



National Pandemic Impact on the Educational Experiences and Well-being of Social Work Students and Faculty

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ABSTRACT: Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) caused many universities and other educational institutions to rapidly change their methods of education. This paper shares insights related to the educational experiences and emotional well-being from social work faculty and students from two public universities, located within two different states (Kentucky and Maryland). Findings from this mixed methods IRB approved research study suggest that that students and faculty need support, both tangible and intangible, from higher education institutions in order to be effective in the classroom.

Keywords: remote teaching, COVID-19, faculty life, student life, social work education



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The Spring 2020 semester posed new and unfamiliar challenges to educational institutions throughout the world. Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) caused many universities and other educational institutions to rapidly change their methods of education, including, for some, a dramatic shift in the modality and framework of their courses. A number of countries had national country-wide school closure policies (Crawford, Bulter-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020). By March 25th 2020, over 150 countries closed educational facilities, which was estimated to impact over 80% of the global student population (UNESCO, 2020). In the United States, the decision to close schools was not implemented nationally, but instead was largely left to the states, with each state making their own requirements. In the case of private educational institutions, they were often tasked with creating their own plans. However, by the middle of March 2020, many universities in the United States switched primarily to remote education, requiring that faculty, students, and staff limit their physical contact with the university and their peers. See Appendix A for COVID-19 orders and universities policies from both Kentucky and Maryland. This rapid response to remove students and faculty from the university setting, including the classroom, posed numerous challenges such as lack of training in offering remote education, lack of access to needed technology, and the impact on individuals' well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Literature Review

Lack of Training

The shift to remote teaching left many students and faculty struggling to adapt to new technology. Faculty at the University of Buffalo's School of Social Work define different types of learning as seated, remote, and online (Sage, Krause, Smyth, Kendall, & Sturman 2020). Specifically, they define remote teaching as "instruction that is temporarily replacing seated instruction due to health, safety, or infrastructure disruption, and that maximizes the elements of seated instruction as much as possible" (para. 3). One of the main aspects of remote teaching that separates it from online teaching is that students and faculty chose a seated or face-to-face classroom environment, but were forced, due to environmental factors outside of their control, to attend class in an online environment (Sage, et al., 2020). For these students, and potentially the faculty teaching these courses, they do not have the technology experience and desire to learn in a more self-paced design (Sage, et al., 2020). In addition, while many universities offered faculty trainings on technologies prior to COVID-19 and the closure of face-to-face campuses, some faculty have never taken these trainings, especially if they have not previously taught in online or hybrid formats. This required adaptation to remote teaching and learning proved difficult for many as students and faculty experienced lack of knowledge about various software and how to best implement their seated courses into a remote classroom environment. In addition, faculty lacked the skills to create and implement quality remote education (Crawford, et al., 2020).

Lack of Access

The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the inequality among students as it related to access to hardware, such as personal computers. Without a functioning computer, students could not participate in many aspects of remote learning. Sahu (2020) suggested that families have limited computers at home, which means students and faculty have to share resources as the whole nation switched to working and schooling from home. This limits students' ability to participate in required video conferencing class sessions, which could impact their learning and course grades.

Reliable internet access is crucial during remote education. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that access to reliable internet access is a current inequality in the United States. Some students and faculty lacked access to reliable internet (Crawford, et al., 2020), which could cause students to miss course content, assignments, and ultimately lead to lower GPAs.

Impact of Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

To date there have been few published research studies discussing the psychological impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on faculty and students' emotional and physical well-being. However, it is assumed that even for those who have not been infected, the dramatic interruptions to daily life, the deluge of ever-changing information, the increase in cases, and the death of loved ones, has directly impacted individual's well-being and mental health (Lee, 2020). Various authors suggested that more attention needs to be paid not just to those who were infected by the virus but to all community members regarding the unique disturbances on individual's well-being (Brooks et al., 2020; Lee, 2020; Zhang, Wang, Rauch, & Wei, 2020).

