

THE EFFECTIVE ROLE OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-
BEING OF BANGLADESHI UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS

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A thesis submitted to the Department of BRAC Institute of Languages in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
MA in TESOL

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that:

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing a degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

I hereby affirm that, as part of the requirements for the MA in TESOL degree, I have submitted my thesis, "The Effective Role of Language Teachers in the Psychological Well-Being of Bangladeshi Undergraduate EFL Students," to the BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University. It is crucial to point out that no part of this dissertation has been extracted directly from published or unpublished works by other authors. Additionally, any information that was manually taken or copied from another source—published or unpublished—has been properly cited or acknowledged in the relevant place or places. I am fully aware that if it turns out that the material in my portfolio is not original to me and contains passages that have been copied, plagiarized, or appropriated without proper reference, my program may be suspended.

ABSTRACT

Improving the quality of education has recently drawn a lot of attention from scholars who see the mental and academic well-being of language learners as crucial components. In Bangladesh, however, there is a lack of substantial research on the subject. In order to bridge this gap, the present investigation looks into how teachers can support students in overcoming psychological challenges and how psychological health affects learning. This study employed a mixed-methods design that included both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire) data in order to accomplish the specific aims. The findings reveal that teachers' empathetic communication, constructive feedback, and culturally appropriate pedagogical approaches substantially improve learners' sense of autonomy, purpose, and self-acceptance—all crucial components of psychological well-being. This study emphasizes how crucial language instructors are not only as facilitators of linguistic skills but also as key contributors to learners' holistic development. Teachers can foster an environment that is more favorable for academic success by responding to the psychological needs of their students. The findings indicate that specialized teacher training programs should provide educators with techniques to assist students' academic progress as well as their well-being.

Keywords: Role of Language Teachers, Psychological Well Being, Academic Achievement, Undergraduate EFL Learners, Teacher Training

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List of Acronyms

EFL	English as a foreign language
PWB	Psychological Well-Being
PWBS	Psychological Well-Being Scale

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

With a greater focus on globalization and economic development, proficiency in English has become ever more crucial for anyone desiring to engage in the global economy and pursue higher education options. It is impossible to overestimate the worth of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Bangladesh. According to Hoque and Kamal (2016), English proficiency is considered a key factor in enhancing employability and career advancement in Bangladesh, particularly in sectors such as information technology, business process outsourcing, and international trade. Students with great English language competencies have a competitive edge while seeking higher education opportunities overseas and getting involved in global academic communities.

This is precisely why academic achievement is a primary objective of language education in Bangladesh, reflecting students' language skills and content knowledge skills. Here, achievement is primarily perceived as a function of effortful accomplishment (Simpson and Weiner, 1989). Academic success, on the other hand, relates to learning outcomes that are frequently evaluated by grades, tests, and externally achievement assessments (Gajda et al., 2017). Achievement testing aims to assess systematic training and learning toward a generally acknowledged skill or body of information in the context of education. Here, academic success in the realm of language acquisition reveals the speed at which language learners may learn a new language (Cho et al. 2018). Where the language learners' unique capacities and traits contribute significantly to raising their academic achievement (Hakimi et al., 2011; Komarraju et al., 2009).

As the demand for English proficiency expands, there is an increased need to look into the aspects which impact undergraduate EFL learners' PWB and academic attainment. That is the reason mental wellness of learners is increasingly recognized as a key component of successful language acquisition (Dewaele & Li, 2018). According to Adler et al. (2017), PWB is the concurrent exclusion of the devastating parts of the human experience, such as fear, anxiety, wrath, and despair. Meanwhile, PWB was defined in research by White and Jackson (2004) as mental health based on traits including strong self-esteem, positive interactions with others, less worry, no depression, and abstinence from criminal conduct. Therefore, Ryff and Keyes (1995) stated that PWB is a reflection of various beneficial aspects of one's functioning. Here positive psychological states such as motivation, confidence in oneself, and resilience to emotions have been shown to contribute to greater language learning outcomes (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Conversely, negative psychological aspects, such as stress and a sense of anxiety, may hinder learners' development of language and academic performance (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). In this sense, it is crucial that teachers give particular attention to the psychological well-being (PWB) of their students when teaching EFL, as this unquestionably serves as a benchmark for them (Warr et al., 2018).

Therefore, the model that best explains the connection between PWB and academic achievement is the self-determination theory (SDT), which is particularly a meta-theory that stresses both internal and external sources of motivation (Amholt et al., 2020). One of the concerns brought up by SDT is how social as well as ecological variables either enhance or diminish individual's perceptions of motivation and determination, their general well-being, and the standard of their accomplishment (Amholt et al., 2020). According to Huo (2022), persistence, self-control, motivation, and self-assurance all play a role in mediating academic success. Students'

motivation may vary according to several aspects, such as instructors' conduct, classroom management, instructional methods, use of engaging activities, and interactions with students (Hosseini, Nasri, & Afghari, 2017). Moreover, students who cultivate social-emotional competence are more probable to take part enthusiastically in educational endeavors and exhibit adaptability in the face of adversity (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Eriksen & Bru, 2022).

However, the traits that EFL students bring to the classroom naturally may have a particular impact on their learning. While Ruppel et al. (2015) encountered individual traits influencing academic achievement that are mostly cognitive or social in nature, such as academic motivation and students' self-perceptions of their skill sets, student-teacher connections as well as interaction with peers. In Bangladesh, where EFL learners often face diverse socio-economic and cultural challenges, the role of language teachers becomes even more pronounced in addressing students' psychological needs and fostering academic growth. Their teaching approaches, interpersonal skills, and support mechanisms have an enormous influence on students' academic performance and also their psychological health (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). Students who have a friendly interaction with their instructors have been shown to be more persistent, as well as more diligent in the classroom, cope better with stress, accept criticism and guidance, and tend to pay more attention to teachers (Little & Kobak, 2003; Yunus et al., 2011). According to Leitão and Waugh (2007) this form of relationship between instructors and learners is defined by mutual respect, warmth, intimacy, faith, honor, caring and collaboration. Teachers' emotional support and academic supervision are essential for promoting students' academic development (Pianta et al., 2002) and supporting students who have previously displayed externalized behaviors (Silver et al., 2005). While effective education enhances psychological qualities and character strengths that are associated with students' higher academic performance, it also has long-term and less harmful

effects on physical health (Carpara et al., 2000; Durlak et al., 2001; Zeng et al., 2016). So, meeting these prerequisites and creating an environment of empathy is key to students' social functioning and development (Chen & Kent, 2020; Ryf, 2014; Carmeli et al., 2009).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the focus on students' psychological well-being and its conceptual importance for academic success, investigation in this area has shown limited and inconclusive findings (Amholt et al, 2020). PWB includes the absence of illnesses such as severe depression or schizophrenia, whereas individuals with such mental disorders may infrequently attain PWB. The lack of these illnesses, on the other hand, does not necessarily indicate that mental growth has occurred (Adler et al., 2017). One's own happiness is frequently disregarded as a measure of mental health, according to Suldo and Shaffer (2008), whereas the link between academic performance and mental health issues emphasizes negative traits like depression and other mental illnesses. At the same time, learners with lower PWB levels could also be particularly vulnerable to anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem, all of which raise stress levels (Mustafa et al., 2020). However, because of frequent negative emotions and reflection, as well as low academic motivation, Roesan et al. (1999) have shown that students' academic performance is considerably affected by their mental health. Just as Eisenberg et al.'s (2009) study uncovered that depression among college students was notably responsible for attaining a low GPA and a greater chance of dropping out.

Meanwhile, teachers in our country are frequently seen having brief contact with their students who lack trust and rapport. In fact, our traditional education system rarely focuses on the emotional needs of students and things like feeling safe in class, building relationships, trusting students, or mentoring. Recent studies on education have concentrated largely on the influence of

language teachers on the PWB and academic accomplishment of EFL learners (Mercer & Ryan, 2010; Sparks & Ganschow, 1993). In Bangladesh, where English proficiency is often essential for academic and professional achievement (Islam, 2019), there is an enormous absence of awareness about the intricate role that language instructors play in supporting the overall growth of undergraduate EFL students. Although research has explored the effect of teacher-student interactions on academic achievement (Suh, 2016) and psychological well-being (Pishghadam et al., 2020) across many cultural contexts, there are not enough studies focusing especially on the Bangladeshi context.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

English is a global language that is now essential for career prospects, higher education, and worldwide communication. English language instruction is becoming more important in Bangladesh, particularly among undergraduate students, to enhance their employability and academic prospects. In this context, language educators significantly influence students' linguistic abilities, self-assurance, and learning views. The dynamics of teacher-student interactions in EFL classroom settings can be more fully appreciated by looking at how instructors influence their students' academic performance and emotional wellness. A multitude of studies has demonstrated a substantial connection between students' academic accomplishment and their psychological health. It appears that a positive learning environment and supportive teaching methods can contribute immensely to improving students' motivation, self-esteem and overall mental health, as well as leading to better academic results. Although there is extensive study on the psychological components of language instruction and learning, there may be little specific research on this topic in the Bangladeshi setting. Analyzing this issue within the context of Bangladesh elucidates the

distinct challenges and opportunities for EFL learners in the nation. The results of this study could have real-world effects on educational institutions, policymakers, and the academic achievement and mental health of language learners. They might also assist in the creation of support networks and language learning strategies that are more successful. Besides, it acknowledges the importance of students' emotional and mental health, which can lead to more engaged and motivated learners. The goal of this study is to look into the many ways that language instructors in Bangladesh contribute to the mental health and academic success of undergraduates studying English as a foreign language courses.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study highlights language instructors' vital impact on the lives of undergraduate EFL students. Focusing on teacher effectiveness, it emphasizes the ability of teachers to positively influence students' psychological well-being and academic achievement beyond simply teaching language skills. Being aware of how psychological well-being affects academic achievement can help educators and policymakers develop measures to help students achieve their full potential. If a student struggles to concentrate in class due to psychological hurdles, the main purpose of the educational program will be disrupted. As a result, the teacher in this situation must be humanistic. The teacher should uplift or scaffold the students whenever they face mental obstacles like anxiety, depression etc. If so, instructors are crucial for fostering happiness in the ecology of learning a foreign language (Wang et al., 2021). Students' general growth might be aided by a comprehensive and encouraging language education program, which will result in a workforce that is more qualified and competent. Shifting the focus from merely academic achievement to the psychological wellbeing of students can promote a holistic approach to education. The country's

economic development and growth may then benefit from this. This study strives to enhance understanding of EFL learners' psychological well-being and how crucial it is for academic accomplishment, while also examining the teacher's role in assisting learners to get past psychological obstacles.

