

Impact of COVID-19 on education and mental health of universities students in Bangladesh: A theoretical perspective

Farha Siddique

Lecturer

Faculty of business administration
Coxsazar International University

Adita Barua

Assistant professor

Faculty of business administration
Coxsazar International University

Abstract:

Current situations of covid -19 pandemic has affected people of all ages all over the world including universities students physically and mentally. Understanding covid-19 impacts on university students mental health in Bangladesh has been limited, yet is a necessary population to study, since they are particularly vulnerable to stress and mental health issues. This study assessed impact of covid-19 on universities students' education and mental health. The aim of this study is to identify how long covid-19 situation impact the education and mental health of universities students in Bangladesh. In this pandemic situation students are detached from their education that also create mental pressure on them. This work represents descriptive survey research design based on observations, discussion with students both private and public university, face to face interview and published data from 8th September(2021) to 30th November (2021). Covid 19 has affected worldwide education sector by shutting down many institutions to control the pandemic situations including Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, near 40 million students are now out of school. Besides this universal problem universities are facing deprivation varies depending on socio-economic status of mass students, lack of technology, parent's capability, transmission to online class etc. Like most countries Bangladesh also using online platform for conducting classes which are enough to teach students like offline education. This article highlights how covid -19 impact universities students in BD. They are facing some challenges to continue their study, which are highlighted here.

Keywords: - Education and mental health, Transmission to online class, Assessment and evaluation, E-learning knowledge, Anxiety and depression etc.

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I. Introduction and Backgrounds:-

The novel coronavirus disease 2019(covid-19) flowed at the last of December 2019 in Wuhan city of China. The initial outbreak of covid-19 Wuhan spread heavily and affecting the other parts of China. The authorities in Wuhan took unexampled steps and locked down the whole city on January 23, 2020 to mitigate the risk of further disease pilotage. Later on, the same unprecedented measure were taken in the other places of China. Within a few weeks, the some disease were identified at other countries and soon, it became a global threat. Spread rapidly all over the world and created a menace on the mind of people. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced the covid-19 epidemic in pandemic, that is this disease transmitted epidemic to pandemic more rapidly. As March of 2019, the virus has spread to more the 177 countries and tainted more than 722435 patients, resulting in more than 33997 death in China, Europe, Iran, South Korea and the United States are major affected countries in the world.

On March 13, 2020 the WHO stated the Europe had become the new epicentrum of the pandemic. China took invasive action and recovering the new cases. Unfortunately other countries like Italy, Iran, and the US, India, Bangladesh and other countries in Europe failed to handle the situations like China.

To minimize the risk of covid-19 many countries had introduced travel restriction both domestically and internationally. To prevent the pandemic situation public health experts and government officials are taking several measures including social distance maintaining self-isolation, quarantine, using mask, hand sanitizes and

gloves as safety measure and taking extra health facilities for infected to control the disease. People are asking to work from home. People like above 60 was at the more risky position. Several countries announced to close museums, Movie Theater, swimming pools, picnic spot, tourist area and places with mass gathering, inclusive of educational institutions to fight this unseen foe. Preliminary evidence suspected that only elderly people were mass affected and children were less affected by the virus. However doctors reported a few case of virus among body of children. The virus should be kept away from pediatric population because its very difficult to stop sick children to play with friends and hug with his/her mother. The widespread closer of school, college, universities and other educational institutional to protect adult and young people from the virus. As of March 25, 2020, 150 countries have closed schools and impacting 80% of the world's students. In Bangladesh it was affected from March, 17 2020 and still maintain this closure.

To raise concern about the current pandemic most of the countries in the world either postponed or cancelled all campus activities like physical class, sports, seminar, workshop, competition both intra and inter, conference and miscellaneous activities. Rapidly universities have move from face to face class to online class delivery system. In this review, author highlight the potential impact of the terrible covid-19 outbreak on the education and mental health of universities students.

II. Literature Review:

The capital of Chinese province Hubei, Wuhan city has deposed the emergence of a new lower respiratory tract disease on 31st Dec 2019. Chinese scientists were able to find the virus resulting in the epidemic, later identified as the covid-19. In March 2020 the WHO has declared covid-19 to be a pandemic (Chahrour M, Assi S, Bejjani M, et al.) (March 21, 2020).

