

COVID-19 CHALLENGE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Sapna*

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting all segments of students learning. The study aimed to investigate the challenge of COVID-19 pandemic on the education of students studying in different foreign universities. The COVID-19 is first and foremost a respiratory disease which has transitioned into pandemic. This virus is a novel coronavirus that has caused health crises around the world. In order to avoid physical contact, the authorities in India and worldwide decided to close schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions. To avoid suspension of classes, the brick and mortar style of teaching shifted to impersonal education through online teaching platforms. This unseen and unimaginable home schooling came as a huge challenge to students learning, impacting 87% of the world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). Everything from teaching to students internal assessment to even games period has moved online, with a lot of experimentation, glitches and uncertainty for everyone. This unexpected disruption might cause or increase inequality and injustice. Educational Institutions in Foreign countries have also been shut down and shifted their platform online to complete the curricula. But this sudden turn of events has brought them face to face with the impact of Covid -19 on a number of Financial and Academic areas. And not only there is an immediate impact but further prospects of admission to these institutions are also affected. The impact can be seen from the fact that the British Council has restricted the access to English Language Tests that happen prior to admission to foreign universities. This paper explores the feedback from international students on their perception of the financial and academic impact of covid-19 on students' education. This study is also being done to test if international students are likely to start their studies as planned. Results indicated that as intrinsic motivation to learn and effort regulation decrease, procrastination increases. Specific strategies for encouraging effort regulation and intrinsic motivation in online graduate students are presented.

Keywords: Foreign Universities, Foreign Students, Covid-19 outbreak, E-Education.

Introduction

The internationalisation of the academic program has proven so successful that a good percentage of the student population are international students. The most obvious reason is the quality assurance and levels of services provided by these institutions. The majority of the international students are from China, India, United states, Hong-Kong and Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Canada, and Thailand. If we look at the data, India comes second after China who are pursuing their qualification from International Universities to earn their degrees.

International students studying in colleges and Universities Abroad

USA	UK	CANADA	Australia
1,095,299	342,620	721,205	720,150

But with the closure of educational institutions due to pandemic, students studying abroad have to come back to their countries. To identify and address the challenges that may be faced by students studying in foreign universities during a flu pandemic, this paper was developed, and evaluated.

* DAV College, Chandigarh, India.

Objective and Methods

- To study the Covid 19 challenge on academics of students studying abroad
- To study the Covid 19 challenge on Assessment and Exams of students studying abroad
- To study the Covid 19 challenge on quality of students work
- To study the Covid 19 Financial challenge on Students Studying Abroad
- To Provide a basis for the promulgation of National and Governmental policies.

Challenge of COVID 19 on Students' Academics

Learning and Assessment

Many students' courses, particularly masters' degrees, rely on overseas institutions to make their career. This infectious pandemic due to COVID-19, however, has made this semester very unusual for the students causing suspension of learning. During the period of necessary social isolation, teaching institutions in all the major countries have suspended classes, internships, projects, which might affect their performance and competency as in foundation year and successive years. In Italy, virtual consulting spaces have been set up in all districts of Georgia where volunteer technology experts from the "New School Model" help teachers implement distance learning. Professor Coates is physically in Melbourne but teaching students from around the world who are enrolled at Tsinghua in Beijing. In just a few weeks, his university has shifted into almost fully digitised operations (The World University Rankings, 2020).

Though in some universities, this technology enabled learning is being implemented with little success because of inadequate prior online teaching knowledge. The universities where online teaching was followed earlier also, these methods proved incredibly popular, to the extent that they are being planned to be integrated in the system in subsequent years on a regular basis.

The scenario in higher education is no less worrisome. The differences in the capacity of various institutions to implement, access and design alternate online modes to support the learning of their students remotely will amplify learning gaps worldwide. How this disruption will impact the livelihoods of individuals, and the prospects of their communities have not been validated yet.

Students are facing problems related to social isolation, intensification of information flow which has resulted into anxiety, stress and thereby causing negative impact on education (Araujo,2020).

The technical issues that cause frustration not as frequently experienced by students in face-to-face classes (Rakes and Dunn 2010).

This impersonal mode has impacted education at all levels however, the distance between learners through provision of chat rooms or real time tutorials is a great relief (Stone and Barry, 2019). These limitations in the ability to meet during a pandemic will cause not only a suspension of learning time, but causes a loss of knowledge, skills gained and existing opportunity gaps.

Challenge on Quality of Students' Work

The students need to be more autonomous in online learning as instructors are not physically present (Ribbe, 2013). Maintaining motivation (Dunn,2010) may be more difficult for online students as they face problems related to social isolation and technical issues that cause frustration not as frequently experienced by students in face-to-face classes.

