

Original Research Article

COVID 19 Pandemic Situation as Stressors at Workplace - A review

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Article History

Received: 16.05.2021

Accepted: 19.06.2021

Published: 23.06.2021

Journal homepage:

<https://www.easpublisher.com>

Quick Response Code



Abstract: Background: The COVID-19 epidemic has triggered a universal catastrophe never seen before, requiring significant adjustments in workplace stress management. There has never been a research that looked at the presence of mental stresses in the Bangladesh professionals under these circumstances. **Aims:** Throughout the early periods of the pandemic, I looked at the incidence of COVID-19 related anxiety, generalized anxiety, and depressive symptoms among Bangladeshi employees, as well as the factors that influenced these symptoms. **Method:** A review of the literature is presented in this article. Articles were found using Google Scholar, Science Web, and Semantic Scholar. I used COVID-19, corona virus, stress, and stressors as keyword, as well as workplace and stress combinations. Due to a paucity of research analyzing the influence of COVID-19 on employees' psychological fitness, we must rely on studies on existing epidemics. **Results:** In this study, higher levels of stress were found. Health anxiety, Retrenchment, Temporary or permanent Job loss, and slashing of financial benefits etc. all predicted anxiety or melancholy, as well as psychological distress. Low income, loss of income, and pre-existing health problems in self and others were also linked to anxiety and sadness. COVID-19-related anxiety was higher in the older employees. **Conclusions:** This study revealed the prevalence of Psychological Stress somewhat rise in the early phases of the pandemic, and many particular COVID related factors predicted these difficulties. Similar investigations are necessary as the epidemic advances. **Keywords:** COVID-19, Stress and Stressors, Human resource management.

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INTRODUCTION

The epidemic is forecast to boost the number of unemployment. According to the ILO, over 85.0% of informal work is very vulnerable in Bangladesh. Marginalized individuals of low incomes, many of them working and self-employed, would have the most influence. COVID-19 is changing our life completely. Identified in late 2019, it has been classified as a worldwide pandemic and by March 2020. Its negative effects are reverberating across society due to the virus's rapid spread and a lack of foresight to prevent and treat it (Ahamed, 2021). The virus that reason for COVID-19, "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome" corona virus 2, changed the world of work in just a few months starting in January 2020. As companies and consumers adjusted their behavior in reaction to the risk of catching the virus, millions of employees lost their employment or were placed on government assistance programs. For the same reasons, millions more people dramatically shifted their work habits, relocating from workplaces to their homes. As a result of their working circumstances, millions more people were at danger of developing COVID-19. The consequent difficulties for

those in charge of people management have been enormous, and efforts to meet these problems have frequently been heroic (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021). The lockdown caused a negative effect on employment in the UK's labor force and many individuals are facing huge losses in retail business, experiencing worry and unease connected with COVID-19 (Allas, *et al.*, 2020). The virus is likely to worsen current psychological fitness and leading towards the emergence of stress-related problems for many (Horesh & Brown, 2020).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Patients with unexplained pneumonia developed in Wuhan, China in December 2019 (Catton, 2020). Confined study carried out by WHO specialists has verified that this new pneumonia is caused by the pathogens SARS- CoV- 2, which are termed 2019 corona virus disease. On 11 March 2020 WHO indicated serious concerns over the extent and severity of the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic.

This crisis causes the economy and working hours to decrease unprecedentedly. According

to “Asia–Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2020”- estimates over 81 million people will be jobless due to the COVID-19. The crisis has had a widespread impact as the number of employees underemployed has increased as millions of employees are required to work less or nothing. In the second quarter, working hours in Asia and the Pacific fell by an anticipated 15.2% and in the third quarter of 2020 by 10.7% relative to pre-crisis levels. Due to the coronavirus epidemic and oil prices decreases, the deceleration of transfers to the area in 2020 is caused by the global economic recession (Ghazanfari, 2020).

