggered psychological mediators such as sadness, depression, worry, anger, annoyance, frustration, guilt, helplessness, loneliness, traumatic stress, and nervousness amongst the people in this country (Banna et al., 2020; Faisal et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2020; Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Yeasmin et al., 2020). According to the empirical research of Banna et al. (2020), 33.7% and 57.9% of the Bangladeshi population suffered from a prevalence of anxiety symptoms and depressive symptoms, respectively and 59.7% reported experiencing stress from

mild to extremely severe levels. Like the previous worldwide pandemic and endemic, there has been a rapid increase in suicidal behaviours, such as suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and actual suicide, in Bangladesh (Mamun & Griffiths, 2020). That is why Xiang et al. (2020) suggested a nationwide epidemiological study on mental health during COVID-19, so that targeted mental wellbeing strategies may be developed.

Amidst the dire situation, a plethora of papers have been published in recent times; focused on different issues of higher education during COVID-19. While some scholars focus on online pedagogy (see Adams, et al., 2020; Ali, 2020; Ibna Seraj et al., 2022; Murphy, 2020; Nordin & Arifin, 2016; Sailin & Magmor, 2018; Toquero, 2020; Wright, 2017), some focus on teachers' development and preparation (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Whalen, 2020); some focus on assessment (Khan & Jawaid, 2020; Sasere & Makhasane, 2020); some focus on challenges and opportunities (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Toquero, 2020). However, relatively little attention has been paid to students' and teachers' wellbeing during COVID-19 (see Allen et al., 2020; Dodd et al., 2021).

In addition, most of the studies are based on a quantitative research approach that provides a limited in-depth understanding of individual wellbeing. Moreover, the research contexts include developed countries where the socioeconomic condition of society does not disadvantage people as in developing countries. In addition, the papers that focus on wellbeing in education mostly view this issue from international students' or parents' perspectives (Patrick et al., 2020). However, little attention has been paid to developing countries where contextual realities create extra layers of struggles for both students and teachers. Even in the context of Bangladesh, there are few studies on the mental health of home-quarantined students and teachers who have been involved in intense online teaching and learning when the educational institutions were closed and transitioned to online teaching in March 2020. There are numerous webinars on effective online teaching and learning; few were found on teachers' and students' mental health. That is why this paper has specifically addressed the following research question:

What factors have affected the university teachers' and students' wellbeing in online classes during COVID-19?

Literature Review

Wellbeing Conceptualized

The concept of wellbeing has been extensively used in psychology, sociology, and economics and has received significant attention from researchers (Brey, 2012; Francis et al., 2021; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016; McGregor & Pouw, 2017; Tausig, 2013). Nevertheless, there has not been any consistent acceptable definition of the complicated multidimensional construct of wellbeing that may be consulted for the wellbeing of teachers and students. While the psychological and individual subjective factors behind wellbeing have been explored in psychology, the contextual factors impacting individual wellbeing have been researched in sociology. However, individual subjective accounts are expected to be also influenced by social dynamics, such as socio-cultural and educational backgrounds, gender, employment, and so on (Gillett-Swan & Sergeant, 2015). Hence, there is no doubt that wellbeing is a psychological as well as a social and contextual phenomenon.

The advocacy groups working for social and development policy and practice are interested in wellbeing. The Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Group (WeD) with country teams in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Peru, and Thailand shows wellbeing as a process (White, 2010). Giving importance to “doing good,” “feeling good,” “living a good life,” and

grounding wellbeing in a particular social and cultural location, WeD identified three dimensions of wellbeing: the materials, the relational, and the subjective. The materials refer to assets, welfare, and standard of living. On the one hand, the relational included the social – social relations and access to public goods; on the other hand, it incorporated the human – capabilities, attitudes to life, and personal relationships. The subjective included people's perceptions of their material, social, and human positions and, on the other hand, referred to people's cultural values, ideologies, and beliefs.

Wellbeing is expressed and illustrated by everyday lexical items that are used in regular life, such as happy, relaxed, anxious, and sad (Ager et al., 2015). These feelings are also discussed about emotions, moods, values, attitudes, orientations, and ideologies and set within the positive and negative continuum. Emotions and feelings are intricately intertwined with subjectivity and wellbeing. Regarding these feelings, Warr and Nielsen (2018) measured workers' wellbeing through compounds indexing job satisfaction, work engagement, and life satisfaction. Warr and Nielsen (2018) showed that greater wellbeing correlated with better performance at work. Even though the findings may not be generalized for contextual differences, it has been observed that "induced positive affect yields positive behavior," and wellbeing has a positive influence on performance (Warr & Nielsen, 2018, p. 7). Good performances at work positively impact wellbeing too.

