

Article

Nurturing Minds and Sustainability: An Exploration of Educational Interactions and Their Impact on Student Well-Being and Assessment in a Sustainable University

Cristina Tripon ^{1,*} , Iulia Gonța ¹ and Aurelia Bulgac ²

¹ Teacher Training and Social Sciences Department, University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest, 060042 Bucharest, Romania; iulia.gonta@upb.ro

² Department of Psychology, The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, 050663 Bucharest, Romania; abulgac@yahoo.com

* Correspondence: cristina.tripon@upb.ro

Abstract: To meet the growing demand for sustainable education, many universities have begun to integrate sustainability into their curricula. Additionally, universities are increasingly investing in digital technologies that enable them to deliver educational content in a more sustainable manner. The research results showed that students' interactions with teachers in a hybrid environment, such as in a STEM university, can have a significant impact on student performance. The research results indicated a positive relationship between the educational environment and the well-being perceived by the students. The results showed that when the educational environment was improved, the students felt a greater sense of well-being. Furthermore, the results showed that students who felt a greater sense of well-being also perceived the educational environment to be more positive, and an improved educational environment can lead to an increased sense of well-being for students. This could be achieved by creating a more supportive and motivating educational environment, which could, in turn, lead to improved academic performance and mental health. The research found that there was a negative correlation between the students' perceived assessment and evaluation related to their well-being. This suggests that students who felt that their assessment and evaluation were unfair or inappropriate were more likely to have poorer well-being than those who perceived their assessment and evaluation as fair and appropriate.

Keywords: education; digitalization; assessment; well-being; students; sustainable university



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1. Introduction

Sustainable education is an approach to learning and teaching that focuses on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of our planet. It is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses a wide range of topics, from environmental science to economics and law. Sustainable education encourages students to think critically about their impact on the environment, to understand how the decisions they make today can affect the world tomorrow, and to develop the skills necessary to become successful stewards of the planet.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 goals that aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. Educational institutions have been at the forefront of the digital transformation and have been working to align their strategies with the SDGs. Universities have embraced digitalization to improve student learning, research and development, and sustainability practices [1].

To meet the growing demand for sustainable education, many universities have begun to integrate sustainability into their curricula. This includes initiatives such as incorporating sustainability topics into educational programs [2], creating new courses that focus on sustainability [3], and encouraging research into more sustainable practices. Additionally,

universities are increasingly investing in digital technologies that enable them to deliver educational content in a more sustainable manner [4]. Examples include online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and interactive simulations of environmental systems.

Digitalization has enabled universities to create more efficient methods of teaching, learning, and research. Universities are using online learning platforms to provide students with access to lectures, tutorials, and assignments from any location. This has enabled universities to extend their reach to students from different parts of the world. In addition, universities are utilizing digital tools to facilitate research, development, and collaboration [5]. They are leveraging data science and artificial intelligence to analyze data and create better solutions for their research needs [6].

Universities are also leveraging digital tools to achieve sustainability goals. They are using technologies such as renewable energy, electric vehicles, and smart building automation to reduce their carbon footprint and promote sustainable practices. Furthermore, they are using digital tools to measure, monitor, and manage their resources and improve their efficiency [7].

Digitalization has enabled universities to become more efficient and promote sustainability practices. The use of digital technologies has also enabled universities to reduce their carbon footprint. By shifting most or all their educational activities to the digital space, universities can reduce their energy consumption and their overall use of materials. Digital technologies also allow universities to reach a much larger audience, enabling them to share their expertise with students around the world [8].

2. Digitalization in the Context of Students' Well-Being and Assessment

Universities are increasingly digitizing their operations to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and create new opportunities for students. Digitalization has had a major impact on student well-being and assessment, with the introduction of new technologies and platforms for learning, communication, and assessment [9].

The use of digital technologies has enabled universities to offer more flexible and convenient learning experiences, allowing students to access materials and participate in activities from anywhere with an internet connection. This has had a positive impact on students' well-being, as it has enabled them to maintain a better balance between their studies and personal life and better manage their time.

Digitalization has revolutionized the way that universities provide feedback to their students. With digital tools, universities are now able to provide students with more timely feedback on their performance, which can help to foster trust between the student and the institution.

For example, digital assessments can be graded and returned to students much faster than traditional methods, providing them with immediate feedback on their work. This helps to improve the students' understanding of the material and to ensure that they are on track to meet their academic goals. Similarly, digital feedback tools allow for continuous communication between staff and students, providing feedback on a regular basis. This helps to build trust between the student and the institution, as the student can feel more secure in their knowledge of the material when their institution is providing regular feedback and support.

The digitalization of STEM University has had both positive and negative impacts on the social fabric of the campus. On the positive side, digitalization can provide students with a platform to interact with each other and form communities of like-minded individuals, regardless of where they are from. The ability to connect with others from across the globe enables students to build new friendships, discover common interests, gain access to new resources, and create a much stronger sense of community overall. On the other hand, digitalization can also create a barrier between students on campus. As technology advances and students begin to rely more and more upon the digital world, physical interactions between students can suffer. It can be difficult to form meaningful relationships and genuine connections when everyone is focused on their own technological devices and

digital activities rather than learning from one another in person. Additionally, a digital divide may arise between those with access to the latest technologies and those without. Another downside is that digitalization can lead to a less social university atmosphere. Digital technology can create physical and psychological barriers between students and their peers, making it more difficult to form meaningful connections and a sense of community. It can also encourage students to become isolated and socially awkward in the real world. Additionally, it can limit the number of physical interactions and in-person conversations, inhibiting important social skills. It is ultimately up to the students and faculty to ensure that digitalization does not become a hindrance to student's social lives but rather an opportunity to foster stronger connections and increased understanding between those of different backgrounds.

