# Alternative assessments in the private universities during the Covid-19 pandemic: Impact and consequences

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in English

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1.  The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2.  The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3.  The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4.  I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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# Approval

The thesis titled "Alternative assessments in the private universities during the Covid-19 pandemic: Impact and consequences" submitted by Rubyat Tahrim Rafa (18103041) of Spring,2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English.

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# Ethics Statement

To conduct this research BRAC University"s ethical guidelines are followed strictly.

# Abstract

This study explores students" perceptions and thoughts on the alternative assessments conducted by their respected universities during the Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. A qualitative research method was employed to carry out this study and the participants are from different private universities of Bangladesh. Private university students were choosen for this study as almost all the private universities adopted alternative assessment during the pandemic. Therefore, documenting students" perceptions and experiencesof alternative assessments is crucial to understand the impacts and consequences of alternative assessment in the higher education in Bangladesh. The study also focused on the factors that influenced students to keep their interests on online learning. The results suggested that despite various challenges alternative assessments were used by most of the private universities during the pandemic and teachers and students had a positive attitude towards alternative assessment. More importantly, it will help university educators in Bangladesh to consider adopting alternative assessment in the future.

**Keywords:** Alternative assessments; Covid-19; factors influencing alternative assessments; Engagement in online education.

# Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my parents whose constant support and guidance enabled me to achieve my goal and desires. Additionally, this work is dedicated to all the students who worked very hard to adjust in online classes and examinations during this pandemic.

# Acknowledgement

First and foremost, all the appreciation goes to Almighty Allah for giving me strength and patience to complete this research. Then, I would like to express my parents" gratitude towards my parents for their constant support and motivation which inspired me a lot to achieve my goals. Also, I want to thank my friends, seniors and juniors for their continuous encouragement and support; without their help I would not be able to finish this study in time. Finally, I offer my heartfelt gratitude and respect to my supervisor, Dr. Md Al Amin, for his guidance and generous support throughout the thesis and my university life. I truly appreciate all your advises for this study and have learn a lot throughout the journey. Moreover, I would also like to thank all the faculty members of English and Humanities Department, as all of them contribute a lot in my whole undergraduate life in Brac university. Lastly, I am thankful to all of the participants who have made the data collection procedure easier for me to conduct this research.

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# List of Acronyms

ICT- Information and communication technology

MCQ- Multiple choice questions

MGT- Management techniques

HRM- Human recourse management

LMS- Learning management system

MKT- Marketing techniques

CSE- Computer science engineering

ENH- English and Humanities

BBA- Bachelors of business administration

EEE- Electrical and Electronics engineering

ESS- Economics and Social Science

COD – Course outside department

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Context:

Bangladesh went into the first lockdown in March, 2020 because of the increasing rate of COVID-19 cases and put a sudden halt to all in-person educational and commercial purposes. The lockdown had been extended several times and many businesses and commercial centres later chose to reopen but all the educational institutions remain closed for an uncertain period of time. Government decided schools, colleges and universities to remain closed for the safety purposes of the young generations. However, government advised to take online classes and to give alternative assessments so that the students can continue with their studies. This decision has brought a major change in the educational institutions of our country. Majority of the educational institutions have resumed their classes online and both public and private universities tried hard to conduct their classes online to avoid any kind of study gap for their students.

The booming of alternative assessment in Bangladesh occurred due to the Covid-19 outbreak hits the country. Because of this pandemic, education system introduces this new alternative assessment process replacing the traditional ones. Though this technique is frequently applied in the western countries but for Bangladesh, it is a whole new concept and had various obstacles. At the initial phase, both students and teachers faced a lot of difficulties adapting this alternative assessment method. Though it has many barriers but this method has also brought some remarkable possibilities in the education system of Bangladesh.

**1.2 Assessment technique during pandemic:**

Considering the Covid situation, all educational and other institutions around the world shifted their educational activities in online and Bangladesh is also following the same. In order to conduct online classes, different universities use different types of free cloud platform such as: Goggle meet, Goggle classroom, Zoom, Facebook, Messenger and more to conduct alternative assessment.

Generally, the main reason behind resuming classes online was to communicate with the students so that they do not feel demotivated during that pandemic time. As classes are conducting online so assessment process must be different from the usual ones. Just like teaching method, assessment methods are also varied from one university to another. But there are some points which remain common in all the universities.

## 1.3 Significance and scope:

The study intends to explore the students" perceptions regarding alternative assessments especially in the private universities as they have been given their best to conduct online classes and test the ability of their students successfully. Moreover, they make the assessments effective enough to evaluate the current potential of the students. Several studies had been conducted in other contexts to explore alternative assessments but in Bangladesh context the area is unexplored. Most of these studies have covered  the problems of alternative assessments (such as- internet connectivity issues, financial crisis, mental health problems etc) or the possibilities of alternative assessments but there is hardly any study which thoroughly explains the factors behind Bangladeshi students" engagements in alternative assessment process. Thus, this study will be helpful for the

stakeholders to understand students" perceptions regarding the alternative assessment and its impact and consequences.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

In this chapter I have presented relevant studies reviewed for this study. One of the aims of this chapter is to find out research gaps and to show how this study will fill some of the gaps in the existing research.

## 2.1 Overview of the assessments:

Flores and Gago (2020) stated that assessment technique during this pandemic is one of the most important factors. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing was practised worldwide and all the educational institutions switched their assessment mode online. Basically, there are two forms of assessments such as- traditional assessment and alternative assessments (Baily, 1998). Traditional method is the usual one which focuses on the formal settings but alternative assessment is not bounded by formal setting but it initiates the students to solve different problems using their higher order skills and knowledge (Colman, 2021). Colman also classified alternative assessment as formative assessment as it tries to evaluate student"s overall understanding and academic knowledge with the help of given feedback. Moreover, instructors follows both techniques- synchronous and asynchronous to interact with the students in this process (Parveen, 2021). Where synchronous follows real time schedule, later follows more relaxed and convenient schedule according to the student"s preference. Edmonson (2008) states, synchronous process deals with active participation, attendance, lectures and discussion and sometimes focuses on the group works as so there is a

huge possibility for the students to stand out by showing their performance and skills but asynchronous process lacks in that. He also states that, here the participation is completely based on the student"s interest as they have the freedom to study independently. However, both processes have the ability to conduct alternative assessment in a convenient and effective way during Covid-19 pandemic (Christian, 1998).