1.5 Research Questions

This study has made an effort to answer the following questions:

1. How does psychological well-being affect students' academic performance?
2. What kind of role do the teachers play to support students' psychological well-being?

1.6 Research Objectives

This study has been carried out keeping the following aims in mind:

1. To investigate how students' psychological well-being affects their academic performance
2. To explore the role of the teachers in supporting students' psychological wellbeing

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following section offers an in-depth review of studies on the intricate connections between language teachers' approaches, their impacts on students' psychological well-being, and the consequent effects on academic performance, particularly among Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners. Recent studies indicate that the PWB of students has an enormous effect on their academic achievements. Regarding the instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL), language instructors have a far bigger role than just teaching grammar and vocabulary; it encompasses a profound impact on the PWB and academic success of learners. This review brings together existing research on the multifaceted impact of language teachers in improving learners' motivation, self-esteem, and coping strategies. By analyzing the intersection of pedagogy, psychology, and cultural context, this literature review seeks to highlight the critical role of language instructors in the educational experiences of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL students.

2.1 Psychological Status of University Students in Bangladesh

The significance of psychological well-being in public health is evident as it influences several areas of a person's existence, from their ability to build relationships, engage in academic pursuits, perform professionally, and get pleasure from leisure activities, to their ability to make decisions and choices on a daily basis (WHO, 2016). Still, compared to other medical conditions, psychological or mental health issues are stigmatized more in the majority of global nations, and this is particularly tragic in lower-middle income nations like Bangladesh (Sakib, 2021). Whereas, students at universities are approximately more prone to develop mental health concerns (i.e.,

anxiety, depression, addiction, suicide thoughts, psychiatric drug use, and other chronic mental illness) than the rest of the population (MacKean, 2011 & Gallagher, 2008). Fundamentally, the undergraduate education time is considered a critical period in an individual's life, and well recognized as essential for the advancement of systems and intervention approaches that may potentially reduce or alleviate mental health issues (Byram & Bilzel, 2008). As most students may deal with challenges in the university setting and experience unavoidable hardships, such as the initial separation from their friends and family members, these individuals may not have the emotional endurance to cope effectively in such situations (Taneja et al., 2018; Saeed et al., 2018; Mamun et al., 2022). Besides, Bangladeshi university students often face intense academic pressure driven by the competitive environment of their education as well as the high standards set by their families and society. Anxiety, depression, and other mental health complications might result from this stress (Islam, 2019). Furthermore, institutions can negatively affect students' mental health by making it difficult for them to find part-time jobs, failing exams, creating financial uncertainty with student loans, or providing textbooks and course materials (Kessler et al. 2005).

2.2 Psychological Well-being: Definition and Dimensions

One of the biggest hurdles in this particular field of study is establishing a precise and unambiguous description of psychological well-being. Acceptance of oneself, self-determination, environmental mastery, personal developmental advancement, and positive interpersonal interactions are the six traits of psychological well-being that Ryff (1989) defined. The traits mentioned above embrace a person's sense of self-determination, mastery over their environment, potential for personal growth, ability to form pleasurable connections, and sense of meaning in life.

Psychological well-being incorporates an individual's fulfillment in life, beneficial effects, and minimum negative emotions (Diener et al., 1999). Several fundamental components of psychological well-being have been recognized in the literature.

1. Life Satisfaction: Life satisfaction is the comprehensive evaluation of an individual's life and their psychological sensations of happiness and contentment (Diener et al., 1985). It is considered crucial for overall well-being since it has a direct connection to an individual's perception of personal significance and direction in life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

2. Positive Emotions: Joy, excitement, and contentment are all crucial positive emotions that positively impact well-being by fostering feelings of happiness and satisfaction (Diener et al., 1997). Furthermore, apart from decreasing unpleasant feelings and anxiety, positive emotions may contribute to enhanced overall wellness (Park & Peterson, 2006).

3. Minimal levels of negative emotions: A person's level of wellbeing can be profoundly affected by emotions that are detrimental such as fretfulness, sadness, and wrath (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hence, it is vital to sustain minimal levels of negative emotions in order to foster psychological well-being, as this permits individuals to keep positive emotions and avoid any detrimental impact on mental health (Keyes & Lopez, 2002).

4. Autonomy: Autonomy is the capacity to make judgments and behave in a manner that is free from external influence or control (Ryff, 1989). Individuals who exhibit a high degree of autonomy are capable of actively pursuing their own objectives and interests, hence potentially resulting in enhanced subjective well-being (Waterman, 1993).

5. Positive Relationships: The maintenance of PWB is interdependent upon the establishment of positive interpersonal relationships with loved ones, friends, and romantic partners (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999). According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), these relationships empower

individuals with emotional support, generate a feeling of community, and are beneficial to their happiness and overall well-being.

6. Purpose in Life: One of the most important components of wellbeing is having a clear sense of direction and worth in life, which is provided by having a purpose (Argyle, 1999). Higher levels of satisfaction and fulfillment are positively connected with a strong feeling of purpose (Sheldon & King, 2001).

7. Personal growth: Personal growth was defined as the continual process of progress and self-improvement experienced by an individual (Ryff, 1989). This may encompass acquiring new abilities, pursuing unusual activities of interest, and cultivating fresh contacts (Lucas et al., 1996). Personal growth is crucial in terms of well-being is rooted in its ability to enable individuals to sustain a feeling of progress and, over the course of their lifetimes, achieve satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999).

2.3 EFL Students' Academic Achievement

Historically, academic success was regarded as the primary result of formal education, and it is undeniable that these accomplishments have an enormous effect on student life and beyond (Kell et al., 2013). Therefore, academic achievement is such a significant variable for measuring student performance. According to Bruce and Neville (1979), standardized achievement tests created specifically for faculty fields should be used to evaluate academic attainment. Thus, academic achievement among EFL students is diverse and dependent upon a variety of circumstances. First and foremost, language proficiency is essential in ensuring students' capacity to grasp and effectively generate knowledge about academia (Brown & Lee, 2019). Proficiency levels affect

reading comprehension, writing fluency, and capacity for oral communication, which are all required for academic success. Second, motivation and goal orientation significantly affect EFL students' engagement and persistence in language acquisition (Gomez & Smith, 2019). However, higher academic achievement is associated with intrinsic motivation, which is defined as a sincere interest in learning a language for interpersonal communication or self-improvement (Wang & Lee, 2020). When extrinsic motivation is stimulated by demands or rewards from outside sources, outcomes may vary based on how students perceive the connection between their goals and academic work. Additionally, self-regulated learning techniques including setting goals, monitoring oneself, and planning strategically helped EFL students succeed academically (Chen & Lee, 2021). Students' study habits, learning preferences, and interactions with peers and educators are all heavily influenced by cultural and environmental factors (Rodriguez & Nguyen, 2018). Comprehending these individual factors is essential to creating supportive educational environments that promote academic success and psychological well-being. Furthermore, psychological distress—which encompasses stress and anxiety—can adversely impact students' ability to think clearly and perform efficiently in the classroom (Chen & Liu, 2021). The capacity of learners to use language skills effectively in academic environments may be hindered by anxiety relating to language use or performance expectations, which may decrease engagement and lead to worse results.

2.4 EFL Students' Psychological Well-being

Basically, psychological well-being (PWB) comprises a holistic and compatible way of life that includes experiencing positive emotions and being effective in daily activities (Huppert, 2009).

According to Diener et al. (2010), psychological well-being is basically a person's subjective evaluation of their life, which tends to be defined by feelings of optimism, involvement, and significance. Just as a person's life satisfaction can serve as an indicator of their overall well-being which can predict and impact a person's physical and mental health (Mustafa et al., 2020). Similarly, Seligman (2002) introduced the notion of "positive psychology," which views PWB as a natural outcome of happiness and contentment. This definition acknowledges that happiness is not simply the absence of unpleasant feelings or experiences but rather the existence of pleasurable emotions, enjoyment, and a feeling of direction and significance in life. To shed light on factors influencing students' PWB, positive psychology (PP) practitioners have recently adopted a more comprehensive strategy (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Perera et al., 2018; Mikus & Teoh, 2022).

Meanwhile, language learners' academic performance is predominantly influenced by their basic psychological needs. High self-efficacy students are far more inclined to stick with their language learning efforts and actively seek out chances for skill development. On the other hand, being afraid of committing mistakes and encountering critique in a public forum triggers an overwhelming feeling of anxiety among students, resulting in a decreased desire to learn (Khan and Rahman, 2024). Accordingly, when students are in optimal mental and physical well-being, they exhibit a level of vigor and enthusiasm about forming priorities and working towards them (Dodd et al., 2021; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). To achieve this goal, SDT interventions must substantially promote one's interaction with the surroundings, language proficiency growth, and overall welfare (Reyes et al., 2012). In contrast, academic performance was shown to be inversely connected with depression but substantially positively linked with emotional pleasure and quality life experiences (Bukhari and Khanam, 2017).

2.5 Language Teachers' Affective Support and Scaffolding

This clearly demonstrates that the closeness existing between teachers and students is a crucial aspect of the educational system that profoundly impacts the learning and teaching activities occurring in the classroom (Derakh-shan et al., 2020; Zhang, 2020). Additionally, one particular component of the interpersonal relationship that is absolutely essential to the advancement of L2 learning is emotional support and scaffolding (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Paris, 2013). The kind of classroom interaction and the environment in which it is used greatly influence the efficacy of affective scaffolding (AS) (Burke-Smalley, 2018). As a view of mind, it frequently stresses the extrinsic causes of functional states. Consequently, it moves away from brain-centered explanations of functioning and toward explanations that support the correlation between functional states and social settings and interactions (Saarinen, 2020). Because students participate more and perform better in learning and academic performance when they feel supported. Here, scaffolding is derived from Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory as an instructional approach to cultivate growth and autonomy in students through a variety of means, such as individualism, collectivism, synchronicity, diachronicity, cognition, and emotional (Saarinen, 2020). The emotional type of teaching scaffolding is considered to be most invasive as it employs the cohesion of the surroundings to promote emotion, mood, bodily emotive form, and underlying feelings (Colambitti and Kroneger, 2015). Whereas Humphries et al. (2015) proposed that teacher support and incentive have a substantial effect in decreasing anxiety and improving motivation in those learning a foreign language.