To students who are in STEM subjects, the loss of learning is even greater than the other subjects. For the students of medical sciences, the development of fine motor skills in a stress free environment (Krähenbühl et al., 2017) is crucial. Clinically meaningful learning is crucial to students' understanding of the relevance of their knowledge to future practice (Collins, 2008).

A survey conducted by NUS on "Coronavirus and Students Survey" of 10,000 students said that teaching hours have reduced, and no quality teaching is there. One of the challenges that international students are facing is that they are unable to access content because of restrictions in their home countries and, therefore, unable to complete their courses or get the same quality of learning as their colleagues.

Since the courses are not designed from scratch keeping in mind fully online mode, the science of teaching and learning gets severely affected (2019, Jossey Bass). Online surveys, chats and discussions cannot take the place of networkings and interactions that happen at the physical connect.

The responses of the students have shown that the situation is not quite comforting for those students who are in their final year and are in the process of sitting their final exams. Academically the loss is huge for researchers who may be in the middle of their research.

Then funding is another problematic area. With the global recession, the government might not be able to fund research adequately making educational centres vulnerable and potentially unequipped to handle a crisis like this. Though it is too early to say anything but this damage will be irreversible, if the universities budget constraints come in the way of researchers (Inside Higher Ed, 2020).

For those who have gone back home can't really return to universities because of flight problems or quarantine guidelines. Some are stranded in a foreign country during a pandemic as many couldn't go back home because of flight problems, or travel restrictions. Then there are students who are on F1 single entry visas and there is no way for them to get back and finish their education.

Covid 19 Challenge on Assessment and Exams of Students

In the Guardian Issue of April 2020, the Oxford University is replacing summer exams with online assessments due to coronavirus. Students have expressed concerns about how their studies will be assessed and the impact on degree results and grading this year. A survey conducted by NUS on "Coronavirus and Students Survey" of 10,000 students, found that over half of students were extremely concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their exams and assessments. Many students completing graduate programs and Post graduate programs are facing stress, and anxiety due to the numerous implications for courses, assignments, seminars and thesis defenses (The Guardian, 2020). The chances of zero year or semester are all the more worrying in most affected areas (UN News, 2020).

The surveillance and monitoring system of online tests needs to be foolproof. Recently the most proctored test conducted by SLAT, and LSAT in India lacked transparency giving a greater leverage to students for cheating. Viewing the whole situation, AILET cancelled its online test from home and planned a centre based online test. Again lab tests, practicals, and performance tests are not possible to conduct online.

Another area of concern is lack of uniformity in grading and marking of different institutions. The NUS is calling for a National approach to exams and assessments and for universities to adopt 'no detriment' policies this year. But the university cleared it that approach would be university specific based on fairness in academic standards. Students are concerned amid widespread fears that the exams performance, which is a career-relevant decision will be adversely affected. The clear directions, procedures for exams, assignments, and projects are some of the concerns that needs to be addressed. A survey conducted by NUS on "Coronavirus and Students Survey" of 10,000 students, found that over half of students were extremely concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their exams and assessments.

Indeed, some researchers have argued that traditional assessment of students' knowledge on the basis of traditional technique is not an effective assessment technique, as they focus almost entirely on students memorising and retention ability (Choudhury et al., 2016). Therefore, this new situation will present institutions with an opportunity for innovations in assessment techniques to accurately assess student's knowledge, competency and understanding.

Financial Issues

This situation would cause financial losses for students. The financial loss is so huge that the parents have invested a huge sum of money for their students' education abroad.

- **Accommodation Problem**

Students are concerned about the impact that the pandemic will have on their finances. They are particularly concerned about accommodation costs during university closure. The majority of students live away from home during their stay of learning in foreign institutions in either university owned, or privately rented accommodation. The Government lockdown and the closure of campuses resulted in students leaving their rented accommodation before the expiry of their contract and.

Analysis

A poll of 1,000 students reported by the Higher Education Policy Institute found that over half of students had moved away from their term-time accommodation: The majority (55%) of students are living away from their normal term-time residence as a result of the Coronavirus crisis. However, another 45% of respondents said they are still living in their term-time residence.

Many university-owned halls of residence and privately run Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) have allowed students who have left university accommodation due to the coronavirus to terminate contracts early without any charges. PBSA providers have released students from contracts and refund certain rents and deposits: Landlords are not required to do this. Most tenants will be able to pay rent as normal and should continue to do so, as they will remain liable for the rent during this period.

- There is no 'one-size fits all' approach, as each tenant's circumstance is different and some will be worse affected in terms of their ability to pay than others. It is important for landlords to be flexible and have a frank and open conversation with their tenants at the earliest opportunity, to allow both parties to agree a sensible way forward.