2.1. New Learners' Interaction Patterns

Digitization has a major impact on teaching and learning processes. It is considered a moment of transformation and challenge, but it can also be an unsettling factor. One of the greatest opportunities comes from the development of the concept of universal access to education throughout life [10]. While technological advances in education have made life easier for students [11], at the same time, studies showed that students prefer hybrid courses compared with those offered entirely online [11,12]. Therefore, by analyzing data and results collected from various research papers, we can identify and evaluate specific behaviors, as well as discover problems related to specific communication styles and new interaction patterns among participants. In this way, it is possible to identify some of the emerging trends in contemporary pedagogy that have influenced and will continue to influence the importance of teaching, considering formal and informal learning, and promoting collaborative learning. At the same time, the digitization of the educational environment raises questions related to the identification of important new parameters for maintaining the organizational quality of the educational process. In connection with the digitization of teaching and learning processes, the concept of efficiency in teaching, and thus, in learning is being reformulated. Therefore, an online learning space is currently being used to validate the effectiveness of the teacher–student interaction model from three perspectives: teacher–student interaction, the students' ability to solve innovative problems and learning outcomes [13]. Therefore, in addition to the parameters that define and support the quality of teaching and learning processes, the interaction between teachers and students can also be considered a factor.

Teacher–student interaction is crucial to improving the quality of education [13]. This is because the background to the element of teacher–student interaction is based on the perspective of social constructivist learning theory, which focuses on the relationship between cooperation and communication. Alongside developing learning and creating new knowledge [14], Bandura's social constructionist theory focuses on influencing self-efficacy. The process of learning and education is, therefore, a social one. In addition, the content of the teacher–student dialogue consists of several indicators, such as acquiring knowledge, building skills, developing emotions, and building values. From a constructivist perspective, people learn through experience and construct their knowledge through their interaction with the world [14]. Humans depend on communication and interaction with others in the learning process and in acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, in the context of the digitalization of education, teacher–student dialogue is expected to have aspects of dynamic dialogue systems and multifaceted processes.

Recent research showed that changes in sociocultural spaces are leading to changes in the functional nature of traditional educational settings. Furthermore, with the use of technology, the role of teachers is also changing, and the introduction of digitization in education aims to make active learning much easier for students [14]. In the classical form of education, students played a passive role in the teacher–student interaction system. Dialogues most often took place in a format in which the teacher was the sole source of information and knowledge. They were the sole organizer, authority in the field, and the

leader in educational activities. In the context of digital learning, teacher–learner interaction increases under certain aspects of mutual support. In other words, teachers and students act as motivators for each other. Teachers motivate students through their attitude and enthusiasm for knowledge and inquiry, while students can be creative, original, and a source of inspiration for teachers to find new learning methods and patterns. Interaction and communication in a digital context mean learning together or, as some authors put it, “co-creating new knowledge” [14]. Services such as resource sharing, teaching support, analysis/evaluation, and teaching management provided by online learning spaces greatly support the smooth implementation of exchange activities between teachers and students. Resource-sharing services help students to access and share resources in a personalized way to achieve co-creation and sharing goals [13].

Another feature of teacher–student interaction in digital environments relates to the intervention of digital devices between teachers and students. Communication in the classical form requires direct contact between participants, and recognition is both verbal and non-verbal. A direct feedback channel is created through the responsiveness of gestures, facial expressions, intonation, vocal timbre, and behavioral patterns. The classic communication model consisted of sending information (sender) and receiving immediate feedback. In this way, the interaction took place in a single space-time coordinate system. All participants in the interaction had the same context.

In the emerging social context, teachers must learn how to conduct effective educational communication not only with face-to-face instruction but also in the expanded digital teaching environment. This situation increases the scope and variety of educational tasks to maintain the quality of the educational process.

Technology is enabling innovation and forcing significant and diverse changes in instructional formats, for example, the presence of various digital devices, such as interactive whiteboards, the possibility of real-time access to some databases, some virtual laboratories, the possibility of the virtual simulation of some experiments, the variety of handling processing, and the availability of various software applications, may overlap with training and learning live content. In addition, teachers can create complete and diverse information about students, classroom activities, personal activities, past grades, and big data databases, which will greatly influence the format of teaching, the learning process, decision-making, and evaluation. Moreover, the accurate description of the student’s activity gives the teacher the opportunity to make valid prognoses about the student’s performance, the best methods to be used, and the most suitable methods relative to the student’s level. This situation certainly raises new ethical issues. From this perspective, in the context of the digitalization of education, we talk about innovative learning interfaces with customization options, contextual information, quickly accessible references, and personalized assessment [10].

The teacher–student interaction model refers to a process in which teachers and students use various learning resources to fulfill their specific roles and responsibilities through different teaching and learning activities. The available technologies, cloud computing, instant access to a large volume of information through the Internet, the possibility of analyzing various data, and the interposition of tools that include the existence of artificial intelligence can generate significant changes in the field of education and in the current method of teacher–student interaction, and these, in turn, can lead to the development of new teaching formats, and thus, to new interaction formats. These new forms of communication require the development of different interaction models that facilitate learning in all areas. These activities use different behaviors in the learning process to achieve instructional goals through mutually influencing interactions. The challenge is to maintain an accelerated learning pace, improve the quality of discussions, further develop problem-solving skills, and improve adaptability to highly dynamic and interactive learning situations. The literature describes the following three forms of education: simulation, gamification, and augmented/virtual reality. Teacher–student interactions in these cases

are highly individualized and customized to specific needs, but the role of the facilitator rests with the teacher.