The research studies done by Wyn et al. (2015) and Satariano (2020) also framed wellbeing as social processes that affect emotional and social health. Even in an economically advanced country like Australia, where youths seem to enjoy high and improved health levels within a prosperous economic condition and where youths are involved in participatory education, they seem to suffer from depression and anxiety disorder (Wyn et al., 2015). The transition from youth to adulthood, securing positions in the precarious labour market, establishing "adult lives," performing "worker identity," navigating their ways in the conflicted terrain of work and social spaces, aligning their activities within the dominant political ideas, the perpetual struggles in self-management and self-surveillance required them to develop reflexive subjectivity. Wyn, Cuervo, and Landstedt (2015) suggested more research on the social conditions that may restrict the possibilities of youths being well.

It seems crucial to develop a framework of wellbeing that may address the multifaceted nature of wellbeing. Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) suggested a dynamic definition of wellbeing addressing the equilibrium or balance affected by live events and challenges. Quintessentially, according to them, wellbeing refers to individual and collective needs of equilibrium/ homeostasis in physical, social, and psychological resources. According to Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012), the framework has several strengths. The framework is simple and may be applied to individuals of different ages, cultures, and gender. It accepts that individuals may differ in their unique resources, and hence, their challenges will differ. Because of identifying the tangible sources of wellbeing, wellbeing becomes operational, and measurement becomes less complicated.

In other words, to explore the wellbeing of students and teachers, it is important to understand the intricate relationship between the social condition and contextual factors that may influence the individual psychological conditions. In addition, students', and teachers' perceptions about their social and material positionality as well as about their cultural values, ideologies, and beliefs need further attention.

Wellbeing and the Education Sector

The positive relationship between teachers' wellbeing and their efficiency in teaching and classroom activities has been empirically proven (Bardach et al. 2021; Dreer, 2021; Mehdinezhad, 2012). Even though empirical evidence indicates that the wellbeing of teachers

and students should be the central concern in educational psychology, the education sector seems more preoccupied with teaching and learning rather than with students' and teachers' wellbeing. Hence, Soutter (2011, p. 2) rightly identified that:

In today's accountability culture, test scores, attendance records, university entrance trends and international league tables are examples of common metrics. ... Less is known, however, about how these relate to the commonly referenced, but more vaguely defined, goals of personal, economic, societal, and environmental wellbeing.

As a result, there are gaps in the existing literature addressing students' and teachers' wellbeing in the contemporary education system. Aulia, Hastjarjo, Setiyawati, and Patria (2020) also identified that there are future possibilities for more research on students' wellbeing at various levels of education.

In an online cross-sectional survey, Dodd, Dadaczynski, Okan, McCaffery, and Pickles (2021) explored the psychological wellbeing of domestic and international university students at an Australian university during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that overall, 34.7 percent of students reported being in a satisfactory state of well-being. Postgraduate students performed better than undergraduate students in terms of wellbeing. The study concluded that female students and students with low self-reported social status needed immediate attention. Allen, Jerrim, and Sims (2020) monitored improvements in teacher wellbeing in the United Kingdom using specific longitudinal survey data. The findings demonstrated that teachers' anxiety levels soared as schools were closed and reopening announcements were made. Teachers in fee-paying schools were more anxious during the summer term when schools were closed because they provided more "live" online lessons than teachers in state schools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nurunnabi, Almusharraf, and Aldeghaither (2020) investigated health and wellness in universities across the G20 countries. The findings showed that lockdown, social distancing, and self-isolation requirements were stressful and harmful, causing health and well-being problems among students.

University students' poor wellbeing in Australia is instigated by an increased level of stress in their lives which seemed to be an outcome of different social conditions, such as employment uncertainty, fragmentation of time, and financial hardship. Wyn (2009) summarised the relational approach to wellbeing that highlights the intricate relationship between wellbeing and social processes and social practices succinctly:

A relational approach locates wellbeing in the nature of the social processes and the social practices that inform their lives. From this approach, individuals' sense of wellbeing is experienced individually but reflects their social relationships, including intuitional practices (e.g., health-promoting schools) and personal relationships (e.g., positive relations within families and at work).
(p. 107)

Other similar research studies have identified unpredictable and complex social and economic relationships and circumstances as the most vital factors for students' wellbeing. These factors are, on many occasions, beyond their control.