## 2.2 Characteristics of Alternative Assessment:

Rapanta, et. al, (2020) stated that alternative assessment is a student-centred assessment and alternative assessments provide better opportunities to give focus on the individual"s work and to give feedbacks. According to Colman (2021), alternative assessment can be conducted in different ways but has the ability to measure student"s skills in every possible way. It is not a high-stake evaluation process but find a flexible and adaptable way to assure the learning goals and objectives. According to Simonson et. al., (2000) the three main characteristic of alternative assessment must consist of - flexibility, reliability and assures students engagement and motivation. Winking (1997) states that this assessment process requires students to apply their higher order thinking abilities to solve the problems which is based on real-life scenario. Usually, alternative assessment techniques include- open- ended essay question, peer work, online interviews, presentation, game-type activities, critical analysis, open-book exams etc to test students" skills (Dietel et al., 1991). Anderson (1998) states that alterative assessment method advocates task-based activities for the students to show their proficiency in a realistic setting. Moreover, as the alternative process takes longer time to conduct, so instructors had chance to conduct variety of techniques to test students" different skills and weaknesses in order to assess them technically (Law and Eckes, 1995).

## 2.3 Effectiveness of alternative or formative assessment:

Alternative assessment is mainly two types- summative and formative. Summative assessment measures a student's overall proficiency based on their performance and usually designed for traditional assessment process where a student mostly gives in person exams following this process (Spiller, 2012). But formative approach gives students the opportunity measures their performance (Shannon, Dea). She also states, as formative assessment is quite simple in formation (group discussion, clicker question, low-stake group work); it is easier to apply in the pandemic. Formative approach basically focuses on improving learning process of the learners by evaluate their knowledge, performance and skills (Van der Klejj, Vermeulan, Schildkamp, & Eggen, 2015). A well-planned formative test suggests both teachers and learners' involvement (Bennett, 2011) where feedback plays an important role. Here, the test report measures students' individual growth and the learner's developmental stage or an overall status of their current condition in the academics. Ramoroka (2007) in his studies states that, different learners have different ways of adapting things so the instructor have to design the questions keeping these things in their mind to make low-stake exams fruitful for the learners.

According to Huerta- Macias (1995), alternative assessments are quite direct appraisals and has the ability to test the university level students through various process. Begum and Farooqui (2008) argued that, in alternative assessment process, student's understanding of a particular situation, analysis, creativity of writing, application ability and higher order skill are being tested in the universities. Moreover, feedback giving and the communication with the instructor is the most important thing in this alternative assessment process (Thomson, 2010) so the students can get clearer idea of improvement. Here, the teaching and learning is completely student centric and have the maximum freedom in participating process. Janisch

and others (2007) states that, students are the integral part of alternative assessment and their participation is much needed for a successful implementation of a task.

## 2.4 Factors influence students' engagement in alternative learning process:

According to Henman (2018), learners autonomy plays a big role in engaging alternative assessment process. Moreover, engagement helps learners to improve performance, building confidence, widens knowledge, increase thinking abilities and enhance motivation. A recent study conducted on 110,000 students of 128 schools claims that, students" engagement in alternative learning process can make significant changes with the academic growth and can enhance their four skills (Reckmever, 2019). (Barua, et al) states, direct (learning resources, teaching competencies) and indirect (teaching context, social network, technology) both factors influence in students" engagement in alternative assessment. Moreover, (Arora & Dhull, 2019) describes some of the major factors which is the main reason for students" engagement in alternative assessment process. Here, the below (figure 1) shows factors which really help the students to keep engage to their alternative learning in order to achieve better results in academic studies.

Student"s engagement in the alternative assessment primarily depends on the mentioned factors. However, except these major factors, there are a lot of internal and external secondary factors which influence the students to engage in online learning (Sakshi, 2019). The detailed analysis on each of the factors are thoroughly discuss on the (findings section; **4.3**) according to the data found by the participants in the interview sessions.

# Chapter 3

# Research Methodology

The chapter briefly describes the methodology which the researcher has used for conducting this research. It includes the purpose of this study, research design, data collection procedure and analysis.

## 3.1 Purpose of the study:

The research has been designed to document the alternative assessment processes conducted by the private universities during the pandemic and its impact and consequences on their students. Almost all the private universities conduct their classes online and assess their students through the alternative assessment process which eventually proven to be effective for that specific period of time. Also, there are some factors which assures students participation in that process. Hence, this study aims to search student"s thoughts on the alternative assessment processes. Most of the participants of this study have done offline classes and give examination on the traditional process as well so they can easily find out the differences and all the pros and cons of alternative assessments which has been continuing for more than 2 years now in all the private universities of Bangladesh. Therefore, the study will try to enlighten on the facts of the research questions (mentioned in **3.2**) and endeavours to explore or record the responses of different private university students on the impact and consequences of alternative assessments.

## 3.2 Research Question:

The following research questions guide this study-

i.      What do students think of the alternative assessment methods conducted by the universities during the pandemic?

ii.     What are the factors influencing students" engagement with online learning and alternative assessment?

## 3.3 Research Design:

A narrative approach within the qualitative research paradigm is used to conduct this study. A narrative approach seems to be more appropriate as it allows me to capture participants" stories. The main reason for focusing on the narrative approach is to construct stories from the participants based on their experience. This technique works as a dual technique where the participants first narrate their own experience then the researcher interprets his version and construct it. This narrative can be derived from the conversation or by in-depth interviews. Usually, narrative method is widely used in qualitative research so that the researcher can get more deep information to conduct his study. However, all the participants of this study are from different universities – South point university, Resident university and Prime university. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to keep the privacy of the participants and not to reveal the identity of the institutions. As all the participants are from different private universities studying in different departments so it would be effective for the research to enlighten the facts of the different department students and their thoughts on the alternative assessment process.

## 3.4 Participants of the study:

For conducting the research, I approached students who are studying in their respected private universities to take part in the research as a participant. Among all the participants, 9 of them are female and 7 are male. The age limit of the participants is from (22-25) years and the first language for all of them is Bangla. Among the 15 participants 4 of them are from English medium background which is definitely an advantage in this alternative assessment system. The highest number of participants are from $11^{th}$ -$12^{th}$ semester in order to describe the impact and consequences of "Alternative assessment" thoroughly.

## 3.5 Student-Participants' profile:

Participants" profiles are presented in the following tables along with their university, department, semester and previous medium of instruction.

| No | Name | Department | Previous medium of instructions | University | Semester |
|----|------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|----------|
| 1 | Raisa | BBS | English | South Point | $9^{th}$ |
| 2 | Anika | ENG | English | Resident | $11^{th}$ |
| 3 | Shahreen | ESS | Bangla | Resident | $8^{th}$ |
| 4 | Orthee | CSE | Bangla | Prime | $12^{th}$ |
| 5 | Emad | EEE | Bangla | Resident | $12^{th}$ |
| 6 | Sabbir | BBS | Bangla | Resident | $10^{th}$ |

| 7 | Shanto | LAW | Bangla | Resident | 11th |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Nayem | BBS | Bangla | Prime | 10th |
| 9 | Anushka | EEE | English | South Point | 12th |
| 10 | Samira | ENG | Bangla | Resident | 12th |
| 11 | Bushra | CSE | Bangla | Prime | 11th |
| 12 | Shoily | ENG | English | South Point | 12th |
| 13 | Ruponty | ENG | Bangla | Prime | 12th |
| 14 | Ninad | ESS | Bangla | South Point | 10th |
| 15 | Qaiyum | CSE | Bangla | Resident | 11th |

Table 1: List of the participants (Student)

The study has been conducted on three different university students- South point university, Resident university and Prime university (Pseudo name) along with the other necessary information so that the readers can understand the alternative assessment process of different universities and different department participants‟ think of it.

