

# Impact of COVID-19 on Academic and Psychological aspects of Undergraduate Students in Bangladesh: A Case Study

Md. Mortuza Ahmmmed, M. Mostafizur Rahman, Abhijit Bhowmik, Ayesha Siddiqua

**Abstract**—Undergraduate students are considered susceptible in terms of anxiety, drug abuse, depression, and bad dietary habits in comparison to the general people. Their academic and psychological facets have severely been altered due to COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this study is to identify the effect of COVID-19 on the academic and psychological aspects of undergraduate students in Bangladesh accompanied by other pertinent factors. Data were accumulated from the undergraduate students of the Fall semester 2020-21 of American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) by questionnaire provided through Microsoft Forms. The associations among the variables were assessed through the chi-square test. All the statistical analyses required to meet the goals of the study were done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Nearly one-fourth of the students suffered from anxiety and depression at an extreme level while close to one-third of them suffered quite a bit signaling a tormenting psychological state of the students. Chi-square tests found that depression, anxiety, study hour, assessment of online learning, and income issue due to COVID-19 of the student had a highly significant association with effects on their study and psychological aspects. Failure to address the aforesaid issues during an epidemic might have negative consequences on the academic and psychological aspects in the long run.

**Index Terms**—Anxiety, Chi-square test, COVID-19, CGPA, depression, MICS.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 epidemic has affected virtually every segment of our life including education sector as well. All types of educational institutions have been experiencing impromptu stoppages all over the world since the arrival of COVID-19 and its lingering existence accompanied by responsive measures like quarantine, social distancing, isolation, lockdown etc. are worsening the situation. It has been revealed through a cross-sectional study based on 505 college and university students that economic insecurity, infection concern, insufficient supply of food, no re-creational activity as well as physical exercise had statistically significant association with the psychological aspects of the students [1]. A separate study has shown that people being circumscribed in seclusion may suffer from different types of psychological predicaments [2]. Anxiety and depression concerning COVID-19 have been detected to cause devastating strain for all [3, 4]. Fear regarding the negative consequences of COVID-19 on economy and everyday life together with concern about academic interruptions have been found to be significantly associated with anxiety level of the students [5]. Students in developing countries have found it quite challenging in swapping to online education system, accustoming with the online evaluation procedures, collaborating with their teachers, accessibility of electronic devices and internet and accompanying cost [6]. A cross-sectional study based on 217 private medical college students in Bangladesh has found that over 70% of the respondents have negative feeling concerning the effectiveness of the ongoing online education [7]. Identical results have also been found in a separate study based on 50 students from both public and private universities in Bangladesh [8].

The adjournment in educational institutions would have negative consequence both on the psychological and academic status of the students [9]. A separate study has revealed that students with lower income have higher probability of delaying their graduation than those with higher income because of the economic consequences caused by the COVID-19 [10]. Financial inequality has been noticed to have significant impact on students' access to online education [11]. Education of students coming from downgraded economic status have suffered the most since the arrival of COVID-19 in Bangladesh [12]. According to Multiple Indicator Cluster

Survey (MICS) 2019, close to 5% families in Bangladesh do not have a mobile phone whereas nearly half of them do not have a television. Besides, merely 5.6% families possess a computer while about 37% have internet access at home which is further restricted for females in most of the households due to the male dominated family compositions in the country [13]. A different study based on students from selected public universities have also revealed that majority of the students have suffered in terms of education, income and psychology as a consequence of COVID-19 in Bangladesh [14]. Also, the online education system has been found to be more difficult to catch than the traditional one for most of the students as well [15].

Students who regularly search for information concerning COVID-19 issues have been identified not only to experience higher depression and anxiety levels but also to lose concentration on their academic activities [16]. Analytical results of a study based on 195 public university students in the USA have revealed that personal health concern, academic interruptions, sleeping instabilities, social distancing, and fear about academic results are the crucial factors of anxiety and depression of the students during COVID-19 [17]. Almost similar findings have been observed in a qualitative study based on nursing students as well [18].