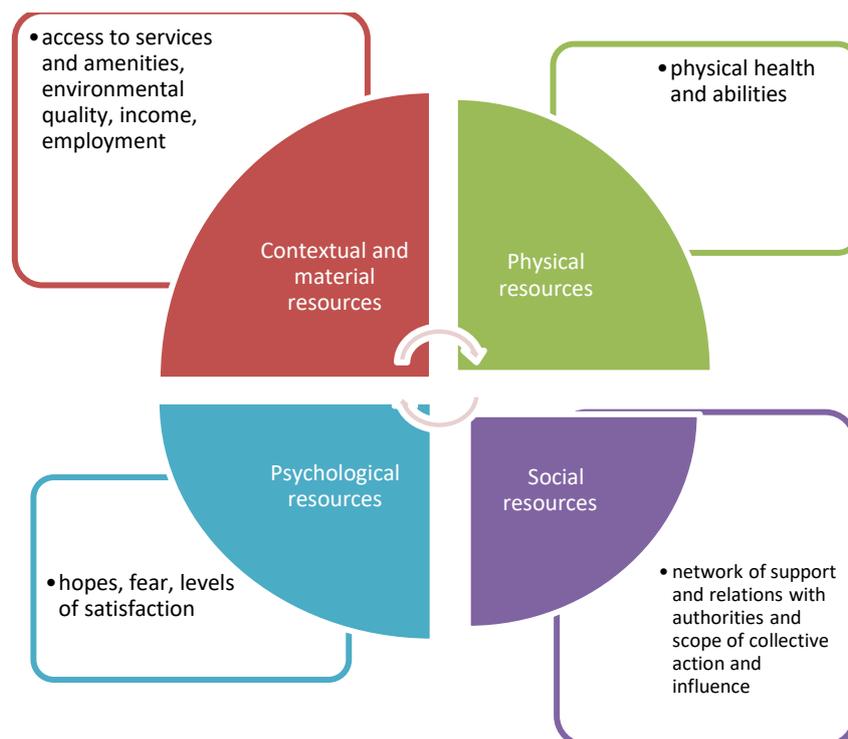
In their research, Wyn, Cuervo, and Landstedt (2015) identified four key issues that impact the wellbeing of young university students: societal expectations regarding health, career, and possibilities and the associated anxieties; high level of individual responsibility in maintaining life, health, education, and achieving future financial stability, and associated prolonged stressful episodes; the precarious nexus between education and work, transitioning

from the tertiary education degrees to work, weak relationships between education and work and associated pains and pangs; and finally, the complexity of the maintenance of balance between study and work commitments, family and social relationships, and associated stress concerning the work condition, opportunities, and future. The research indicates that wellbeing has little to do with learning and teaching as such. They are more associated with social factors beyond the classrooms.

These research studies discussed above indicate that educational experiences are peripheral to students' sense of wellbeing. In a research study, students were requested to draw visual arts to express their definition of wellbeing (Soutter, 2011). In their visuals, they conceptualised wellbeing in terms of four independent domains: physical, mental, and emotional, spiritual, and social wellbeing. In addition to money, cars, or materials, they gave importance to independence, health, and their selves. Their relationship with family members, friends, nature, pets, and neighbours was also significant. Ability to think, make decisions, and feel well, happy, pleased, fulfilled, and content and positive attempts to become whom they were equally emphasised. Neither school nor learning was mentioned in the visual arts. They did not give many references to the future either.

There has also been increased research interest in teachers' emotions or feelings in teaching, such as anxiety, shame, anger, or depression. Research on teacher development and educational reform is also putting more attention on the emotional politics in teaching (Zembylas, 2002). Based on the social constructionist position, Zembylas (2002) drew attention to discursive, political, and cultural aspects that influence teachers' emotions. He was mindful of teachers' interpersonal relationships and inter-subjective engagement. Consequently, Zembylas (2002) indicated that the interrelationship among schools, learning, and teaching is emotionally complex, and it is important to understand how teachers may problematise the existing teaching and learning practices to develop politically and historically sensitive curriculum and pedagogic practices.

Figure 1
A Conceptual Framework for Wellbeing



In summary, the existing research on wellbeing shows that physical, social, and psychological resources play a vital role in ensuring the wellbeing of students and teachers. To understand teachers' and students' wellbeing in relation to online teaching and learning, it seems essential to go beyond the physical, social, and psychological resources and challenges, specifically in the context where students and teachers have limited access to technical support. Context and materials will play an essential role in individual and collective teaching and learning as well as in wellbeing.

Based on the discussions above, we may state that adequate access to contextual and material and physical, social, and psychological resources ensures individual wellbeing and positive feelings and outlook on life. Only by addressing and mitigating the contextual and material (access to services and amenities, environmental quality, income, employment); physical (physical health and abilities), social (network of support and relations with authorities and scope of collective action and influence), and psychological challenges (hopes, fear, levels of satisfaction), the wellbeing of students and teachers may be ensured.

Methodology

The research study was conducted by members of a reputed English Teachers' Association in the country. They felt the need to understand the wellbeing of university teachers and students from an unbiased position and contribute to knowledge. This paper is an outcome of a large study where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were followed. However, because of the word constraints, only the rich, in-depth qualitative data collected from focus group discussions (FGD) with teachers and students are presented in this paper. The reason for choosing only a qualitative approach is to understand the participants' in-depth intensive narratives thoroughly, so that an opinion about their wellbeing that was affected due to online education during COVID-19 may be constructed.

Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues (O. Nyumba et al., 2018). As the purpose of the study was to collect a comprehensive, collective, and in-depth picture of the wellbeing of the private higher education teachers and students in Bangladesh, FGD was considered the suitable qualitative method for the collection of qualitative data because qualitative data is the main basis of qualitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). A total of 10 FGDs (5 FGDs with teachers and 5 FGDs with students) were conducted. A total of 24 teachers (16 females and 8 males) from 11 private universities and 19 students (10 males and 9 females) from 10 universities teaching and learning English at undergraduate and master's levels in Bangladesh participated in the above 10 FGDs. The faculty members belonged to various positions ranging from lecturers to professors and had a wide range of experience ranging from less than 5 years to more than 20 years. The student respondents were from the first year to master level and participated in either language skills-based foundation courses, English literature courses, or Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT) courses.