In Bangladesh on 8 March 2020, the initial established case of Covid-19 was recognized. The administration took over two months to shut the country. The Government stopped all services and limited social assembly, with the exception of emergency services. The time included travel, spiritual pursuits, educational establishments and other commercial operations. The unemployment rate rose sharply and companies had to shut down because of a cash flow problem. People's livelihoods have been greatly damaged (Ahamed, 2021). Orders in the Ready made garments (RMG) sector are reported to be suspended for a value of USD 3.17 billion, which endanger the employment and financial protection of millions of employees – most of them women - have been canceled or stopped. Media sources show 70,000 people lost their employment by June 2020 and up to one million jobs will probably be in danger until the end of the year (Asia News -online, 8 June 2020).

The connection between the job and the individual is an essential product of stress. Stress is an imbalance inside an individual that is frequently shown in symptoms such as sleeplessness, excessive transpiration, and anxiety. The amount of tolerance of the individual depends on whether stress is good or negative. People react differently to events that seem to produce the same physiological and psychological requirements outside. Some people react positively by increasing their drive and dedication to completing the work. Other people react less desirably by resorting to alcohol or drug addiction outlets (Ivancevich *et al.*, 1990). This article attempts at identifying the factors that impact mental health via COVID-19. This study detects several stresses from the latest literature connected to their jobs.

METHODS

This article provides a review of the literature. Google scholar, the Science Web and the Semantic Scholar have searched for articles. The Author applied corona virus keywords OR COVID-19, workplace and stress combinations. The focus of this paper is COVID-19 impact on employee's mental health issues that the world is facing now. The Author searched Google's study, Scientific scholars using a mixture of corona virus related keywords and settings, COVID-19 and

workplaces, COVID-19 and the psychological fitness of the employees, COVID-19 and emotionally distressed conditions, COVID-19 and depression. The articles have been selected for our study subject based on their relevancy. The goal was to examine papers that assist to connect epidemiology, psychology and human resource management. I have to draw on current outbreaks such as SARS (Serious Acute Respiration Syndrome) and Ebola because of the lack of research on the impact of COVID-19 on employee psychological fitness. In this example, I searched for items linked to psychological fitness with these epidemics. All the papers examined are listed and included in this report.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A stressor is a demand, event, or scenario that upsets a person's balance and causes heightened autonomic arousal, which triggers the stress reaction (Caughey, 1996). Chronic stress has been linked to anxiety, psychosomatic disease, and a range of other mental issues (Taylor-Brown *et al.*, 1982; Zastrow, 1984). Stress is defined as a state of disparity in the psychological state which is difficult to restore or to compensate (Sanders, 1983). “Stress is a dynamic situation in which a person is presented with an opportunity, demand, or resource that is connected to what the person wants and the outcome is considered to be both unknown and crucial (Schuler,1980)”. Workplace stress is a contributing factor in physical and psychological illnesses, as well as organizational consequences like absenteeism and decreased productivity (Ganster&Schaubroeck, 1991). The emotional and physiological responses to stresses are referred to as stress (Maslach *et al.*, 1996; Zastrow, 1984). Burnout is a particularly significant symptom of prolonged stress, and it can reduce the efficacy of human care workers (Collings & Murray, 1996). Burnout is a condition characterized by emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and diminished sense of personal achievement (Maslach, *et al.*, 1996). Social workers can be stressed and feel burnout more than other working groups (Lloyd, 2002). An increased emotion of emotional weariness, when employees believe they cannot maintain a desired psychological level, is a fundamental component of burnout syndrome. Depersonalization is a second component, in which professionals acquire unfavorable, cynical attitudes and sentiments towards their clients as a result of ongoing stress. Reduced personal accomplishment is the third dimension, which means the worker has a bad attitude about their work and is unhappy with their achievements (Maslach, *et al.*, 1996). Health care Employees, Banking Professionals etc. who are working in front line is facing huge stresses, while consultant had better levels of self and work-support. For developing good mental health management supports are important, their absence can have a large pressure on psychological fitness (Love, *et al.*, 2010).The concept of behavioral arousal is now the most commonly recognized theoretical route for

understanding stress impacts on human performance. Although arousal has performed a lot of beneficial roles in the stress arena in terms of increasing interest and debate, its lack of predicting capacity is a significant flaw (Hancock, 1989). The stressor-strain connection was regulated by social support, which decreased the strains experienced, alleviated professed stressors and moderated the stressor strain relationship. Social support's mediating and suppressive effects on the job stress process were shown to be inconclusive (Viswesvaran, *et al.*, 1999).

