



# CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF THEORETICAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Volume: 03 Issue: 07 | Jul 2022 ISSN: 2660-5317  
<https://cajotas.centralasianstudies.org>

## The Effects of COVID-19 on Project Management Processes and Practices

**Dr. Md. Mahfuzul Islam Shamim**

Ph.D. in Project management, Project management professional and public policy practitioner in  
Bangladesh  
[myshamim2006@gmail.com](mailto:myshamim2006@gmail.com)

*Received 24<sup>th</sup> Jun 2022, Accepted 13<sup>th</sup> Jul 2022, Online 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 2022*

**Abstract.** *The main goal of this journal is to identify and determine the effect of the Covid-19 outbreak on the Management of projects. The global pandemic affected work-related processes, straining employees working on projects as a team. The number of activities that must be coordinated and managed during the pandemic can overwhelm the management team. This event makes it essential for proper planning by the organization's leadership team. However, making quick and correct decisions can be challenging due to the abrupt changes experienced in different sectors of the global economy ("Effects of COVID-19 and Recommended Practices: Case Report", 2021).*

**Keywords:** *Project Management, Project Performance, Covid 19 Outbreak, Processes, Management Team*

### 1.1 Introduction

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that varies from mild to severe symptoms and is caused by the coronavirus. The disease is transmitted mainly by contacting an infectious material or objects contaminated by the virus. The illness is characterized by fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath, resulting in pneumonia and respiratory failure, resulting in death. The pandemic outbreak has had major interruptions on all sectors of the economy globally, leading to many global changes in organizations and societies. Dealing with organizational changes is stressful for employees, even in non-crisis times. The pandemic has an extra toll on the mental health of individuals in an organization. Employees experience a depletion of emotional and physical resources ("The Impact of Pandemic COVID -19 in Workplace", 2020). Identifying the variables involved in a project and the resources available in an organization are essential in addressing the employees' mental health and their effect on productivity during the pandemic and future crises. The management team needs to monitor the productivity of their employees since it makes it possible to identify areas that are more time demanding. This scenario allows the management team to allocate resources to improve overall performance (Draghici, 2020).

The pandemic outbreak led to new regulations and protocols to mitigate the spread of the pandemic globally. This situation led to changes in most organizations' productivity levels, which have affected both

field and office workplace productivity. The pandemic had positive and negative impacts on the productivity of multiple jobs. The overall negative impact surpassed the positive effects of the pandemic. Some of the setbacks included delays experienced on the initial schedule set during the onset of the projects and funding challenges. This journal focuses on the effects of COVID-19 on project management processes and practices. The journal also focuses on risk analysis of projects during the pandemic, the overall performance of tasks, and work for the organization during the project's development cycle. The study also focuses on future developments in project management post the global crisis caused by the worldwide pandemic.

As a result of the pandemic, governments around the globe have come up with strict measures to curb the spread of the virus and reduce the burden on health workers and the chances of the National Health system collapsing. Management boards also adopted different strategies for dealing with the pandemic challenges. Most managers adopt the agile management strategy to deal with unexpected scenarios. The elegant management model made decisions possible under uncertainty, where the planning period was short and required adjustments to the organization's activities. This event was based on the outbreak indicators and future projections on its impact. The pandemic had a short- and long-term influence on project management, which, therefore, affected the competence of most project managers.

## **1.2 Research methodology**

The proposed research method for this study is a descriptive research approach. A descriptive study approach is a research method that allows for a more in-depth study of factors and demographic traits and the cost-effective collection of large amounts of data. A descriptive study analysis, therefore, is considered for this study because it perfectly elaborates and provides a clear explanation of the impacts that Covid-19 possesses on the various processes and practices of managing a project. The main source of data for this research was secondary data. Therefore, the researcher utilized this data from recorded annual reports, magazines, published books, government articles, journals, and information from websites for this research. The researcher selected this method because it facilitated the accurate collection of data and the accumulation of relevant information to the study, just as the scholars in their articles had recorded it. The area of study for this research focused on the impacts of the pandemic on the business economy, thus targeting businesses and organizations that had ongoing or new projects during this Covid-19 era. This scenario is because recently, Covid-19 infections had been highly associated with most business operations especially initiated projects involving day-to-day interactions between business people and their customers. This scenario potentially provided the study with a background context of focus to segment this specific population sample due to the government's various strict measures to curb the spreading of the virus. The researcher, therefore, analyzed the collected data, and the results were recorded as shown in the above draft.