2.6 Previous Studies

An extensive body of academic research undertaken globally has investigated the link between students' PWB and academic accomplishment, as well as the significant impact of instructors in this domain. A quantitative inquiry was carried out by Mustafa et al. (2020) to assess the influence of psychological status on academic performance among 542 Sultan Idris Education University second-year undergraduate students. The Psychological Well-Being Instrument, created by Ryff in 1989, was used to measure psychological well-being. On the other hand, academic achievement was quantified using the cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The majority of students rated moderate to high psychological well-being, according to a descriptive survey. According to the assessment of PWB, the majority of students have ambitious life goals. Additionally, it is suggested that another component of PWB — autonomy, environmental competence, personal development, positive interpersonal interactions, and self-acceptance—is at an intermediate level.

Meanwhile, Rüppel et al. (2015) inquired about the correlation between psychological wellbeing and academic performance in the classroom, as well as the interaction effect of socioeconomic status (SES) and subjective well-being (SWB). Despite the unexpected adverse effect of psychological well-being on the CAG as reported in their analysis, there was also an indirect beneficial influence identified on the School Environment Scale. Overall, the two effects largely neutralize each other. There was no clear association with socioeconomic status. Moreover, the cross-sectional study conducted by Eriksen and Bru (2023) specifically examined the connections between academic engagement (both behavioral and emotional) and emotional well-being (EWB) as well as social-emotional competencies (SECs) such as emotional regulation, relationships with others, and school work scheduling). The study's findings validated the

hypothesis, since SECs exhibited a significant correlation with the most powerful predictor of mental control (EWB). Moreover, the association between EWB and academic engagement was statistically significant, with schoolwork planning being directly related to the intervening variable.

A further study conducted by Bayram and Bilgel (2008) investigated the overall incidence of anxiety, stress, and depressive disorders among Turkish university students. Researchers collected data from 1,617 students who completed the Anonymous Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-42) in their classes. Out of the individuals surveyed, 27.1% experienced moderate to severe depression, 47.1% claimed to suffer from significant anxiety, and 27% admitted to having serious to severe stress. Female students showed greater amounts of stress and anxiety ratings. By comparison to their peers, first and second year students exhibited elevated levels of melancholy, anxiety, and stress. The study found that students who expressed satisfaction with their learning experience exhibited lower levels of melancholy, anxiety, and tension in comparison to those who did not indicate enjoyment. The elevated proportion of anxiety, fear, and depressive symptoms among college youngsters is a concerning trend. For this particular demographic, it is also essential to develop primary and secondary prevention interventions in addition to offering suitable and sufficient support services.

Additionally, a cross-sectional research study was carried out by Mamun et al. (2022) to look at the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression anxiety, depression, and stress in a group of 590 undergraduate pupils at Jahangirnagar University in Bangladesh. Their study also examined potential determinants of these mental health problems, including sociodemographic variables (e.g., gender, family socioeconomic level, permanent residency, field of study) and behavioral

indicators (e.g., physical activity, smoking, Internet use). A survey was done in person with these students, asking them questions about their socio-demographic background, behavioral characteristics, and their responses to the 21-item Bengali Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (BDASS-21). The estimated occurrence rates of anxiety, depression, and stress at moderate to severe levels were 58.1%, 52.2%, and 24.9%, respectively. There were not any noticeable disparities between genders in relation to anxiety, depression, and stress. Whereas being from a low socioeconomic status, smoking and not getting enough exercise have all been found to be risk factors for depression. Moreover, engaging in a romantic relationship increases the likelihood of developing chronic stress and anxiety.

Furthermore, in another descriptive and cross-sectional study, Alim et al. (2017b) evaluated the degree of anxiety, depression, and stressful circumstances amongst Khulna Medical College Bangladesh first-year medical students. For this purpose, a cohort of 105 pupils who satisfied specific criteria for inclusion and exclusion were chosen. Additionally, they filled out the abbreviated Bengali adaptation of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21 BV) in addition to providing their personal details. The data analysis revealed that the average age of the students was 18.8 years, and that the majority of the student body (54.3%) was male. Additionally, 54.3% of students claimed to have symptoms of sadness, 64.8% indicated feelings of anxiety, and 59.0% reported signs of stress. Among the students, a total of eighty-five individuals (81%) experienced sadness, anxiety, or stress either alone or in combination with each other. The preexisting mental health problem was a combination of stress, anxiety, and depression, which accounted for 36.2% of cases. Statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between gender disparities and levels of stress, anxiety, or depression. It has been observed that first year MBBS students have a remarkably higher prevalence of mental disorders, including stress, anxiety and depression.

Medical students must have access to adequate psychiatric care to manage these symptoms appropriately.

In addition, a study by Carnicer et al. (2019) looked at the link between stress, academic performance and coping mechanisms in a random sample of 334 students in college. The main aims of this study are: to determine the frequency of stress and the corresponding coping mechanisms; to examine how age affects the influence of stress on academic performance; and to identify and tackle the lasting effects of stress on workplace and personal welfare. Three foremost findings emerged from the study: firstly, a significant number of students reported experiencing stress and employing avoidance coping mechanisms; secondly, students who exhibited lower levels of stress and utilized problem-focused coping strategies achieved higher academic success; and finally, it was observed that students who encountered elevated levels of stress exhibited worse academic performance, although the impact of age-related stress was relatively minimal. It is crucial to acknowledge and tackle the adverse impacts of stress on the well-being and academic performance of teacher education students, in order to prevent enduring issues in their professional and personal lives.

Likewise, Punia and Malviya (2015) carried out a survey of 100 students aged 21 from diverse fields as part of their research project. Research methodologies included the Ryff Well Being Inventory, which included composites and self-developed open-ended questionnaires with recent academic records, along with a series of statements indicating six areas of psychological well-being. The survey's findings indicate that most students have a moderate degree of wellbeing, no despair, and a decent opinion of their academic achievement. Besides, the study showed that students with varying degrees of academic success also had higher personal growth scales, life

purpose, and well-being indicators. Furthermore, task-oriented coping strategy users score higher on the measure for both personal growth and well-being.

While in a study conducted by Khan and Rahman (2024), a mixed method approach was used to identify and comprehend the challenges, specifically anxiety, that students encounter when learning foreign languages. The study additionally explored how essential teachers are in creating an atmosphere that encourages learning. Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the 33-point Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which served as the foundation for a survey questionnaire distributed to foreign language learners in order to collect quantitative data. Simultaneously, valuable qualitative information was gathered by conducting in-depth interviews with teachers who were actively involved in teaching foreign language programs. A fruitful study that produced complex findings that improve our knowledge of successful tactics and the involvement of instructors in lowering anxiety in foreign language learning courses was made possible by the merging of students' experiences and teachers' perspectives.

Similarly, a study undertaken by Pan et al. (2023) demonstrates that EFL teachers have a favorable and substantial impact on students' academic involvement and emotional welfare. Specifically, according to the study, teachers' affective scaffolding accounted for approximately 73% – 65% – of the difference between EFL students' academic and emotional engagement. Furthermore, researchers found a substantial connection between PWB and academic engagement, with each factor accounting for 56% of the variance. According to this data, teachers should cultivate a healthy teacher-student relationship in order to support students' psychological growth.

An extensive body of research has undertaken globally on the implication of psychological well-being on students' academic achievement, as well as the role of teachers in this regard. But in

our context of Bangladesh, there has been no significant research on this subject so far. Although public awareness of students' psychological well-being is gradually increasing in our country, there are several limitations to its significant implementation. That is why this study will be beneficial to our understanding of EFL learners' psychological well-being and how vital it is in terms of academic accomplishment, as well as investigate how educators can help learners in overcoming psychological hurdles. Through this exploration, we seek to illuminate strategies that can enhance both the psychological well-being and academic performance of students, ultimately contributing to a more holistic approach to language education in Bangladesh.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Humanism and Learning Theory

Humanistic learning theory was first proposed in the early 1900s by Abraham Maslow, James FT Bugental, and Carl Rogers. Humanistic learning philosophy reinforces learners' independence and autonomy. According to Maslow's hierarchy, having the capacity to learn is linked to the fulfillment of other desires and the student's view of the value of knowledge (Gandhi & Mukherji, 2022). The theory believes in encouraging students to develop interest in learning. Perhaps the best-known applications of humanism to ELT are Curran (1976) and Gattegno (1972). The characteristics of humanism in ELT can be applied in less radical ways than in other practices. Maslow believed that experience is fundamental in shaping human learning and behavior. This theory is quite student-centered while teachers serve as role models who encourage pupils to become more interested in observation and exploration. The humanistic teacher acknowledges the 'developmental readiness' of each individual student (Piaget, 1970), which will drastically affect

the schedule and techniques used to teach each student. Besides, a teacher needs to be aware of students' motivation whether it is 'extrinsic' or 'intrinsic' and teach accordingly.

2.7.2 Sociocultural theory

According to socio-cultural theory, learners are portrayed as active participants in their own learning environment (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Significantly, the primary focus of the socio-cultural approach lies not on the individual but on the environment in which the human exists (Behroozizad et al., 2014). Thus, the acquisition of knowledge is regarded as the outcome of collective engagement, and the conventional teacher-student interaction should be transformed into one that fosters cooperative learning (Zhang et al., 2013). Given the significant demand to speak their native language outside the classroom, it is crucial to provide students with sufficient chances to engage in conversation in EFL education (Allahyar & Nazari, 2012). Vygotsky claims that learning occurs concurrently with individuals' engagement in social and cultural activities (Raymond, 2000; Van Der Stuyf, 2002). Vygotsky contends that humans are conscious individuals who engage into continuous contact with their surrounding environment. In other words, the development of an individual is inherently intertwined with its social and cultural surroundings (Amerian et al., 2014). Within the field of education, the most impactful form of mediation offered by experts or beginners is the one that aligns with learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is basically introduced the gap between an individual's individual capabilities and their potential achievements when supported by others or cultural practices (Vygotsky, 1978; Xu & Long, 2021). Bruner (1983) suggests that the purpose of scaffolding is not to simplify the process for the learner, but rather to enable the completion of the task by providing help.