Well-being is not simply the absence of disease or illness but is a state of complete physical, mental and social health or wellness (World Health Organization, 1946). This includes considering how well a person is functioning in regards to their mental health, physical activity, social connectedness, professional effectiveness, and overall life satisfaction (Faculty of Public Health, 2016). There is only newly developing research that is focused on understanding the impact of COVID-19 on individuals' well-being. The majority of what is known about people's emotional and physical welfare comes from lessons learned from previous pandemics.

One recent study specifically focused on adults living in China during February 2020 (Zhang, Wang, Rauch, & Wei, 2020). It was noted that adults who were not working reported more distress and worse health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Lee (2020) reported on findings from their Coronavirus Anxiety Scale. Specifically, it was suggested based on their study of 775 adults in March 2020 that younger aged adults and those with higher education levels "were associated with higher coronavirus anxiety." Currently, there is not enough evidence to support that college students (high percentage of younger aged adults) and faculty members (a demographic with higher educational levels) have higher levels of coronavirus anxiety, but these findings ask us to further investigate university students and faculty members well-being and how they are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic almost all states issued some type of state governor "stay at home" orders. Many of these orders provided specific details about where people could go and what businesses had to temporarily close. Some people who came in contact with a known COVID-19 positive person or those who travelled to a restricted country or area were asked to self-quarantine for 14-days. Brooks and colleagues (2020) reviewed previously published literature about the psychological impact of quarantine and found a reported "high prevalence of symptoms

of psychological distress and disorder” (p. 2). They noted the most common stressors during quarantine included the duration of it, fears of being infected, and inadequate provisions and lack of information. Personally, participants noted that boredom and frustration, including the loss of their daily routine and reduced social contact were very challenging during the quarantine period. Finances and stigma were the stressors most noted after their quarantine was lifted (Brooks, et al., 2020). In hopes of reducing these stressors, they highlight the importance of providing up-to-date information in a timely manner, providing needed supplies, and increasing communication. These findings provide helpful insights into the well-being of those who are quarantined but they also suggest that more information is needed to determine the impact on people’s well-being when other public health measures are utilized, such as school closures (Brooks, et al., 2020).

Crawford and colleagues (2020) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided higher education with the opportunity to engage in “coordinated, collaborative, and collective” efforts for quality remote education (p. 12). Toquero (2020) took it one step further and asked educators to utilize this pandemic as an opportunity to research best strategies for online and remote learning. This study shares insights related to the educational experiences, professional confidence, and emotional well-being from social work faculty and students from two public universities, located within two different states (Kentucky and Maryland), in the United States (see Appendix A: Select COVID-19 orders and universities policies from Kentucky and Maryland). Both universities offer social work degrees at the undergraduate (BASW/BSW) and graduate (MSW) level. In addition, both offer their undergraduate degrees at various satellite locations throughout their state and both programs offer a fully online MSW program option. Table 1 provides a comparison of the number of social work students and faculty for both the Maryland and Kentucky social work programs.

Table 1

Maryland vs. Kentucky Social Work Program Comparison

Characteristic	Maryland	Kentucky
	f (%)	f (%)
Undergraduate Students	326	171
Main Campus	216 (66.3)	120 (70.2)
Satellite	110 (33.7)	51 (29.8)
Graduate Students	409	96
Main Campus	102 (24.9)	65 (67.7)
Satellite	188 (46.0)	--
Online	119 (29.1)	31 (32.3)
Faculty	82	43
Full-time	26 (31.7)	16 (37.2)
Adjunct/Part-time	56 (68.3)	27 (62.8)

Methods

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of COVID-19 on students and faculty/staff at two different universities located in different states. This pandemic made it clear how each state within the United States determined their own strategies for how to deal with COVID-19. These two universities were utilized in this study because they are both public institutions with similar Master of Social Work (MSW)/Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) program offerings, but are located within different states. The researchers were interested in understanding more about how the community members in these universities would differ or be similar in their feelings about the impact of COVID-19. In addition, researchers were interested in learning about personal well-being and educational experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the research questions examined in this study were as follows: (a) Was there a difference between Maryland and Kentucky students and faculty/staff with respect to personal well-being and educational experience?; (b) Was there a difference between students and faculty/staff with respect to personal well-being and educational experience?; and (c) What supports do students and faculty/staff need during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Design, Sampling Strategy & Procedures

This study was exploratory in nature and utilized mixed methods. Researchers at two Universities created a survey examining professional experience, preparedness, and access to needed technology. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at both Universities.