Some university websites are providing students with advice, including on accommodation issues, during the coronavirus pandemic. For example, the University of Newcastle's website has the following advice for students in private accommodation: Private accommodation If you are living in private accommodation in Newcastle, we advise you to monitor Government guidance about the support that is available to protect you.

- **Student's Loan Payment**

Students are concerned about the impact that pandemic will have on their financial debt during the lockdown. Will my payments be delayed or Will I receive my scheduled or next instalment at the planned start of new term?, are some of the questions being addressed. The inflexibility in banks' approach was seen in Loan write off demand by nurses in England Health Education for cancelling their debts. These nurses have taken paid placements in hospitals to assist during the coronavirus pandemic.

Another issue is debt servicing. As students have lost their sources of income due to Covid 19, it has become an uphill task to pay their instalments in time. Blackburn (2020), an academic and former Head of Higher Education in the Scottish Government, has made a case for an emergency extension of the student loan scheme for the students who are in financial crises.

- **Students' loss of income**

A large proportion of students rely on income from part-time working and holiday jobs to pay their rent and other living costs. In the current pandemic, organisations are finding it difficult to hire and train temporary and seasonal staff. This missed opportunity has dried up students' sources of income and they are finding it difficult to meet their current and future living costs.

The lost loan repayments would entail huge loss to the government but this being a one-off cost to the government needs serious concern on the part of the government.

- **No Refund of school fee**

The Govt of UK has made its stand clear on its website that students should not ordinarily expect refunds of fees.. Education being the important factor has to be delivered whether in person or online. However, if the institutions are unable to facilitate adequate online tuition then it would be unacceptable for students to be charged for any additional terms. In response to emergency, most of the institutions have stopped face to face teaching and are providing high-quality distant online learning across the UK, and further education sectors in England are already working hard to prepare learning materials for the summer and autumn terms.

Decision Areas for the Promulgation of National and Government Policies

Here are the decision areas on the basis of information collected under the study.

- The transition from face-to-face teaching to online delivery has a serious impact on assessments and evaluation. This demands for continuous evaluation of students through different modes. Along with online evaluation, the physical assessment has to be planned and scheduled. Students, as well as faculty, should devise ways and means for administering outstanding assignments, projects, and other continuous assessments. Faculty members have to change the assessment types to fit online mode.
- Faculty members, with the respective heads, should frame a flexible assessment guideline to keep in mind that students are not at a disadvantage. If any student is not able to attend a course online due to illness or any disturbance, universities should remain as flexible as possible to ensure that he or she will not get any negative impacts in terms of grading. Some courses, such as labs, fine arts, clerkship, dance, art, and music, cannot be taught online. In such cases, the faculty can simply grade students on the work they have already done or suspend classes until things become normal.

- The solution for International students who are into research work is either to halt research work or plan an alternate work as for now. They should join an online community with colleagues in their field of research work in this uncertain time. Though this also presents an opportunity to replan and rethink our ways of interacting with others in such a way that it benefits the scientific community at large.
- As many international students fall below threshold, the government should end the freeze on loan classifications and recommend the enforcement of prudential requirements with a flexible approach in relation to penalties and persisting risks.
- The government needs to continue with tax deferral measures, passive Tourism, employment promotion programs, and also encourage full employers' share of social contributions for the ones who lost their jobs during the lockdown to overcome the crisis of parents to continue the education of their wards.

Conclusions

In the emerging and ever-changing COVID-19 context, universities should implement a number of measures to slow the spread of the virus. Students and staff should receive regular information through emails and university intranets. The health and safety of students and staff should be the top priority. Proper counseling services should be available to support the mental health and well-being of students. Authorities should take the responsibility of ensuring food and accommodation for international students. Faculty members should embrace technology

The Government's non-statutory guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Landlords and Tenants applies to all landlords and tenants. It outlines tenants' responsibilities with regard to paying rent and abiding by tenancy agreement. And the same goes with landlords who are expected to be complacent and flexible.

It might result in more regionalization in case of students mobility and a drastic shift in student movement to other countries. The countries with efficacious and socially responsible epidemic control mechanisms with great health care systems will definitely stand to gain from the crisis. Much depends upon how will the education systems of source countries be affected by the crisis? How the government policies will be changed and To what extent parents budgets are slashed and are ready to take risk? Such factors could limit access to education and consequently drive more students overseas.