Stay-at-home (also known as safer-at-home or shelter-at-home) orders are being used by local and state governments to slow the increase of the corona virus infection in 2019. By remaining at home, we can help reduce the number of people who become ill at the same time, safeguard individuals who are at higher risk of serious disease, and keep our health-care system from being overburdened. Sadly, remaining at home might disturb our daily business, such as working and caring for your loved ones, which is troublesome. These shifts might generate emotions of tension, worry and anxiousness as well as the general uncertainty surrounding this epidemic. These sentiments are natural, and during terrible situations people generally bounce back. No COVID-19 vaccination is presently available. Avoiding being exposed to this virus is the best approach to prevent disease.

Health services are put under excessive strain in the course of acute health emergencies, making their working lives even more stressful than typical (Tam, *et al.*, 2003). A deadly disease, the number of patients in need of treatment substantially enlarged, putting

pressure on health and staff. In addition, doctors feel a higher danger of self-exposure to the most underprivileged patients, which adds to the stress. (Chen MI, *et al.*, 2009; Shiao, *et al.*, 2007). The lack of "Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)" that might develop throughout a pandemic is the compound of this stress (Devnani, 2012). COVID-19 work-related stress, incapable to come back residence due to lockdown, unavailability of alcohol, and so on are among the suicide causes in India (Dsouza, *et al.* 2020).

During a pandemic, the primary stressors are - 1) Perceptions of safety, danger, and risk of infection (Brooks, *et al.*, 2020) 2) Information misconceptions and the uncertainty (Gao, *et al.*, 2020; Garfin, *et al.*, 2020) 3) Isolation and quarantine (Qiu *et al.*,2020;Wang, *et al.*, 2020); 4) shame and communal leaving out, 5) financial loss and job instability (Brooks, *et al.*,2020). Some stresses that have emerged during pandemic outbreaks, according to studies, have long-term impacts (Brooks, *et al.*, 2020). Many of the researchers opined that such stress- related effects persist long after the pandemic has passed and Management have to provide good support to the employees to face such situation.. COVID-19 is still present at the time of authoring this report. As the pandemic is continuing it's impossible to conclude its impact on people's psychological fitness after it has vanished. From research findings on past SARS epidemic, some predictions may be made about the possible stresses that may have a detrimental influence on employees' mental health following COVID-19 like stigma, financial loss, and employment instability, post COVID stress disorder may have a long-term effect (Wu, *et al.*, 2005).

Several Stressors has been summarized from literatures

Health Anxiety	Ripp & Charney, 2020; Trougakos, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Shevlin, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Paul, <i>et al.</i> , 2021
Temporary Salary withdrawal / Partial or no Payment	Allas, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Restubog, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Khamis, <i>et al.</i> , 2021; Shevlin, <i>et al.</i> ,2020.
Temporary Reduction of working Hours / weeks	Allas, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Restubog <i>et al.</i> ,2020
Reduction of financial benefits	Allas, <i>et al.</i> ,2020; Restubog, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Vaccaro, <i>et al.</i> , 2020
Promotion and performance appraisals	Shen, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020; Jia, <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Salas-Vallina, <i>et al.</i> ,2020
Fear of Termination	Shimbo & Nakayama, 2021; Jafri, <i>et al.</i> , 2020
Transfer	Kinowska, 2021; Sun, <i>et al.</i> , 2020
Retrenchment	Tu, <i>et al.</i> , 2021;Salari, <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Elsafty&Ragheb, ,2020;Choudhari, 2020; Khamis, <i>et al.</i> , 2021

Health Anxiety: Fear and terror set in during a pandemic. In fact, following the first casualty and growing media reporting associated to the number of following instances, people's worry levels may go up (Rubin & Wessely, 2020; Trougakos, *et al.*, 2020). Employees in this situation are concerned about them including spouses regarding their health issues (Bai, *et al.*, 2004; Brooks, *et al.*, 2020; Xiang, *et al.*, 2020, Ripp & Charney, 2020). The breakout of COVID-19 and the

subsequent management efforts may cause extensive fear and stress (Zhang, *et al.* 2020a; Shevlin, *et al.*, 2020; Paul, *et al.*, 2021)

