Online Education during COVID-19 in Bangladesh: University Teachers’ Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In Bangladesh like the other nations around the world educational sector is highly affected by COVID–19. During this lockdown teachers may help their students to minimize the educational gap. An online survey was conducted from 30 July to 24 September 2020 to collect the information from teacher of different public and private universities. Descriptive statistics was used to find their perceptions about online education, and problems faced related to e-learning. About 88.5% of the participants take online classes during the pandemic among them majority (91.5%) of them were staying at home and continue their online educational support to the students. They may face some problem during the online classes and poor internet connection (69.51%) and lack of logistic support (19.13%) were the main problem they faced. Very few (1.4%) of them think the process are not helping the students to overcome the educational gap. This study will helpful for government and the educational authority to find the overall scenario of online education during lockdown from teachers’ point view.

Keywords: COVID–19, lockdown, online education, public and private university teachers, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

COVID–19, a highly infectious disease has changed the regular picture of the whole world. Having the severe possibility of spreading among individuals during close contact is causing millions of deaths (Mishra et al., 2020). This pandemic severely impacted the socio-economic and many other basic factors around the world and educational factor is no exception to that.

In March 2020, COVID–19 has resulted in academic closure in Bangladesh (Moralista & Oducado, 2020). This closure of academic institutions severely impacted the majority of the student population and also other involved people of the education sector. Many countries all over the world have started the online education system and they are continuing with this process to minimize the gap (Rahman, 2020). Online education through social media is now the best possible alternative to face to face learning. Platforms like Facebook, Zoom, Google classroom, Google meet etc are some of the mediums through which academic institutions are trying to communicate with the students (Fami, 2020).

Online learning is not that easy for a country like ours. It is a big challenge not only for the learners but also for the teachers. Changes to the educational system including technical support, administrative planning, maintaining online schedule and data, all are very much new for the teachers. In this regard along with preparing lectures they must have proper skills and knowledge of using technical properties.

Government has taken some initiatives to help the educational institutions to conduct classes in this lockdown. But most of the rural and some underprivileged urban areas are at a disadvantage for continuing this process (Fami, 2020). Both teachers and students from such territories are facing distance issues, limited technical assistance, lack of internet access and financial insufficiency.

Distance learning has many benefits (Al-Husban, 2020; Seage & Türegün, 2020) and limitations (Weinhandl et al., 2020). Many factors are considered as obstacles to e-learning (Gokdas & Kayri, 2005). In a recent study in India found many positive and negative opinions about online education (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). There are many studies that show the conditions of students experiencing online education but comparatively fewer studies are conducted describing the circumstances of the teachers in this regard.

During COVID–19 lockdown how teachers help their students to minimize the educational gap, their perceptions about online education, and problems related to e-learning are the main aim of this study.
METHODS AND MATERIALS

This is an online survey-based study of the 353 private and public university teachers in Bangladesh. An online survey was conducted from 30 July to 24 September 2020 to collect the information by non-probability convenience sampling procedure. A well-structured questionnaire was designed which contained some demographic characteristics and information about online classes, their experience and challenges. Questionnaire link using 'Google form' was sent to respondents through email and Facebook messenger. Prior to starting the survey, the aims, objectives and the confidentiality of given responses were clarified with participants. After reading, participants gave their consent to participate by clicking either "Yes" or "No." A total of 313 participants send complete information regarding the survey. Descriptive statistics were carried out to understand the distribution of study participants. Simple percentage distribution was estimated to assess the opinion on online classes, and problems related to study due to the lockdown. IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0. was used to conducted the statistical analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 313 questionnaires out of 353 were returned. We had the responding rate of 88.7%, which has been an acceptable rate. The demographic data of the participants are demonstrated in Table 1. Of 313 participants, 49.8% were aged below 31 years, 48.9% were aged between 31-50 years, and the rest were aged 51-65 years. Two of every five participants were female. Half of the respondents were resided urban areas, and very few (10.2%) of the respondents were from rural areas. The majority of them were from public universities (81.5%). Half of the students were from the Science academic background (56.2%). One fourth of the teachers experienced more than 06 years in our study.

Educational Status of the Participants

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** Taking online classes either home or office during the COVID-19 Pandemic

| Characteristics          | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| **Age of the respondents** |           |                 |
| Below 31                 | 156       | 49.8            |
| 31-40                    | 113       | 36.1            |
| 41-50                    | 40        | 12.8            |
| 51-65                    | 4         | 1.3             |
| **Gender**               |           |                 |
| Female                   | 124       | 39.6            |
| Male                     | 189       | 60.4            |
| **Current place of residence** |   |                 |
| Rural                    | 32        | 10.2            |
| Semi-Urban               | 123       | 39.3            |
| Urban                    | 158       | 50.5            |
| **Institutions**         |           |                 |
| Private University       | 58        | 18.5            |
| Public University        | 255       | 81.5            |
| **Academic background**  |           |                 |
| Science                  | 176       | 56.2            |
| Arts                     | 57        | 18.2            |
| Commerce                 | 80        | 25.6            |
| **Teaching Experience**  |           |                 |
| Below 02 years           | 125       | 39.9            |
| 02-05 years              | 109       | 34.8            |
| 06-10 years              | 52        | 16.6            |
| Above 10 years           | 27        | 8.6             |
participants of our study taking training about online teaching. 79.4% of our teachers used laptop or computers for taking online classes and half of them were used mobile data to take their classes.