However, teacher–student interaction in digital education remains a key factor influencing student learning performance. Recent research data suggests that interactions between teachers and students not only directly affect student learning outcomes but also affect student learning outcomes through the mediating effects of the psychological environment and learning engagement [15]. Furthermore, active participation in the learning process supports learning motivation through the subjective quality of the interaction between teacher and student. To maintain participation in the dialogue at the same time, it is recommended to improve the quality of questions in the learning process.

At the same time, the question arises as to what impact the digitization of education will have on training and self-development in the medium-to-long term. In this context, teacher–student interaction can be difficult to maintain in the context of the digitization of learning, as it can lead to difficulties in maintaining focused attention and problems related to maintaining spontaneity. The challenges of learning have increased significantly, all of which affect student retention. Commitment to active learning and difficulties related to self-regulatory and self-organizing abilities are also recorded. To achieve important learning outcomes, students must demonstrate high levels of emotional maturity, high levels of autonomy, and the ability to learn independently. All these aspects are expressed in very different ways by different people, at different ages, and in different areas of study. Interaction and communication take many forms and serve many different roles.

From the perspective of student well-being, digitalization in classroom dynamics has both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that a wide range of digital tools can help students to engage more with their learning materials and develop valuable digital competencies, such as in coding, computer programming, or communications technologies. Furthermore, digitalization can help to engage students in a deeper discussion in a more interactive and safer environment, given the lack of physical contact that can reduce stress during exchanges between classmates.

On the other hand, digitalization can also be detrimental in terms of student well-being. Secondary students might be exposed to cyberbullying, as digital platforms are generally less regulated, while lower-ability students might not possess sufficient digital skills to benefit from the digital resources available. Furthermore, digitalization might reduce meaningful contact with other peers, which can lead to a feeling of isolation and lack of empathy, as well as an increased disconnection from instructors.

Empirically, we know that digital contexts require more dialogue and communication skills from both teachers and students. Achieving the desired performance requires even stronger intersubjective engagement between those involved in the process.

Additionally, there is continuing interest in exploring ways to analyze and facilitate more effective teacher–student interactions in the online environment. Therefore, teacher–student interaction patterns remain an issue for future research, as they serve as evidence of their importance and role as a dominant factor in the efficiency and performance of academic outcomes.

Looking to the future, we are trying to find different strategies to improve teacher–student interaction at different stages of the lesson, at different stages of development, and in different areas. The quality of teacher–student interaction is also reflected in the psychological environment created in such situations. Moreover, the psychological environment as an important and motivating factor in knowledge acquisition is expressed through states of psychological and emotional well-being. Thus, dynamic systems of teacher–student interaction, psychological milieu, and emotional well-being are important educational mechanisms that support newly created educational contexts (important for assessing subjects' quality of life).

In summary, accurate student learning data and an intelligent performance management system can help teachers to better manage their lessons and provide students with a more harmonious learning environment (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the indicators and benefits of digital learning.

Benefits of Digital Learning	Indicators
Accessibility	Digital learning is widely accessible worldwide. It overcomes physical boundaries, making learning possible from any device with an Internet connection.
Engagement	Digital learning activities are highly interactive, engaging, and stimulating, involving graphics, multimedia, and innovative tools, such as virtual reality.
Personalization	Digital learning systems are highly personalized and adapted to each student's specific needs and interests.
Good retention	Digital learning activities and courses are designed with an emphasis on good retention, using repetition and reinforcement to ensure students retain the necessary knowledge and skills.
Cost-effective	Digital learning is far more cost-effective than traditional classroom learning.
Increased productivity	Digital learning can help to increase productivity by increasing the speed at which knowledge is acquired and applied.

2.2. The Influence of Well-Being on the Student's Training and Learning Process

Seligman's well-being construct defines well-being as, on the one hand, a balance and harmony of several areas of personal life: professional achievement, interpersonal relationships, social life, hobbies, and material well-being. On the other hand, well-being also has a dynamic aspect that involves being supported by constructive interactions with those around, positive emotions (love), involvement (life in flow), help/good deeds for others, gratitude and thankfulness expressed to those around, and effort and enthusiasm for creation and development.

Psychological well-being may also be addressed as a particular empirical construct that has been conceptually and theoretically built because of research that has led to the establishment of a measurement scale made up of six factors that is specific to psychological well-being. The model is based on the theory developed by Carol Ryff [16], who believes that the individual state of psychological well-being, contentment, and happiness contributes to self-acceptance (a positive evaluation of self and one's own life), personal development, finding a purpose in life, positive relationships with others, the ability to resolve different situations (ability to cope with personal life situations and situations in the adjacent environment), and autonomy [17]. Happiness is achieved by achieving a state of equilibrium that can be affected by both life's challenges and rewarding events.

Research on the concept of happiness has raised the question of whether this concept can be operationalized as a universal psychological concept for academic performance. One argument related to this dilemma is that happiness is a subjective, socio-culturally constructed construct this is perceived because of education and an understanding of the meaning of happiness and achievement [18].

Many psychologists have studied the effects of happiness on human functioning and have found evidence that happiness is associated with higher levels of physical, mental, emotional, and social health; self-perception; and more.

In terms of student well-being, the field has been studied in the context of academic progress; changes in learning strategies; or according to various factors such as grades, mental well-being, mental health, coping strategies, and material well-being. This research has considered, e.g., stress, self-esteem, and motivation. Recent research on well-being in the context of education has mainly focused on the relationships between the perceived school environment, school outcomes, and well-being. The results indicate that a positive school environment and self-efficacy status are associated with well-being [19]. Creating an optimal school learning environment and maintaining good health within school facilities is considered an important factor for sound academic and personal development [20].