2.7.3 Affective Filter Hypothesis

The linguist Stephen Krashen first employed the phrase "affective filter" in 1986. Krashen defines it as "a series of affective variables which play a role in the acquisition of second languages" (Krashen, 1986). Krashen's theory of second language learning, for example, classifies affective variables into three categories: "motivation", "confidence", and "anxiety". Language acquisition is more challenging when sentiments or emotions (such as fear, anxiety, or shame) are overwhelming. The emotional filter is often referred to as an invisible barrier that forms in the mind, blocking information and cognition. Anxiety is a factor that influences the formation of a learner's emotional filter. As a result, when a language learner's affective filter is robust, language acquisition becomes more challenging (Robertson, 2011). Krashen (1981) hypothesized that among those learning languages who are anxious, the information may fail to reach the specific region of the brain responsible for language learning. Schumann (1975) discusses psychological factors such as attitude, culture shock, language shock, motivation, and ego permeability in relation to second language (SL) learning. Additionally, he points out that adults' learning of an additional language may be profoundly affected by emotional aspects. The uncertainty resulting from the fear of being teased by peers, the absence of understanding of basic language skills at a later stage of life, and the lack of motivation arising from the perception of no importance of a second language in one's life may all contribute to anxiety (Mehmood, 2018). Insufficient self-confidence and motivation among students may hinder their language learning progress (Robertson, 2011).

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Our traditional education system rarely focuses on students' emotional needs, and sensitive issues such as feeling safe in the class, building rapport, trust or counseling students. In any classroom

giving attention to these issues are important, however being a language teacher, I think we need to give special attention to these points. This scenario is often common in English language classrooms in Bangladesh. Since most of the students have English phobia, they tend to avoid communicating in class for the fear they have in their mind. As it is closely related to the affective filter hypothesis that emphasizes motivation, confidence and anxiety as three categories of variables that play a role in second language acquisition.

Thus, teaching is a challenging job as a teacher has to deal with students from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, teachers need to be culturally responsive to their students which is highly suggestive of socio-cultural theory. Having said that, it is not possible to address virtually every student in a large or small classroom. A teacher's focus in the classroom should not only be on teaching but they should also focus on the emotional state of the student. According to Hammond (2014) “Our challenge as culturally responsive teachers is knowing to create an environment that the brain perceives as safe.” Moreover, Gay (2010) points out that caring within a culturally responsive context automatically places teachers in a different kind of emotional and academic partnership with students. This relationship is anchored in affirmation, mutual respect, and validation that breeds an unshakable belief that marginalized students not only can but will improve their school achievement (p. 52).

Chapter 3

Methodology

The primary goal of this study is to look into the impact of students' psychological well-being on their academic accomplishments, as well as the role of teachers in assisting students with conquering psychological barriers. This research intends to follow both qualitative and quantitative approaches so that readers can receive a comprehensive view from various perspectives, as the subject of psychological well-being is more complicated and a mixed method is perhaps well suited to exploring it thoroughly.

3.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive approach that includes correlational analysis and a complementary survey. Considering the purpose of assessing undergraduate student's psychological well-being, it can be classified as descriptive. Furthermore, it demonstrates the correlation between the independent variable of PWB amongst EFL undergraduate learners and the dependent variable, namely their academic success. The current study used an explanatory-sequential mixed-methods design proposed by Cresswell and Clark (2008) to achieve the stated goals. To gain a thorough knowledge of the research problem, the researchers employed a questionnaire to collect quantitative data. The full picture is elaborated, interpreted and illustrated using qualitative data provided through interviews. The primary emphasis of this study is on both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2 Participants of the Study

The target audience consisted of undergraduate EFL students in a particular private university in Bangladesh. The teachers involved in EFL programs and courses in this institution also become part of the study. To minimize bias in sample selection, data were collected from study participants using a random sampling technique. About 31 students from a particular private university of Bangladesh were chosen to ensure a diverse representation in regards to their psychological well-being. I agree it might sound very small but due to the unavoidable situation of political turmoil in Bangladesh that time, it's literally hard for me to reach an adequate number of students and unfortunately, I have to accept this reality. Although this is considered relatively low, approximately 51.6% of males and 48.4% of females participated in the questionnaire survey. Similarly purposive sampling was employed to select about 4 language teachers experienced in teaching EFL at undergraduate level.

3.3 Instruments

Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire

The researcher plans to use a modified version of Ryff's (2007) 13-item Psychological Well Being Scale (PWBS) to evaluate the respondents' psychological well-being in order to enable the target sample group to properly comprehend the content. The six components of happiness and well-being it is going to assess are "self-acceptance," "autonomy," "environmental competence," "personal growth," "positive relationships with others," and "purpose in life." The questionnaire is accompanied by a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The 9 items will be reverse scored, with scores higher suggesting improved well-being. In addition to demographic inquiries, there were both closed-ended and open-ended questions pertinent to the subject matter.

So here the questionnaire survey has included two open-ended questions to provide a more comprehensive overview of the psychological concerns encountered by the students. Here the questionnaire was distributed electronically (via Google Forms) to the students of a particular private university. Clear instructions and consent forms are provided also.

Interview Schedule

A qualitative semi-structured interview was designed with selected teachers to gain insight into their teaching methods, the type of psychological support they provide and how they contribute to students' academic success. The purpose is to allow respondents to use their words to inform the study from their perspective (Lofland et al., 2006). A semi-structured interview guide containing themes and questions was written in English. In this study, four EFL teachers—three female and one male—from the same university were chosen to participate in the interviews. The interview was conducted in person at the university location. The interview lasts between ten and fifteen minutes. In this context, an extended period gives more extensive and detailed information. Furthermore, in-person interactions build stronger relationships than virtual discussions. Moreover, before recording, I obtained the participants' consent to address any potential concerns they may have. And the qualitative data analysis was conducted thematically.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

At the initial phase of data collection, the researcher contacted the authorities of the particular private university and took permission. First, by surveying Ryff's PWB scale questionnaire, an attempt was made to understand the psychological well-being status of EFL undergraduate students in that university. Through this, students who are considered to have sufficient psychological well-being, i.e. those who are confident enough and have a positive attitude towards

their life, definitely have academic achievement and its significant effect is observed. Also, an attempt is made here to compare students whose psychological well-being is not expected to see if it has any adverse effect on their academic achievement. On the other hand, four teachers of the English department of the same university were interviewed with their permission, in an effort to get their important views on what role or action the teacher should take in the psychological crisis of students and how much importance they attach to it.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

The online survey and interviews obtained information that identified several key issues concerning the psychological well-being of undergraduate EFL students and the effect it has on academic achievement. Additionally, gain insight into the efficacy of language instructors in this context. Here the use of online surveys and interviews suggests a mixed-methods approach, which can provide both quantitative and qualitative insights. This combination makes it possible to comprehend the problems at hand more thoroughly. By adding depth to the analysis, including an assessment of language instructors, it recognizes that teacher effectiveness is a critical component in supporting students' academic and psychological needs. The focus on undergraduate EFL students is highly valuable, as this group has often been found to face unique challenges, including language difficulties, cultural adjustment, and performance expectations, which might impact their psychological well-being.

4.1 Findings of Online Survey concerning the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) of EFL students: It is important to highlight PWB in the context of EFL learners, as these learners often face unique stressors, including linguistic challenges, cultural adjustment, and academic pressure. Such findings may guide appropriate interventions for this population. Online surveys ensure broad representation, reaching a large and diverse sample of EFL students across different regions. This method is also time-saving and cost-effective. The findings may shed light on often overlooked aspects of EFL learning, such as how psychological factors influence language learning and academic performance. This may contribute to greater awareness and support for mental health resources.

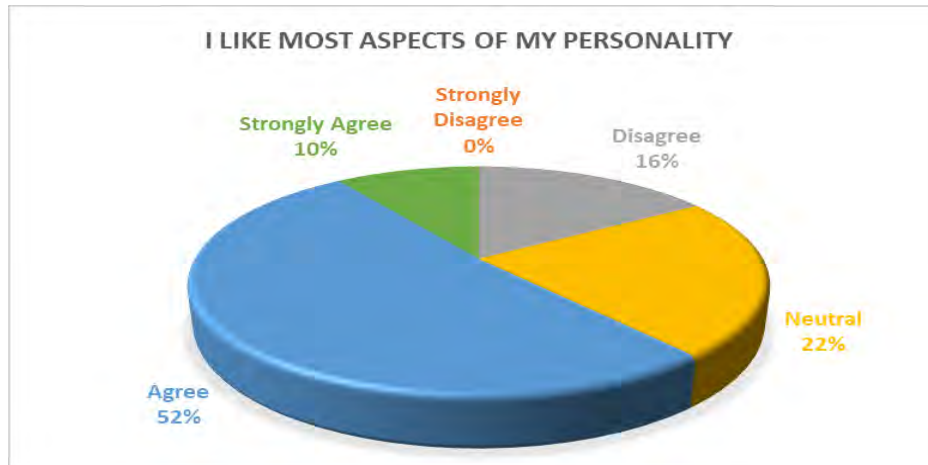


Figure 1: *Liking most aspects of one's own personality*

Out of 31 respondents, above 51.6% of respondents agreed with the statement that they like most aspects of their personality which fall under the category of self-acceptance regarding psychological well-being (**Figure 1**). And 9.7% people strongly agree with this statement which indicates the positive sign of this study. While 22.6% respondents remain neutral with the above figure. On the other hand, 16.1% of people disagree with the statement and none strongly disagree in this regard.

