

## **Impact of Mental Pressure and Coronavirus (Covid-19) on the Work Performance of Working Mothers of Bangladesh.**

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**Abstract:** Bangladesh opens up its business physically. Usually, For working mothers, it is tough to maintain work and family. During this COVID-19 pandemic, difficulties become more challenging to handle for mothers. Mothers have several maternal and postpartum issues to handle alongside work. This study intended to assess the impact of Mental Pressure and issues faced by COVID-19 on the work performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. To accomplish this study, online questionnaires were asked to the working mothers. A total of 109 responses were gathered to complete this research. SPSS 25 and MS Excel was used to develop and present the findings. These findings show that Mental Pressure and COVID-19 has negatively impacted the work performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. Recommendations and limitations also have been provided for the better development of future studies.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus (COVID-19), Mental Pressure, Mood Swing, Work Performance, Working mother

### **I. Introduction**

The world's greatest challenge is COVID-19 declared by the World Health Organization. All countries started to stop their regular system and adopt technological helps to work from home for minimizing the risk of coronavirus [1-2]. According to [3] as of now (29th August 2020) 24,999,171 people infected worldwide, 842,840 people died and 17,371,698 get recovered. But according to reports of [4] coronavirus has developed a "new cluster". For this reason, doctors are worried about vaccines, whether the vaccine that doctors preparing will work on it or not.

On the other hand, Bangladesh is a developing country with a population of 164,949,951 approximately. Among these populations, only 1,525,815 were tested and 308,925 total infected found. Total deaths recorded 4,206, recovery is 198,863, and daily infections 2,131 approximately. Bangladesh is number 15 in the global chart of coronavirus cases according to [3]. These situations are critical to everyone whose working outside from home. This is a great risk for working mothers too. As they have to breastfeed or closely interact with their kids. Social distancing has been instructed but it is difficult to maintain. During this pandemic where everything has started reopened and continues its regular schedule with some new changes for employee's safety, it is quite difficult for working mothers to feel safe at the workplace as well as at home to their kids. Mothers had to go through a large amount of mental pressure. Their peace of mind can develop a healthy body and their children's health as well [5-6].

### **II. Literature review:**

Mothers are worried about their children. For working mothers, this tension is worse as they have to work outside of the home. Their fear of infected by coronavirus is more than normal mothers. Although many studies discuss COVID-19 as the deadliest virus so far. But this virus affects babies differently. Symptoms that adults get after infected by a coronavirus, babies don't show the same results. Studies proved that babies are not significantly affected by a coronavirus. The important thing about babies is, nurses, doctors, mothers have to be educated about

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the potential impact of this crisis [7]. Another study confirms that children from 0-19 years old have a much lower risk to get infected than adults. But children with immature immune systems are more prone than adults to get infected [8].

The fear of spreading coronavirus among family members is one of the most important issues for working mothers. Their work which is situated outside creates difficulties among families [9-10]. Working mothers who breastfeed their children are at more risk. [10] studied that breastfeeding acts as a cure for babies but it has revealed that breastfeeding can transfer infections from infected mothers to non-infected babies even through any intimate contacts also. Working mothers had to go outside of the home, this creates more risk. Based on this research it has suggested that to keep distance or take precaution before feeding or intimating with babies [11-14].

To avoid employee's health risks, organizations were started work from home but for white-collar employees only. Employees who work in the service sectors, production-oriented organization, marketing-related sectors, still had to work physically. This is kind of necessary but still risky. Now, all the organizations opened their business to save the economy. Organizations implementing programs to maintain employee wellbeing at the workplace as well as personal life. Working mothers usually had to go through much stress. COVID-19 has created a separate section of stress among working mothers. Organizations need to prioritize these issues related to working mothers [15, 5].

### **2.1 Mental pressure:**

In this pandemic situation, working mothers have to maintain works as well as family's safety at the same time. Working mothers are more afraid of COVID-19 because of their children. Whether their children are going to be affected because of them or not. During this pandemic childcare also seems not so secure for children (Park et.al., 2020[16]). According to [9] families facing mental stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Especially those who have babies age under 5, their parents are most likely to have mental health issues. As per the research, children have less chance to get coronavirus but still have the risk to get those. According to [9-10] parents of children need to be more aware of coronavirus and teach their children how to follow the "new normal" rules to break the COVID-19 chain.