A convenient sampling technique was followed for selecting the participants. Personal networks and open online calls were used to gain access to the teacher participants, while students were accessed through the participating teachers who participated in FGDs. Teachers advised their students to voluntarily participate in the study if they were interested. Students who showed an interest in participating in FGDs were contacted by the researchers to set a suitable time for each FGD group meeting. Even though more students expressed an interest in participating in FGDs, a significant number of students were unable to attend due to technical issues and a time mismatch. All FGDs were conducted using Zoom meeting software. These FGDs were conducted by the researchers themselves so that they might be well familiar with the data and understand its in-depth meaning. Both English and Bangla were used for

conducting (asking and answering questions) FGD that depended on participants' comfortability. It was observed that teachers usually used English while students used a mixed language to express opinions. All data were recorded using Zoom recording with the consent of all participants.

For collecting data, two sets of FGD guidelines were developed for teachers and students based on reviewing existing literature and the personal experience of the researchers. The FGD guidelines were divided into two parts. The first part includes the basic information about name, gender, name of the university, designation, year of teaching experience (for teachers), subject, and year of study (for students). Part two included several open-ended questions focusing on online education, such as whether they faced any challenges with accessing technology, devices, the internet, online classes, lecture materials, exams, and assessments, and how those issues affected their mental health. Some examples of the questions used for students are: What challenges do you face in getting access to online classes with your devices? What challenges do you face with internet speed and cost, and how do you overcome them? How effective and fair was the online assessment you faced during COVID-19? Why do you think so? Do you face any stress or anxiety associated with the above challenges? Likewise, some of the additional questions for teachers and students are: What are the possible reasons behind the anxiety and insecurity? Do you think that online teaching may marginalise some students in universities? In what ways do you think we might address this issue? What specific support do you think students from disadvantaged backgrounds require? The duration of each FGD was about 80–90 minutes.

After collecting FGD data, all digitally recorded data were transcribed and translated into English verbatim by a group of professional translators. After translation, all textual data was saved in MS Word files and shared with researchers to check the quality and accuracy of the data. After randomly reading the texts and listening to the audio, when it seems that transcription and translation accuracy have been maintained, the two lead authors have closely read the texts several times, identified the texts related to wellbeing issues and developed individual codes (e.g., stress, pressures, anxieties) using comments in the word files. Then, by reviewing the codes, several subthemes (e.g., psychological stress, physical stress, and financial stress) were developed that are aligned with the key research questions. In this sense, in analysing data, inductive analysis or data-driven thematic analysis was followed rather than driven by the researchers' theoretical interest in the area or topic (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings of the study have been presented under key themes aligned with research questions.

Despite not having any institutional ethics committee, the researchers, aware of research ethics because of their experience in conducting rigorous research at home and abroad, strictly maintained research ethics, including maintaining participants' safety and anonymity. They collected data from the participants with their consent, explaining the purpose of the study and how the confidentiality of the data will be maintained. To maintain confidentiality, participants' pseudonyms rather than their original names have been used in research publications. Moreover, to maintain the trustworthiness of the study, source triangulation was used, where data from teachers and students were presented for cross-referencing. Moreover, participants' quotations are used to make the study trustworthy.

Results

The data are analysed, and the factors influencing university teachers' and students' wellbeing in online teaching during COVID-19 in Bangladesh are identified in the section below. The findings are organised according to themes, based on the conceptual framework

given in Figure 1 which identifies the resources significant for students' and teachers' wellbeing: contextual and material, physical, social, and psychological.

Contextual and Material Resources and Wellbeing

Access to Services and Amenities

While explaining three dimensions of wellbeing: e.g., materials, social and subjective), White (2010) suggested that materials refer to assets, welfare, and living standards. The data analysis reveals that in online-based teaching and learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, most students and teachers did not feel comfortable because of their inadequate access to contextual and material resources. Almost all students and teachers reported that poor internet connection was the most common cause of their mental distress. This situation was more challenging in rural areas where students had limited access to internet facilities and technological support. It was not possible to be connected to online classes if they stayed at home in many cases. Against this backdrop, despite having the potential possibility to be infected by a coronavirus and regardless of what the weather was, many students had to go out of their homes during the lockdown, stayed in an open field, sat under trees, or rode on a tree or on top of a roof of the local areas to be connected to online and continue online classes, Rural students sometimes attended the classes going out of home despite having windy or rainy or scorching sunny weather. One of the teachers shared their view this way:

Our students indeed face many difficulties with the network, even some of them had to attend classes from the paddy fields or the rooftop under the midday sun.
(Sanjida, Teacher)