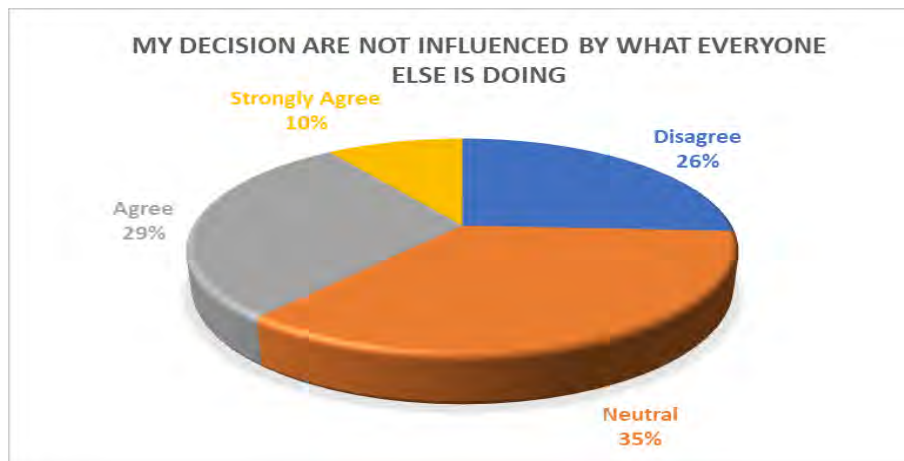


Figure 2: *One's own decisions remain unchanged by what others are doing*

Another aspect just like one's own decisions are typically uninfluenced by the actions of others, which aligns with the autonomy aspect of psychological well-being (**Figure 2**). In the above statement, 35.5% people responded neutrally. But 29% of respondents agree with this statement. And 9.7% respondents strongly agree with this following statement. On the other hand, 25.8% of people disagree with the statement. So here we can find agreement about the positive commitment to the statement which is quite higher than the negative aspects. Like here, actually over 50% of people show a positive attitude towards statements that indicate freedom of thought, not influenced by others which is pretty good.

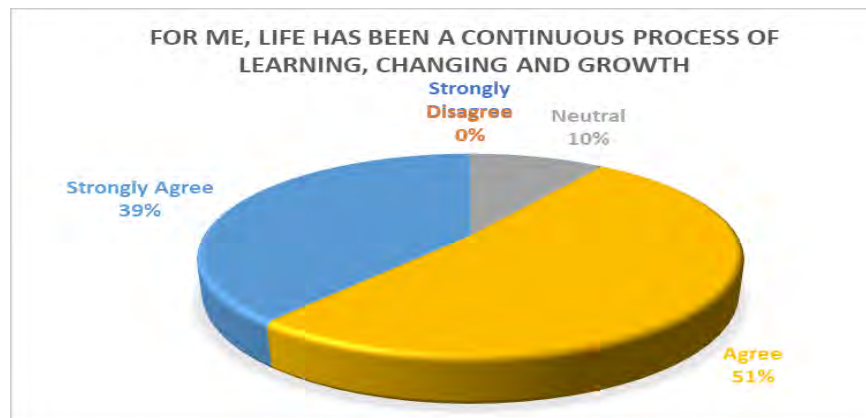


Figure 3: *Life for oneself is a continuous process of learning, changing and growing*

The life of an individual might be an ongoing journey of learning, transformation, and development, which aligns with the psychological well-being scale's personal growth components. Following the above statement, 51.6% respondents gave a positive mark which means they agree with it and similarly, 38.7% people showed strong agreement (**Figure 3**). That means $(51.6\% + 38.7\%) = 90.3\%$ people give affirmative aspects to this statement. Less than 10% (9.7%) of respondents were neutral. If I consider 50% neutral means 5% agree with this statement. So, total agreement $90.3\% + 5\% = 95.3\%$.

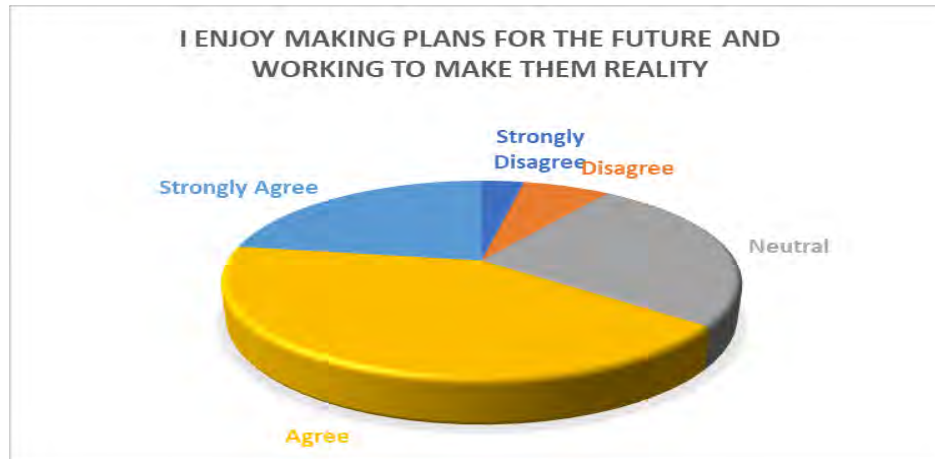


Figure 4: *Making plans for one's own future and working to make them a reality*

Making plans for one's own future and working to put them into action that align with one's life's purpose, which includes mental well-being. Following the above statement, 41.9% respondents are agreeing and 22.6% are strongly agreeing (**Figure 4**). Thus, 25.8% of the respondents remain neutral. On the other hand, 6.5% respondents disagreed and 3.2% of respondents strongly disagreed. Mainly ($41.9\% + 22.6\% = 64.5\%$) people show positive signs about the statement, demonstrating that they like planning for the future and working to see it through to completion.

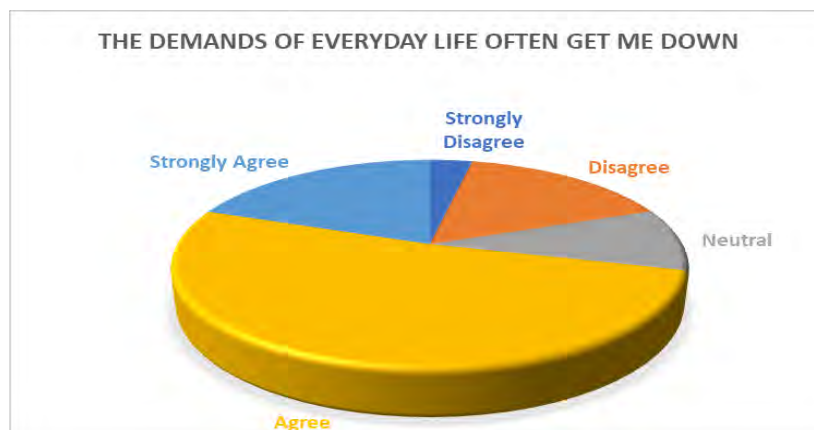


Figure 5: *The demands of daily life often bring one down*

The responsibilities of daily life frequently weigh people down which is equivalent with environmental mastery. Following **(Figure 5)**, 51.6% respondents show agreement and 19.4% show strongly agree. That means $(51.6\% + 19.4\% = 71.0\%)$ show their negative outcome regarding this issue. Meanwhile, 9.7% respondents remain neutral, which means they do not give strong opinions regarding this matter. On the other hand, 16.1% disagree and only 3.2% strongly disagree regarding this issue which actually shows a positive outcome. In this way, we can say that most of the respondents give negative responses by choice (71.0%).

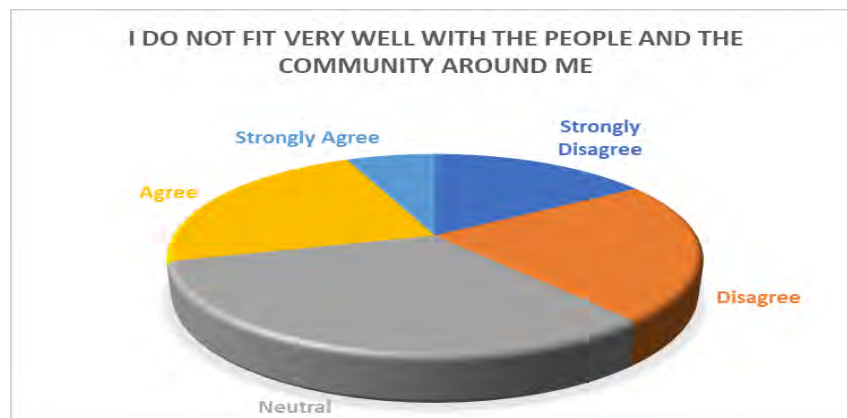


Figure 6: *The issue of not fitting in with the people and community around one's self*

Here we can see the issue of not integrating effectively with the individuals and community surrounding them, which corresponds with environmental mastery. Following **(Figure 6)**, 32.3% of the respondents remain neutral because they are not very sure about their position whether they fit in very well with the people and community around them. Here, 16.1% of respondents strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement, while 22.6% disagreed. That means they feel perfectly suited to meet any type of people and community around them which is quite positive. On the contrary, 22.6% of people responded and 6.5% strongly agreed on the above issue which mainly shows the negative side.



Figure 7: *Maintaining a close relationship can be difficult and frustrating*

Developing healthy connections has proven challenging and exasperating for those that foster positive relationships. Of the responders, more than one-third (35.5%) disagreed with the statement that said that the situation had a very positive side (**Figure 7**). They don't face such problems in their relationship which is really appreciable. And 9.7% respondents strongly disagree about this issue which makes it quite worthy. However, 25.8% of the respondents or one-fourth of the respondents remain neutral on this issue. They are somehow a bit confused or not so sure of their position. On the other hand, 19.4% respondents agree with the above statement and 9.7% respondents strongly agree with it which I think is basically quite negative.



Figure 8: *Worrying about what other people think of one*

They are concerned about others' perceptions of them, which coincides with autonomy. Following the above statement, 29% of the respondents agree with this problem, indicating that they are constantly concerned about what other people are thinking about them, which is something I believe is inadequate (**Figure 8**). And 22.6% of respondents strongly agreed with the aforementioned statement, confirming the respondents' poor self-perceptions. They somehow depend on what other people think about them. They don't have much confidence in themselves. While 25.8% of respondents remain neutral who are not so sure about their position. However, 16.1% of those surveyed disagreed about the above statement. And a very small insignificant percentage 6.5% strongly disagree with the above statement who are confident enough about themselves do not depend on other people's judgment which is quite positive but shows a small amount which I think is quite disappointing. I think this is a big threat to our generation.