Happiness in the school environment can be understood as a state brought about by several factors, such as academic (quality of academic atmosphere), community (quality of interpersonal relationships), security (emotional safety), and institutional environment (organizational characteristics of school environment) factors [21]. Whether the classroom setting is well-maintained depends on classroom-related aspects, the level of student

engagement, student–student relationships, and the teacher in a limited/small student group setting (Figure 1. Summary of the indicators that can influence well-being).

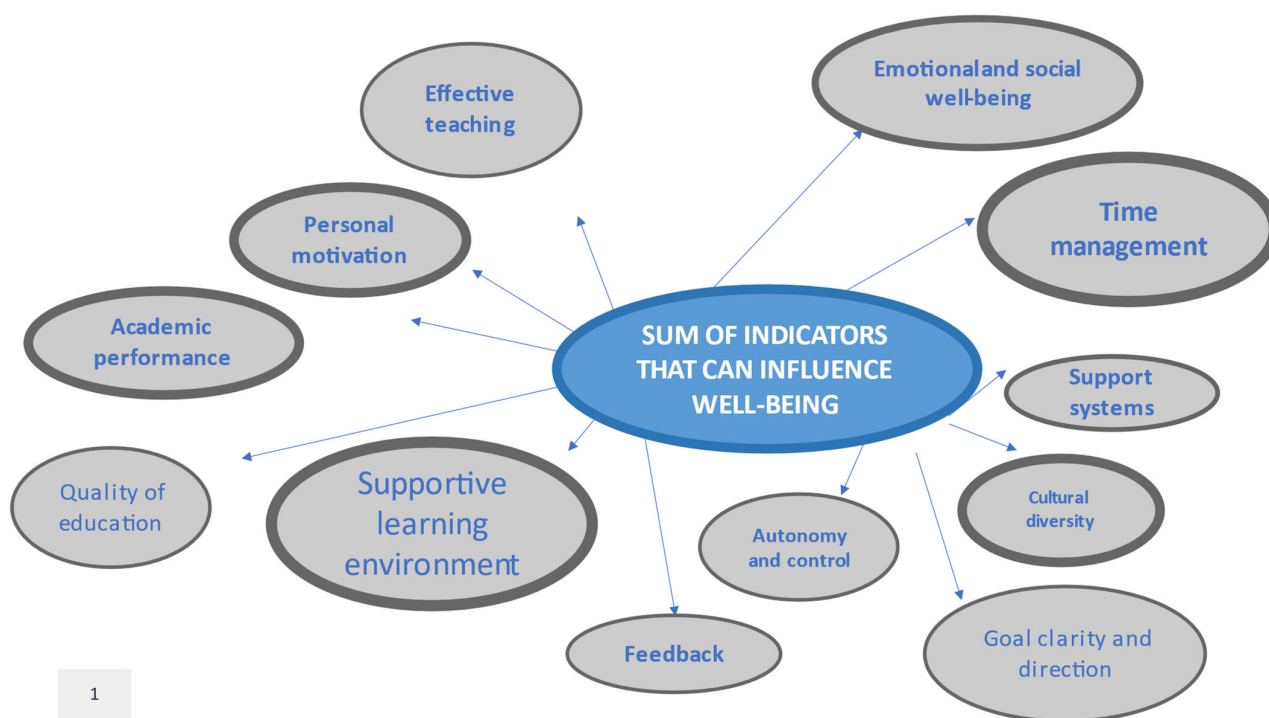


Figure 1. Summary of the indicators that can influence well-being.

Student well-being is also affected by how students manage their intelligence [22]. In addition, certain personality traits play roles as factors that influence happiness; for example, spirituality, courage, tenacity, hope, leadership, vitality, curiosity, love of learning, openness, creativity, perspective, appreciation of beauty and excellence, humor, citizenship, and social intelligence predict increased life satisfaction [23].

The importance of cognitive and emotional self-esteem (the components of happiness) to successful self-actualization demonstrates both the subjectivity of happiness and the importance of dynamic components of such states. On the one hand, success depends on the intrinsic and subjective elements of self-esteem, but on the other hand, personality traits determine self-esteem and the behavioral pathways through which psychological development is achieved and personality is built.

It turns out that happiness depends on the process of constructing one's own subjective and external reality. People who feel helpless (here meaning the inability to change, overcome, or solve life's problems) and have a negative self-perception are impaired, while those who focus on emotional control and constructive self-evaluation demonstrate effective problem-solving strategies.

Another study on student well-being highlighted the interplay between individual characteristics and characteristics associated with the school environment [17]. The research concluded that a comfort approach should include both elements. A simultaneous focus on environmental aspects (such as the school environment) and the individual characteristic of the student allows for a deeper understanding of student well-being. Proper consideration of these two elements can promote academic excellence and personal growth in students.

Therefore, learner well-being can be influenced by the school environment and institutional practices. Students who are satisfied with their learning process interpret their learning experiences as positive and are more persistent in their learning than students who perform poorly. The latter may drop out of school or have behavioral problems [21]. Studies on this subject showed that challenge avoiders and those who cannot overcome difficulties initially have the same skills as challenge seekers and those that display perseverance.

The difference lies not so much in the history of failure as in motivation to solve difficult problems. In an academic context, achievement-oriented motivation and goals (as opposed to performance-enhancing goals) must be underpinned by confidence in one's own abilities through well-being [22,23].

Unfortunately, we have recently observed an increase in self-reported psychological stress among students. Since this area is important to society, increased psychological stress in this group of people can have a huge impact on the population. There are several mechanisms that can mitigate this problem, including a continued focus on preventive measures, mental health promotion, and providing psychological support to students [24].