## 3.6 Data collection procedure:

As all the participants are from different universities and I cannot get the opportunity to conduct an in-person interview due to the pandemic. Therefore, all the interviews were conducted through Zoom video call. The questions set for the interview are open-ended so

the participants can give detailed answers. This research mainly based on the interviews of the participant"s self-observation on alternative assessment process. The whole interview process is recorded with the permission of the participants so that I can use these data for further analysis.

## 3.7 Ethical Consideration:

The researcher tries her best to maintain the ethicality of this research following the BRAC University"s ethical guidelines for research. The participation of the students in this research are completely voluntary and no one is forced to take part in the interview process. The agreed to take part in this research with their own consent. They are informed that the information will only be used for this particular study and their personal data will be kept fully secured. To ensure this point, I also sent an email where the consent form has been attached so that no participants can read and understand the purpose of the study. Moreover, I asked the participants to choose the medium of the interview and some of them used Bangla as they are more comfortable with this language.

# Chapter 4

# Findings

The chapter thoroughly describes and analyses the data which the researcher has found through the interviews from the participants. The themes of the chapter originated from the interview process which develops the answers of the research questions. To have a better interpretation of perceptions of the participants, the readers need to go through the background information shared in the (Table-1; section 3.5) of the students. As the students were from different universities so the assessments process varies from each-other. This basically helps me to analyse the interview and the rationale behind their perceptions. However, the findings section is divided into two major parts. In the first part, I am going to describe some of the participant''s experience of alternative assessment through their stories describing in the interview session. In the second part, I will relate the research questions with the interview results based on the stories present in part one.

## (Part-1)

## 4.1 Selected participants' stories

### 4.1.1    Raisa's Story:

I am a student of „South Point" university currently reading in BBA department. My university usually take live online classes (synchronous learning method) on the pandemic and the exam process is usually long assignment based. The instructor gives us assessments on the goggle classroom and we need to write the answers in a word file and upload it on the specific channel created on the goggle classroom by the teachers. The deadline of the submission is always mentioned for the students. For small quizzes and mid, the duration is

very little; like- few hours depending on the marks but for the finals, the duration is quite long compared to the others. Also, they give case-study based assignment where we need to collect real-life data along with expert analysis on specific topic. In this case, time duration stays for few days. Though we get lot of time to research to collect information for the case study but for the other exams we need to study sincerely. The questions we need to answer in the exams are quite higher order based so that nobody can write their answers using notes. In traditional exams, teachers designed questions directly from the book but in alternative assessment process, they test the student"s thinking ability. To get better marks, I need to search various articles related to the topic and have to apply my higher order skills as well. Though it sounds very boring but effective to pass the time in this pandemic.

Beside these long assignments, my university takes viva on zoom call or sometimes by phone calls, live group presentation and short summary when every chapter of a course ends. In case of live presentation, we need to dress up formally and have to stream our slide and give presentation keeping our cameras on. It ensures students engagement (skills, participation, performance, cognitive) in the alternative assessment process. But. It becomes a hassle as if any persons on the group faces any internet connectivity issue, then the whole group have to suffer because of it. Overall, the process is quite good to continue my studies on this pandemic unless we have to wait for the situation to get better like the public ones.

**4.1.2   Anika's story:**

I am a student of "Resident" university of English department. This is my $11^{th}$ semester so I have given both traditional and alternative exams in my university. As I am a literature major

student, so attending the scheduled classes are quite necessary in my case. Though my university has created a new platform but many course instructors uses earlier published resources and didn"t record any pre-lecture videos for the students to study but give the necessary articles in that platform so that we can have clearer idea by reading these after the class. Moreover, the teachers also upload the class recording in this platform for the students who missed any of the class lectures. In this technique, any English course instructor can teach the materials as they are already authorized and did not take any effort to make newer videos every single week. They basically use published journal and their own knowledge to teach so the answers of the students vary from person to person depends on their understanding of instructor"s word. The exam process is quite simple; like- writing answers on the scheduled exam day in the class time as similar to the traditional ones but we just need to write those in a word file and have to mail it to the teacher and that"s the only difference in this case. For these reasons, I did not find any disadvantage in this type of alternative way of learning hence it saves the time and energy to wait in road because of traffic jam in the Dhaka city.

In another department, I noticed that the process of the assessment is completely different. The instructors did not take classes usually and uses a separate platform named "Slack" (communication tool) for communicating with the students and to solve small problems. They only take live classes before the exams if any big problem arises which needs consultation. The assessment process uses technological way to teach and conducting exams. Learning and teaching are completely electronic device based and teachers uploaded all the necessary materials and videos in the separate platform introduced by my university. All the exams such as- mid, quizzes, final, assignment are clicker question type given in that platform. We just need to finish answering all the questions in the given time and click the submit button on it. The marks of these exam can be shown just after the students pressed the

submit button. So, it is quite easy for the students to calculate their total by their own and does not need to wait for a long time. This type of learning process is completely driven by a student"s inner force and cognitive engagement. The process of these exams is "timed based" so ensuring internet connectivity is the main thing here. If any students lost connectivity, then the answers of all the clicker questions can be removed. So, it is quite challenging for the students to ensure their internet server connection and keep backup data all the time. Also, this type of exams can be given sitting anywhere so it is more convenient process of giving exams in an alternative method which ensures students flexibility.

### 4.1.3 Sabbir's story:

I am also a student of „Resident" university studying in the BBA department. It"s my 10<sup>th</sup> semester and have been doing my online classes from 4<sup>th</sup> semester. As my university created a study platform maned "Alex" (pseudo name) so the instructors uploaded all the study materials earlier and we need to go through these before the class. The classes of my university are not mandatory but my department reserve 5 marks for participation so that they can ensure students engagement in online classes in various ways. Many students have the tendency to skip classes in spite of staying at home so the university conducted many in class peer activity so that students" emotional engagement with the peers can be assured and they learn to value their other classmates which led to better student engagement on alternative assessment process. My department usually follows various alternative assessment process so I have to keep myself updated all the time. In most of the courses, teachers follow low stake exam process such as- MCQ in order to asses us. All the quizzes are conducted in these techniques but for the midterm and final exam, they gave short question answers which we all have to write in the word file and complete it within a specific time. Though they gave

enough time to write the answers, but because of the internet and device disturbance some students face a huge difficulty to submit their answers on the "Turnitin." Although this platform is widely used for detecting plagiarism, we can also submit our assignment through it. However, the final exams of BBS courses are conducted as "proctored" so some students felt anxious and made silly mistakes because of it.

