

Academic Institutions at the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *Information delivery mechanism through the university homepage would be effective as a large number of students visit their university webpage for updates. Home pages of 83 universities representing 14 countries around the globe were visited to observe the initiatives they have taken in order to create COVID-19 education and awareness. Most of the universities (96.7%) in developed countries included information regarding COVID-19. They had detail and updated information that helped students and general audiences get informed on COVID-19. However, only half (52.5%) of the universities from developing countries had such information about the pandemic. Thus, there exists a gap in understanding of the pandemic among the two worlds.*

Keywords: Awareness information, Coronavirus, China, Nepal, University, Website

1. Background

An infectious disease first detected in Wuhan, China named as COVID-19 has spread in 210 countries since its first reporting to the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in China on 31 December 2019. According to World Health Organization, COVID-19 pandemic continues to create an acute shortage of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and medical kit. As of the WHO situation report published on 18 April, 2020, Nepal has total 31 cases, out of 8,016 tests. Social and educational responsibility of universities is also of critical importance in this pandemic. In this context, we visited home pages of 83 universities representing 14 countries around the globe to observe the initiatives they have taken in order to create COVID-19 education and awareness.

2. Methods

The home page of 83 universities or higher education institutes from 14 countries (Annex 1) around the world were visited, and noted down if their page included information or awareness message related to COVID-19 pandemic. At least five well known universities from each of the country were chosen. These countries included Bangladesh (5), Cambodia (5), China (5), East

Timor (5), France (5), Germany (13), Nepal (10), Norway (5), Spain (5), Sri Lanka (5), Thailand (5), UK (5), USA (5), and Vietnam (5). Eight of the selected countries were developing countries from Asia, and the six were from developed countries in Europe and the North America. While the seven countries represented COVID-19 impacted countries, the same numbers of countries were less impacted countries. For example, China had the first report of COVID-19, whereas the USA, Spain, Germany and the UK represented the highly impacted countries, and rest represented the less affected countries. Nepal was specially considered as it borders China, where the Coronavirus was first detected and strict measure such as lockdown was taken.

3. Results

COVID-19 awareness information and message

Among the 83 universities, 78.1 % had updated information materials regarding COVID-19 in their respective homepage while 21.9 % had no any update regarding the matter as explained by Table 1. Among the five research institutions observed, one institute each from China and France had the material displayed. In Nepal context, two out of 10 institutions, namely Kathmandu University and Mid-Western University had COVID-19 related updates in their homepages, rest of the universities had the lockdown notice

that is closer of the classes and office. These universities did not have information about COVID-19 on the page.

Among the studied institutions, 38.4%, COVID-19 message was either from the university or the government authorities. The information or message included from various levels, such as the President of the country, President Of the university, Dean, Head of the Department, communication unit, Director

Table 1: Updated COVID-19 information on in the university homepage

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	24	21.9
Yes	59	78.1
Total	83	100.0

General, professor or government authorities. The messages highlighted the gravity of the pandemic and precautionary measures to be followed for safety.

According to country-wise samples, all five universities of France, USA, Norway and Vietnam, two out of five universities of Bangladesh, two out of 10 universities in Nepal, three out of five universities of Sri Lanka, four out of five universities in China, four out of five universities in Spain, 13 out of 13 universities in Germany, five out of five universities in UK, and one out of five universities in East Timor had displayed COVID-19 awareness information in their respective homepages as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Webpage visited universities in 14 countries in context of COVID-19 pandemic 2020

SN	Country	No. of home-page visited universities	Homepage with COVID-19 information	University homepage with app or medical emergency contact information
1	Bangladesh	5	2	1
2	Cambodia	5	1	1
3	China	5	4	3
4	East Timor	5	1	0
5	France	5	5	5
6	Germany	13	13	3
7	Nepal	10	2	1
8	Norway	5	5	1
9	Spain	5	4	3
10	Sri Lanka	5	3	2
11	Thailand	5	4	2

Annex 1: Name of the countries and website visited universities

SN	Country	University
1	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Agricultural Univ., Univ. of Chittagong, Univ. of Dhaka, North South Univ., Univ. of Shahjalal
2	Cambodia	The Univ. of Cambodia, Cambodian Mekong Univ., Paragon International Univ., Norton Univ.
3	China	Guangxi Univ., Peking Univ., Shanghai Jiao Tong Univ., Tsinghua Univ., Wuhan Univ.
4	East Timor	Dili Institute of Technology, National Univ. of East Timor, Universidade Da Paz, Universidade Dili, Instituto Profissional de Canossa (IPDC)
5	France	Aix- Marseille Univ., Univ. of Bordeaux, Univ. of Lille, Sorbonne Univ., Univ. of Strasbourg
6	Germany	Univ. of Hamburg, Univ. of Heidelberg, RWTH Aachen Univ., Technical Univ. of Munich, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Muenchen Freie Univ. Berlin, Univ. of Gottingen, Leiden Univ., Delft Univ. of Technology, Univ. of Groningen, Univ. of Amsterdam, Eindhoven Univ. of Technology, Maastricht Univ.
7	Nepal	Agriculture and Forestry Univ., Far Western Univ., Kathmandu Univ., Lumbini Buddhist Univ., Mid-Western Univ., Nepal Open Univ., Nepal Sanskrit Univ., Pokhara Univ., Rajarshi Janak Univ., Tribhuvan Univ.
8	Norway	Univ. in Bergen, Harstad Univ. College, Inland Norway Univ. of Applied Science, Molde Univ. College, Nord Univ.
9	Spain	Autonomous Univ. of Madrid, Autonomous Univ. of Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, Complutense Univ. of Madrid, Universitat de Valencia
10	Sri Lanka	Univ. of Colombo, Univ. of Jaffna, Univ. of Kelaniya, Univ. of Peradeniya, Univ. of Sri Jayewardenepura

12	UK	5	5	3
13	USA	5	5	5
14	Vietnam	5	5	0

App or medical emergency contact

Many of the universities around the world are undertaking research studies on the novel coronavirus, the virus that cause COVID-19. In present study, all the sampled universities from France and USA had either computer application program App/s or medical contact information displayed in their homepage. In China, Spain and UK, three out of five universities had such information of their research on COVID-19 and emergency contact. The university home pages in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Germany, Norway, Sri Lanka, and Thailand had information of COVID-19 contact. However, the universities from East Timor and Vietnam were not found to have such program or medical contact displayed in their homepage. Overall, 23 universities out of 83 had their Apps or medical emergency contact (Table 3).

Table 3: App or medical information contact in the universities

University with App or medical emergency contact	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	27.7
No	60	72.3
Total	83	100

4. Conclusion

Information delivery mechanism through the university homepage would be effective as a large number of students visit their university webpage for updates. Home pages of 83 universities representing 14 countries around the globe were visited to observe the initiatives they have taken in order to create COVID-19 education and awareness. Most of the universities (96.7%) in developed countries included information regarding COVID-19. They had detail and updated information that helped students and general audiences get informed on COVID-19. However, only half (52.5%) of the universities from developing countries had such information about the pandemic. Thus, there exists a gap in understanding of the pandemic among the two worlds.

11	Thailand	KasetsartUniv.MahidolUniv.,Univ. of Phayao, Prince of SongklaUniv.Webster Univ. Thailand
12	UK	Univ. of Oxford, Univ. of Cambridge, London's Global Univ., Imperial College London, King's College London
13	USA	California Institute of Technology, Univ. of Chicago, Harvard Univ., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford Univ.
14	Vietnam	HoaSenUniv., Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh City Univ. of Science, Pham Ngoc Thach Medical Univ., Van HienUniv.