A working mother has to go through multiple conflicting roles from the workplace to home. They have handled family as well as a regular task. These roles create a great source of stress. Stressfulness creates mental pressure and for new mothers breastfeeding is affected very badly. About 80% of working mothers won't able to breastfeed properly [17-18]. According to [5] working mothers are in more pressure than non-working mothers. Even working mothers have less time to spend with their children which drives their children's mental health issues. That family's where husband and wife both doing jobs, they have more issues to handle family and children along with jobs. Studies reveal that parents facing mental issues as well as their children's facing the same [19]. Depression, anxiety stress is an enemy for the mother's health as well as a baby's health [20]. [21] describe children's safety can be measured through; physical, functional, wellbeing, and coping. For the working mothers, it would be recommended to measure for safety purposes.

[22] studied babies eating behaviour and mental health. In this article, it has been described that anxiety, depression can be raised by the bad eating behaviour of babies. Mothers have to invest time in baby's food. For working mothers, it is a bit difficult to handle. And that leads to depression and anxiety. Their time table is divided into work and family. So they are more prone to mental pressure. [23] researched on mood instability of mothers. This explained that mood instability or mood swing is one of the reasons for depression. This is a serious issue for working mothers as they have to control the behaviour in the workplace. This leads working mothers to be more irritated. On the other hand sleep deprivation of working mothers can create more depression at family and workplace [24].

According to this information, it can be summarized that working mothers have to handle family-work related pressure, but at this moment of the pandemic, they have to face extra pressure of the COVID-19 too. Stress has driven from fear of spreading the virus, stress developed from role conflict of work-family, unavailability of supplies during a pandemic [25].

### **2.2 Work performance of working mother:**

[25], discussed that employee's at the workplace who has family, they are in a great challenge. After went back home, they have to take care of their families too. [26] studied the mental health of employees during this pandemic, were explained that the COVID-19 pandemic has developed an intense amount of stress at the workplace. Employee's performance falls, only lowering the stress and fear of coronavirus would help employees to perform

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better. [27] explains that employee's performance impacted negatively by a coronavirus, and employee's reactions about these changes are also having a negative effect on performance.

[1] studied on impact of COVID-19 on the performance of working women. Where it has been described that excessive office work and housework have become a burden. They didn't get enough time to spend with their husbands and children. This creates family conflict among working women. They have to go through a lot of work-related stress. Stress and anxiety stopping them to enjoy life with their families. [28] studied on maternal employment and children's development. In that study, it has been found that there is a negative relationship between maternal employment and children's cognitive skills.

Working mothers work create a boundary between work and family. They need to reprioritize all the important matters [24]. For working mothers time is crucial to divide equally between work and family. Mothers are an important part of any family [20]. For working mothers, it is very crucial and tough on the other hand to manage proper time for their families. On the other hand, family support is very important. Not only family support but also family-friendly workplace policies [25]. Where they will not be criticized or underestimated [5].

Some family has both husband and wife working together. For them, childcare is one of the options to take care of their children. But for COVID-19 childcare is also a matter of tension. Parents are more worried about what if children get the infection from childcare facilities. Especially for mothers, time is crucial to divide equally between work and family. Mothers are an important part of any family. It is very crucial and tough on the other hand to manage proper time for their families [18, 16]). Even mothers need to manage their sleeping habits to maintain work outcomes. [24] research on sleep deprivation and work performance of mothers. In that paper, it has been described that mothers and child's sleep affect mothers work outcome. Even 1 hour of less sleep affecting the mother's work performance. It was suggested that a flexible schedule or part-time work system would be helpful to develop a work-life balance of working mothers.

[29] said that working mothers need to have positive gratitude. In that article, it has been suggested that spirituality, pro-sociality, and emotional well-being can be helpful to develop a feeling of admiration, thankful, and appreciation. Where working mothers will feel less depressed and irritated by being positive.

### **2.3 Objective:**

Based on this information, this research set the objective to identify:

1. To identify the impact of mental pressure on work performance of working mothers
2. To identify the impact of COVID-19 on the work performance of working mothers.