2.3. The Influence of Well-Being on the Student's Assessment

The well-being of students can be affected by administrative or didactic issues: academic pressure, university culture and systems, difficulties related to scheduling, administrative processes, lack of clarity of teaching materials, low levels of interaction in class, lack of variety in activities [25,26], teaching quality, dissatisfaction with the learning environment/method, poor management of content by teachers, and emotional aspects related to testing/evaluation [17].

The academic performance of students is closely related to their well-being [24]. A positive emotional state of students before evaluation is associated with better test results compared with students who are anxious [17]. Therefore, educational interventions aimed at improving students' well-being contribute to their academic performance.

Students' well-being is influenced by their individual personality characteristics [27], including self-respect and self-confidence. In situations such as exams, students' self-deprecating attitudes can lead to intense emotions, which can negatively affect their results.

Students with low levels of well-being are at greater risk of generating strong thoughts and emotions related to exam failure and have poor coping strategies. To maintain students' well-being in exams and other testing situations, it is necessary to consider the cognitive (worry) and emotional (affective-physiological) dimensions of students [28]. Worry involves negative thoughts and concerns about the negative consequences of failure, while emotional arousal affects the physiological state and manifests as nervousness, increased heart rate, muscle tension, etc. Worry predicts a decrease in students' academic performance: negative emotions reduce attention, interest, intrinsic motivation, and thorough learning. However, the same (balanced) negative emotions can increase students' extrinsic motivation in their attempt to avoid failure [29].

In a study on the evaluation and management of student activity using relaxation and cognitive restructuring techniques, Akinsola and Nwajei [30] demonstrated that test anxiety, trait anxiety, and depression coexist and are positively related. Additionally, the results showed that they are negatively related to academic performance. In conclusion, the researchers stated that the combination of relaxation and cognitive restructuring treatment reduced anxiety and depression and improved the test performance of the students.

Therefore, it is extremely important for educational institutions to take measures to ensure that the evaluation of students is accompanied by constructive emotional connotations.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Methodology

The need to identify students' perceptions of the online approach to teaching from a sustainable education perspective is one for which the United Nations has set sustainable development goals. In this context, the starting point was how well-being, assessment, and quality educational interactions influence students' perceptions of the online or hybrid modality carried out in universities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research objectives set in the first analyses related to identifying teachers' online learning behaviors in relation to their interest in developing students' well-being as part of healthy educational interactions that promote student-centered learning and how continuous assessment was approached. Regarding the latter, an important element relates to

related teacher practices or changes that occurred because of moving teaching activities into a hybrid format.

3.2. Research Participants and Context

The students participating in the research ranged from second- to fourth-year students undergoing their undergraduate studies at a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) university. Most of them already had experience with both physical and online activities, given the conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, they all had different teaching experiences since they were part of several faculties of the STEM university, not just one. Furthermore, in relation to their gender, a large proportion of them (72%) were boys, while 28% were girls, and the total number consisted of 871 respondents. Participation in the questionnaire was on a voluntary basis, with no benefits other than informal, group discussions about the challenges faced and possible causes. Given the specificity of the STEM approach and the challenges related to the under-representation of girls, balancing the representativeness of the research group was not possible. The Ethics Committee at the institutional level approved the research through the letter of approval.

The STEM university selected is in Romania (top STEM university) and provides students with the best possible education in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and plays an essential role in driving innovation and growth in the global economy, which is a core element of sustainability. Additionally, as technology and innovation evolve, so do the needs of businesses and organizations, and university-level programs provide students with the skills they will need to meet these requirements and be prepared to face the challenges of the future. At a STEM university, sustainability is often addressed through a variety of courses and initiatives. Students explore concepts such as corporate responsibility, energy management, climate change, and environmental conservation. These curricula often include hands-on experiences in the lab or the field, providing real-world skills that can be applied to reduce the impact of human activity on the environment. In addition, through projects (such as the EELISA project) and research opportunities, students gain an understanding of the relationships between economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice. Finally, university projects often provide resources for students to become engaged in sustainability initiatives, such as student clubs and volunteer opportunities.

3.3. Methods and Research Instruments

The research instrument applied was a questionnaire, which was organized according to the following four perspectives: specifics of educational interactions, well-being, students' perception of assessment and evaluation, and technology implications for student learning outcomes. The research instrument was designed to provide researchers with a better understanding of the relationship between these four aspects, as well as provide insight into how each component relates to student learning and academic achievement. Educational interactions were studied through the inclusion of both the student–teacher and the student–student dynamic. The instrument assessed both verbal and nonverbal communication between students and teachers, as well as the level of student engagement in the classroom. This component also evaluated the degree to which students could express their ideas and opinions in an appropriate manner and receive feedback from their teacher. The second component, namely, well-being, examined the extent to which students felt safe and secure in their educational environments. It assessed the amount of support students received from their teachers and peers, as well as the degree to which they could meet their academic and social goals. The final component, namely, perception of evaluation, looked at the extent to which students felt their performance was accurately evaluated. The instrument measured the level of trust between the student and the teacher, as well as the extent to which the student felt they were given an accurate representation of their abilities.

Each category analysis comprised a considerable number of items (Table 2) that students answered based on a Likert scale (1—disagreed with the given statement and

5—totally agreed with the given statement). In the first phase, the instrument consisted of a total of 46 items, but after the pretesting stage, the final number of items was adjusted, mostly in view of doubling the significance or because of the failure to meet the Cronbach's alpha criterion for statistical reliability.

Table 2. Research instruments indicators.

