



UTM

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**ACADEMIC PAPER OUTLINE:
FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH DURING
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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1. INTRODUCTION

OPENING STATEMENT: The pandemic has created a worldwide impact on the people of all ages. It casts a great impact on the mental health of the students.

GENERAL STATEMENTS:

- Most of the students worldwide are affected when their schools and institutions have started to close the operations to curb the spread of this contagious pandemic.
- As is known, most universities worldwide currently have to dramatically switch their learning approach from face-to-face to Open Distance Learning (ODL), thus further inducing anxiety problems among the parties involved, especially the students.
- The research by Cao et al. (2020) related to the psychological effect on university students in China revealed that from the 7,143 students' responses, 0.9% had severe anxiety, whereas 2.7% and 21.3 had moderate anxiety and mild anxiety, respectively.

THESIS STATEMENT: This paper will discuss the factors affecting the mental health of the students' during the Covid-19 pandemic such as **lockdown consequences, financial stress, pre-pandemic High Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) severity, and economic instability.**

2. BODY

FACTOR 1: Lockdown consequences

a) Isolation impacting mental health

- This prolonged quarantine may impede university students' studies, disrupt their daily routines and habits, and hinder their mental health
- Imposing restriction, social distancing, home quarantine is likely to have psychological distress on students and also influence their mental wellbeing (S. Islam et al., 2020).

b) Digital divide

- Looking at university students' there is a number of evidence that students are experiencing awful consequences as the activities of the students and their mental health are being given less priority in this crucial situation.
- The key obstacles in introducing online classes for all in developing countries such as Bangladesh are the lack of sufficient internet speed, computers, mobile data cost, the financial status of the family, and the mental health of students which are associated with the digital divide (Sifat, 2020a).
- The digital divide, which is associated with the region, financial class, gender, and so on, are the challenges to executing online learning effectively.

Evaluation and conclusion : For the majority of the students, this is our first time facing such a major lockdown. Even the governments of the world could not prepare for something so devastating yet so small it can't be seen by the naked eye. The lockdown has affected many people from its sudden and drastic change in all sorts of forms such as mentally, physically, financially, and more. As the author states, how the institution closure forces an emergency shift from traditional learning to online learning, which is associated with the digital divide and many more. However, the best thing we can do is be patient and hope for the best.

FACTOR 2: Financial stress

a) Financial stress for students

- According to WalletHub's in the "2020 College Student Financial survey", more than 13 million college students are anxious about their future finances. (HAJI WAHAB & Othman, 2021)
- Financially, many students today are worrying about debts or student loans, application fees, rental housing fees, books, study materials, student job loss, concerns about their future financial status, future education as well as their career (Brooks et al., 2020; Statista, 2020; Elmer et al., 2020)
- Some of the students have started to find other initiatives to support their studies by exploring freelancing opportunities, looking for jobs in high demand during this period, and many more. (HAJI WAHAB & Othman, 2021)

Evaluation and conclusion : Financial support is one of the crucial issues faced by most students enduring Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, as HAJI WAHAB stated, all parties such as the universities, governments, banking/financial institutions, and student loan organisations need to work together to assist graduates in various ways, including immediate case assistance and temporary loan relief. This ensures that the problem in financial support among university students can be mitigated and managed correctly.

FACTOR 3: Pre-pandemic High Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) severity

a) Pre-existing mental health issues such as ADHD make youth more vulnerable.

- During the early stages of the pandemic, higher levels of pre-pandemic ADHD symptoms were linked to worse reports of cognitive and emotional well-being (Porter et al., 2021).

a) Youth and families with ADHD are burdened by the added stress of coping with abrupt lifestyle changes.

- Based on the socioeconomic (SES) factor, during the early stages of the pandemic, better parental education indicated a higher degree of well-being among youth (Porter et al., 2021).

b) Life-altering makes people with lower levels of ADHD before pandemic report higher levels of cognitive distress during the pandemic.

- Those who are experiencing worsening attention problems are less prepared to deal with the pandemic's unexpected stress and lifestyle adjustments.
- There is a 30% reduction in total hours spent on studies to combat potential dropout and negative effects on learning (Boruchowicz et al., 2022).
- A sudden life change affects a rise of health issues, mortality, and dropout rates among youth (Boruchowicz et al., 2022).

Evaluation and conclusion: Pre-pandemic ADHD severity is one of the risk factors that influenced youth well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Blaire M Porter points out in the article, those who previously suffered from ADHD may need more community and educational support. During an outbreak, youth spend more time at home with their families, so families need to pay more attention to them with psychiatric consultation so that they can be constantly monitored at home.

FACTOR 4: Economic instability impacting the mental health

a) Lack of proper health care:

- As poverty and socioeconomic inequities are prominent in Low Middle Income Countries, and with poor coverage of adequately resourced health-care and social safety nets, it is plausible to expect mental health problems in large sections of communities across Low Middle Income Countries. (Kola et al., 2021)
- In the developing and underdeveloped countries, the students are deprived of many health care facilities needed in the pandemic, which affects their mental state.

b) Lack of availability of digital services:

- In many cases, students' basic right to education has been hampered in the lower income countries as they could not go to school or other institutions for learning.
- Students in Low Middle Income Countries regularly face barriers to accessing online technology due to unequal digital landscapes that prevent youth from accessing the Internet and related virtual spaces. (Rahiem, M. D. H., 2020)

Evaluation and conclusion: Economic instability increases the fatality of the pandemic. Due to the economic instability, both personal and governmental initiatives to curb the severity of the pandemic are hampered. This also impacts a lot on the mental health of the students. It adds more burden to the sufferings of a student. Normally the students are quite tense about shaping their future. In such cases, the arrival of a pandemic only worsens things.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have observed a variety of factors influence youth mental health during the pandemic. Experiencing these challenges might manifest itself in many ways which come either from the individual themselves, conditions, or people surrounding them. These challenges should not be overlooked as it will have long-term consequences for the future generation's well-being, such as pandemic repercussions on youth's education and work.

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