To fulfil this objective, this study will try to identify the answer of these two questions;

1. Does Mental Pressure of working mothers impact their work performance?
2. Does the COVID-19 impact the performance of working mothers at work?
- 3.

### **III. Conceptual framework:**

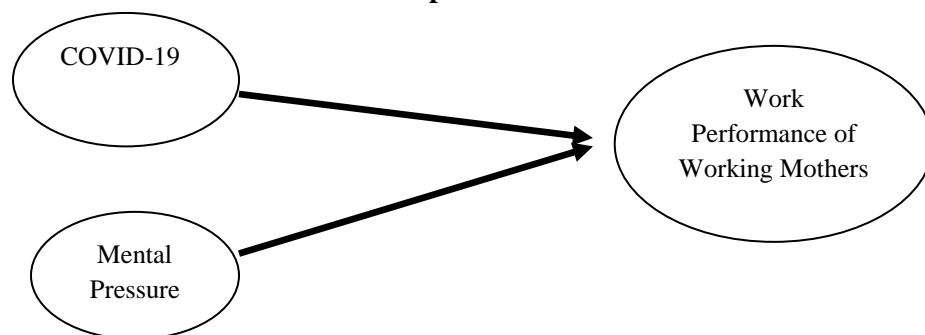


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

### **3.1 Hypothesis:**

To fulfil the objective of this study, these two hypotheses have developed.

H1: COVID-19 Pandemic affected the work performance of working mothers.

H2: Mental pressure affected the work performance of working mothers.

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### IV. Methodology:

To conduct this research, a cross-sectional study is being chosen. An Online-based survey is used to collect data from random working mothers of Bangladesh. These working mothers were working from the beginning of the pandemic until now. This survey is conducted to assess the impact of mental pressure and coronavirus (COVID-19) on the work performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. Employees from different backgrounds randomly asked questions. The 7 points Likert scale, 1=Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3, Somehow agree, 4=Neutral, 5=Somehow disagree, 6=Disagree and 7=Strongly Disagree are being used to get data. For this research, 109 working mothers responded to this survey.

#### 4.1 Data analysis:

All the data was collected through an online survey questionnaire. After gathering all the data stored in application tools. Quantitative data analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS 25 and MS excel. In this study demographic variable has been developed to show the foundation information for the study. Multiple regression analysis has been developing to show the variable's impact on DV. With the help of SPSS, this study has developed a reliability test to show the reliability of variables. After the calculation, this research intended to describe those.

#### 4.2 Demographic variable:

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>For mother, Working During COVID-19</b>		
Yes	90	82.6
No	19	17.4
<b>Husband working during COVID-19</b>		
Yes	103	94.5
No	6	5.5
<b>Number of Children</b>		
1	103	94.5
2	6	5.5
3	0	0
4	0	0
More than 4	0	0
<b>Age of children</b>		
0-6 month	85	78
6 month – 1 year	6	5.5
1-2 year	3	2.8
2-3 year	3	2.8
3-4 year	2	1.8
4-5 year	10	9.2

Table 01: Demographic Variable

Demographic variables describe the basic foundation of the research. For this, the working situation, number of children, and age of children have been chosen and asked to work mothers of Bangladesh. Over 82% of mothers had to work from home or at the workplace during COVID-19 and over 94% of working mother's husbands have to work from home or workplace during COVID-19. Most of the respondents have only one child, the maximum of two children. About the age of children, maximum respondents (78%) were the mother of the newborn. This information explains how critical would be the situation for working mothers to handle this COVID-19 situation along with the mental pressure that comes with postpartum [30].

#### 4.3 Reliability Test

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Mental Pressure (MP)	6	.936
COVID-19	10	.937
Work Performance of Working Mother (WPWM)	4	.954

Table 02: Reliability test

The reliability test is a widely used test by researchers to identify whether the variables are reliable or not. Even it has its scale to measure the internal consistency of variables reliability. Below role of thumb Cronbach's Alpha rating given;

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.9 excellent.  
 .8 good  
 .7 acceptable

.6 questionable  
 .5 poor less than  
 .5 unacceptable

According to this rating, it can be said that all the variable of this study is reliable. Variable MP has .9 above rating which is excellent, variable COVID-19 with .9 above rating as well as WPWM is also has a rating of .9 above.