This study utilized a convenience sampling approach. All students, faculty, and staff enrolled at or employed with either university's social work programs during the Spring 2020 semester were eligible to participate in this study. An email invitation was sent to eligible participants at both Universities at the end of the Spring 2020 semester (late April 2020). The email invitation included an overview of the study, including any risks and benefits associated with participation, as well as a link to the Qualtrics survey. A reminder email was sent approximately two weeks later encouraging individuals to participate in this study. If individuals clicked on the Qualtrics link, they were taken to the survey where they were first presented with the approved IRB documents and asked to read and consent to participate in the study prior to moving on to the survey instrument.

Instrument

Two surveys were created for distribution to students and faculty/staff. Both surveys

included both closed- and open-ended items. Survey items that were consistent across both surveys included the following demographic items: race (1 = Caucasian/White; 2 = African American/Black; 3 = Asian American; 4 = Indian/Alaskan Native; 5 = Two or more races: Specify; 6 = Other); ethnicity (1 = Hispanic/Latino; 2 = Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino); age; gender (1 = male; 2 = female; 3 = transgender; 4 = gender non-conforming; 5 = other); marital status (1 = single; 2 = married; 3 = separated; 4 = divorced; 5 = widowed); and number of children. Questions on both surveys also addressed social work experience (i.e., Are you currently working as a social worker?; If yes, how would you describe your primary job?; If yes, what happened with your primary job during COVID-19?), what University they attended, their role at the University (1 = BASW/BSW Student; 2 = MSW Student; 3 = Full-time Staff; 4 = Full-time Faculty; 5 = Adjunct/Part-time Instructor; 6 = Field Supervisor/Field Instructor; 7 = Field Liaison; 8 = Other), and whether they had access to a computer and/or Wi-Fi during remote learning.

Students and faculty/staff were then asked to answer 20 Likert-scale items, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). These items focused on perception of the social work profession during the pandemic (e.g., I am confident in social worker's ability to respond to COVID-19 concerns; I am worried about the future of the social work profession after COVID-19), and their perception of personal well-being (e.g., My anxiety increased during the COVID-19 pandemic; I worried about my financial security more during the COVID-19 pandemic than at other times throughout the last year). These questions were created based on the distance education literature surrounding personal well-being and the research team's discussion about what information was needed from our students so we could best help them be successful within their program of study.

Student Survey

In addition to the items addressed above, students were also asked to respond to eight items specifically about their educational experience during remote learning (e.g., I was comfortable talking with my social work professors about the impact of COVID-19 on me personally; I wish my social work professors reached out to me more during the COVID-19 pandemic; I was engaged via remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic). Four open-ended items were also included that were related to the role of technology, faculty response, and the profession's response. These items included the following: (a) What role did technology play during the COVID-19 pandemic in assisting you with your education?; (b) What did your social work professor do that was helpful during this time?; (c) What did your social work professor do

that was unhelpful to you during this time?; and (d) In your opinion, how present was the profession of social work during the COVID-19 pandemic? One final open-ended question provided students with an opportunity to comment on anything related to their COVID-19 experience.

Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff were asked to respond to eight items related to their efficacy teaching remotely (e.g., I think my social work students were engaged via remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic; I felt confident utilizing the technology required for remote teaching during the spring of 2020; I felt as though I got enough support from this social work educational institution during the COVID-19 pandemic). Seven open-ended items were also included that were related to the role of technology, institutional response, and the profession's response. These items included the following: (a) What role did technology play during the COVID-19 pandemic in assisting you with remote teaching?; (b) What technology tools did you find most helpful?; (c) What technology tools did you find least helpful?; (d) What was the most stressful thing about teaching remotely during spring 2020?; (e) What did this social work educational institution do that helped you prepare to teach remotely during spring 2020?; (f) What additional things would you have liked from this social work educational institution to help you teach remotely during the spring of 2020; and (g) In your opinion, how present was the profession of social work during the COVID-19 pandemic? One final open-ended question provided faculty with an opportunity to comment on anything related to their COVID-19 experience.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Ultimately there were a total of 113 students and 164 faculty/staff who completed the surveys. More specifically, there were 88 students and 21 faculty/staff who participated from the Maryland institution and 28 students and 20 faculty/staff from the institution in Kentucky.