References

- ✓ Al, Cimpian., H. Arce., Markman, E. M., Dweck, C. S. (2007). Subtle linguistic Cues Impact Children's Motivation. *Psychological Science*, 18 , 314-316
- ✓ Alvarez, I., Guasch, T. & Espasa, A. (2009). University teacher roles and competencies in online learning environments: a theoretical analysis of teaching and learning practices. *European journal of teachers education*, 32, 321-336
- ✓ Araújo, Francisco. Jonathan. de Oliveira., Abrantesde, Ligia Samara,. etal (2020). Impact Of Sars-Cov-2 And Its Reverberation In Global Higher Education And Mental Health. *Psychiatry Research*, 288,11297.
- ✓ Bawane, Jyoti, Spector, J. Michael. (2009). Prioritization of online instructor roles: Implications for competency based teacher education programs. *Distance education*, 30, 383-397
- ✓ Beckman, K., Apps, T., Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2018). Conceptualising Technology Practice in Education Using Bourdieu's Sociology. *Learning, Media and Technology* 43 (2): 197–210
- ✓ Becky, Packard, Wai. Ling. (2010). Web-based Mentoring: Challenging traditional models to increase women's access. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in learning*, 11(1)
- ✓ Desai, Chitra. G., Shinde, Sahebrao. N. (2010). Web Based School Education In India: A Changing Scenario. *IEEE Xplore*
- ✓ Franchi, Thomas.(2020). The Impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on Current Anatomy Education and Future Careers: A Student's Perspective. *American Association for Anatomy*, 13, 2, 312- 315
- ✓ Longjun, Jough. (2020). School's Out, But Class' On': The Largest Online Education in the World Today: Taking China's Practical Exploration During The COVID-19 Epidemic Prevention and Control As an Example. *Best Evid Chin Edu ; 4(2):501-519.*

- ✓ Gewin, V. Nature. (2020). Five tips for moving teaching online as COVID-19 takes hold. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32210377/>
- ✓ Rissanen, I. E., Kuusisto, E. Hanhimäki., & Tirri, K. (2018). The Implications of Teachers' Implicit Theories for Moral Education: A case study from Finland. *Journal of Moral Education*, 47, 63-77
- ✓ Schmidt, J. A., Shumow, L., Cam, H. Kackar. (2015). Exploring teacher effects for mindset intervention outcomes in seventh-grade science classes. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 10 , 17-32.
- ✓ Kasprisin, C. A., Single, P. B., Single., M. & Muller, C. (2003). Building a better bridge: Testing e-training to improve e-mentoring programmes in higher education. *Mentoring & Tutoring*, 11(1), 67-78
- ✓ Linn, M. C., Palmer, E., Baranger, A., Gerard, E. Stone. (2015). Undergraduate research experiences: Impacts and opportunities. *Science*, 347(6222), 1261757 1-6.
- ✓ MEDLIN, PETER. (2020). International Students Face A Host Of Problems During The Pandemic. <https://www.nprillinois.org/post/international-students-face-host-problems-during-pandemic>
- ✓ N, Blake. (2002). Tutorial and Students without Faces or Places. *Journal of Philosophy of education*, 34,1, 2000
- ✓ Oxbridge to replace summer exams with online assessments due to coronavirus. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/mar/21/oxbridge-to-replace-summer-exams-with-online-assessments-due-to-coronavirus>
- ✓ Patrick, Gryczka., Edward, Klementowicz., Chappe, Sharrock., & Montclare, Jin, Kim. (2016) . Interactive online physics labs increase high school students' interest. *JOTSE- dialnet*, 6374, 6, 3,166-187
- ✓ Rattan, A., Good, C., Dweck, C. S . (2012). It's ok – not everyone can be good at math: Instructors with entity theory comfort (and demotivate) students. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 48, 731-737
- ✓ Ribbe, E., & Bezanilla, M. J. (2013). Scaffolding learner autonomy in online university courses. *Digital Education Review*, 24, 98–113.
- ✓ Ross, J. Longhurst. (2006). Why Aren't They Here? Student absenteeism in a further education college. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 23.
- ✓ Sahu, Preadee. (2020). Closure of Universities Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 . *Curesus*, 12(4): 7541.
- ✓ Salmon, G. (2000). *E-Moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan.
- ✓ Stavredes, Tina,. (2011). *Effective Online Teaching: Foundations and Strategies for Student Success*. John Wiley & Sons, 288 .
- ✓ Stone, D. M, Barry, D.S. (2019). Improving virtual learning interactions: Reducing the transactional distance of online anatomy modules. *Anat Sci Educ* 12: 686– 687.
- ✓ UNESCO, (2020). COVID-19 Educational disruption and response. <https://en.un2esco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures-2020>
- ✓ Wheeler, C. C., Erhart, L. M., Jehn, M. L. (2010). Effect of school closure on the incidence of influenza among school-age children in Arizona. *Public Health Rep*, 125, 851–859.
- ✓ WHO, (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. ;<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019-2020>
- ✓ Williamson, Ben., Eynon, Rebecca., & Johne. (2020). Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency. *Learning , Media, and Technology*, 107-114.