It is important to investigate the academic and psychological experience of the university students in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 epidemic given the unanticipated surroundings. This study has been intended to identify these academic and psychological crises. The objective of this study is to address the impact of COVID-19 on the academic and psychological aspects among the students at tertiary level in Bangladesh along with other relevant determinants.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Primary data for the study were assembled from the undergraduate students of the Fall semester 2020-21 of American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB). A self-directed questionnaire was developed at the beginning which was finalized only after being pretested on a sample of 50 students encircling various faculties. Almost 10000 students are there in AIUB under different faculties. Initially, a sample of size 1650 was estimated considering 2.2% margin of error at 95% confidence interval [19]. Anticipating 5% non-response rate, the final sample size was adjusted as:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Final sample size} \\ &= (\text{Initial sample size}) / (1 - \text{Anticipated non-response rate}) = \\ &1650 / (1 - 0.05) \approx 1737 \end{aligned}$$

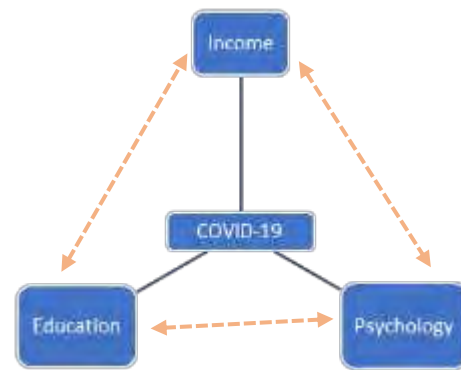


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

A total of 44 classes were selected by simple random sampling technique covering all the faculties, namely, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Faculty of Business Administration (FBA), Faculty of Engineering (FE), and Faculty of Science & Technology (FST). Each of the classes had 40 students on average resulting in a total of 1760 students. They were asked to give response to the relevant questionnaire provided through Microsoft Forms. Exactly 1715 students turned in with complete response indicating a non-response rate of nearly 2.6%.

Several variables related to the study objective were considered like gender, area of residence, age, depression, anxiety, effects on study and income due to COVID-19, study hour, online learning hour, rating of online learning, COVID-19 experience of the student as well as any of his/her family member, and any death case in the family from COVID-19. The association among the variables were assessed by applying chi-square test, where  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$  indicated significant association and  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.01$  indicated highly significant association. All the statistical analyses required to meet the goals of the study were accomplished through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) - version 20.0.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The background characteristics of the respondents are illustrated in Table 1 below:

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Female	382	22.3
	Male	1333	77.7
<b>Age</b>	18-20	284	16.6
	20-22	899	52.4
	22-24	461	26.9
	>24	71	4.1
<b>Area of residence</b>	Urban	1257	73.3
	Rural	458	26.7
<b>Study affected</b>	Considerably	471	27.5
	Greatly	496	28.9
	Moderately	459	26.8
	Not affected at all	102	5.9
<b>Study hour</b>	Slightly	187	10.9
	<2	436	25.4
	2-4	672	39.2
	4-6	426	24.8
	6-8	115	6.7

	>8	66	3.8
	<2	240	14.0
<b>Online learning hour</b>	2-4	416	24.3
	4-6	591	34.5
	6-8	356	20.8
	>8	112	6.5
	1	221	12.9
<b>Online learning rating</b>	2	335	19.5
	3	731	42.6
	4	317	18.5
	5	111	6.5
	A little bit	177	10.3
<b>Anxiety level</b>	Extreme	415	24.2
	Moderate	495	28.9
	Not at all	48	2.8
	Quite a bit	580	33.8
	A little bit	188	11.0
<b>Depression level</b>	Extreme	475	27.7
	Moderate	375	21.9
	Not at all	125	7.3
	Quite a bit	552	32.2
	Considerably	457	26.6
<b>Income affected</b>	Greatly	537	31.3
	Moderately	365	21.3
	Not at all	143	8.3
<b>Self-positive</b>	Slightly	213	12.4
	No	1525	88.9
	Yes	190	11.1
<b>Family member positive</b>	No	1136	66.2
	Yes	579	33.8
<b>Family member death</b>	No	1553	90.6
	Yes	162	9.4

The gender ratio of the students was 3.48 : 1 signifying the preeminence of male students at AIUB. More than half of the students (52.4%) were aged between 20 to 22 years. Figure 1 highlights the distributions of students by age and gender more evidently.

As expected, the majority of them (73.3%) came from urban areas since tertiary education is an expensive deal in private universities in Bangladesh and is beyond reach of most of the limited stipendiary rural citizens. Distributions of how COVID-19 affected the students are displayed in figure 2.