Sample Characteristics

A majority of participants ($n = 116$, 73.9%) were students, with 26.1% being faculty/staff ($n = 41$). A majority of participants were Caucasian/White ($n = 130$, 82.8%), non-Hispanic ($n = 136$, 93.8%), and female ($n = 141$, 89.8%). Participants ranged in age from 20-76, with the mean being 36.0 ($SD = 13.6$). Most participants reported either being single ($n = 76$, 48.4%) or married ($n = 63$, 40.1%), and a majority ($n = 79$, 50.3%) reported having children. Participants reported having between 0 and 5 children, with the average number of children being 1.1 ($SD = 1.3$).

With respect to social work experience, a majority ($n = 107$, 68.2%) of participants reported they were not working as a social worker at the time of the study. Of those who were working, 36.0% reported working in mental/behavioral health ($n = 18$), 20.0% reported working in child welfare ($n = 18$), 8.0% reported working as a medical social worker ($n = 4$), 6.0% as a school social worker ($n = 3$), 2.0% reported working in substance misuse ($n = 1$), and 28.0% reported working in some other area ($n = 14$). Further, of those who reported working at the time of the study, a majority ($n = 26$, 52.0%) reported working from home with the same number of hours during COVID-19, with 22.0% ($n = 11$) reported being essential and were required to work in person.

Regarding student experience, a majority ($n = 85$, 75.2%) reported being in a face-to-face/hybrid program at the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester, with 24.8% ($n = 28$) being enrolled in an online program. With respect to faculty, a majority ($n = 32$, 88.9%) reported having taught for their respective university prior to the Spring 2020 semester and indicated this was not the first time they had taught remotely or online ($n = 29$, 80.6%). Regarding technology, a majority of participants reported having access to both a computer ($n = 155$, 98.7%) and reliable Wi-Fi ($n = 150$, 96.2%).

A Chi-Square was conducted to determine if there were differences between Universities with respect to categorical variables; independent sample t-tests were conducted on age and number of children to determine if there was a difference between participants in Maryland and Kentucky. Results indicated there was a difference between Maryland and Kentucky with respect to role ($\chi^2 = 8.667$, $p = .003$). A majority of Maryland participants were students (80.7%), with 22.4% less Kentucky participants reporting being students. Further, 41.7% of Kentucky participants reported being faculty/staff, with only 19.3% of Maryland participants reporting being faculty/staff. There were no differences between universities for any other sample characteristic.

Well-Being

Items related to personal well-being were also asked of both students and faculty/staff at both universities. A Mann Whitney-U was conducted on each of the items in order to determine if there was a difference between Maryland and Kentucky participants as well as between students and faculty/staff. There were no statistically significant differences in any of these items when comparing Maryland and Kentucky; however, there were four items that demonstrated statistical significance when examining students and faculty/staff. Specifically, the four items that emerged were as follows: (a) My anxiety increased during the COVID-19 ($p = .010$); (b) During the COVID-

19 pandemic, I did not have enough to eat ($p = .026$); (c) During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had enough money to pay bills ($p = .024$); and (d) During the COVID-19 pandemic, I felt socially isolated from my primary support systems ($p = .030$). On average, students appeared to fare worse than faculty/staff on all of the well-being related items, indicating higher increased stress ($M = 4.2$ vs. $M = 3.9$), higher food insecurity ($M = 1.6$ vs. $M = 1.2$), less financial security to pay their bills ($M = 3.8$ vs. $M = 4.3$), and more social isolation ($M = 3.6$ vs. $M = 3.1$).