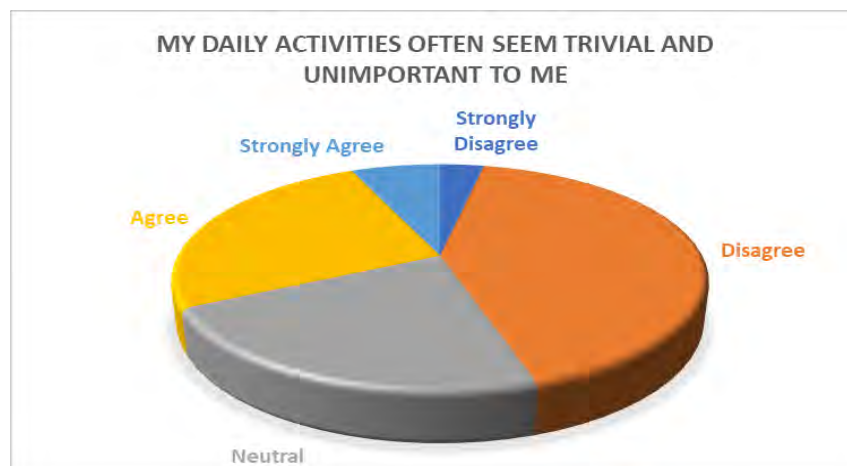


Figure 9: *One's own daily activities seem trivial and unimportant*

Their feeling of purpose in life is correlated with the fact that their everyday tasks sometimes seem trivial and insignificant. Here, 41.9% of respondents disagree with the statement that I believe to be a very favorable quality (**Figure 9**). And 3.2% strongly disagree about the issue. However, I believe that the statement is fairly negative because 25.8% of respondents agree with it, and 6.5%

strongly agree. Also, 22.6% of the respondents or one-fourth of the respondents are neutral indicating that they are not clear about the statement.



Figure 10: *Lack of understanding of what one is trying to achieve in life*

Following the above statement, 45.2% of respondents believe that they don't have a solid notion of what they're seeking to achieve in life, which corresponds with their purpose (**Figure 10**). And 3.2% of people show strong agreement about the statement. Thus, it shows mainly negative aspects of the issue. On the other hand, 29% of respondents disagree about this issue which I think is quite positive. At the same time, 9.7% of respondents strongly disagree. While 12.9% of respondents remain neutral which basically shows that they do not have a clear view about the point.

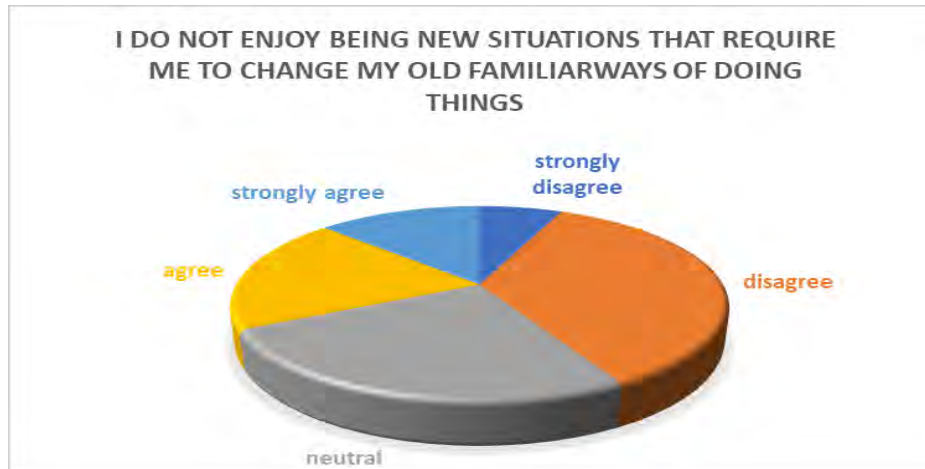


Figure 11: *Not enjoying being in a new situation that forces him to change his old familiar ways*

Despite the fact that it is in line with their personal growth, 35.5% of respondents denied that they dislike being in novel circumstances that force them to drop their conventional approaches (**Figure 11**). Similarly, 6.5% of respondents strongly disagree about this issue which I think is undoubtedly a positive aspect. On the other hand, 19.4% of respondents agreed on the point and 12.9% strongly agreed which I think is quite a negative aspect. However, 25.8% of respondents remain neutral on the issue, indicating they are quite undecided about their position.



Figure 12: *Feeling disappointed about one's achievements in life*

Following the above statement, 45.2% of respondents think that they feel let down by their life's accomplishments in many ways, which is consistent with self-acceptance (**Figure 12**). Similarly, 16.1% of the respondents strongly agree about this point which I think is definitely a negative aspect. On the other hand, 16.1% of the respondents disagree about the point and 6.5% strongly disagree which I think is quite a positive aspect. While 16.1% of the respondents remain neutral as they do not have a strong point to agree or disagree about this particular point.



Figure 13: *Difficulty arranging life in a way that is satisfying to one*

The statement that 54.8% of respondents feel that they struggle to organize their lives in a way that is fulfilling to them and compatible with environmental mastery (**Figure 13**). Similarly, 12.9% of the respondents strongly agree with this point which I think is quite a negative aspect. While 25.8% of the respondents remain neutral about this point which indicates that they have not said anything about the point or are not very clear. On the other hand, 6.5% show disagreement and none strongly disagree which I think is quite a negative aspect.

Table 1: Data Analysis according Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS), 13 Item version (modified):

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS)	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	Remarks
1. I like most aspects of my personality.	0%	16.1%	22.6%	51.6%	9.7%	Positive
2. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	0%	25.8%	35.5%	29%	9.7%	Positive
3. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growth.	0%	0%	9.7%	51.6%	38.7%	Positive
4. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	3.2%	6.5%	25.8%	41.9%	22.6%	Positive
5. The demands of everyday life often get me down.	3.2%	16.1%	9.7%	51.6%	19.4%	Negative
6. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	16.1%	22.6%	32.3%	22.6%	6.5%	Positive
7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	9.7%	35.5%	25.8%	19.4%	9.7%	Positive
8. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.	6.5%	16.1%	25.8%	29%	22.6%	Negative
9. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	3.2%	41.9%	22.6%	25.8%	6.5%	Positive
10. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.	9.7%	29%	12.9%	45.2%	3.2%	Negative
11. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.	6.5%	35.5%	25.8%	19.4%	12.9%	Positive
12. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	6.5%	16.1%	16.1%	45.2%	16.1%	Negative
13. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.	0%	6.5%	25.8%	54.8%	12.9%	Negative

Here out of 13 questions, most statements contain “Positive” remarks, indicating an overall trend toward psychological well-being. Some questions (e.g., 5, 8, 10, 12, 13) are marked as "Negative" indicating areas of concern for mental well-being. Responses for most positive questions skewed

toward “agree” (A) and “strongly agree” (SA), demonstrating a positive self-evaluation in terms of one's own development, acceptance of oneself, and life's purpose. Some questions have significant proportions of mixed levels of “neutral” (N) and disagreement, suggesting uncertainty or variability in certain levels of well-being. We found personal growth (3), goal-directed behavior (4), and self-acceptance (1) are significant strengths. A general trend of positive integration with others (6, 7) and finding purpose in daily activities (9), high levels of stress from daily life (5), dissatisfaction with achievement (12), Social anxiety (8), lack of purpose (10), and struggles with life satisfaction (13).

Furthermore, out of 2 open-ended questions the first one is - How do you believe your psychological well-being affects your ability to focus and perform academically?

The answer comes from a student like - *My ability to concentrate and perform well academically is greatly influenced by my psychological health. When I am mentally and emotionally balanced, I can concentrate more deeply, process information efficiently, and approach my studies with enthusiasm. A positive state of mind not only boosts my motivation but also enhances my problem-solving abilities and critical thinking. Conversely, when my mental health is strained—whether due to stress, anxiety, or personal challenges—it becomes much harder to focus, stay motivated, or retain information. This leads to decreased productivity, procrastination, and lower academic performance*

According to another student, *Psychological well-being is the root factor behind optimum performance by any human being and therefore academic performance that involves a lot of mental balances can be no exception to it.*

From another student, *Obviously, it matters... When my mental state is not favorable to me, it creates a great deal of difficulty for me to concentrate on my studies, which could undoubtedly affect my academic achievement negatively.*

And the second open-ended question asked to students was- In what ways do you think teachers can provide a helpful atmosphere for students' psychological well-being in the classroom?

As the answer comes from a student - *Teachers play a major role in fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom that promotes students' psychological well-being. Teachers can help children feel secure, respected, and inspired by cultivating an inclusive, respectful, and empathetic culture. Encouraging open dialogue and active participation allows students to express their ideas without fear of judgment, reducing anxiety and building confidence. Moreover, providing personalized, constructive feedback can boost self-esteem and inspire continuous improvement, rather than instilling fear of failure.*

According to another student, *if a teacher acts as a facilitator to students and is nice, it may produce a significant change among students. This not only makes the setting more welcoming, but it also motivates students to involve themselves in exploring new things.*

4.2 Findings of Interviews regarding the Efficiency of Language Instructors in the Academic and Personal Development of Students: In order to explore the circumstances and conditions that may or may not promote the influence of students' psychological well-being on their academic achievement, as well as to figure out the appropriate role of the teacher in addressing students' psychological distress, a qualitative semi-structured interview has been developed. The objective is to enable participants to provide their own words to contribute to the study from their own viewpoint (Lofland et al., 2006). Simultaneously an English-language semi-structured interview

guide including themes and questions was also drafted. Prior consent has been obtained from the prominent instructors to record their invaluable speech prior to the initiation of the interview session. Furthermore, a deliberate attempt is made to represent the names of the educators solely in symbolic form, such as T1, T2, and so on.

Theme 1: Psychological Well Being and Learning

The initial inquiry to the instructors during the interview session was: Could you provide any insights or observations regarding the potential positive or negative impact of the students' psychological well-being on their English language acquisition?