This situation became distressing when there was an interruption of electricity, and they had to use mobile data which created both financial and mental pressure on the students because mobile data was costly. Ahmad and Arifin (2021) found that because of the high cost of internet data and a slow internet connection, the students couldn't attend their classes on Zoom properly. Students who attended online classes using mobile devices faced more challenges than the students who used laptops because mobile data were costly in Bangladesh. During the pandemic rather than becoming humanistic, mobile operators in Bangladesh increased data packages that created financial anxieties among students, particularly for those from the middle-class or lower-middle families who used mobile data. Except for a few institutions, most of the intuitions also did not come forward to help their students with data support. The students' financial anxiety rocketed up when many students found their parents in a financial crisis due to the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data analysis further reveals that most students had devices such as laptops or smartphones to attend online classes. Some students did not have their laptops and faced difficulty in online classes and examinations. They had to rely on their smartphone. One of the female students mentioned:

A few students in our class were from villages and used university computers for doing the assignments. It was problematic for them during the pandemic. They could not join classes properly. (Soma, Student)

One of the students shared her painful experience when her device/laptop broke during the exam week. She could not sleep because of the tension. As she mentioned:

I feel that I have a problem with the device, and other than that, I face challenges while there is an exam week going on. I mean, I could not sleep for the whole week, even for three hours. (Asha, Student)

Environmental Quality

Female students experienced additional anxieties and fears when they had to go out of the home. They felt exposed to possible potential risks that could compromise their safety and security. They had to stay outside the home for hours because they had to attend 1-3 classes in a day where each class's duration was 1-2 hours. One of the students shared how online classes during the pandemic threw them into a danger zone:

The online class has become a huge issue nowadays. When participating in online classes repeatedly, such as hour-long classes, the mobile charge runs out so fast! We have to charge up our devices on one side and participate in classes on the other. As a result, our devices do not get charged properly. It is a big issue. (Moni, Student)

Though teachers acknowledged that there were advantages of recording lectures and sharing with the students (e.g., absent students can watch it later, if the lesson is recorded), they felt a bit uneasy for several reasons such as a lack of confidence in running effective classes, fear of flaws in teaching, or fear of being watched by senior colleagues and the authority. As a result, whenever they sat in front of the camera, they naturally became a little stiff and self-conscious. Moreover, many teachers preferred uploading external videos to taking live classes or recorded classes to maintain family privacy.

Likewise, students were not comfortable interacting with teachers in online classes, even not in online presentations with cameras to maintain their privacy (cf. Sultana, 2022; Wright, 2017). They tried to hide behind the black screen of the zoom, turning off the microphone and video in the name of saving data consumption and maintaining privacy. To check students' level of understanding when teachers asked questions to students by name or in general, very little response came from the students' side. Only a few students responded after several repetitions of the questions which gave the teachers an uncomfortable feeling and made the flow of the class get interrupted. The classes seemed mechanical too. Since the students were physically separated, it was a huge impediment for a teacher to ensure students' participation (Latipah & Gunawan, 2021). Two of the students observed:

I do not always like to turn on my microphone to say something because I expect my friends to say something, respond to the teacher, and also my friends think that some other person will turn on the microphone and respond to the teacher. So, it always happens that the teacher is talking, and no one is responding to her. I know it is bothersome and annoying for teachers sometimes. (Rupa, Student)

When sir asked a question to a student, the student did not respond. Some students did their household chores by turning off the video. Some boys joined the class, turned on a film, and slept. They phoned me and said that "please phone me and wake me up when the class ends. (Manosh, Student)

Students explained their reasons for not responding to the questions asked by teachers in online classes. Conversely, the reverse opinion was revealed in the voice of some of the

students who were interested in asking questions if they did not understand any part of the lesson. However, they could not ask, worrying if others might get disturbed. Many also identified that they could not ask questions for the lack of time.

On the one hand, fewer interactions between teachers and students made many students introverted and/or from introverted to more introverted; on the other hand, it made some teachers feel worried about the effectiveness of their classes.

Education and Skills

Findings reveal that students' dropouts increased. Dissatisfaction with online classes, learning crisis, and expected results in the exam also worked as factors to postpone their study for one or two semesters and wait for face-to-face teaching:

I would say that the dropout rate will increase because many students understand that by giving online exams, they are not getting the grades they expect. So, they do not want to damage their CGPA by doing online classes anymore. Many of my friends have already dropped out of the courses. Even I did so. I feel that it will increase. (Rabbi, Student)

We were discussing that students might not enrol in the upcoming semesters. We saw that 70% of our existing students enrolled, which might create a fuss later. (Samiha, Teacher)

The online assessment process provided many students with a feeling of discomfort (Sultana, 2022). One of the reasons was the power failure during the examination, and students were not able to write in the examination and became tense wondering whether they would be able to submit exam papers within time. Another reason for such discomfort was the limited scope to correct typing mistakes in the online examination. They had little experience with such online examinations by typing on the button of a laptop or mobile phone. Accordingly, they often made mistakes in typing and got little time to correct those mistakes. When they compared this online examination with their long-practised paper-pen test, they felt they were not in their comfort zone. Moreover, they were mentally and physically used to facing examinations in a calm and quiet environment in an exam hall where everything was organized for the exam. However, when they took online examinations at home, they faced challenges paying attention to tests.