Student- and Faculty/Staff-Specific Items

Students and faculty/staff were asked eight different items related to their specific experiences at their respective universities. A Mann Whitney-U was conducted on each of these items in order to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between Maryland and Kentucky participants. There was only one student-specific item that demonstrated a statistically significant difference between Maryland and Kentucky: During my Spring 2020 social work classes, I felt that my professors cared about me ($p = .028$). On average, students from Kentucky reported feeling more cared for by faculty ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.7$) than Maryland students ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.7$). Similarly, there was only one faculty/staff-specific item that demonstrated a statistically significant difference between Maryland and Kentucky: I felt comfortable with Canvas prior to the COVID-19 pandemic ($p = .012$). Maryland faculty/staff ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.6$) reported being more comfortable, on average, with Canvas (an online learning management system) compared to Kentucky faculty ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.2$).

Qualitative Findings

Both students and faculty members were asked numerous open-ended questions. Both groups of participants were asked, "What role did technology play during the COVID-19 pandemic in assisting you with your education (students) or remote teaching (faculty)?" All of the responses (faculty $n = 30$; student $n = 87$) alluded to the notion that both students and faculty members felt dependent on technology to complete their classes/do their job. For instance, one faculty member noted, "technology made it possible to do my job" and a student reported, "Everything from learning to lectures to Zoom." Students and faculty both reported that Zoom, the video conferencing software, was the most helpful technology tool. It is important to note here that both universities provided faculty paid Zoom accounts; therefore, it was the required and provided option for faculty.

Students were asked, "What did your social work professor do that was helpful?" and students' responses ($n = 85$) fell into two main themes: communication and flexibility. Students

noted that faculty communicated about COVID-19 by checking in with them and by expressing understanding. Various students shared these statements: “had open forums to relieve stress and discuss frustrations with professors;” “Specific professor checked in, understood and acknowledged what we may be experiencing at home, and offered specific times for individual calls;” and “offered processing discussions, really put a lot of effort into making sure we were doing well, thoroughly engaged in trauma informed practices.” In addition, students also noted that faculty were flexible with assignment due dates, class readings, and offering extensions for those who needed them. One student noted, “they would adjust assignments based on the needs of individuals and the class.”

Students were also asked to reflect on what their professors did that was not helpful. While 86 students responded to this question, 50% ($n = 44$) stated “nothing” or “n/a” as a response to this question. The additional answers received fit into two themes, which are the opposite of the themes mentioned above. Students noted that a lack of communication was not helpful. Specifically, students stated that some professors did not provide timely responses and/or did not respond to emails or other forms of communication. Students also noted that it was not helpful when professors failed to provide accommodations and were not flexible with assignment due dates. A handful of students noted that some professors assigned additional work, such as “discussion boards which added more stress”.

Three main themes were identified when professors ($n = 29$) were asked about the most stressful thing about teaching remotely during spring 2020. The most common response ($n = 14$) was the concern about meeting students’ needs, such as student engagement in courses and worrying about the impact of COVID-19 on students. Professors’ comments included: “maintaining student attendance and involvement during weekly online session” and “students having personal difficulties that prevented them from focusing on class”. Professors also felt that preparing for online or remote teaching was very stressful. They ($n = 8$) noted that it was difficult to transition their courses online. In addition, less professors ($n = 4$) noted that balancing life was the most stressful thing. While this does not reflect the majority of participants, it is important to include as a theme because it was present for some of the responses. One professor stated, “Managing work/home balance with managing personal and professional responsibilities all in one place without a separation”.

Professors ($n = 29$) noted that the most helpful things that educational institutions did to help them prepare for remote teaching was offer trainings and free-to-use software and provide

adequate communication. Specifically, they appreciated “great technical support” and the hardware, such a laptop and camera, which were provided. Adequate communication was described by one participant as “transparent and proactive”. In addition, one participant stated that there was a “quick response and decision making” process from the administration. Some additional things that professors would like from the social work educational institution was more communication and access to technology, including hardware and software programs, such as this request from a participant: “flexible budget spending for supplies and items needed to work from home”.