Patients and health professionals needs mental health interventions to those who are in need. Patients suspected covid-19 may experience fear of the consequences of infections by new fatal virus and mandatory 14 days quarantine results in boredom, loneliness, and anger, mental health problem created among patients and health worker (Xiang YT, Li W, Zhang L, Zhang Q, Cheung T, et al. 2020)

The covid 19 situations impacts all spares of life including most important education sector. Since outbreak started all over the world most of the educational institutions have closed or started online classes. This study was undertaken to know the impact of covid 19 on universities students including their mental health anxiety and depression. Study showed that Bangladeshi students are facing high level of anxiety and depression symptom during this pandemic. (Islam et al. 2020, Jamilah et al. 2020)

Ahmed et al 2020 found that universities students have had higher level of stress, anxiety and depression during the covid 19 pandemic (Ahmed et al. 2020, Cao et al 2020, Wang et al 2020)

Ahmed et al. 2020 also found that higher anxiety and depression symptom among university students than full time employees, part time, govt and non govt employees. Our observation of impact of covid 19 and mental wellbeing consistent with covid 19 literature among Bangladeshi student sample (Islam et al. 2020, Khan et al 2020). Overall the impact of covid 19 and mental health dispositions for college student, as surveyed in April 2021, which was found to be high during the beginning months of the pandemic for Bangladeshis (Sakib et al 2020). Moreover, our observation did not differ significantly by gender, age, educational level, literature on university students have also found insignificant differences across this group (Ickes et al. 2015, Liu et al. 2019, Saleh et al. 2017). In terms of gender, there has been some inconsistency in the literature. Islam et al. 2020 found male experienced high level of psychopathology the female. However Wang et al 2020 found that female and male students show significant associations with anxiety, depression, and stress during the covid 19 outbreak in China. The pandemic and danger of covid 19 mean that people should not to be alert for their health and mental wellbeing. Precaution and preventive measure can decrease this situation like distancing (Casale and Flett 2020).

Now students are more considering about their future, career. What will happen if this situations will enlarge? They are more depressed as they can't end their semester online. So that they fell worry about their future. Majority of the students felt tense about the effect of the disease, and who were afraid of their future in the pandemic. At this stage of pandemic, fear anxiety and worry were pervasive, anticipated, and present (Ahmed et al. 2020, Lee et al 2020)

During April 2020 when participants were surveyed, only one third of the participants felt worried about the confidence that covid 19 pandemic would not be an issue in Bangladesh. Even though some participants did not feel that the pandemic would be create problem to Bangladesh, all educational institutions closed beginning March 18, 2020, due to covid 19 outbreak in the country (UNICEF 2020). As a result, first line emergency response, all students return to their home or other private residence unaffiliated with their universities. Students daily life become confined and govt restricted them to remain home. The time is enlarging gradually due to extreme face of corona like Delta variant.

III. Methodology of the study:

The study employed the descriptive survey methods with the interactive interview via online in the pandemic area and offline field works for collecting data in possible places covering approximate 3000 students from both private and public universities. This method was used because it gives greater room to study the subject matter and ensures that inferences can be made about some characteristics attitude and behavior of the population in the study.

The populations of this study is universities students of Bangladesh covering both private and public universities students. The researchers has used both the primary and the secondary data for the purpose of this study. Secondary data were collected from available publications, research studies, articles and website.

Primary data were collected from based on observations, face to face conversation with students, and open interview with students. Researcher visited universities to observe and talk with students informally.

Challenges:-

Here are some challenges universities students of Bangladesh are facing due to covid -19 prevalence:-

1. Transmitted to online class from face to face class:-

The first challenges universities students of Bangladesh are facing is shifting from face to face class to online class. Because they are new to this platform for learning. As Bangladesh is developing country there is not enough advance in e-learning. E-learning platform is new for most of the students in BD. Worldwide online teaching is not a new mode of teaching and learning. But in case of Bangladesh its something new. Many faculty members are getting training on online teaching either for the lecture delivery mode or add on new featured to face to face education. Nevertheless some faculty members who are not techno-friendly will not be able to conduct online platform more efficiently. There is also a question arises that for the faculty members as they are capable to use technology. Furthermore, computer, laptop and other devices at home have very demand from parents, who have to work from home. Thus faculty members are facing difficulty to work from home. Also, many universities have lacking's for adequate technology or other resources to conduct e learning and teaching. From students side what about those students who don't have any smart phone, PC or Laptop to join in class? Is it possible to conduct practical work, labs, music and art courses at online? Also quality of online education is much more challenging topic at now in Bangladesh.

2. Assessment and Evaluations:-

Most of the students and teachers are facing now question of fair assessment and evaluations on online. Is there students are loyal or free from plagiarism? How much concern paid by teachers at online assessment and evaluations? Transition from face to face teaching to online class has a severe impact on students assessment and evaluations. Although many years ago technology has used in education but online mode of assessment and evaluations are underdeveloped in Bangladesh. Faculties have to change online assessment mode to fit with fair judgment. Also its very tough to identify or monitor whether students are taking fair or unfair means exam. Faculties and students also faces challenges as how to administer outstanding assignment, viva, presentation and projects works. Again lab test, practical is just impossible on online. In additions students who are live in remote area or poor network system are facing problem giving their exam also unfortunately falling down their CGPA.

3. Supporting devices for online class:-

In Bangladesh most of the students are not habituated with technology. Parents can't effort those technology like laptop, pc, tab, smart phone for their children. That's why many students faces devices problem. For that they can't so in class in proper time. Someone has devices which don't support online teaching learning platform like zoom, Googleclassroom, module, kahoot etc. This is the severe problem many students faces. Who didn't able to complete their semester? Some students dropout the semester in expect of face to face class. So students have to face challenges for supporting devices to conduct smooth running of their class.