We all have faced problems in online exams like typing mistakes; that is the common thing we all have made. It is impossible to make an exam environment inside our home. No matter how quiet it is, it is impossible to focus on the exam in our home. (Laila, Student)

In addition, many of them searched for answers on google and corrected their answers and shared them with friends during online exam time. This malpractice made those students shocked who provided answers based on their ability rather than taking help from any sources or anyone. Another reason for feeling uncomfortable for the students was the pressure of assignment-based assessment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were assigned several assignments for each course that opened chances of cheating in different forms, including copying and pasting texts from different online sources. While this assignment process gave freedom and pleasure to dishonest students, honest students felt shocked and

discriminated against. Maintaining integrity in online assessment has been a global concern. During COVID-19, online cheating has increased too.

Income, Wealth, and Assets

Students expressed their financial anxieties and hardship because of their parents' income loss, which eventually contributed to many students' dropouts or enrollment in the following semester. Though some students received tuition waivers or admission fees waivers from their universities under conditions, all students did not receive this opportunity. The students who received tuition waivers under the condition were under the stress of achieving the required GPA in the upcoming semester. Otherwise, they would lose their waiver opportunity. On the one hand, personal financial crisis, on the other hand, the target of achieving the required GPA increased many students' psychological pressure. Besides, due to the burden of assignments, students suffered from immense mental pressure (Sultana, 2022). In addition, the hectic deadlines triggered their mental pressure. Keeping pace with hectic deadlines, they rushed to complete assignments. As a result, this rush impacted their proper understanding of the subject matter (Ahmad & Arifin, 2021).

Teachers complained about their salary cut, half salary pay, irregular salary pay, and postponement of their promotion for the COVID pandemic. On top of that, they were forced to engage in extra work, including collecting students for their university. One of the female teachers shared:

I am anxious about my salary and job security because I got 60% of my salary in March, and it was very much shocking because they kept us working on different issues. We worked day and night. Furthermore, we had to work almost two times more than our usual work, but at the time of salary, we got 60%. The university management sets different kinds of criteria that we have to meet, and they give us only 24 hours to meet those criteria. (Iqbal, Teacher)

Physical Resources and Wellbeing

Physical Health and Abilities

The data analysis further shows that online teaching, learning, and assessment processes were physically taxing and time-consuming, consequently creating physical and mental anxieties for both students and teachers. One of the students explained how online classes were painful for his mental and physical health, and he faced a hurdle to pay attention to his study:

We do not keep our concentration for a long time. How much concentration could we devote to a small device? How could we see the screen of the device for a long time? It affects our brain, and it pressurises our brain, and our brains become tired soon. In the face-to-face classroom, we can take classes and concentrate for 80 minutes. In online classes, we become tired after 30 minutes. (Liza, Student)

Likewise, how increased workload during a pandemic contributed to physical and mental pressure on teachers was illustrated by several teachers. Asa, a teacher, mentioned that downloading all assignment submissions and organising them in a folder were some of the extra workloads that she tackled in the case of the online assessment. Students submitted so many different files that it became unmanageable for her to organise.

The workload has increased without a doubt. Creating lesson plans, uploading them in Moodle, giving exams, checking exam copies, and discussing these issues with other teachers on laptops have made us act like automated robots. (Laboni, Teacher)

From WhatsApp, students have a faculty's number. So, students can call them anytime to solve their problems. Sometimes students are calling them mistakenly at night to know anything. However, it would not happen in regular classes. In this regard, teachers' workload has increased. (Russel, Student)

In other words, teachers have tried their level best to make online classes reliable and accessible. Consequently, their workload and working hours increased. Some teachers found themselves stressed with computer-induced medical problems (such as musculoskeletal problems, vision problems, and headaches) and burdened with online teaching:

Nevertheless, sitting in front of the screen for hours has caused a sore neck. For example, today, I have been sitting in front of the computer screen since 10 in the morning, the whole day, as our master's students had a presentation. Moreover, my neck is already aching. So, this is a practical problem for me. We are aged, you know. This is bothering us a lot. (Amzad, Teacher)

The study has also identified that teachers' and students' wellbeing is associated with physical comfort and discomfort. It was found that due to the online remote teaching and learning process, both teachers and students suffered from physical discomforts, such as back pain, blur vision, headache, and other physical discomforts because of the prolonged engagement with online activities. No matter how long they worked, they also had to attend online meetings after office hours, sometimes late at night.