Both students and professors were asked to respond to our final question, “What other comments do you have about your COVID-19 experiences?”. This question provided the most in-depth and lengthy responses from students of the whole study. Faculty ($n = 36$) were more likely to respond with an n/a or state they had nothing else to say (16 responses). For both participant groups (39 student responses and 11 faculty responses) personal challenges were the most commonly shared. Specifically, for students, the challenges discussed fell into the larger theme of mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, and isolation. One student shared, “I sunk into a huge depression due to social distancing”. Another student noted, “I was terrified when it first happened and my anxiety was at full peak!”. As sample quotes above highlight, students were more likely to discuss a specific increase in their personal mental health symptoms. Also, two students noted specific financial challenges such as “financially, it has been very difficult. It has been difficult to find a job without having been able to take the licensing exam. State hiring is frozen which impacts being able to apply for desired positions.”

A challenge noted mostly by professors was dealing with unknown. For instance, one professor commented that “the ongoing uncertainty with no real end in sight or plan for moving forward wears on the ability to perform my professional responsibilities to my typical standard”. Another professor shared that “the unknown is difficult for all”. Also, professors specifically talked about the challenges that their students’ now face. For example, one professor noted, “this has been very hard on the students”.

While the majority of answers, from both faculty and students, to this question focused on the challenges there were a number of answers that focused on the future and/or mentioned positive impacts. These comments were not as frequent; however, they represent a large minority (17 student responses and five faculty responses) of the comments and are therefore important to mention. These hopeful statements ranged from thanking the school or department of social work

for their support to one professor's comment about the changes to the field: "Now more than ever, the field will shift to new and creative ways to serve our clients and support each other as professionals." In addition, one student shared, "I had two professors that were honest about the struggle and became my stability during a very difficult time. I have friends in other MSW programs who felt lost and abandoned by their programs but the [program name] truly made me feel connected, supported, and cared for. They reinforced the sense of community and values of social work. Very proud to be part of the [program name]." Another student shared that "during this pandemic I have learned that I love social work more than I have in the past and I am excited to start my career!" These students highlight their connection to social work and how the COVID-19 pandemic helped them further develop their professional identity.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine preparedness and response to COVID-19 at two public universities in different states. Specifically, the student and faculty findings provide an overview about helpful educational responses and well-being. Based on findings from students and educators at both universities, it is suggested that universities continue providing timely and transparent communication to all members of that community. It is also critical that institutions discuss the pandemic, specifically by naming it and talking about impacts. Our findings support Brooks and colleagues (2020) notion that increasing communication and providing up-to-date information can reduce the stress associated with quarantines and pandemics. As our findings suggest, both faculty and students experienced stress due to the unknown nature of this pandemic and will welcome transparent and on-going communication. While these findings might seem obvious to many social work educators, it is important to research our current practices to ensure that we are providing adequate support to students and faculty during this global pandemic.

Students reported a higher increase in stress levels, food insecurity, and social isolation and less financial security than their instructors. Both the qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that students are affected socially, emotionally and mentally by this pandemic. Therefore, it is imperative for faculty and administration to provide support for students. We need to increase students' access, including telehealth methods, to formal mental health supports at the university level, which is not something that most departments or schools can do independently. But faculty should advocate for an increase in counseling services, specifically to address the increased anxiety and stress that students are experiencing. Faculty and administration should actively share current resources, such as local food banks, financial support programs, and other helpful

resources. Faculty and administration are encouraged to provide information about these resources in a variety of ways including: (a) a module or page on the learning management system; (b) on social media pages; (c) verbally in their virtual class or in a recorded lecture; and (d) through university email.