Temporary Salary withdrawal / Partial or no Payment, Temporary Reduction of working Hours / weeks, Reduction of financial benefits

Pandemics cause chaos on businesses. As a preventative measure against the intensity and spread of

a pandemic, schools and businesses are closed in Bangladesh from 16 March, 2020 and working hours are reduced in many countries (Tyko, 2020). Due to the loss of revenue, this scenario will have a detrimental influence on people's financial ability (Zhou, *et al.*, 2020). Because firms can no longer function at their prior capacity, the majority of them are closing, resulting in a large number of layoffs and redundancies, resulting in a significant reduction in employment in Bangladesh. Employees are also experiencing partial reduction of salary or financial benefits, reduction of work weeks and working hours.

Promotion and performance appraisals: The employee performance assessment system has been severely hampered as a result of the epidemic. An employee is required to work from home because his or her performance is below par. Professionals from other sectors who operate as frontline fighters, on the other hand, require additional promotional and motivating tactics. "Socially responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM)" focuses on a set of practices targeted at enhancing employees' socially responsible. That is to say, they will persist long after the epidemic has passed. Some predictions made by researcher on previous pandemic experience like employee motivations, appraisals, opportunities (Shen and Benson, 2016). SRHRM suggested keeping employees motivated by offering CSR training and evaluating employee social responsibility in performance reviews, remuneration, and promotions (Zhao, *et al.*, 2019). For example, hotels and travel firms educated and paid workers for welcoming hospital medical staff, aiding community people, providing transport services, and voluntarily working in cabin hospitals. These techniques have the potential to reduce psychological stresses and enhance employee engagements (Shen, *et al.*, 2020; Salas-Vallina, *et al.*, 2020).

Fear of Termination, Transfer, and Retrenchment: In this COVID-19 pandemic condition, a huge number of people throughout the world are unemployed (Shimbo & Nakayama, 2021; Jafri *et al.*, 2020). Work-from-home, wait-from-home, transfer to a remote site, and retrenchment are all common occurrences for employees (Kinowska, 2021; Sun, *et al.*, 2020) Employees commonly express pervasive stress related to employment, status, and other uncertainties including fear of unknown (Tu, *et al.*, 2021; Salari, *et al.*, 2020; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020; Choudhari, 2020; Khamis, *et al.*, 2021)

CONCLUSIONS

As the Covid-19 epidemic spreads throughout the planet, the world is experiencing tremendous economic upheaval. The coronavirus-caused recession may wreak harm comparable to the Great Depression of the 1930's and the unstable post-World War II economy. Food shortages, unemployment, liquidity crises, transportation challenges, remittance shortages, a

drop in exports, and industry shutdowns are just a few of the issues that are expected to develop throughout the world. Our capacity to cope with all these unforeseen obstacles rests in our capacity to acquire lasting competitive advantage and assure a great employment relationship through effective HRM practices.. In the end, managers and leaders in the higher echelon of the hierarchy must join together and use a range of tactics to help all the parties to complete this difficult challenge.

During this crisis moment, the HRM departments must reprogram their working hours. We are well aware that manufacturers and industries face problems owing to the scarcity of employees. Therefore, staff from various organogram levels needs to meet to create a consensus decision that may benefit all stakeholders within the organization, to guarantee the production of goods and services is seamless.

Factories and establishments must restructure their method, schedules, working hours and rotation work in order for them to endure the continuing financial crisis in. To decrease employees' stress, appropriate management assistance from the highest level should be implemented. How supportive are the employers and how the employees perceive it - there is a difference. The perception gap among employees must be identified and how the gap is to be bridged so as to maintain morale and decrease stress, which will increase the company's productivity over time and assure sustainable economic growth.

Future Research

Employees have a specific know-how that helps factories and facilities to maintain their worth and to provide their clients with better value. Pandemic situations might take a long time and fresh pandemics can continue to impact people. So it is important for through future study to know how to maintain employee morality and how to decrease or administer the COVID-19 pandemic like associated stresses.

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Cite This Article: Abdullah Mohammad Ahshanul Mamun (2021). COVID 19 Pandemic Situation as Stressors at Workplace - A review. *East African Scholars J Econ Bus Manag*, 4(5), 104-109.