



# The Covid-19 Pandemic on Sustainable Issues among University Students

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## Editorial

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**Abbreviations:** WHO: World Health Organization; COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019; SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals; ODL: Open and Distance Learning.

The year 2020 is unexpected, started by a widespread virus from Wuhan, China and most people believe that this virus originated in bats and pangolins. Unfortunately, this virus has widespread throughout the whole world and the World Health Organization (WHO) called it a pandemic COVID-19 of course it caused a big impact in communities where most people lost their job and all institutions including Universities were ordered to be closed. However, this problem does not mean university students to stop their studies. Today we are lucky because there are a lot of online platforms that help us continue our studies such as Google Meet, Zoom and many more. Even though it is not easy to say because it gives a lot of effects on students like having a not suitable environment to study and leading to stress [1].

In December 2019, the world found a new virus in Wuhan, China. This contagious disease is named Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). COVID-19 has become a pandemic where it has been spread all around the world. The first case in Malaysia was recorded in late January 2020 and even after almost a year the cases still show a significant increase day by day. COVID-19 can be life-threatening to the infected person. A person will catch this virus if they are in close contact with infected people. Hence, the government has asked all people to minimize their movement and always follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) listed by the Ministry of Health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a greater impact towards the world in many aspects including the higher education system. Most of the academics and students felt challenges and anxiety during the pandemic period [2,3]. All students, especially university students are suffering from a problem getting a quality education as mentioned in the 4th goal in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [4]. It is due to this pandemic that universities are closed for any activity and educational purposes. Hence, the only way for them to get an education is through an online education.

However, online education is not as sustainable as in-class education. It has become a new challenge for the world to achieve a quality education among people. As we know, online education requires a student to have access to high-speed internet and a proper device such as a laptop to join an online class with the lecturer. Unfortunately, not all students can afford it. As a result, it has become a big challenge for them.

As a student, it is undeniable that online education can become a distraction for students. Students are easily distracted because they are using technology in their education. They might lose their focus and interest in the lessons. Besides, staring at the screen for long hours in online classes can have a bad effect on students' health. Studies have proven that staring at a screen for hours can cause blurred vision, headache, shoulder pain and also eye strain [5]. These can lead to another issue in achieving sustainable development where to ensure good health and well-being among people of all ages.

Another issue on sustainability due to COVID-19 among university students is hunger [6]. Due to the pandemic, the number of workers in each company or sector is limited then resulting in a higher number of workers being fired. Those who fall under the B40 family or low-income family are the most affected group in terms of finances. The cost for each semester of studies might reach up to RM2000 and above. If the students' guardians are jobless due to the pandemic, the whole family of the students might end up in hunger. In contrast, the SDG's goals are to ensure zero hunger by 2030.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created lots of issues related to sustainability among university students, especially in getting a quality education. Quality education has become among the top goals in the 17 goals of SDGs since a good leader in the future is a result of quality education. Hence, actions are needed to solve these issues from being a burden to university students. They truly need a comfortable environment in order to study well.

Since this pandemic occurs governments have come out with movement control commands, all the learning process should be done in open and distance learning (ODL) from their home and it is challenging for all students and lecturers [7]. Based on SDG4 (quality of education) was also distracted due to this pandemic because of limitations of practical use among students. As we know, practice is very crucial to make students understand more about their learning. A simple example that can be illustrated is the medical students' intake 2020/2021, there is a lack of practical ways to handle patients properly face to face. Different people come from different families, not all people have supportive families but some students come from broken homes where they cannot give 100% focus on their studies. So it is clear that Covid 19 affects the quality of education.

Secondly, the rate of stress among students also soars up drastically due to this crisis [4]. As we know in order to break the chain of covid 19 we should stay at home and limit ourselves doing outdoor activities, and this becomes the reason why rates of stress among students suddenly increase. Even though, open distance learning is not going easy for some students due to poor internet connection and failure to manage time wisely. As we know younger people like to enjoy their time by doing activities like playing volleyball, jogging and cycling that will promote an adrenaline rush but unfortunately this pandemic limits them from doing so. At the same time, it will reduce healthcare and well-being in the community where it is SDG3 (Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on health system & Sustainable Development Goal 3.). Furthermore, with limitations in learning most students have problems especially in finishing the assignment because they cannot manage their time between family and study. So it is clear that Covid 19 affected healthcare and well-being

among students.

This pandemic gives a lot of impact on the economy, environment, education and society throughout the whole world. Most businesses drop, people lose their jobs and distracting the health of the community. But we cannot stop here. Government, front liners, and many authorities struggle to make sure we live in sustainable communities, as residents we should put all effort into following all the procedures and SOP that have been set up for us. Covid is real! And everything happens with HIS permission. We hope all authorities will give full commitment to preventing this pandemic happen again in the future.

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