## **1.3 Short-Term impact of the pandemic on Project management**

Covid19 has greatly affected various spheres of business, including draining down the entire process of managing projects, that is, stemming from the initiation phase of the estimated project to the end or closing stage of the project. Some of these changes that have caught up with the essential project management processes include:

### **1.3.1 A shift in communication in projects**

This change is one of the aspects of project management that had to be adjusted at the onset of the outbreak. More importantly, this aspect of communication is very key, especially during the project execution stage. In this phase of project management, communication is vital since it involves the one-on-one interaction of employees or teams in performing the actual tasks necessary for the project's

completion. Communication in a project involves both internal and external communication. Most companies globally were less experienced in remote work. With the government's lockdown measures and social distancing policies, working from home was a revolution for most employees. However, these changes affected some global companies with preexisting virtual teams less. On the positive side, it was easier to learn remote communication and apply it to ensure the continuity of projects (Goschin & Constantin, 2021). The challenge faced with remote communication was the loss of a face-to-face form of communication. This shift had a huge blow on the creation process of the communication plan dealt with in the project planning stage that was to be utilized throughout the project's life cycle. Virtual communication also led to the loss of some bits of the informal communication structure. These included getting the context and insight on the project achieved in ordinary conversations in the office with the project team. Online communication also demands extra effort and concentration, which results in the project getting exhausted more quickly. In addition, it was challenging to reach a consensus on some aspects of projects and would usually take longer than face-to-face meetings, which were held in boardrooms before the pandemic outbreak (Hristov, 2021).

### **1.3.2 Need to change ManagementManagement and upcoming new projects**

As a result, the pandemic brought about a lot of overwhelming attitudes toward fulfilling tasks as per the set project specifications, which made managers more curious about how the duties and responsibilities, especially in the project execution, controlling, and monitoring phases of the projects life cycle to maintain quality deliverables after the project as required. New projects and cross-corporate programs emerged during the crisis. These new projects were crisis-oriented and implemented under Pressure by a team of employees closely monitored by the board and project managers. Furthermore, the projects were aimed at supporting the existing business models. The models included shifting from physical meetings to virtual offices and online channels.

### **1.3.3 Challenges and changes in the ManagementManagement of stakeholders**

The process of generating a project ideology in the project's initiation phase, which would serve the prevailing demand in the market, effectively became a dilemma for many project-oriented businesses during the pandemic. According to Draghici (2020), as a result of the uncertainties of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak in the future, it became difficult for organizations to make binding agreements with their potential customers. These particularly affected external projects since it became challenging to keep in contact with the clients or the end users of the organization's projects. Moreover, many businesses were stuck in the planning stage of their projects since making decisions for internal projects became time-consuming and would usually take longer to agree on a particular path for a specific project. Decisions like getting approval to access planned investments would take longer than usual, leading to overall delays in the delivery of the new project (Hristov, 2021).

### **1.3.4 Extra Pressure on the project teams**

The need to achieve consistent, top-notch results by organizations despite the tough changes that came with the pandemic brought a lot of disorganization and anxiety to the executors or workers of the quoted projects. Measures by governments forced many employees to work from home. As a result, most project team members were under double Pressure, which involved sharing the project's work and helping with household responsibilities (Shamim M. I, 2016). These responsibilities often led to longer working hours and isolation, which affected the mental well-being of the workers, thus poor results at the end of the project process or on the completion phase of the project, which marks the expected deliverables by customers or end users. On the positive side, working from home gave most employees an insight into their family lives and those of the team members, which contributed to more understanding and better cooperation in the working and different family setups (Muñoz-Villalba, 2021).

### **1.3.5 Need for creativity and workaround in ManagementManagement of project-related management issues**

Different projects faced various challenges which were as a result of the unexpected outbreak of the pandemic. This scenario forced most of the project teams to focus on their projects' essential and critical processes and infrastructures. This situation triggered ingenuity in solving problems faced during the project life cycle and implementing new workarounds to achieve the expected results (Lucocq & Radhakishnan, 2021).

### **1.3.6 Delays in project delivery**

The pandemic outbreak led to the postponement or suspension of some projects. The construction industry, for example, was temporarily slowed down or stopped altogether since most construction projects require more of face to face interactions and physical teamwork, especially in the execution phase of the project life cycle. This situation proved difficult during this pandemic era, and thus the need to stop such operational projects required serious physical involvement. Furthermore, this also resulted in foreign workers returning to their home countries to quarantine (Muñoz-Villalba, 2021).