Variable	Items	Alpha Cronbach (α)
I. Educational interactions	1. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of educational interactions between teachers and students?	0.77
	2. Do you feel that teachers consistently provide meaningful feedback to students?	
	3. How often do teachers provide students with clear instructions and expectations?	
	4. Are teachers able to motivate and engage students in meaningful learning experiences?	
	5. Do teachers effectively manage classroom behavior and maintain a safe learning environment?	
	6. Are teachers aware of individual student needs and provide personalized learning opportunities?	
	7. Do teachers provide adequate resources and materials to support learning?	
	8. Do teachers respond to questions and inquiries from students?	
	9. Do teachers promote a positive classroom culture that encourages student participation and engagement?	
II. Assessment and evaluation	1. How often do you find that assessments and evaluations accurately reflect your learning?	0.72
	2. Do you feel that assessments and evaluations are fair and provide a true measure of understanding?	
	3. Do you feel assessment and evaluation processes contribute to your overall educational experience?	
	4. Do you think assessments and evaluations are sufficiently challenging and rigorous?	
	5. Do you find the feedback and guidance help you receive following assessments and evaluations?	
	6. Do you feel assessments and evaluations could be improved to better reflect your learning?	
	7. Do you think assessments and evaluations are meaningful and assess relevant subject material?	
	8. Do assessments and evaluations motivate you to learn?	
III. Well-being	1. Do you feel supported by your teachers in the hybrid classroom?	0.78
	2. Do you feel motivated to participate in the hybrid classroom?	
	3. Do you feel understood by your peers in the hybrid classroom?	
	4. Do you feel connected to your classmates in the hybrid classroom?	
	5. How would you rate the quality of your learning experience in the hybrid classroom?	
	6. How would you rate the level of engagement you feel in the hybrid classroom?	
	7. How would you rate the level of safety you feel in the hybrid classroom?	
	8. Do you feel respected by your teachers in the hybrid classroom?	
	9. Do you feel your needs are met in the hybrid classroom?	
	10. Do you feel listened to in the hybrid classroom?	
	11. Do you have access to resources that help you take care of your wellbeing?	
	12. Do you could participate in activities that improve your well-being?	
IV. Technology implications	1. Do students feel safety about using technology to enhance their learning?	0.75
	2. Do students have challenges to face when using technology for learning and instruction?	
	3. Does technology change the way students interact with instructors?	
	4. Do technology impacted the way students receive and process information?	
	5. Do technology help improve student engagement with course material?	
	6. Have teachers strategies ensure students are using technology safely and responsibly for learning and instruction?	
	7. Does technology help instructors to assess student progress?	

Another instrument was applied, namely, a focus group, to receive some details about some data collected from the quantitative instrument, namely, educational practices, in

relation to some aspects of the research that could be improved from the perspective of the students participating in the research.

As seen in Table 3, the Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics showed that the research tool was valid and could be used to collect data for analysis (each dimension studied satisfied the reliability requirement, i.e., being more than 0.7) [31].

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics.

Indicators	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Educational interactions	9	0.77
Assessment and evaluation	9	0.72
Well-being	12	0.78
Technology implications	7	0.75

4. Results

The mean analysis suggested that teachers who provided students with clear instructions and expectations (I3), motivated and engaged students in meaningful learning experiences (I4), managed the classroom behavior and maintained a safe learning environment (I5), were aware of individual student needs and provided personalized learning opportunities (I6), and responded to questions and inquiries from students (I8) were the most important resources as educational interactions indicators in the hybrid classroom. In contrast, the respondents reported a lack of meaningful feedback from teachers (I2). The findings pointed out that educational interactions can have a significant impact on student performance. The variables associated with the assessment and evaluation had mean scores varying from 4.32 to 4.65. The Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted to examine the differences in the educational environment according to the students' well-being. No significant differences were found ($x = 1.69$, $p = 0.63$), with a mean rank score of 523.30 for the educational environment and 547.43 for students' well-being. Statistically significant differences were found for teachers related to the educational environment and students' well-being ($U = 7.62$, $p = 0.006$), demonstrating that student well-being was more significantly perceived as a predictor by teachers who were more likely interested in the educational environment [31].

Table 4 presents the correlations between the factor scores computed during the factor analysis. All the correlations were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. As anticipated in the research hypothesis, teachers' interest in creating healthy educational relationships were positively and significantly correlated with students' well-being. Antithetically, the research hypothesis stated a negative relationship between educational interactions and the students' perceived assessments and evaluations. The correlation between the two variables was negative and statistically significant, as the data in Tables 4 and 5 show.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the variables included in the model.

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Educational environment	1	10	5.6	2.4	−1.2	−0.8
Well-being	1	10	6.2	2.3	−0.7	−1.2
Assessment and evaluation	1	10	7.3	2.1	0.4	−1.0
Technology implications for learning	1	10	6.3	2.5	0.6	−1.2

Research results showed that students' interactions with teachers in a hybrid environment, such as in a STEM university, can have a significant impact on student performance. This study demonstrated that hybrid learning environments provide students with the opportunity to be more engaged with their instructor, which can lead to an improved understanding of the teaching material. Additionally, hybrid learning environments provide students with the flexibility to work at their own pace and to work on their individualized learning plans, which can help to further facilitate student success. In addition, research

demonstrated that hybrid learning environments can create more meaningful interactions between students and teachers. This environment provides students with the opportunity to ask questions and to receive feedback from the instructor in real time. This direct feedback can help to improve understanding, lead to long-term learning, and create an atmosphere of collaboration and dialogue between the instructor and students, which can lead to a more engaging learning experience.

Table 5. Correlation matrix of the factor scores computed through factor analysis.