The special relationship that is perceived between psychological well-being and learning is a complex interplay of mental health, emotional stability, and cognitive processes. Psychological well-being, while encompassing emotional, social, and psychological dimensions, specifically impacts a person's ability to think, learn, and thrive academically.

“Psychological well-being is significant because if students are not psychologically stable, it would be difficult for him or her to concentrate in the lesson. It does not matter how good a student she is.” (T3)

The teacher rightly highlights here the significance of psychological well-being for students' academic achievement. This corresponds with evidence indicating that mental health issues including stress, anxiety, and depression, can significantly impair pupils' capacity to concentrate, retain knowledge, and excel academically. By noting that psychological stability influences attention, "no matter how good a student is," the speaker acknowledges that academic success is

not determined solely by intellectual ability. Emotional and psychological factors play a role in overall achievement.

Another teacher mentioned -

“Basically, any kind of learning, students should be motivated and in a very good state of mind. So, if a student is depressed or not in a very good state of mind, it can definitely disrupt their learning.” (T4)

Here the instructor cites the need for students to be motivated and have a good mental state as essential for all forms of learning. They claim that insufficient motivation or a negative mental state has a detrimental effect on learning, suggesting that mental and emotional variables are crucial to learning. Here the focus on students' mental and emotional states reflects a holistic understanding of learning. Instead of viewing learning as a purely intellectual activity, the teacher links it to the overall well-being of students, which is crucial for the students' comprehensive development.

According to another teacher, students' affective filter can affect their ability to learn English. Consider, for example, when an English medium student is speaking very fluently and giving a wonderful presentation. The next presenters, who are a little bit weak, ultimately get very nervous and somehow their performance is impacted because of that. The superior complexity that they're speaking is much better than us. This scenario has the potential to create frustration, which definitely affects their performance.

Theme 2: Cultural and Contextual Challenges

A further important concern was raised regarding the challenges expected in addressing the PWB

of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners, taking into account cultural and contextual factors. Supporting the psychological health of Bangladeshi undergraduate learners of EFL requires a clear grasp of contextual, cultural, and individual aspects. In Bangladesh, mental health issues are often stigmatized, leading to a reluctance among students to seek support. Many may fear being labeled as “weak” or “disabled,” which can discourage open discussions about psychological well-being.

However, in Bangladesh, English is viewed as a means of gaining access to lucrative professional prospects. This creates intense pressure to excel, which can affect self-esteem, especially among students who struggle with language acquisition. Moreover, Bangladeshi society is largely collectivist, with a strong emphasis on family obligations. This can increase the pressure on students to prioritize social and family expectations over their own mental health.

“Many students are having some family problems because of which it's impacting their language learning as well. They're not being able to pay attention, understand or focus. Also, not actually free about sharing their problems with the teachers.” (T3)

Here, the instructor notes that a large number of students are dealing with family issues, which often have a detrimental effect on their ability to pick up a new language. Given the strong correlation between academic achievement and emotional and psychological well-being, this is a significant finding. Research supports that the stress of personal problems can impair the concentration, motivation, and cognitive abilities necessary for language acquisition. In the same manner, family issues that cause youngsters to lose concentration and attention highlight how crucial it is to treat students' emotional health in addition to academic teaching. Again, it is often

seen that students are reluctant to tell their teachers about these problems, out of fear, which is not a normal occurrence at all.

According to another faculty,

“Since the majority of the Bangladeshi students come from the Bengali medium school and in the classes, the students hardly get an opportunity to share their level of understanding the problem with the teachers.” (T1)

The statement highlights a common problem in Bengali medium schools - a teacher-centered approach to education, with classes often lecture-based, with students rarely encouraged to ask questions or engage deeply with the material. Because of this, we discovered that a large number of Bengali-medium EFL learners suffer from communication anxiety, fear of receiving a poor grade, and a general feeling of inadequacy while speaking English. These concerns are heightened when language is tied to academic and professional success. At the same time, the cultural emphasis on rote learning rather than communication skills can lead to gaps in practical language use, which affects students' confidence and overall psychological well-being.

According to another teacher, first of all, the challenges that teachers faced were managing undergraduate students. In most cases, they are lower-middle class students, they have a lot of financial crises which creates stress for them. At the same time, they have to collect tuition fees, which also creates some stress. They can actually overcome this problem if they get proper support from their family but they do not get that opportunity and they neglect it. And being alone from their family, sometimes they go astray. So, the right solution is not found by the students and the issues are reflected in the classroom (T3).

In Bangladeshi culture, strong family ties are generally seen as a source of emotional and financial support. However, for students studying away from home, physical distance can diminish this support network. Families often expect students to excel academically and contribute financially, creating a dual burden that can be overwhelming. Being physically separated from their family might cause feelings of loneliness and confusion. Students may engage in dangerous conduct as a result of that isolation, particularly if they lack coping mechanisms.

Theme 3: Signs of Psychological Distress

The teachers were questioned about the ways in which they recognize signs and symptoms of psychological discomfort or low well-being among the students they teach in English as a foreign language. Emphasis is placed on recognizing indicators of psychological discomfort or low well-being, which may include anxiety, stress, sadness, or lack of motivation. Teachers must be able to recognize both overt symptoms (including, crying, isolation) and covert ones (including, decreased participation, avoidance of work).

According to one teacher,

“The signs and symptoms are very easy to spot. The student may not be paying attention in class, may be looking elsewhere or talking to others, or may be giving a blank look.” (T2)

The speaker emphasizes that identifying the signs and symptoms of distress is “very easy.” This view oversimplifies the process of recognizing emotional discomfort, which can often be short and complicated. Confidence in recognizing behavioral cues suggests that the teacher may have experience or insight in identifying when students are disengaged or struggling. As crucial as it is

to keep an eye on these symptoms, it is also critical to look into the underlying reasons and take supportive action.

According to another faculty member, sometimes a few students might be doing very well in the beginning of the semester, enthusiastic but suddenly they are not doing that well. So that can be one sign. But for some students, we can understand that they don't have enough friends. They aren't communicating with anyone. They are facing problems socializing, not mainly introverts. So, in that case sometimes there might be other issues. Sometimes when we see both of the cases try to talk with the students personally if possible.

Here, the faculty member highlights sudden academic decline as a possible indicator of psychological distress. At the same time, this observation is valid; changes in academic performance may indicate stress, emotional distress, or other challenges. Recognizing social isolation as a distinct issue is significant. It also shows an understanding that not all socially reserved students are introverted; some may be struggling with other barriers like anxiety, cultural differences, or language challenges. The faculty member also recommends speaking privately with pupils who are displaying symptoms of discomfort. It is absolutely a practical and empathetic approach. Personal interaction can help clarify the underlying reasons for observed behavior as well as build trust.

Theme 4: Support Strategies

The teachers were then asked about the strategies or interventions they use to support EFL students who may be facing challenges with their psychological well-being. Consequently, educators are prompted to consider how to establish a conducive environment for students in their language

class. Or how students exhibit greater enthusiasm in articulating their thoughts and participating in classroom activities?

A teacher commented in response to this –

Basically, the process we think about, the strategies we try to employ, just like she always asks questions to the students. Tell them that there is nothing right or wrong here. The ideas you are sharing are clearly something we will get some important messages from there. If you need some additional information, we will provide it but we have to know it first. So, the floor is open to everyone. Then there is a lot of good work like pair work. They have to talk to their classmates, give presentations and do assignments. They have to work together. Also, we would try to guide them from time to time, give them facilities. So, we don't think that a teacher-oriented classroom is a very good option for a language classroom. That's why we try to make it student-oriented. (T3)

Here, by emphasizing "there is no right or wrong" and opening the floor to everyone, the teacher encourages a safe space for exploration and creativity. This is essential in language learning, where the fear of making mistakes can hinder participation. Moreover, pair work, group discussions, and presentations promote active learning and peer support, which can enhance language acquisition. These methods align with communicative language teaching (CLT), where interaction is central to the learning process. Here, the teacher becomes more of a facilitator, offering assistance when required, rather than the main source of knowledge. This is consistent with constructivist learning theory, which holds that students build their knowledge via interaction and experience. Furthermore, the approach recognizes the need for flexibility, suggesting that teachers provide

additional information or facilities as needed. This reflects responsiveness to student needs, a hallmark of effective teaching.

Theme 5: Balancing Academic and Emotional Needs

Hence, the educators were subsequently inquired - Could you elaborate on how you balance academic instruction with the emotional needs of your students in your pedagogical approach?

Just as a teacher shared some issues that need to be addressed here.

Obviously, emotional needs. Students come to academics later if they are mentally stable. I always believe that academic results are not as important as life comes first. If you are not mentally stable, your academic results don't really matter. That's why I tell them to do physical exercise, go to extracurricular activities, play different kinds of sports and travel.
(T4)

Addressing both academic and emotional needs supports students' overall development. Academic achievement is also strongly correlated with emotional well-being because students who experience compassion and encouragement are more inclined to participate in and excel in their studies. Without a question, educators who put students' emotional needs first can foster a welcoming and safe workplace. In addition to lowering anxiety, this boosts self-esteem and promotes engagement, particularly in difficult subjects or assignments. Emotional support ensures that diverse students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those facing personal challenges, feel valued and capable. This can reduce disparities in academic achievement. The belief that "life comes first" reflects a compassionate and student-centered approach. It recognizes that academic success is secondary to mental health, which is vital for long term success and

happiness. Encouraging physical exercise, extracurricular activities, and travel is an evidence-based approach to improving mental health and personal development. These activities can build resilience, teamwork, creativity, and a sense of fulfillment.

Theme 6: Collaboration with Professionals

In order to improve the psychological health of their EFL pupils, the instructors were also asked if they collaborated with other educators or experts, such as psychologists and counselors.

According to another faculty member,

“Whenever I think of any particular students who are facing any severe problems which I might not handle myself then by talking with other faculties or consulting with the counseling in person.”

(T4)

The speaker here acknowledges that they may not have the skills to handle all issues independently. This self-awareness is crucial in professional and academic settings, as it prevents mishandling of sensitive issues. The speaker takes a collaborative approach here, involving other faculty members or consulting with counseling services. This somehow ensures that students are well supported from multiple perspectives and areas of expertise. The statement suggests a genuine concern for the well-being of students. This compassionate approach is essential in building confidence and creating a supportive environment for students facing challenges. Instead of ignoring or delaying action, the speaker takes action to resolve the problem by asking for help, which helps to mitigate the problem more effectively.