A significant proportion of them (83.2%) responded that their academic study was affected to an extent due to COVID-19. Around one fourth of the students were observed to study in both less than 2 hours and 4 to 6 hours category while close to 40% were found to study between 2 to 4 hours on average per day. Around one third of them used to spend 2 to 4 hours in online learning on average per day while nearly 43% of them rated the online learning as average. Distributions of students by study hour and online learning can be observed through fig 3.

Close to one fourth of the students admitted suffering from anxiety at extreme level while little over one third of them suffered quite a bit. Almost matching outcomes were obtained for depression level as well signaling a tormenting psychological state of the students. Distributions of students by anxiety and depression are exhibited in figure 4.

Family income of more than 90% of the students was affected due to COVID-19 to some extent. Around 11% of the students found themselves to be COVID-19 positive. For one third of the students, any of their family members were reported as COVID-19 positive of which just over 9% cases

resulted in death.

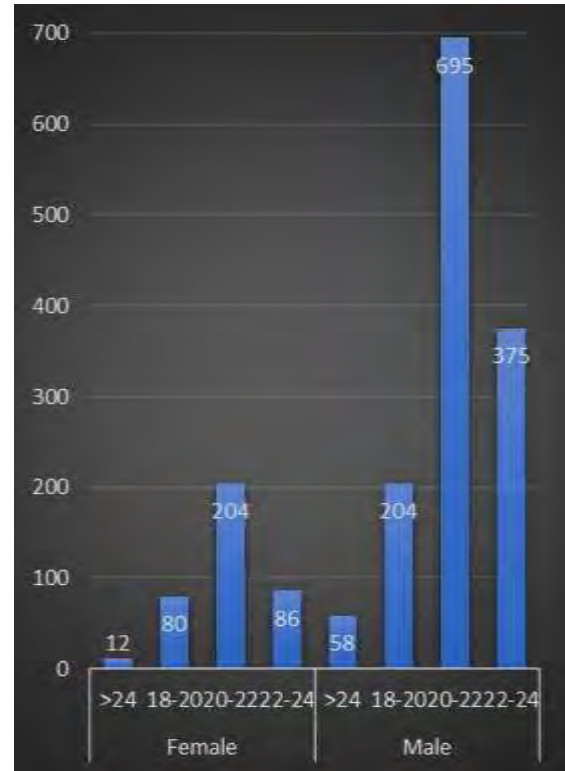


Fig. 1. Distributions of students by age and gender

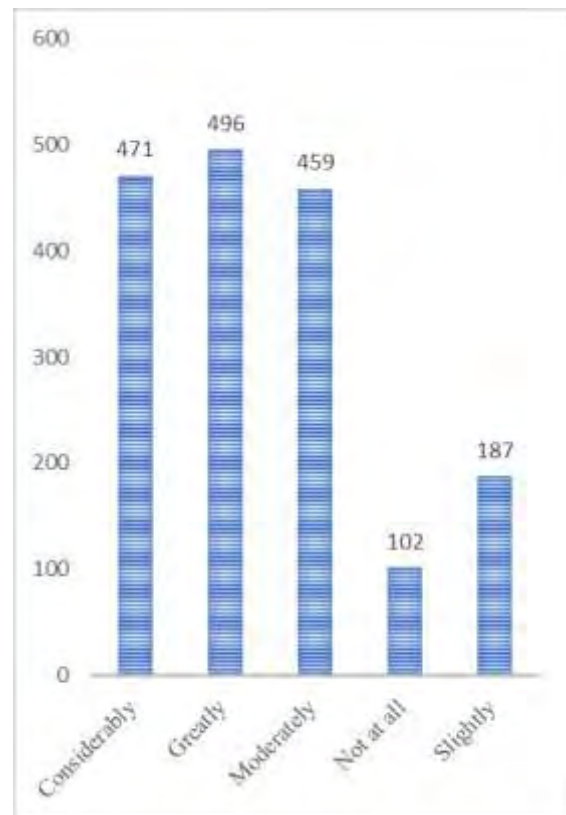


Fig. 2. Distributions of how COVID-19 affected the students

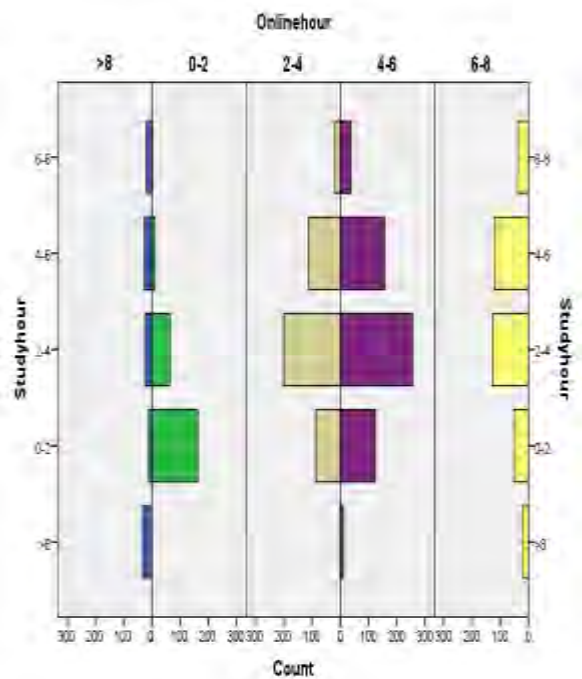


Fig. 3. Distributions of students by study hour and online learning

The association between the effects on study due to COVID-19 and the selected variables can be observed in Table 2. The analytical results of chi-square tests show that variables like depression, anxiety, study hour, rating of online learning, effects on income due to COVID-19 and COVID-19 experience of the student had highly significant association with effects on study ( $p\text{-value} \leq 0.01$ ) while COVID-19 experience of any of his/her family member and any death case in the family from COVID-19 had significant association ( $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ ).

The association between the depression level of the students and the selected variables can be observed in Table 3. The analytical results of chi-square tests show that variables like gender, effects on study and income due to COVID-19, anxiety, rating of online learning, and COVID-19 experience of the student as well as any of his/her family member had highly significant association with depression level of the students ( $p\text{-value} \leq 0.01$ ) while online learning and area of residence had significant association ( $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ ).

The association between the effects on study due to COVID-19 and the selected variables can be observed in Table 4. The findings are almost similar to what are observed in Table 3.