Factor Scores		Educational Interactions	Assessment and Evaluation	Well-Being	Technology Implications for Learning
I. Educational interactions	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	−0.025	0.332	−0.021
	N	871	871	871	871
II. Assessment and evaluation	Sig. (2-tailed)	−0.025	-	−0.426	−0.402
	N	871	871	871	871
III. Well-being	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.332	−0.426	-	0.208
	N	871	871	871	871
IV. Technology implications for learning	Sig. (2-tailed)	−0.021	−0.402	0.208	-
	N	8.71	8.71	8.71	8.71

The research results based on students' perceptions of assessment and evaluation in a hybrid way in a STEM university indicate that hybrid learning can help to enhance the educational experience. Students found the hybrid approach to be more efficient, as it allowed them to receive feedback quickly and make corrections to their work more quickly. In terms of assessment and evaluation, students reported that the hybrid approach was a more effective way to receive feedback on their performance. They found that the assessments were more tailored to their individual needs, enabling them to better understand their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, they found that the assessments allowed them to measure their own progress, as well as evaluate their performance relative to their peers.

This study conducted with students at a STEM university found that hybrid classrooms had a positive effect on student well-being, but not for all students involved. The students reported that they felt more engaged in the hybrid learning environment due to the flexibility it provided. The study also highlighted some of the challenges faced in the hybrid learning environment. Many students felt isolated and disconnected from their peers and instructors, leading to poor engagement and decreased academic performance. Additionally, the lack of in-person interaction can lead to feelings of alienation and anxiety, leading to decreased mental health and well-being. Furthermore, technological issues, such as unreliable Internet connections, unresponsive virtual meeting tools, and the need to switch between multiple devices, could lead to further frustration and difficulties in the learning process.

The research results in the SPSS Tables 4 and 5 indicate a positive relationship between the educational environment and well-being perceived by students. The results show that when the educational environment was improved, the students felt a greater sense of well-being. Additionally, the results show that students who felt a greater sense of well-being also perceived the educational environment to be more positive. Moreover, the results suggest that an improved educational environment could lead to an increased sense of well-being for students. This could be achieved by creating a more supportive and motivating educational environment, which could, in turn, lead to improved academic performance and mental health. Additionally, the STEM university could focus on providing resources and interventions that can help students to develop social and emotional skills, as these can help to improve their well-being.

Research results have found that when students perceive their educational interactions with technology as positive, it leads to improved learning outcomes in the classroom. The students reported feeling more engaged and motivated when interacting with technology-

related tools, such as web-based learning platforms, electronic whiteboards, and simulation software. The study also revealed that students felt more capable of retaining information when technology was utilized in the classroom. The incorporation of technology in the classroom was found to provide students with increased opportunities to collaborate and engage in creative problem-solving, and students reported feeling more confident in their ability to complete tasks independently.

The research found that there was a negative correlation between students' perceived assessment and evaluation related to their well-being. This suggests that students who felt their assessment and evaluation were unfair or inappropriate were more likely to have poorer well-being than those who perceived their assessment and evaluation as fair and appropriate. This could be because feeling like their hard work was not being appreciated or that their efforts were not recognized can lead to increased stress and anxiety. Additionally, feeling that the assessment and evaluation are not tailored to the individual student's needs and learning style can lead to a sense of frustration and exclusion. Digitalization has also changed the way universities assess their students. This leads to improved student motivation, as they can take ownership of their studies and be rewarded for their efforts. Furthermore, online assessments are often more objective, and thus, students are less likely to feel as though their results are biased due to their gender, race, or other factors, as the author reported [32].

The negative statistical results between students' perceived assessment and evaluation related to educational interactions can include increased feelings of stress or anxiety among students due to a lack of understanding of the evaluation process and negative attitudes toward the assessment or evaluation process, leading to decreased motivation and engagement in educational activities, a decrease in student self-esteem resulting from feeling overwhelmed or inadequate when faced with difficult evaluation tasks, increased tension between students and teachers as students feel their performance is being judged unfairly or incorrectly, and a sense of disconnect between students and teachers when students feel the assessment or evaluation process is disconnected from the educational material being taught. All this data was collected during the interview component of this research (N = 12). Changing the context implies changing the tools, and thus, we are talking about the need to develop new models of learners' interaction and communication. In the newly created context, creative courses with an emphasis on emotional depth could become a new trend, while trivial and boring content will fade away [10]. Fostering an effective teacher–student interaction can positively impact learning in the higher education setting [33]. At the same time, some early research estimated that compared with classical education, teacher–student interaction in online education is an important factor that influences student learning effects [34].

5. Discussion and Recommendations

Student-perceived well-being, educational interactions, and assessment and evaluation in online activities are complex issues that have been gaining attention in recent years due to the increasing prevalence of digital technology in the lives of young people. Studies suggested that online activities can have both positive and negative impacts on student well-being. On the positive side, online activities were found to provide students with access to new information, resources, and social relationships that can lead to improved academic performance, enhanced creativity, and increased self-esteem. Furthermore, online activities can provide students with a sense of connection, belonging, and social support, which can help them to cope with stress and anxiety [35]. On the other hand, online activities can also have a negative impact on student well-being, as excessive use of digital technology can lead to increased stress, anxiety, depression, and cyberbullying [36]. To maximize the positive impacts of online activities on student well-being and their perceived impact on assessment and evaluation, we should strive to create a safe and supportive environment for students to engage in digital activities (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Activities to maximize the positive impacts of online activities on student well-being.

1. **Create a positive online space:** Encourage students to create a positive online space using positive language, thoughtful responses, and appropriate content sharing. A positive online space can help to foster a sense of community, support, and communication, all of which are essential for student wellbeing.