Theme 7: Training and Professional Development

Last but not least, the question inquired as to whether they had undergone any professional

development or training pertaining to promoting students' psychological health within the framework of language acquisition. If yes, how has this influenced their teaching practice?

A teacher responded to this question by saying-

This is actually not direct training but courses help me a lot thinking about the psychological challenges of my students. Just like I found that all the students will not be in the same category but I have to include all the students which is called inclusive education. (T4)

The statement demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the value of inclusive education and the part professional development plays in preparing teachers to handle students' psychological difficulties. The speaker acknowledges that students are diverse and cannot all be categorized in the same way. This awareness is the foundation for creating an inclusive learning environment, where differences in abilities, backgrounds, and needs are respected and accommodated. Despite their challenges or skills, this approach intends to give everyone fair access to educational possibilities.

So here these findings emphasize the importance of language teachers' roles as both educators and emotional supporters for their students. In addition, the integration of emotional intelligence with effective educational techniques can improve the mental health and academic performance of students. Creating a classroom atmosphere that promotes participation and decreases anxiety is one way language instructors can help their anxious EFL pupils. There may be an increase in anxiety levels among students in Bangladesh due to the pressure to succeed academically, since a good grasp of the English language is often associated with better job prospects. Make it a point to ensure that every single student, regardless of their origins or abilities, acknowledges that they

are appreciated and included in the educational process. By encouraging open communication and placing more focus on progress than perfection, instructors' sympathetic demeanor may assist reduce this tension in a variety of ways. It is best to keep away from giving students harsh criticism and instead provide them with helpful comments that will inspire them to improve their performance.

One of the most important responsibilities of language teachers is to motivate pupils to take responsibility for their education. Promoting students' autonomy in an EFL setting helps them become more resilient and self-assured. Activities that encourage involvement and active participation should be included, such as cooperative group projects, role-playing games, and other similar activities. Giving students the freedom to select writing, presentation, or project themes that align with their passions and interests is important. It's critical to support students in setting realistic, customized language objectives and tracking their development. By utilizing goal-setting activities, encouraging students to conduct self-evaluations, and incorporating technology-driven tools that enable students to engage in independent practice, educators are able to accomplish this goal. In Bangladesh, where traditional methods of memorization are the norm, transitioning to a learner-centered approach involves conscious effort, however it can significantly enhance psychological health and academic performance. Make it clear to students that making mistakes is an inevitable part of the learning process, and encourage them to view these mistakes as opportunities for growth. To ensure that students are able to explore language without fear of being criticized, it is important to create a teaching environment that facilitates this.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Limitations of the Study:

In the wake of the abrupt quota reform student movement that occurred in Bangladesh in July 2024, following the collapse of the government on August 5th, the overall situation in the country deteriorated. In such a situation, my survey work has been delayed a lot since I did not get any form of response from the students in the data collection. It was not possible to see the predicted results after the movement since the amount of data that was anticipated to be collected from the students before the movement was significantly different. With only 31 responses included overall, the questionnaire survey's proportion of respondents seems relatively small. This limits how far the results may be applied to the broader population of undergraduate Bangladeshi students studying English as a foreign language. It's probable that conducting interviews with only four teachers will not be sufficient to capture the various teaching styles and perspectives that could have an effect on the outcomes for students. Only one private university is participating in the research project. Due to the lack of diversity within the institutional context, the results do not accurately represent public universities or other private institutions in Bangladesh. Due to the fact that both the student and the teacher participants have connections with a single university, there is a possibility that bias will be introduced. The institutional culture or specific teaching practices at this university may not accurately represent the broader EFL context in Bangladesh. The findings may not be applicable to other educational contexts, such as public universities, rural areas, or diverse cultural settings, as a result of the limited concentration on a single private university. Even though it is a comprehensive design, the mixed-methods approach may have

difficulties in successfully balancing and integrating qualitative and quantitative data. Given the short research duration, the extent of data collection and analysis may have been constrained. It could also obstruct the capture of changes in students' academic performance and psychological well-being over time. I admit that there is an absence of quantitative data regarding students' academic performance. But through a qualitative approach, I tend to connect a little bit regarding how PWB affects students' academic performance. Due to unavoidable situations, I am somehow not able to reach students' academic achievement. If there were adequate data regarding academic performance then this study will be more efficient.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications:

Teachers should work to develop a relationship with their pupils that is both supportive and empathic. The creation of a constructive learning environment has the potential to alleviate anxiety, increase self-confidence, and encourage learners to become more motivated. The emotional obstacles that students face should be acknowledged and addressed by teachers, who should do so by offering support and recognizing the students' achievements. There is potential value in providing educators with training in fundamental counseling skills or emotional competence. The PWB of students could be improved through the implementation of stress-relieving activities or mindfulness practices in the classroom, which would result in an increase in the students' readiness to learn. Teachers are able to provide individualized help to improve students' academic achievement because they are aware of the variances in skills and learning styles that exist among students. Regular feedback that is constructive can serve as a guide for students and assist them in identifying areas in which they might develop. This has the potential to improve academic achievement and build competence. To obtain academic and language

learning objectives, teachers have the huge potential to assist students to involve them in pair or group works that may ensure not only free discussion's opportunity but also generate a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Language instructors notably stress student-centered classrooms here that facilitate students' unrestricted engagement in conversation, problem-solving, and collaborative work. It is certain that students' autonomy, academic performance, and emotional resilience are all improved in such settings. In that context, educators should function as scaffolders, specifically reducing the disparity between students' current competencies and their desired abilities. To build students' confidence, it is essential to break down difficult tasks into smaller ones, which helps students overcome their fears and advance their language proficiency. It is crucial to evaluate the work of educators as psychological counselors or facilitators here. By exhibiting empathy, addressing the needs of each individual student and recognizing the obstacles students encounter, in this way teachers equally cultivate a psychologically secure environment for EFL learners. Moreover, fostering students' interest and support mitigates emotional filters which is a crucial element of language acquisition. In the Bangladeshi context, educators must modify their approaches to meet the cultural and social constraints that students may encounter. The application of these strategies permits language educators to enhance the academic performance of EFL students in Bangladesh and facilitate their overall development, thus empowering them for effective communication in real-world contexts and for career success.

5.3 Conclusion:

Anyone hoping to participate in the global economy and university abroad, there is no way to be fluent in English. Due to English being a lingua franca, it has become a common tool that has huge potential to ease communication processes especially among people whose native language

might be different. Consequently, academic success in language education is fundamental for EFL learners. In that case, the role of language instructors is vital in impacting the academic performance and psychological health of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL students. Educators can actively engage students in their educational journey by fostering a learner-centered classroom and employing scaffolding techniques, thereby improving their confidence and autonomy. The emotional support of teachers is crucial in alleviating students' apprehension, as demonstrated by the affective filter hypothesis, enabling them to overcome linguistic and psychological obstacles. Moreover, employing the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) ensures that learners obtain support during challenging activities with appropriate help, so incrementally improving their proficiency and self-efficacy. Language teachers may create a supportive atmosphere that boosts language learning and fosters the learners' overall development by identifying and meeting the emotional and intellectual requirements of EFL students. This approach is crucial in Bangladesh for developing a generation of competent and confident English speakers capable of excelling academically and professionally.

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Appendix -A

The questionnaires are being developed by Banasree Goswami, an MA student in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at BRAC University. They are designed to gather primary data for her thesis on the topic "The Effective Role of Language Teachers in the Psychological Well-Being and Academic Achievement among Bangladeshi Undergraduate EFL Learners." This study aims to look into the impact of students' psychological well-being on their academic accomplishment, as well as the role of teachers in assisting students with conquering their psychological barriers. The purpose for employing these questionnaires is for obtaining information that is not accessible from secondary sources and to validate the results of the study. I assured you that the data you gave will be exclusively utilized for academic reasons.

Name of the Institution: _____

Name of Department: _____

Semester: _____

Email: _____

Which Gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB), 13 Item version (modified):

Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 1-5) to the following sentences.

Please click that if your answer is:

SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

D = Disagree (2)

N = Neutral (3)

A = Agree (4)

SA = Strongly Agree (5)

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS)	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
1. I like most aspects of my personality.					
2. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.					
3. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growth.					

4. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.					
5. The demands of everyday life often get me down.					
6. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.					
7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.					
8. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.					
9. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.					
10. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.					
11. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.					
12. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.					
13. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.					

14. How do you believe your psychological well-being affects your ability to focus and perform academically?

15. In what ways do you think teachers can provide a helpful atmosphere for students' psychological well-being in the classroom?

Appendix- B

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude for sharing your precious time with me in order to support my study. This is Banasree Goswami, I am going to finish my Masters in TESOL at BRAC University. Now I am doing a thesis entitled - **The Effective Role of Language Teachers in the Psychological Well-Being and Academic Achievement among Bangladeshi Undergraduate EFL Learners**. In this regard, I need your help to carry out my research in this field.

If you allow me, I wish to record this conversation. I want to reassure you that whatever information you provide here will be treated with the highest secrecy and used exclusively for academic reasons. I shall not include the identities of the respondents or your institution in my thesis or other publications that come out of this study. It will take around 15-20 minutes to finish this interview.

Semi-structured Interview Questions:

1. To begin with, can you please share any understanding or observations about how students' psychological well-being positively or negatively impacted their performance in learning English?
2. What challenges do you anticipate to encounter in addressing the psychological well-being of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL students, considering the cultural and contextual factors? How would you navigate these challenges?
3. How do you identify signs and symptoms of psychological distress or low well-being among your EFL students?
4. What strategies or interventions do you employ to support EFL students who may be struggling with their psychological well-being?
5. Would you please tell me something about how you prioritize both academic instruction and students' emotional needs in your teaching approach?
6. Do you collaborate with other educators or professionals (e.g. counselors, psychologists) to support the psychological well-being of your EFL students? If so, would you please elaborate on this?
7. My last question mam/sir, have you ever received any training or professional development related to supporting students' psychological well-being in the context of language teaching? If yes, how did it influence your teaching practice?

Thank you very much sir/mam for your time and response.