4. Poor network system:-

Poor network system is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. Most of the areas are totally out of network and some of the areas where have network but not strong as to support online platform. Universities students come from those area at now they are situated at their home. But lack of strong network they can't properly join class assessment and evaluations. For this reason most of the students drop out the semester because they can't join in evaluation or in test. Bangladeshi students are still facing this problem. This is the big challenges for them.

5. Lack of e-learning knowledge:-

Bangladeshi students are habituated with face to face class. As developing country universities can't effort much more advanced technology in education system. That is we are not entering into education for students also don't have any idea about e-learning. Some of the private universities exercises it but public universities in Bangladesh far away from it. E-learning knowledge is big challenges for them as they don't have much idea about that

universities or our education system responsible for that. In this covid-19 situations universities still lock down. Now students are gradually trying to habituate with that changes in education.

6. Parent's capabilities:-

Majority of the parents of Bangladesh can't effort technology for their children. Because they don't have enough money to afford it. So it's the big challenge for the students of those parents. Also many parent's don't have technological knowledge so they wouldn't pay much attention for this.

7. International student's:-

In Bangladesh there are many international students are studying for whom in the lockdown situation back to their home is just impossible in this pandemic situation. Now universities are closed, it is important to consider that many students don't have any other accommodation facilities outside the campus. It has become great challenges for administration that to arrange food, accommodation and other safety services for international students. Students need to advice for their safety measure. Due to delay in examinations they need to stay at campus that can cause monetary problem. Some students back to their home after flight services has opened. They think delay in their semester ending. At home many students faces problem of computer, laptop, and strong network connections. Again disruptions for international students due to covid 19 may affect the admissions of coming semester.

8. Delay in semester ending:-

Because of covid 19 students can't accomplish their semester in due time. They are facing delay in semester ending, especially public universities students are bigly facing this problem. Private universities in Bangladesh started online class with the closure of universities due to covid 19. But public universities take decisions in some delayed time. Also mass students are present here. So public universities started their online class in delayed time. So of public universities in Bangladesh severely facing this delayed semester ending problem.

9. Lack of personal interactions between teachers and students:

With broadcasts, this is simply not possible to make face to face interactions between students and teachers. It's very much important to connect students with teacher and lecture. If students physically present in the class they can concentrate more on lecture than online class. In online class their concentration can break due to many reason like background sound, connection lost due to poor network, or they can scroll Facebook, Instagram, when occurring online class. But offline class is all of this problem free because there is a face to face connections with students and teachers. So this is a big challenge to grab student's concentration during online class.

10. Travel restrictions:-

Travel restrictions created worldwide chaos for airlines due to covid 19 outbreak has created. Worldwide nations closing their international boarders restricted travel to that country. Faculty members, students, who have already registered for international conference or any other events restricted to travel overseas to mitigate covid outbreak. For this travel restrictions many Bangladeshi students who were admitted into other countries universities they can't join here at right time or students who paid registration fees for international competition, conference like debate faced huge financial problem or mental problem as they could not get there.

Mental health:-

There is also tremendous impact on mental health of universities students'. They fell devastated of their career life. They afraid of their bright future. What will occur in future? Covid 19 outbreak has disrupted the lives of many people all over the world. Further rapid increase in infected cases in this year and universities are also closed for further time they feel uncertainty about their future. What is going to happen? It has created plenty of stress among the mind of students. So, this stress created negative effect on learning and psychological health of a student's. Teachers also experiencing major obstacles in teaching and assessment in the final part of their students. They may likely graduate late due to delay in examinations are going to face global recession caused by covid 19.

Anxiety and Depression:-

Anxiety and depression take place in the mind of students due to this uncertain situation. They worried about their future. Age limit is also fact for getting government job. Students who didn't complete their semester they fell severe level of anxiety and depression. They fell afraid of their future. Even many students drop out from study due to this anxiety. Even they fell now afraid of new variant of COVID 19 can occur. Education can stop at any time. Anxiety and depression now hampering students mind.

IV. Conclusions:

This survey results illustrate the important degree of stress and constraint currently experienced by higher education institutions in Bangladesh. Almost all universities that responded to the survey are affected in a way by COVID-19 situations and crisis faced by all universities.

Results show how much challenges universities students had to face during this pandemic situations. That negatively affect their education and mental health and create anxiety and depressions on them.

In the meantime, in this emerging and ever changing covid 19 context, Universities should take protective measure to slow spread of virus. Students should receive regular information via email or university intranets, health and safety of students should be the top priority. Proper counselling service should be provided to support mental health and well-being of students. Faculty members should embrace technology and pay careful attention to student experiences to make the learning rich and effective. Although universities are open now but students can't recover them from this long covid situation. They are still facing mental health problem anxiety and depression. Now new variant of covid named Omicron, Delta variant newly creating anxiety and depression among students. They also feel afraid of shutdown of university.

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