Besides these, there is a section of practicing MCQ after every lecture video in that platform so the students can test their ability of self -learning in this process. This is a very good initiative taken by the university for self-realization on study. However, student can also see their progress in a specific section as well. But a single course applying multiple assessment techniques sometimes confuses the students about the exam process and decrease their confidence level at a certain stage is the only concern in my opinion.


**4.1.4 Bushra's story:**

I am a student of CSE department in "Prime" university and this is my 11<sup>th</sup> semester. My university take live online classes and its mandatory for all the students. As they did not provide any recording of the live session so attending all the classes is quite necessary to understand each and every topic thoroughly. They apply this process to increase students" engagement in the class. The assessment process is completely online based as the instructors give us the questions on the goggle classroom and we need to write our answers usually on the A4 size paper and scan it with the help of some mobile applications and then submit it in the goggle classroom as a PDF form. Here, no notebook is allowed and cameras must be turned on during the exam and students" needs to make sure their hands, face and exam script must be visible all the time. The time frame of the exams depends on the marks as the quizzes carry only 20 marks so the time is half an hour. But, in case of mid and final exam, the time

increases with the length of the exam. In this case, after the exam time ends, separate 15 minutes are given for scanning and making PDF. As in the engineering department, the answers of the assessments are very complicated so it is not possible to solve all of these using word file. So, hand written answers are quite needed here. Though this is a good technique but scanning and making PDF requires a handsome amount of time and some students faces difficulties in submitting the answer script on time. Lab exam process are also conducted in the same process. Here, the major problem is, if any student"s electricity goes, the whole code will be erased which eventually creates a big problem for the students.

In my opinion, alternative assessment is quite effective to conduct everything online. If we put our education on halt like the public ones so it could bring a huge loss for us. But, in case of lab assessments, there remains a huge lacking in learning and the lab codes which the instructors give in the exam are mostly available in online so the students can easily copy these from the internet and there is no way to get caught in case of lab ones.

**4.1.5 Ninad's story:**

I am a student of ESS department studying "Economics" in the "South Point" university and my institution mainly focuses on the synchronous (also discussed in **4.1.1**) method which requires teachers and students to connect in real-time (live class) through zoom meetings or goggle meet. Here, the class time is specific and cannot be changed and the instructors teach the students by using various slides also shared their screen for showing the difficult calculations in a blank word file. The exam process is like the traditional method as we have to write down the answers in paper, then scan these and later have to make a folder  of it. Then we have to submit it in the goggle classroom. Also, we need to give live presentation applying synchronous strategy so that students can ask questions to their fellow mates and

most importantly, teachers can assess student"s speaking and listening skills. The duration as well as the scheduled exam time is mentioned in the goggle classroom and after the mentioned time, their answer file would not be accepted so students need to keep these things in their mind. However, as all the assessment follows the same technique, so it is really helpful for the students to maintain the track. To ensure students" engagement in the class, teachers sometimes conduct some in-class participation activities in order to communicate with the students.

### 4.1.6 Samira's story:

I am a student of "Resident" university and this is my 12<sup>th</sup> semester. Though online semester process is quite good for me but it also has some challenges and difficulties. As earlier mentioned, our institution uploaded pre-recoded videos for most of the course and it is quite helpful for us to learn the study materials from wherever we are. Earlier Anika states that (**4.1.2**), her instructor did not provide any pre-recorded lecture videos rather he uses existing study materials to teach the literature courses in the live class. But as I am doing my major in "Media" so my course instructors uploaded some lectures videos so that we can watch them and prepare ourselves for the class. Also, the instructors provided lots of supplementary videos and research articles which is essential for my stream so that we can apply those in our journal writings. Most of my instructors create a link on our educational platform where we can submit our work rather than mail it to him which is basically a better process of submitting any assignments in my opinion. The exam process is also differing from Anika"s as here all of our test is long assignment based as the teachers gave almost 1-2days to complete those. The link which he provided for submission clearly states the last date and exact time for submission so there is no place for delayed submission which is actually an

advanced step. Also, a course instructor of mine told us to make a documentary video as an assessment to test our creative skills. It is really an innovative process for assessing the students rather than giving lots of assignment moreover, this process can actually increase the interest level of the students to attend the classes. Here I would like to state that, same university and same department also differs in the assignment techniques and it is not necessary to conduct a specific way for taking alternative assessments in this type of learning process.

## (Part 2)

## 4.2 Addressing Research Question1: Students' perception regarding alternative assessments

In this section, students" perceptions regarding online assessments are going to discuss thoroughly. The section will contain some of advantages, disadvantages and challenges which was faced by the participants during their online semester.

### 4.2.1 Advantages of alternative assessment:

All the participants agreed that, alternative assessment during the pandemic was a big opportunity for them to continue their studies amid the crisis. All of them came up with some similar aspects on the advantages which are described below-

**4.2.1.1 Flexibility in learning:**

Participants shared that; alternative assessment gives them the opportunity to learn study materials according to their own pace. As most of the assessments are kind of paper based so they get enough time to research and write a really good paper unlike the traditional exams. Though the long assignments or research papers requires time and effort but it has the flexibility to express something according to their opinion. Also, instructors are quite flexible in this case and give enough time to students to submit their answers.

**4.2.1.2 No travelling:**

All the participants agreed in this particular point that, the most convenient aspect of alternative assessment method is; they don't need to travel for attending classes or giving the exams which eventually saves time. Also, 2 of my participants who lives outside Dhaka says, "It is the most convenient option for them as it is not possible to do online classes and have to move Dhaka just to give 1 or 2 exams. So, it basically saves time, money and energy." Thus, alternative assessment is cost-effective in a sense and have opportunities to learn for the maximum number of students at the same time (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

**4.2.1.3 Accessibility:**

Alternative assessment provides accessibility to the students so that they can study from anywhere not only in Bangladesh also in the world. In alternative assessment, students just need internet accessibility to complete their task and they can do it anytime and anywhere. As online education is active till now, many students went outside Dhaka for vacation or to stay in relative house for some days or even went to the Abroad for various reasons. So, alternative assessment is quite suitable in this case as they don't need to think about going to

their universities anymore and can continue their studies from wherever they are. So, this particular point is a big advantage of alternative assessment process.