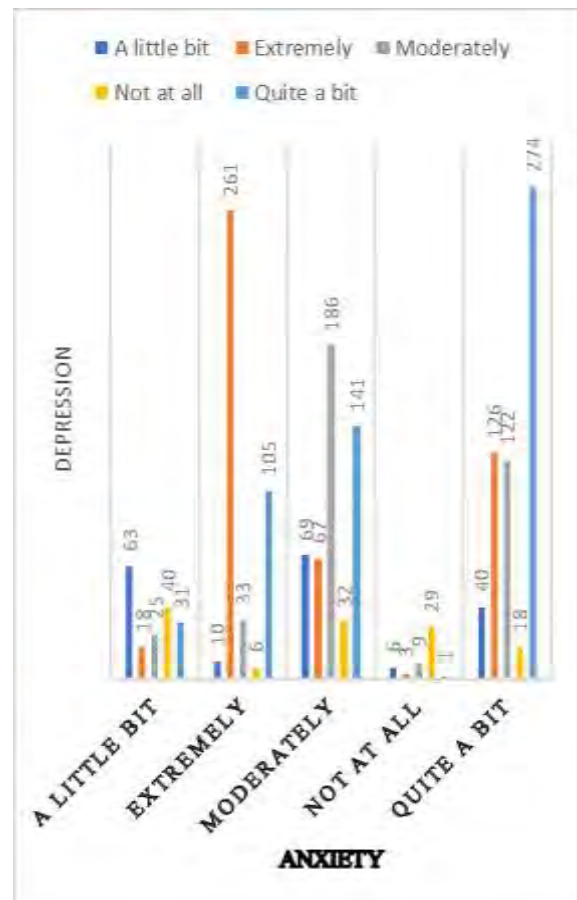


Fig. 4. Distributions of students by anxiety and depression

TABLE II  
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY ACADEMIC AFFECT FROM COVID-19 AND COVARIATES

		Study affected					Significance
		Considerably	Greatly	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	
Gender	Female	107	114	97	18	46	$\chi^2 = 2.38$ p-value = 0.66
	Male	364	382	362	84	141	
Age	18-20	77	82	74	17	34	$\chi^2 = 6.99$ p-value = 0.85
	20-22	254	262	237	54	92	
	22-24	123	133	131	23	51	
	>24	17	19	17	8	10	
Area of residence	Urban	356	346	351	70	134	$\chi^2 = 8.18$ p-value = 0.08
	Rural	115	150	108	32	53	
Anxiety level	A little bit	33	34	44	25	41	$\chi^2 = 354.75$ p-value = 0.00
	Extremely	92	217	63	15	28	
	Moderately	122	79	203	25	66	
	Not at all	6	9	8	17	8	
	Quite a bit	218	157	141	20	44	
Study hour	0-2	136	153	89	25	33	$\chi^2 = 52.55$ p-value = 0.00
	2-4	182	187	197	27	79	
	4-6	97	115	131	27	56	



<b>Online learning hour</b>	6-8	35	26	28	14	12	$\chi^2 = 20.23$ p-value = 0.21
	>8	21	15	14	9	7	
	0-2	67	86	55	11	21	
	2-4	102	119	117	28	50	
	4-6	170	153	165	33	70	
<b>Online learning rating</b>	6-8	101	101	101	19	34	$\chi^2 = 360.56$ p-value = 0.00
	>8	31	37	21	11	12	
	1	52	131	24	7	7	
	2	104	131	64	12	24	
	3	216	170	238	31	76	
<b>Depression level</b>	4	81	45	110	16	65	$\chi^2 = 358.97$ p-value = 0.00
	5	18	19	23	36	15	
	A little bit	37	19	61	23	48	
	Extremely	115	254	67	11	28	
	Moderately	96	65	146	22	46	
<b>Income affected</b>	Not at all	22	18	37	25	23	$\chi^2 = 201.47$ p-value = 0.00
	Quite a bit	201	140	148	21	42	
	Considerably	173	104	122	20	38	
	Greatly	127	246	104	25	35	
	Moderately	96	81	130	13	45	
<b>Self-positive</b>	Not at all	27	30	40	22	24	$\chi^2 = 14.56$ p-value = 0.00
	Slightly	48	35	63	22	45	
	No	420	420	419	94	172	
<b>Family member positive</b>	Yes	51	76	40	8	15	$\chi^2 = 9.28$ p-value = 0.05
	No	304	311	313	77	131	
<b>Family member Death</b>	Yes	167	185	146	25	56	$\chi^2 = 10.48$ p-value = 0.03
	No	427	434	423	92	177	

<b>Online learning hour</b>	4-6	44	106	123	12	141	$\chi^2 = 28.80$ p-value = 0.02
	6-8	12	31	37	2	33	
	>8	9	17	21	1	18	
	0-2	33	62	49	11	85	
	2-4	37	85	133	13	148	
<b>Online learning rating</b>	4-6	57	140	175	13	206	$\chi^2 = 144.87$ p-value = 0.00
	6-8	35	90	112	9	110	
	>8	15	38	26	2	31	
	1	15	112	36	9	49	
	2	33	84	81	7	130	
<b>Depression level</b>	3	67	130	254	17	263	$\chi^2 = 843.94$ p-value = 0.00
	4	38	59	96	10	114	
	5	24	30	28	5	24	
	A little bit	63	10	69	6	40	
	Extremely	18	261	67	3	126	
<b>Income affected</b>	Moderately	25	33	186	9	122	$\chi^2 = 108.58$ p-value = 0.00
	Not at all	40	6	32	29	18	
	Quite a bit	31	105	141	1	274	
	Considerably	33	112	135	7	170	
	Greatly	47	188	120	13	169	
<b>Self-positive</b>	Moderately	32	59	130	10	134	$\chi^2 = 12.59$ p-value = 0.01
	Not at all	23	25	47	10	38	
	Slightly	42	31	63	8	69	
<b>Family member positive</b>	No	161	350	451	42	521	$\chi^2 = 19.71$ p-value = 0.00
	Yes	16	65	44	6	59	
<b>Family member Death</b>	No	131	250	340	40	375	$\chi^2 = 2.61$ p-value = 0.62
	Yes	46	165	155	8	205	

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY ANXIETY DUE TO COVID-19 AND COVARIATES