At times, faculty might feel like talking about the impacts of a current crisis can be harmful to students. However, these findings suggest that students benefit from classroom discussions about the impact, including opportunities to discuss how it personally affects them. Even if students are quiet during these discussions, faculty should continue to make space and time in their classrooms (virtual or face-to-face) to discuss current events, such as COVID-19. For some educators, this may seem basic and obvious. However, faculty members are also experiencing the stress of this global pandemic. When faculty are stressed and overworked, they can forget the obvious or focus only on “what needs to be done” or the content that they feel needs to be covered in class. These findings suggest that making space to check-in with students is one of the most impactful things we can do as faculty. Therefore, the authors suggest making this a priority in classrooms and shifting content around, if needed.

Faculty’s lack of training with technology, including new software programs, was mentioned throughout previous literature. The participants in this study, both students and faculty, highlighted their dependence on technology and the need for adequate training. This speaks to the importance of technology in our current lives and how training is needed for faculty to successfully provide education. Schools and departments should focus on providing up-to-date training and need to make it an expectation for faculty, including adjunct faculty. Also, for faculty who are nervous or hesitant to utilize these technologies, it is a good idea to encourage them to attend trainings and practice with peers, prior to utilizing these technologies with students, so they increase their comfort level. These findings highlight the need to do this on a continued basis, and not just during a crisis. Both of the universities included in this study have fully online courses prior to the pandemic, with about 30% of students enrolled in the fully online Master in Social Work (MSW) program options at each university. However, the findings suggest that some faculty still struggled to teach remotely during the pandemic.

It should not be assumed that faculty have the knowledge and the skills to teach remotely during a crisis situation, even if they currently teach online. Instead, all faculty should be required to take courses and increase their knowledge of new technologies, both for planned and unplanned remote and online teaching. This global pandemic helped us envision what technology is most

needed and it highlights how more research is needed to determine best practices for remote teaching. Specifically, more research is needed to determine the differences and similarities between online and remote teaching. Specifically, how do we define these terms? How is teaching remotely during a crisis different and similar to teaching within an already established distance education program? Additional feedback from students and faculty about remote and online teaching/learning would increase our knowledge of best practices.

The vast majority of students and faculty members included in this research study had access to both a computer and reliable internet. Almost four percent of the students' surveyed did not have access to reliable internet. While this is not a high percentage it does show the university that there are some students (and faculty members) who need help accessing the internet. Access to the internet is crucial for remote and online learning during COVID-19 and beyond. At the time of this writing, there is no current data about university social work students who lack reliable internet access. While this study cannot be generalizable to all universities or specific departments, it does provide insight into how many students could be affected by this and highlights the need for administrators to be prepared to help a small percentage of students in our programs with computers and access to reliable internet. Again, this finding might seem obvious to faculty, but it is important for us to address this issue at a policy level. Do universities have policies that help students' secure access to technology? If so, do faculty members in various disciplines know how to help students obtain this access? It also speaks to the larger societal need of equity and who has access to technology. Faculty members often are the first point of contact for students; therefore, they need to be on the forefront of broader community discussions about access to technology. More research is needed to determine how faculty members can increase their advocacy around this important topic.

This study has several limitations. These limitations include: (a) the low response rate, (b) the exclusion of students and faculty from other disciplines, and (c) the reliance on self-reported data. While these findings cannot be generalized to students and faculty from other universities or programs of study, this data shows that faculty and students from two different state universities had similar educational and well-being needs. This can help higher education plan for this current pandemic and potential future pandemics. Another limitation with the study design is the data collected from one survey questions: I felt comfortable with Canvas prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that Maryland faculty felt more comfortable utilizing the learning management system, Canvas. This data is most likely related to the fact that faculty at the university in

Kentucky do not utilize this specific learning management system, instead they utilize Blackboard. Therefore, this question needs to be broadened in future studies (e.g., comfort utilizing their learning management system).

Conclusion

Understanding the impact of a global pandemic on the educational, personal, and professional experiences of students and faculty can provide invaluable information for educators. As a part of an emergent area of exploration, this study included participants at social work programs in two states to determine how well-being and educational success were influenced by COVID-19. Findings from this study shed light on the fact that students and faculty need support, both tangible and intangible, from programs in order to be effective in the classroom. Continued research needs to be done to better assess the long-term impact of these types of unprecedented incidents on higher education.

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