#### 4.2.1.4  Uses of higher order skills:

In alternative assessment process, teachers usually set the questions in such a way that participants have to apply their knowledge as well as higher order skills at the same time. So, the students don"t need to memorize each and every thing thoroughly to get good marks rather they need to understand the topic in order to apply their knowledge and give their views on it. A participant named Shoily states that, "As I am a linguistic major student so I used to read the whole chapters thoroughly and memorized many things without knowing the actual meanings. But alternative assessment needs reasoning, application and proper understanding of any topics so I try to know about the actual meaning of a text with the help of my instructor. The question pattern is now creative and requires our views which is missing in the traditional method. So, it is quite good thing to increase the higher order skills."

#### 4.2.1.5   Uses of technology:

The most important aspect of alternative assessment is using the technology. As all the classes of private university are conducted online through the internet so having the basic knowledge in technology is quite needed. But unfortunately, some students are lacks in this particular knowledge and faced huge problems in the earlier days. For CSE or EEE department, it is not a big thing as they are quite advanced in the technological aspects and have to work with computer all day but in case of other department students, it can be slight issue for some. A participant named Raisa sates that, "As I am a BBA student of South Point university so I used to attend my classes and read slides and the pdf version of books. I did

not try to search other educational application or sites earlier but now I have to go through this in order to make my assessments or presentations presentable with the help of technology in alternative assessment. It is a good thing I guess as knowing the basic technological things is quite needed in this era but many students do not even try to learn technological skills for various reasons and they always lack in certain skills. But in alternative assessment process, teacher needs to see our creativity and application skills so I have to learn these for my own betterment as well."

### 4.2.1.6   Self-assessment techniques:

In alternative assessment process, some universities give their students a fair chance to self-assess themselves. After every recorded video, there are some multiple-choice question answers remain so they can apply their knowledge of whatever they have learned by seeing the videos and can apply it in that section. Those questions are basically based on MCQ pattern and are non-graded so the students can easily participate in it without any fear of losing marks which is a good assessment process for self-practice.

### 4.2.1.7 Cost effectiveness:

Alternative assessment is quite cost effective compare to the traditional classes as no money has been spent in going to the universities by any transport. Also, students who live outside Dhaka do not need to spent money in accommodation and can easily conduct their studies staying at home with the help of the internet. Though many students cannot afford Wifi connection and they have to buy mobile data every month or every single week but it was comparatively less expensive than transportation or accommodation cost. So, alternative assessment surely a better affordable option conducted during the pandemic.

## 4.2.2 Disadvantages of alternative assessment:

Though alternative assessment is a good process to continue study in the pandemic but it has some certain disadvantages which is described by some of the participants. The disadvantages which the (R) found by the interview are mentioning below:

### 4.2.2.1    Lack of face-to-face communication:

As alternative assessment process conducted through online so some universities make their personal learning platform and upload recoded videos in order to decrease student"s difficulty. Here, many instructors do not conduct online classes usually rather they use various learning platform like- Slack, Facebook group, messenger group, WhatsApp, discord in order to solve student"s problem or giving feedback. But in this process, instructors cannot see the students and failed to understand their actual lacking. However, lack of face-to-face communication sometimes creates a huge communication gap between students and teachers. Feedbacks which are given in this type of platform is quite short and does not satisfy the students in some point. Also, many times instructors did not notice or accidently skip some of the questions asked by a student which demotivates a student about this process.

### 4.2.2.2    Question on the validity and reliability:

"Validity"and "Reliability" are one of the foremost things which is needed to assure in a test. But, in alternative assessment, these points are highly questionable as there are many flaws remains in alternative process. Participant Sabbir told that, "Our university most of the exams

are assignment based and teachers are quite lenient in this case to give them few days to research. So, students can easily cheat in these exams because of the poor formation of the test which raises question on the validity and reliability of the exams. Many people are still not sure about the alternative assessment process is reliable for the university level students or not.

### 4.2.2.3    Lengthy exam procedure:

Many participants state that, almost all the private universities conduct long assessments-based question answers which requires a lot of research and took 1-2 days for writing the answers. Also, in case of finals, the time framed can be by almost 7-10 days to a do proper research. Moreover, this type of research work needs to conduct several interview sessions for data collection, finding relative articles and more. So, these long exam procedures need huge effort and time than the traditional ones and sometimes students become annoyed because of the lengthy exam procedures and to write a single paper continuously for so many days.

### 4.2.2.4    Inability to test four skills:

A university student requires to have expertise in the four skills like- reading, writing, speaking and listening and to ensure all of these, all the private universities have some special language courses which are quite necessary for all the department‟s students. In these courses, instructors assign different activities to the students in order to enhance their four skills. Such as- writing different kind of journals to increase their writing skills, giving impromptu speech or presentation to increase the fluency in speaking, reading different type of compositions, listening activities etc. But in online these assessments are replaced by

various alternative methods. Students give presentation without showing their face and read their notes by seeing. Here, their speaking ability or fluency cannot be tested as the process has big lacking. Moreover, in writing assessments, they copy articles from the internet so it is quite difficult for the instructors to assess them properly also to test all of the skills like- listening or reading cannot be conducted online and the students lack in these skills.

### 4.2.2.5 Procrastination:

As alternative assessments took a long time to complete any task and the videos are quite lengthy to watch again and again, students often feel procrastinated. It hampers the flow of their studies and can affect badly in their performance. As in alternative methods, students need to study, watch the lecture videos, attend live classes or consultations all by themselves so there is a big tendency to get bored easily as there is no one to motivate them and need to finish everything all by themselves from staying at home. For this reason, they often feel procrastination. One of my participant Samira claims that, "I often feel procrastinate because of my study pressure. It is too tiring to look at the screen for a long period of time. So, when I took a break, I didn"t feel to start studying again. Basically, that"s happen because of not going to the university and not doing any physical classes for a long period of time."

### 4.2.2.6 Excessive assessment:

In traditional method, there are mostly 3-4 exam (mid, final and quizzes) along with the presentation have been conducted but in alternative assessment method, instructors gave so many assessments to the students in order to test their learning abilities and skills. For example- instructors take 2-3 quizzes along with mid, final, presentation, viva, research paper and often call the students after the exam to clarify the answers which they write in their

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exam. Moreover, these assessments are research based and took a long time to finish. So, the students who take maximum number of courses, find it very difficult and felt immense pressure to submit them. Because of the excessive assessments, students become demotivated and frustrated in the alternative assessment process.

### 4.2.2.7 Physical and mental health issues:

Though alternative exams are considered as an effective way to continue studies but sometimes students" physical and mental health get affected by it. It is earlier mentioned that, because of using various techniques at the same time, low-stake exam process, timer-based exams; all of these eventually lower the spirit of the students to do well in the exam. Also, it caused a great harm to their mental health as well. Students experience anxiety, hypertension, sleeping disorder, stress, anxiety and more because of the excessive amount of the assessments given by their university which basically demotivates a student and creates a dangerous effect on their mental health.