### **1.3.7 Vendor management risks**

This change mainly affected the construction industry and its projects. The global pandemic outbreak mostly affected and disrupted the supply chain. Disruption of the supply chain led to increased costs and more time for given products and parts. Some suppliers faced the possibility of going bankrupt, while some companies faced the possibility of forming mergers (Jovanović-Milenković et al., 2020). All these factors threatened contracts already in place and had the potential to harm the set-aside budget to complete projects. Consequently, these changes in operations caused a shift in the planning stage of every project during this pandemic period, thus having to re-plan their entire sourcing process to include the new changes revolving around the specific project and ensure that the right deliverables are achieved within the minimum set timeframe. This event makes it clear that Management of future projects should be future-oriented, making it essential for managers to be proactive in having a mitigation strategy for any chances of future supply chain disruption (Mazumder & Saha, 2021).

## **1.4 Solving project management Issues during and after the outbreak of the pandemic**

### **1.4.1 Clear communication strategy and project team collaboration**

The measures taken by the government forced employees to work remotely. This change ended regular physical status meetings preventing daily interactions with colleagues in their respective offices. This scenario made it challenging to seek clarifications on specific issues related to the organization's projects which therefore presented an opportunity to adopt other forms of communication. As a result, it became essential for organizations and project teams to create virtual teams, making it possible for them to feel connected and keep in touch regularly. Most organizations reduced the number of emails sent internally (Shamim M. I, 2022). These organizations adopted chats for issues that did not need extensive insights due to the little time taken to get a response from other team members. Using chats also reduces constant phone calls and allows project members to manage their working schedules and respond to inquiries on their own time (Tripiawan & Frestikawati, 2021).

Most project teams adopted video conferencing tools such as zoom and Googled hangouts to hold regular meetings. These conferencing tools were vital in the recreation of conference room atmospheres, facilitated communication between team members, and helped in the maintenance of team member connections which reduced the effects of feeling isolated as a result of working from home. Furukawa (2016) explains that constant communication helps project managers quickly identify emerging issues and

offer viable solutions. This scenario makes it possible for the project team to meet the deadline within the allocated budget.

#### **1.4.2 Centralization of Data**

The lockdowns due to the pandemic made it necessary for organizations to centralize information, including communication channels, reports, and other documents vital to attaining the organization's project goals. Different teams in a project often use other forms of data to achieve the project's end goal. This case makes it a primary need to be in a position to collect and synchronize the various data sets. The lack of a centralized information system makes ManagementManagement of a project demanding and increases the chances of failing to achieve the goals set by the organization (Coggburn, 2005).

According to Müller and Klein (2020), project management tools enable managers to log in and access what happens on a given project in real-time. The managers can also track the status of every project and ensure everything takes place as planned. Google Drive is one of the collaborative tools adopted by most organizations. Failure to use these tools often led to wasting time while trying to access documents in different individual project folders. Centralization of data and resources ensures all members involved in the project are aware of their responsibilities, tasks assigned to them, and the deadlines to deliver (Shamim M. I, 2020).

#### **1.4.3 Efficient and effective monitoring**

Like data centralization, the pandemic has forced project managers to monitor the project's progress more closely. Most organizations try to avoid extra costs, deadline delays or missing vital resources that would compromise the company's return on investment at the end of their financial year (Mousa Eltoum et al., 2021). Therefore, close monitoring is necessary to ensure effective and efficient ManagementManagement of the entire project. Adopting and implementing an effective centralization tool makes it easier for the project team to get an efficient report. Both monitoring and centralizing tools should work in synchronization to facilitate accurate time information, enabling team members to take appropriate actions when needed.

These factors are interconnected. The absence of efficient communication makes it difficult for project managers to act on emerging issues despite having the freedom and capability to monitor the project's progress. The lack of information centralization makes monitoring incomplete or wrong data less valuable. It is not easy to achieve project goals where the project members are not connected, given the necessary support and empowerment to ensure the progress and success of the project. Successfully implementing these three factors helps organizations and project teams weather the pandemic's effects and provides the organization's long-term productivity (Sánchez, 2016).