### **4.4 Regression:**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig.	F-value	Tolerance
Mental Pressure (MP)	.863	.746	.863	17.710	.000	313.630	1.00
COVID-19	.816	.666	.816	14.619	.000	213.709	1.00

Table 03: Regression Analysis.

The simple linear regression analysis reported in Table 03 with the t value for Mental Pressure (MP) 17.710 at  $p < 0.001$  and COVID-19 is 14.619 at  $p < 0.001$ , indicating that both MP and COVID-19 have a significant negative impact on work performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are supported based on the result above. The strength of the impact is measured by the r-value of MP is .863 and COVID-19 is .816 at a p-value of 0.001, within the  $r=0.5$  to 1.0 ranges which are considered large according to Cohen's guideline. The coefficient of determination measured by the  $r^2$  is at 0.746 for MP and COVID-19 is .666. This value indicates that MP by 74.6% and COVID-19 by 66.6% has negatively impacted the work performance of working mothers.

## **V. Discussion**

This study aimed to assess the impact of MP and COVID-19 on the performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. Based on the analyzed data it is clear that MP and COVID-19 have a negative impact on the work performance of working mothers of Bangladesh. This study is the earliest approach to measure mental pressure and COVID-19 impacts on working mother's work performance of Bangladesh. To measure the Mental pressure of working mothers, this study uses depression, anger, sleep deprivation, irrational thinking, mood swing, and memory issue. According to [24], sleep deprivation of mothers negatively affects their work outcomes. This study uses sleep deprivation to measure mental pressure and the result shows the negative effects on the work performance of working mothers. For mothers and non-mothers mood swings or instability is a common issue, and in this study, mood swing has been tested to measure mental pressure. [23] tested mood instability of working mothers and found a negative impact. In this study, it is also proven that mood swings or instability have a negative impact on the work performance of mothers. Other measurement scales; depression, anger, irrational thinking, and memory issues show a negative impact on the work performance of working mothers. COVID-19 has impacted on working mothers performance negatively. Impact of COVID-19 measured through; maintaining hygiene, role conflict, daily activity, issues with foods, fear of infections, fear of family safety, doctors unavailability, financial instability, and depression. All the measurement has a negative relation with the work performance of a working mother's. This study intended to assess the impact of mental pressure and COVID-19 on their work performance. These findings show that the objective of this study has been achieved accordingly, where the working mothers work performance has impacted heavily by mental pressure and the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **5.1 Limitations and Recommendations:**

There are very few studies have done on the work performance of mothers at workplaces. So, it is a bit difficult to get a wide range of available data related to working mother's work performance. This study faces difficulties to get responses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on these conflicting situations for working mothers, it would be recommended that family supports come first place. Where working mothers and their family members combine effort can be helpful to reduce work-family conflict. On the other hand, as we already have gone through work from home and flexible work scheduling, managers and organization can maintain this phase to develop working mother's performance. Organizations can reduce their mental pressures by introducing mindfulness training at their workplace. Which will help to develop work performance as well as reducing mental pressure-driven from the workplace. Researchers can research in other regions as this is based on Bangladesh's perspective. Specific issues regarding working mother's work performance



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can be further studied, like; the impact of sleep deprivation on work performance, the impact of mood instability on work performance. Also, an in-depth study of this specific topic will be recommended for the future.

### **VI. Conclusion**

This study has shown a significant impact of mental pressure on the work performance of working mothers. The study objective of showing the negative relation of mental pressure and COVID-19 on performance is achieved accordingly. As an employee, working mothers have to be as professional as others. But this shouldn't be avoided that they have limitations. And those limitations can be a burden on the career path of those mothers. Organizations need to develop a friendly oriented environment for mothers to enhance their work outcome. In this current COVID-19 pandemic, mothers have to keep safe their children as well as herself. COVID-19 has become more challenging for new mothers, as they have to breastfeed their babies. They have to be more careful as well as active in the workplace. So there is a big conflict between work and family safe during COVID-19. There is a good side of COVID-19, as all of us have seen that work can be done through a flexible schedule and from home with the help of technology. Researchers have already shown that work from home has its difficulties but still, it can be used to enhance the work performance of working mothers.

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