Moreover, majority of the participants agreed on the facts that, 40% of the students faces different types of physical issues as they have to continuously sit in front of the computer or laptop and have to do their work which create problems in their eyesight. Participant Bushra states that, "As I am an engineering student so I have to work more in front of my computer and has to sit in a chair for half of the day to complete my difficult assignments. Because of these reasons, I often felt back pain and sometimes suffers from bad headache." In this way students physical and mental health gets affected by the alternative assessment process day by day.

### 4.2.3 Challenges of alternative assessments:

In the previous section, the (R) mentioned that online assessments have some challenges which affects the performance of the students. Here the challenges would be mention below-

**4.2.3.1. Internet connectivity:**

In our country, the internet connectivity issue is the most common concern for all as we do not have a strong infrastructure to conduct online classes without any kind of disturbance. Most of the time students face internet issues and it make them more anxious about the alternative process. The most annoying part is when the students give their exams on the goggle survey form, their internet suddenly goes and the page cannot reload itself. Because of this reason, sometimes their answers erased and they cannot even finish writing in their full exams. Nambier (2020) states that, poor connectivity, power cuts, disconnected between the classes, poor audio and videos quality, login related issues these are some common things which happen because of poor network and left a bad impact on students" mental health and felt demotivated to continue with the alternative exam process.

**4.2.3.2    Poor quality videos:**

As earlier mentioned, that, some of the universities made separate platform for their students where the instructors upload pre-recoded video materials. As this is the main source of learning, so students need to watch these videos again and again in order to learn and gather knowledge for their courses. But the videos which they provided are very poor quality and they have to watch it several times which is quite frustrating. Also, these videos sometimes are not effective enough to give proper answers in the exams so, students lack in knowledge in various aspects.

A participant named Shanto claims that. "We thought alternative assessment process will be fun as we sit idle all day so we can manage watching these and then give our exams. But it is not that easy task as it lacks in opportunity to communicate with the teachers and those poor-quality videos eventually makes it really difficult for us to improve learning efficiency."

### 4.2.3.3    Insufficient feedback:

Alternative assessments conducted in many forms and it is not possible for the teachers to maintain the same technique all the time. Participant named Ninad states that, "In our university, almost 90% assessments are submitted through goggle classroom and students get short feedback in this process." But another participant named Ruponty shares that. "In my university some courses are mainly conducted in a MCQ format. Here the goggle form only shows right and wrong answers and cannot explain the reasoning. So, in this case, there is no chance to give any feedback in this process." Another participant Samira states that, "In many courses we have to write research-based assessments then send it by email to the instructor. In this case, teachers can give detailed feedback as a reply but here we have to wait for at least 15days for short feedback which is quite frustrating."

So, from the interview session (R) finds that, almost 80% participant agreed on not getting proper feedback in the alternative assessment process which is a big challenge for the teachers and the institution to in order to solve students" problems.

### 4.2.3.4    Poor literacy on technological aspects:

As Bangladesh is a developing country, here the overall literacy rate is quite low (around 72%) compare to the other developed countries. In our country, the technological issues are severe and the rate of handling computer or smart devices are very low. Many students in the

rural areas did not have any fluency to operate digital devices to attend alternative assessments. They face huge problems in operating the applications like- Zoom, Goggle meet, Goggle classroom, WhatsApp etc. Moreover, many students cannot even afford advanced mobile phones or devices. Also, in the rural areas, technological aspects in literacy is such lower that they face a lot of trouble in joining the live sessions or to submit any assessments as well. Sometimes it seems quite challenging for the students to fulfill every criterion of alternative assessments with this limited knowledge and because of not having prior experiences, they fail to do well in the alternative assessment process. For the various reasons, it is quite challenging to update the students and train them on the technological aspects in a short period of time.

### 4.2.3.5    Ensuring credibility:

According to the participates, instructors use various methods to assess the students. For instance- they use goggle survey form, MCQ questions, research-based assessments, timed based exams, presentations and more. In most of the cases. Teachers are not able to keep their eyes on the students at the time of the exam and here remains a big question remain on the fairness of the exams and students" dignity. Huge number of students find copying from their friends and from the internet. It is not acceptable in any university and has a serious punishment for this kind of act. Though all the private universities took various initiatives to control plagiarism rate, but it still remains at a certain extent. It is quite depended on the credibility to what extent they can remain sincere. To minimizes this rate, institutions instruct the students to keep their cameras on the time of the exam but still students make lots of excuses and tries to copy in the proctored exams as well. So, it is very difficult to assess the students without ensuring credibility and it is a big challenge in alternative assessment system as well.

## 4.3 Addressing Research Question 2: Factors that influence students' engagement in online learning and alternative assessments

In this section, the (R) will highlight the factors which ensures students" engagement with alternative assessment process found by the interview. The section 4.3.1 will highlight the major factors which is the primary cause for students" engagement in alternative assessment. Moreover, section 4.3.2 will highlight the secondary factors for students" engagement.

### 4.3.1 Major factors influencing students' engagement:

#### 4.3.1.1 Skill engagement:

According to the Handelsman et al. (2005), students make various efforts like- organizing the materials, listening to the recordings, attending live sessions etc in order to gain knowledge and to show their skills in the class. It can be visible in the communication between the students and teachers and it is required to build a trust between the two communities. In alternative assessment process, students get lesser opportunities to shoe their skills and efficiency in learning. So, to show their four skills- reading, writing, listening and speaking abilities to their instructors" students attend live sessions or to ask question in order to flourish their basic skills to the teachers. Here, the engagement is the most important thing in order to get compliments. In alternative learning process, raising questions, receiving tutoring is quite needed so in the consultation sessions, students get the opportunity to show their skills to the teachers as well as to his peers. To earn a degree, it needs continuous efforts and engagement to hold a positive enforcement. So, in order to give greater efforts and achieve

better results, students try to show their skills which eventually influence them in engaging alternative assessment process.

### 4.3.1.2    Emotional engagement:

As in alternative process, everything happens virtually and the average course length is around 4months so students did not get time to get attached with everyone with this short period of time and lacks in interest to attend classes. So, the instructors try to make sure that, students can get some opportunity to interact with their course mates through various activities to get emotionally attached with them which motivates them to remain engaged in this process.