#### **Conclusions and Recommendation**

Despite the economic chaos and downfalls brought about by the pandemic, especially in managing business projects, project managers have, however, come up with new approaches such as ensuring effective communication, centralization of data, and monitoring techniques to ensure continuity of projects and achievement of organizations' goals. Covid 19 has proved to many businesses why they must prepare themselves in advance to fit in and catch up with the ever-changing business environment, whether a negative or positive change. This study has shown that despite the negative effects, the pandemic has also significantly impacted businesses and organizations' project management practices in terms of the growth in digitization and the automation of procedures relevant to business operations. The derived results from this research have also helped in forming the basis for further afterthoughts such as;



1. The effective execution and implementation of projects require a high level of competency and professionalism from project managers in dealing with the dynamic changes in the business environment.
2. Consequently, as noted by the study, the significant part of the pandemic unveiled various ineffectiveness in the projects and business aspects, which would not have been identified or even would have taken decades to implement.
3. The knowledge of the risk of a similar situation like the Covid 19 occurring should act as a basis for project managers to train them to make resilience and adaptable-dynamic risk management project management which is more agile to curb such events.

## References

1. Coggburn, J. (2005). The Benefits of Human Resource Centralization: Insights from a Survey of Human Resource Directors in a Decentralized State. *Public Administration Review*, 65(4), 424-435. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00469.x>
2. Draghici, A. (2020). Changes and challenges of human systems management during and after the pandemic. *Human Systems Management*, 39(4), 469-472. <https://doi.org/10.3233/hsm-209001>
3. Effects of COVID-19 and Recommended Practices: Case Report. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.37506/mlu.v21i2.2803>
4. Furukawa, C. (2016). Dynamics of a critical problem-solving project team and creativity in a multiple-project environment. *Team Performance Management*, 22(1/2), 92-110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tpm-04-2015-0021>
5. Goschin, Z., & Constantin, D. (2021). Estimating the short-term economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic: A regional perspective. *Geographia Polonica*, 94(3), 441-457. <https://doi.org/10.7163/gpol.0214>
6. Hristov, I. (2021). The role of the stakeholders' perception on the company's performance during the pandemic. *Academy Of Management Proceedings*, 2021(1), 13718. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2021.13718abstract>
7. Jovanović-Milenković, M., Đurković, A., Vučetić, D., & Drašković, B. (2020). The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Real Estate Market Development Projects. *European Project Management Journal*, 10(1), 36-49. <https://doi.org/10.18485/epmj.2020.10.1.5>
8. Lucocq, J., & Radhakishnan, G. (2021). SP4.1.13 ManagementManagement of appendicitis during COVID-19 pandemic; short-term outcomes. *British Journal Of Surgery*, 108(Supplement\_7). <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjs/znab361.092>
9. Mazumder, S., & Saha, P. (2021). COVID-19: Fear of Pandemic and Short-Term IPO Performance. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3784013>
10. Mousa Eltoum, A., Yatiban, A., Omar, R., & Islam, R. (2021). Corporate social responsibility practices of business firms in Dubai during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Problems And Perspectives In Management*, 19(1), 231-243. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19\(1\).2021.20](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(1).2021.20)
11. Müller, R., & Klein, G. (2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic and Project Management Research. *Project Management Journal*, 51(6), 579-581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8756972820963316>

12. Muñoz-Villalba, J. (2021). The COVID-19 Crisis Management as the Management of a Project. Lessons Learned in Spain. *European Project Management Journal*, 11(2), 13-23. <https://doi.org/10.18485/epmj.2021.11.2.2>
13. Sánchez, L. (2016). Cumulative effects assessment and ManagementManagement: principles, processes, and practices. *Impact Assessment And Project Appraisal*, 34(4), 359-359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2016.1244276>
14. Shamim, M. M. I. (2016). Opportunities in BPO Sector for Youth Study of Bangladesh. *Business Review Bangladesh*, 5(1 & 2), 25–30. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16009.57440>
15. Shamim, M. I. (2022). Exploring the Success Factors of Project Management. *American Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 5(7), 64-72.
16. Shamim, Md. M. I., Shavarebi, K., & Raihan, M. (2020). PLANNING OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TRAINING PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT: A CASE STUDY OF BANGLADESH. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 5.
17. Shamim, M. I. (2022). IT Skills Development Project and Economic Development in Bangladesh. *Academic Journal of Digital Economics and Stability*, 19(7), 13-21.
18. The Impact of Pandemic COVID -19 in Workplace. (2020). <https://doi.org/10.7176/ejbm/12-15-02>
19. Tripiawan, W., & Frestikawati, W. (2021). Risk Management: Identification and Mitigation in Maintenance Project During COVID-19 Outbreak (A Case Study in Telco Maintenance Project). *Journal of Modern Manufacturing Systems And Technology*, 5(2), 52-58. <https://doi.org/10.15282/jmmst.v5i2.6852>