Platform Uses and Problem Facing during Online Classes

Figure 2 illustrate that, for e-lectures, respondents in study were using various platforms such as the Google classroom, Zoom app, Skype. Facebook room, Google meets (meetings) etc. the study revealed that most of the teachers (58.12%) prefer the Zoom app for their e-lectures. Majority of the respondents in our study faced some problem during the online classes and poor internet connection (69.31%) and lack of logistic support (19.13%) were the main problem they faced (Figure 3).

Students Participation and Evaluation

Among the study participants maximum teachers find 40% to 80% during their online classes and students respond rate was fifty-fifty they revealed. More than half of our participants did not take any online examination (Table 3).

Table 2. Perception and experiences about online classes (n=277)

| Variables                        | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Numbers of online courses taken  |           |                 |
| Below 02                         | 20        | 7.2             |
| 02-05                            | 147       | 53.1            |
| More than 05                     | 110       | 39.7            |
| Hours giving online classes per week |         |                 |
| 01-02 hours                      | 73        | 26.4            |
| 03-04 hours                      | 93        | 33.6            |
| 05-06 hours                      | 63        | 22.7            |
| Above 06 hours                   | 48        | 17.3            |
| Online teaching experiences      |           |                 |
| Some/little                      | 53        | 19.1            |
| Regular                          | 39        | 14.1            |
| First Time                       | 185       | 66.8            |
| Efficiency in online teaching    |           |                 |
| Efficient                        | 107       | 38.6            |
| Not efficient                    | 12        | 4.3             |
| Developing/learning              | 158       | 57.1            |
| Training taken for online classes|           |                 |
| Peer training/workshops          | 25        | 9.9             |
| No training                      | 252       | 90.1            |
| Gadgets for taking online classes|           |                 |
| Laptop or Computers              | 220       | 79.4            |
| Tab                              | 16        | 5.8             |
| Smartphone                       | 41        | 14.8            |
| Internet connection for online classes|     |                 |
| Broad Band                       | 129       | 46.6            |
| Mobile Data                      | 148       | 53.4            |

Figure 3. Parentage distribution of platform using in online classes

Table 3. Students participation and evaluation (n=277)

| Variables                        | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Attendance level of your students|           |                 |
| Below 40%                        | 44        | 15.9            |
| 40 to 60%                        | 104       | 37.5            |
| 60 to 80%                        | 97        | 35.0            |
| Above 80%                        | 32        | 11.6            |
| Response of the students         |           |                 |
| Satisfying                       | 149       | 53.8            |
| Not Satisfying                   | 128       | 46.2            |
| Taking any online examinations   |           |                 |
| Yes                              | 104       | 37.5            |
| No                               | 149       | 53.8            |
| May be                           | 24        | 8.7             |
Table 4. Students participation and evaluation (n=277)

| Variables                                      | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| **Essential to continue the e-learning process** |           |                 |
| Yes                                            | 221       | 79.8            |
| No                                             | 12        | 4.3             |
| Not decided                                    | 44        | 15.9            |
| **Online education is helping the students to overcome the educational gap** |           |                 |
| To a short extent                              | 108       | 39.0            |
| To an average range                            | 116       | 41.9            |
| To a large extent                              | 49        | 17.7            |
| Not a bit                                      | 4         | 1.4             |
| **Some subjects are difficult to be delivered through online** |   |                 |
| Yes                                            | 273       | 98.6            |
| No                                             | 4         | 1.4             |

Importance of E-learning Process during Lockdown

Table 4 shows that maximum (79.8%) teachers in our study think that, it is essential to continue this e-learning process and very few (1.4%) of them think the process are not helping the students to overcome the educational gap. They also added some of the subjects are very difficult to delivered through online.

Our study revealed that, majority of the teachers were continuing their e-learning process to help the students to minimize their study gaps. Poor internet connection be the main problem they faced during their class.

CONCLUSION

The academic activities have significantly disrupted and the students are so much frustrated to think about their academic future for this unexpected COVID-19 lockdown. Our study evaluated the teacher’s perception about the online education of private and public universities in Bangladesh during this pandemic. Some of the teachers face little bit challenge in online teaching. Our study has revealed the overall scenario and the perceptions about online teaching in under graduation and post-graduation level. We think that it will be helpful for the government and institutional authorities to make an academic decision. By using this information, they can make a plan for the universities to continue the e-learning process during this pandemic.

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