Participant Samira states, "When we find any course interesting and have the ability to apply our knowledge and make us feel more emotionally engaged, we tried to give more effort to engage themselves on it. Moreover, some assessments appear to be more engaging and quite unique so students become more engaged in these to get positive feedback, praise and encouragement". Also, students who have higher emotional engagement, score very high on different kinds of tests (Dixson, 2015) and instructor always tries to creates an emotional bonding with their students so that they can spread genuine positivity in the class. In order to keep students emotionally motivated, instructors often ask about the student"s and their families" well beings and motivate them in this tough time and ensure their participation.

### 4.3.1.3    Behavioral engagement:

Behavioral engagement is the easiest way to gain attention by actively engaging in the alternative assessments. Many instructors allotted some marks for the class participation which motivates the students to actively participate in any kind of in class activities.

Instructors conduct many types of activities whether it is peer works or group discussions; many students show their highest interest by raising hands, unmute the micro phone to ask questions or to give answers or turn on their cameras to express their views on it by showing their facial expressions. By doing these, they can make a good impression on the instructors as these things are easily observable and show the students" interest in participating various activities in in the class. So, for getting a good feedback appreciation, students engaged in this concrete behavior which improves students" performance in learning process and increases the engagement in alternative assessment process.

### 4.3.1.4    Participation engagement:

In the alternative learning process, students" participation in live session or in online classes is the most important thing and to ensure that, teachers and the institutions took lots of steps. According to the Handelsman et al. (2005), participation is quite important factor in alternative process and the most effective way is to ensuring peer works in the class. Through the peer activity, students can socially interact with their class mates and can participate in different kind of in-class activities which helps the students to become social and increase their satisfaction level. Emad says, "These type of activities helps to build higher order thinking abilities among the students and to develop competencies. Beside the peer works, teachers also set some of the individual fun filled tasks as well to flourish our skills and to achieve the bonus marks for participating in the class, students remain engaged in this alternative assessment process."

#### 4.3.1.5    Performance engagement:

In alternative assessment, teachers try to engage the students in various ways in the class. So, they design lot of in-class performing activities for the students. As students become bored staying home for a long time, these types of activities increase their interest to participate in the class. So, to create a good impact among all the teachers and class mates, students engage in different type of activities in order to show their performance through alternative assessment process. In order to score high on performance scale, students remain engaged in all the classes to show their skills and to achieve a better remark from the teachers.

### 4.3.2   Secondary factors influencing students' engagement:

#### 4.3.2.1    Teacher-students interaction:

Another most important factor which ensures students engagement in the alternative assessment process is teacher students" interaction. It is needed in both alternative and traditional process but in online learning it is quite essential. As teachers and the students did not get much time to know each other and to find the lacking of the students" so scheduled interaction is needed. A positive relation between the teachers and students are quite needed in alternative assessments and can make a big impact in students" overall performance. In alternative process, students feel lot of difficulties in understanding any topic all by themselves. So, to solve their problems and to create a bond with the instructors, they remain engaged in the alternative assessment process. However, achieving a good grade by solving their confusion is the main cause which influence them in this engagement.

**4.3.2.2    Chats and messaging:**

In alternative assessment process, it's easy to keep themselves in the track as there are lots of opportunities remain in this process. Many assessments, discussions, solutions can be easily found in the messenger, WhatsApp chat or in other messaging platforms. Here, students and teachers discuss about many topics, solve their problems and take part in different type of discussions in order to grow bonding. So, these type of apps helps students toto take part in different conversation and to remain engage in alternative assessment process.

**4.3.2.3    Active learning strategies:**

Using active strategies can be a beneficial way to increase student engagement rate in alternative assessment process. Instructors use blended method for example- case studies or different kind of problem-solving method which needs communication skills and student generated questions in the exam. Moreover, they need to make effective strategies and has to apply them in their learning and all of these requires good knowledge about the materials and effective strategies. So, in order to communicate with the other mates, students need to engage in alternative assessment process which basically gives them the flexibility to do everything in their own way.

# Chapter 5

# Results and Discussions

## 5.1 Possibilities of alternative assessment:

The chapter analyses the results which was found by the interview of the students and analyze the data thematically. The data are collected on the basis of the research questions; however, the chapter tries to fulfill the research gap between findings and the research objectives of the study. Though participants have different opinions on alternative assessment process conducting in their respected universities, but they all agree that, it has huge possibilities in upcoming days in Bangladesh. The problems they faced the most in the initial days are because of the lack of knowledge on technology, skills and management system. Both teachers and the students had to suffer a lot for this type of reasons. Also, using various methods and platforms at the same time creates hassle for the students as they are not used to it and did not understand what techniques they have to follow in different courses. Though this technique has lots of lacking, but it has to say that, the technique has wider possibilities in various aspects.

Alternative assessment is a good way to apply some technological skills in studies. When the (R) asked the participants about learning some skills which they think will help them in their long run, participant Shoily says, "As I am a student of English department so I lacked in technological skills and doesn‟t know how to create Excel file, making Pdf etc. Also, sharing screen, recording the screen in different platform seems quite difficult for me as I am not used to this kind of apps which is not required for my department in traditional method. But, because of the alternative assessment process, we have to submit all our works through

goggle form, pdf or word document or sometimes need to make Excel file for other courses as well. Though it was quite tough for me in the beginning but I think alternative assessment creates a huge impact on learning different kind of digital skills." Therefore, developing technological skills is a good idea not only in alternative assessments but also for further life as well.

## 5.2 Alternative or Authentic assessment:

In traditional learning process, students memorize what their instructors teach them in the class and does not go deeper into the studies. But alternative assessment tests students thinking ability and present knowledge so the questions are quite complex and requires a lot of research. For this reason, memorization is not needed here hence they need to understand what they are reading. This is why it is often called "Authentic Assessment" process and often characterized as "Realistic" problem solving method. Moreover, this type of assessments requires to learn new technological aspects and needs to apply different skills on different aspects.

### 5.2.1 Traditional Vs Alternative Assessment:

The following Chart will try to highlight the points of the alternative assessments and how it differs in every criterion than the traditional or summative ones.

| Traditional Assessment | Alternative Assessment |
|---|---|
| Memorization based question format | Higher order and creative question format |
| Requires exact answers | Requires thinking ability and justification-based answers |

| One shot test | Lengthy, continuous assessment based |
|---|---|
| Individual test | Group task-based test (Often) |
| Inauthentic test | Authentic test |
| Easily scored | Contain different task-based assessments |
| Focus on the facts | Focus on the skills |
| Given unreal problem solving | Given real-world problem solving |

Table 2: Traditional Vs Alternative assessment

## 5.3 Positive sides of alternative assessments:

Alternative assessments in the private universities have many advantages. It is surely a good initiative and students were quite happy to start their studies again without wasting time in the strict lockdown. Also, it is convenient to learn the materials staying at home and giving exams without stepping outside. This method gives students more flexibility to manage all the course materials all by themselves and more choices on their hobbies and passion. A participant Bushra told that, "Alternative assessments gives me the opportunity to do a parttime online based job in the pandemic which is quite impossible in the traditional method. All of us are sitting in our houses and doing nothing for a long period of time so doing a part time job helps me to overcome with my fears and gives me a lot of confidence which helps me in my studies as well. So, the impact of these kind of alternative assessment is quite good on me." So, these are some of the positive sides of the alternative assessments according to the participants which can actually help them in learning different skills beside the academic ones throughout the pandemic.