		Anxiety level					Significance
		A little bit	Extreme	Moderate	Not at all	Quite a bit	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	34	116	93	8	131	$\chi^2 = 13.07$ p-value = 0.01
	Male	143	299	402	40	449	
<b>Age</b>	18-20	37	60	85	9	93	$\chi^2 = 5.11$ p-value = 0.95
	20-22	87	223	263	26	300	
	22-24	46	114	128	11	162	
<b>Area of residence</b>	>24	7	18	19	2	25	$\chi^2 = 10.17$ p-value = 0.03
	Urban	122	290	362	33	450	
	Rural	55	125	133	15	130	
<b>Study affected</b>	Considerably	33	92	122	6	218	$\chi^2 = 354.75$ p-value = 0.00
	Greatly	34	217	79	9	157	
	Moderately	44	63	203	8	141	
<b>Study hour</b>	Not at all	25	15	25	17	20	$\chi^2 = 16.07$
	Slightly	41	28	66	8	44	
	0-2	45	112	100	15	164	
	2-4	67	149	214	18	224	

TABLE IV  
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DEPRESSION DUE TO COVID-19 AND COVARIATES

		Depression level					Significance
		A little bit	Extreme	Moderate	Not at all	Quite a bit	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	35	141	72	16	118	$\chi^2 = 25.30$ p-value = 0.00
	Male	153	334	303	10	434	
<b>Age</b>	18-20	32	77	55	27	93	$\chi^2 = 8.72$ p-value = 0.73
	20-22	102	260	194	60	283	
	22-24	43	121	111	32	154	
<b>Area</b>	>24	11	17	15	6	22	$\chi^2 = 10.41$ p-value = 0.03
	Urban	126	342	296	90	403	
<b>Study affected</b>	Rural	62	133	79	35	149	$\chi^2 = 358.97$ p-value = 0.00
	Considerably	37	115	96	22	201	
	Greatly	19	254	65	18	140	
<b>Study hour</b>	Moderately	61	67	146	37	148	$\chi^2 = 14.83$ p-value = 0.53
	Not at all	23	11	22	25	21	
	Slightly	48	28	46	23	42	
	0-2	45	138	88	33	132	
	2-4	77	179	147	43	226	
	4-6	46	112	93	31	144	
	6-8	16	27	32	10	30	

	>8	4	19	15	8	20	
	0-2	30	64	58	18	70	
<b>Online learning hour</b>	2-4	53	108	88	34	133	$\chi^2 = 30.04$
	4-6	64	152	135	29	211	p-value = 0.02
	6-8	36	105	73	36	106	
	>8	5	46	21	8	32	
	1	10	118	29	13	51	
<b>Online learning rating</b>	2	29	116	59	17	114	$\chi^2 = 170.87$
	3	74	167	172	44	274	p-value = 0.00
	4	51	53	89	32	92	
	5	24	21	26	19	21	
	A little bit	63	18	25	40	31	
<b>Anxiety level</b>	Extremely	10	261	33	6	105	$\chi^2 = 843.94$
	Moderately	69	67	186	32	141	p-value = 0.00
	Not at all	6	3	9	29	1	
	Quite a bit	40	126	122	18	274	
	Considerably	39	121	108	15	174	
<b>Income affected</b>	Greatly	39	225	77	24	172	$\chi^2 = 214.96$
	Moderately	36	72	117	25	115	p-value = 0.00
	Not at all	34	22	31	22	34	
	Slightly	40	35	42	39	57	
<b>Self-positive</b>	No	172	402	336	11	500	$\chi^2 = 13.05$
	Yes	16	73	39	10	52	p-value = 0.01
<b>Family member positive</b>	No	134	269	263	97	373	$\chi^2 = 31.93$
	Yes	54	206	112	28	179	p-value = 0.00
<b>Family member Death</b>	No	172	405	348	11	509	$\chi^2 = 2.61$
	Yes	16	70	27	6	43	p-value = 0.62

#### IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### V. CONCLUSION

Undergraduate students have been going through severe psychological hardship during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The future of the pandemic is uncertain and may have negative consequences on the academic and psychological aspects of undergraduate students in the long run. That is why it is important to address the impact of COVID-19 on the academic and psychological aspects of the students for the people concerned to schedule a long-term plan to control and reduce the issues.

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