Creating a positive online space for learning requires teachers to build a sense of trust and connection with their students. This can be done by encouraging open communication, setting clear expectations, and fostering an environment of respect.

First and foremost, teachers should encourage open communication between themselves and their students. This can be done by creating forums for student discussion, providing private messaging systems, or simply asking for student feedback on a regular basis. This allows students to express their opinions and ideas in a safe space [37].

Second, teachers should set clear expectations for their students. This can be done by providing clear and concise course objectives, outlining expectations for student participation, and developing a grading and assessment system that is fair and consistent.

Finally, teachers should foster an environment of respect. This can be done by creating an inclusive environment that celebrates the unique perspectives and experiences of each student, and by establishing a system of consequences for disruptive behavior or bullying.

By combining these strategies, teachers can create a positive online space for learning that encourages collaboration and respect. When students feel safe, secure, and supported, they are more likely to participate and engage in meaningful dialogue, leading to a more productive and successful learning experience [38].

2. **Engage in meaningful interactions:** Encourage students to engage in meaningful online interactions with their peers, teachers, and other members of the online community. Meaningful interactions can help to build relationships and support, which, in turn, can help to promote healthy student well-being.

Teachers can engage students in meaningful interactions by creating an inclusive learning environment [39]. They should strive to make sure that all students feel respected and appreciated in the classroom. This can be done by building strong relationships with students and actively listening to their ideas and concerns. Teachers should also

encourage students to collaborate and work together in group activities. This helps to foster the development of meaningful interactions as students learn to work together to solve problems.

Teachers should also create engaging, hands-on activities for students that allow them to explore and discover new concepts [40]. This type of learning encourages students to think critically and engage in meaningful conversations with their peers. By providing opportunities for students to ask questions and share their ideas, teachers can create an environment that encourages meaningful interactions.

Teachers should use technology to their advantage. For example, by using interactive tools, such as online forums and video chat [41], teachers can open discussions and activities that allow students to interact and collaborate in new ways. This can help to create meaningful interactions that can be beneficial for both teachers and students.

3. Set boundaries and establish rules: Establish boundaries and rules for online activities to help to ensure that all participants feel safe and respected [42]. For example, establish rules for appropriate language, content sharing, and interactions with other members of the online community.

Teachers can set boundaries and establish rules in the classroom by communicating clearly with their students. They should explain the rules and expectations at the beginning of the year, and consistently reinforce them throughout the school year [43]. The rules should be fair and reasonable and should promote respect, safety, and learning. Teachers should also have clear consequences for breaking the rules. Additionally, teachers should create a classroom environment where students feel safe and respected. This means that teachers should avoid yelling, belittling, or shaming students. Instead, they should use positive reinforcement to encourage and reward good behavior. Teachers should also take the time to get to know their students so that they can respond to their individual needs. Teachers should set boundaries for themselves as well. This means that they should respect their own time and energy, and not allow students to take advantage of them. Students should understand that teachers have lives outside of the classroom and that they need to respect their boundaries [44]. Teachers should also take care of themselves emotionally and physically so that they can be present and available for their students.

4. Encourage healthy habits: Encourage students to practice healthy online habits, such as taking breaks from their devices, limiting their time online, and getting adequate sleep [25]. Healthy habits can help to reduce the risk of developing mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

Teachers have a unique opportunity to encourage healthy habits among their students. By leading by example, teachers can demonstrate the importance of healthy habits and help students to understand how to make healthy choices throughout their lives [25].

5. Promote self-care practices: Promote self-care practices, such as deep breathing and mindfulness, to help students to manage their stress levels [43]. Teachers can encourage students to practice self-care by setting aside time during the day for physical activity. This could include taking a walk, doing yoga, or participating in other activities that help to reduce stress levels. Teachers should also provide students with resources to help them manage stress and anxiety, such as mindfulness exercises and meditation resources [45]. Furthermore, teachers should model the self-care practices they promote. This could include taking breaks throughout the day, engaging in physical activity, and setting realistic and achievable goals. By modeling self-care practices, teachers can encourage students to prioritize their own mental health and well-being.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is evident that teachers play an essential role in the world of digitalization. They are responsible for providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge for them to succeed in a digitalized world. Through guidance and support, teachers

can help students to develop the essential skills and capabilities required to navigate the digital landscape.

Digital technologies can provide a range of sustainable solutions to students' learning. These solutions can range from utilizing digital tools to allow for access to a wide variety of resources to promoting student interaction through tools like artificial intelligence. With the move away from traditional didactic practices, digital technologies allow for the development of more personalized, individualized approaches to student learning. For example, digital tools offer more opportunities for personalized feedback, guidance, and scaffolding of learning to meet the student's individual needs. By guiding students to become experts in their own learning, students can develop lifelong learning skills and resilience. Moreover, digital learning tools can promote collaboration, social connection, and community engagement. Through digital means, students can connect and communicate with their peers or teachers, as well as participate in digital spaces, such as forums and discussion boards. This provides an opportunity for students to connect in meaningful learning conversations that foster collaboration, comprehension, and an understanding of different perspectives. Digital technologies also provide resources to build sustainable learning models that are both cost-effective and reduce environmental impact. Through students learning online, for example, the use of resources such as paper and books can be reduced. Additionally, online resources can be re-used and updated, eliminating the need to produce additional printed materials.

Furthermore, teachers can help students to understand, evaluate, and analyze the vast amount of information available on the Internet and use it in meaningful ways. Teachers can also provide a valuable source of emotional and mental support to their students, helping them to overcome the challenges of digitalization. The role of teachers in the world of digitalization is therefore invaluable and should be recognized and respected.

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