Social Resources and Wellbeing

Network of Support and Obligations

Female teachers seemed to suffer from an additional source of anxiety because of their social relationships and responsibilities at home. They were the usual primary caregivers, and hence, they needed to take care of their family members, and on many occasions, COVID-19 patients at home. Any sickness and death seemed to have more stimulating effects on them. Also, as women in the household, they had more responsibilities, including child-rearing and household chores. The young mother teacher participants needed to supervise their young children when these children had their online classes. When in the same household, the father, mother, and children had online commitments (classes/ meetings), it seemed women became the manager of these simultaneous events in the household. Arranging adequate numbers of laptops and smartphones had also become a hurdle for women. Thus, being quarantined at home and meeting the demands of multiple and simultaneous roles of wife, mother, teacher, and employee within the same space became a source of stress and anxiety for female teachers:

... mental anxiety - I would like to ask all the female teachers here whether they also face this problem if there is a small child at home, whether I should take care of it or take classes. The baby may make a sound in the middle of the classes; it is also a source of anxiety; I mean sitting in front of the students at

the right time and managing your household It is extreme pressure for female teachers. I mean... at least for me... and... Moreover, if you have a history of someone having corona in your family, I lost my father on May 14. It has been just one month now. He died of the corona. So, when you have situations like this, you feel anxious, I mean... you cannot give attention to anything, let alone teaching... Then I also feel anxious for students since it has already happened in my family... Whether they are safe or not... I also have to think of it. So, it is also a cause of anxiety. (Joya, Teacher)

The differences in the role of teachers in the household during COVID-19 became evident in the following light-hearted comment made by a female teacher participant:

I feel jealous when I see my husband, and he is pretty relaxed... He is in a relaxed mode all day long... Moreover, he is spending his days relaxing for the last two months and spending the nights as well. He is a businessman. I am very jealous of it. I am not in his place... That is why I have to sit before the laptop for a long time, and why I have to work. (Jesmin, Teacher)

This finding suggests that workload, activities, and stress in all professions were not equal, and teachers' professional and personal lives had been immensely affected by the pandemic.

Psychological Resources and Wellbeing

Hopes, Fears, and Aspirations

Teachers also expressed their financial anxieties and fear of losing their job. Several teachers reported fear that either themselves or any of their colleagues received 30%-70% reduced salary from their universities for several months. Even some of the teachers did not receive any salaries. Cutting salaries or no salary from university made the teacher community worried about the loss of their jobs. On top of that, several universities forced the teachers to give different written undertakings such as agreeing to work with a lesser salary, working without promotion, or suspension of increments until the pandemic ended. Moreover, apart from teaching, the authority forcibly engaged them to work from morning to late at night in various administrative and training works. Also, violating privacy policy, university authorities monitored teachers' activities and movement through different Apps. Such unpleasant initiatives shocked the teachers severely and gave the teachers a feeling of leaving the job.

University authorities also had tension and anxieties about the recruitment of new students and financial affordability. Because of the uncertainty in new recruitment, universities identified that the number of enrolled students had decreased. As private universities depend highly on these newly admitted students, they anticipated financial calamity. As private universities do not get any government endowments, their expenses solely depend on students' tuition fees. Hence, universities tried their best to bring back their regular students who had failed to register. However, if the pandemic continued for a long time, many universities would fall into an economic crisis, eventually putting the teachers' jobs and salary at risk. In the meantime, many teachers started facing financial challenges. One of the teachers reported that he had to shift to a cheaper flat to adjust to the pay cut. One senior teacher shared:

We are from private universities and we get our major funds from the students, and we do not receive any government funding. So financially, it will be quite

a challenge for the administration to run the universities smoothly, as the student intake is low. As a result, teachers are worried, and there is pressure from the administration. (Rubana, Teacher)

Thus, future financial instability created stress among many university authorities in Bangladesh. This stress is seen globally, particularly among international universities. They are not in regular operation; many are closed; and students stay home.

Discussion

The paper has identified how online teaching during COVID-19 caused by the pandemic affects the wellbeing of higher education teachers and students in Bangladesh. Online teaching has been affected by contextual, material, physical, social, and psychological challenges, and consequently, both teachers and students are experiencing stress and anxiety.

In terms of contextual and material resources and wellbeing, access to services and amenities seems to play a vital role. For example, technological issues seem to create a digital divide between urban and rural and poor and affluent students (Panyajamorn et al., 2018). However, the technological divide is a global issue (Chen & Wellman, 2014) in online teaching or remote teaching, even in developed countries like the UK (Watts, 2020). During COVID-19 and the lockdown period, students' learning, and mental wellbeing in rural areas, including Bangladesh, seems to be affected immensely. According to Lai and Widmar (2021), for those who do not have easy access to the Internet, the digital divide restricts their options. There was a negative association between remoteness and Internet speed at the local level, demonstrating the challenge that rural areas encounter. As a result, the digital divide threatens rural students' wellbeing in Bangladesh, especially those from low-income and financially marginalised families. Thus, these findings indicate that the environmental quality of using the technology causes anxiety and uneasiness among teachers and students, which eventually affects their psychological wellbeing during the pandemic. Likewise, female students feel more stress than their male counterparts because of their feeling of insecurity about going out of the home to attend remote teaching. A study by Awang and Singka (2020) reveals that there is a significant relationship between safety construct with wellbeing among students. Thus, safety must be exercised and handled consistently and efficiently to protect students' well-being.

In addition, assessment and related stress seem to compromise the wellbeing of students. Researchers in the United Kingdom have discovered a threefold increase in requests to a big "homework aid" website since the COVID pandemic struck. Baik, Larcombe, and Brooker (2019) showed that students' wellbeing is also associated with assessment. The study quoted:

My wellbeing would be improved if there were consistently explicit criteria for assignments, more notice about expectations for assessments, and less weight on marks on the end of semester written exams.

To improve the learners' wellbeing, students suggested maintaining clarity and fairness in assessment and providing more feedback on assessment. In this study too, to avoid this challenge about exams and make them fair to some extent, some of the teachers asked for the handwritten assignments from students; some asked them to mail the images of assignments; some others, however, suggested taking video interviews or viva or setting analytical questions in an open book exam instead of MCQ tests. Teachers also suggested their colleagues set up creative questions so that students would not copy and paste the answers from google. They

also advised their colleagues to be more vigilant, and more strategic to keep up with the challenges.

Teachers' wellbeing is closely associated with their job security, regular payment, and reasonable workload. This study's results suggest that university teachers were worried about their salaries, and jobs and concerned with leading a decent life during COVID-19. They have a fear of losing their jobs because of the low enrolment of students in universities. Teachers are also anxious because of the university authorities' surveillance, long training sessions, and frequent pay cut. Job insecurity is described as an employee's fear of losing their job involuntarily (Burchell, 2011), decreases psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction, and raises depersonalisation disorder and physical stresses revealed in several studies on the psychological effects of job insecurity (see Hellgren et al., 1999; Hellgren, & Sverke, 2003).

Experts predicted coronavirus may "make or break" universities' finances. Universities successfully able to transit to online teaching could gain financially in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic. At the same time, the universities failing to do so successfully could be at risk of a permanent shutdown (see Bothwell, 2020). Despite offering courses online, as Bangladeshi universities are facing student shortages, the university authorities are worried about future financial stability. According to Burchell (2011), the unexpected announcement of work insecurity will result in a sharp increase in psychological symptoms. When considering the long-term effects of work instability, wellbeing (i.e., anxiety and depression symptoms) tends to deteriorate for at least a year, with no signs of levelling off or recovery. In the context of Zimbabwe, adopting a qualitative study, Mabhoiyi (2020) teachers in Zimbabwe are underpaid and dissatisfied with their salaries, causing them to be concerned about their wellbeing in this economically struggling Sub-Saharan country. On the other hand, teachers at other universities are more at ease because they note that their administration is not slashing their wages and promoting and paying them as usual. From a sociological standpoint, wellbeing, according to these findings, is often relational because they have access to public goods as a social process and social practices that inform their lives. Thus, it can be said that individuals' sense of wellbeing is perceived individually but represents their social relationships, including intuitional practice (Wyn, 2009).

Because of the collapse of homes and workspaces, female teachers are struggling the most. Workload, activities, and stress are more complex and unequal for women than men to some extent, and women have multiple identities with multiple roles that reflect gender inequality in professional and family roles (Memon & Jena, 2017; Reichelt et al., 2021). While supporting the university authorities in transitioning from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, they need to cater to COVID-19 infected family members and other family members.

Students seem to suffer more from contextual and materialistic challenges. Those from a non-privileged background located in rural and sub-urban areas in Bangladesh do not have access to uninterrupted internet facilities and amenities required to attend online classes. Assessments in online teaching, which are predominantly based on assignments, have become burdensome for them. The financial burden due to decreased income of their parents because of COVID-19 has created extra pressure on them. Teachers also often experience physical discomfort due to their extended online activities, such as back pain, blurred vision, and headaches. Both students and teachers seem to be in an unfair position where they neither exert their agency nor fulfil their personal and professional ethos in online teaching. Numerous studies show clear links between physical activity and reduced psychological distress (Ashdown-Franks et al., 2019; Rodriguez-Ayllon, Estévez-López et al., 2019). Moreover, studies show that sedentary behaviour, especially excessive screen time such as watching TV, using a computer, a cell phone, or the Internet for more than two hours per day in leisure time, is linked to poor mental health in young people (Rodriguez-Ayllon, Cadenas-Sánchez et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper are significant for several reasons. First, the findings indicate the necessity of focusing on students' and teachers' wellbeing, rather than preoccupying ourselves solely with the issues of teaching and learning, as Soutter (2011) has suggested. Second, it is also essential to focus on contextual, physical, social, and psychological aspects of human life for a nascent understanding of wellbeing. Third, the paper provides a guideline for educators, to think about the educational experiences beyond classroom boundaries, specifically during any critical period. The policymakers need to be mindful of the factors, too, while developing a curriculum for the time of crisis. Finally, the responses of students and teachers in this research study are compelling. There should be open discussions and counselling sessions to immediately address the emotional and psychological issues to ensure students' and teachers' wellbeing.

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Acknowledgements: The research was conducted by the Research SIG of BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) and funded by BELTA.

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Article Citation

Sultana, S., Roshid, M. M., Haider, M. Z., Khan, R., Kabir, M. M. N., & Jahan, A. (2022). University students' and teachers' wellbeing during COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A qualitative enquiry. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(6), 1635-1655. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5265>