## 5.4 Issues related to alternative assessment:

Though alternative assessment is considered to be an effective form if conducting studies in the pandemic but it has many issues associated with it. Some participant states that, students who live outside Dhaka did not get proper network most of the time and the instructors often did not make any consideration in attending classes or in submitting assessment. Because of this reason, they often lose some marks and their grade gets affected. In traditional method, students can consult with the instructors easily but here they had to use various platforms to communicate with them and they get really late reply and it creates a lot of issues in the whole process. Moreover, many participants were complaining about operating the platform which has been used in the alternative assessment. As students have to use various platforms like- Zoom, Goggle meet, Slack, Discord, What"s App etc and many students are unable to operate these type of apps as they did not used this before. Participant Ruponty says that, "Most of us are not familiar with the Zoom, Goggle meet, discord these types of apps and in the initial days we suffer a lot in recording our presentations, peer or individual task. Moreover, some of the students cannot even install these types of apps in their mobile phones because of the lack of space or any other issues. So, it become really difficult for them to buy a new device at that period to complete their assessments." Also, students are completing their assessment staying in complete isolation for a long period of time which creates a huge impact on their physical and mental health as well and become demotivated day by day by doing these types of assessments. Therefore, all of these are some of the general issues which most of the students face in alternative assessment process.

## 5.5 Solutions of the challenges:

From the interview, (R) came to know about different kind of challenges which the participants faced in their alternative assessment process and this section, will highlight the points regarding how the students overcome with the challenges faced in the alternative assessment process.

### 5.5.1 Keeping backup internet:

Many students complain about having poor network or internet issues during the alternative assessment or in the live class and presentation; in this case, keeping backup internet can help them in this process. As many students did not have Wifi or broadband connection in their home and have to join using mobile data, it is quite required for them to check the mobile balance and internet balance regularly so that they can easily know about the expiry date of these and can take necessary steps before hand. Moreover, students using Wifi connection can also face interruptions because of load shedding or other problems keeping backup mobile internet can help them in solving any kind of problems causes by the internet issue at an extent.

### 5.5.2 Change in grading system:

From the interview session it is apparent that, students face a lot of difficulties because of the usual grading system as well. Alternative assessment process is completely different from the traditional ones especially in the initial days, they face huge difficulties in completing their assessment too. As we all know that, the grading system in private universities is very strict

and if they lose focus in any assessment, there is a high possibility that they miss the chance to achieve "A". To consider all of these points, universities can slightly make changes in their grading system to decrease the difficulty level of the students. It is not that, they have to change the grading forever or for every online semester but at least the institutions can make these changes for 1or 2 semester so that students can adjust with the newer process. So, changing grading system for some semester would definitely a good thought and once the students get used to it, intuitions can easily go back to the usual grading process.

### 5.5.3 Proctoring the assessments:

It is true that, conducting alternative assessment is not that easy task as the teachers are not able to invigilate the students during the exam so there remain a high chance of conducting unfair means in this assessment process. For this reason, many people raise questions on the validity or the reliability of the exam which is quite fair at an extent. In order to solve this problem, proctored exam process can be introduced in every private university so that copying and plagiarism rate can be decreased. Institutions have to ensure that, every student should have cameras turned on during the exam and their face and the script must be visible all the time. According to many participants, it is the only way to control cheating and teachers can monitor their students easily. However, some students also state that, this process can be difficult for some of the students as many of them can easily get anxiety also some of them cannot afford high resolution mobile phones or webcam just to sit for the exams.

## 5.6 Psychological preparation for alternative assessment:

In our country, the process of alternative assessment conducted suddenly that teachers and students both find it very difficult to cope up with the format at the beginning. As it is completely new process and has many challenges so preparing psychologically to accept this huge change in education sector is quite needed for the students. But sadly, we do not get any time to prepare ourselves and because of this reason, the students are facing huge difficulties in operating the various platforms as well. Moreover, we do not have a strong infrastructure to conduct alternative assessment method smoothly and because of the lack of knowledge, students make mistakes and it demotivates them for accepting alternative assessment process. Also, getting poor marks in the exams or poor performance can lower their confidence level and can become annoyed by the excessive pressure of alternative tasks. However, if our education system prepared the students for adapting this kind of changes in advance, then they would be psychologically strong enough to handle any kind of stress or pressure occurring for studies.

# Chapter 6

# Recommendation and Conclusion

## 6.1 Emphasis on the class participation:

It is important to conduct regular live session instead of just providing pre-recorded materials for the students. It is true that, pre-recorded session and providing live class recordings can help the students to work by their own but sometimes they become more depended on these materials that, they almost forgot to attend classes. By doing live sessions, students can perform better and can interact with the instructors and the fellow mates as well. It increases their communication skills and increase the knowledge. Moreover, this type of E-learning may be good at a certain extend but avoiding live sessions and just hear the class recording did not bring any positive benefit in the long run. So, teachers have to make sure that, students must attend the live sessions regularly and for this they can take various steps to ensure students" engagement rate. For instance- they can reserve some marks for participation and can make the classroom interactive and for this reason, teachers can give different type of peer activity or self-activity in order to communicate with the students and evaluate their performance.

## 6.2 Stable internet connection:

In Bangladesh, internet connection is quite poor and it creates a huge difficulty in conducting the alternative assessment process. In rural areas, the situation is more difficult and not only

Wi-Fi also mobile data are also not stable. Without solving this serious issue, government instructs to conduct alternative assessment process which increases the difficulties for some students. Moreover, shortage of technical equipment, lack of knowledge in digital tools are also some of the major points which creates troubles in learning. So, ensuring stable internet connection and a proper network is quite necessary in the alternative assessment process. Moreover, institutions can also take some steps to know about students" difficulties and can try to ensure getting proper access to any resources in their studies.

This study aims to shed light on the students" what students think about the alternative assessment process during the Covid-19 pandemic and which factors influence them to remain engaged with this alternative process. The results are quite neutral as based on the department and assessment process, the opinions on the alternative assessments differs. Where some participants found alternative assessment difficult to cope with, others found it really effective to continue their studies during the pandemic where most of the public institutions remain closed for longer period of time. However, the study precisely deprived the impacts and consequences of this process by exploring students" perception regarding alternative assessments. The study will help the educators to get an overall idea about the alternative assessment process of different private universities and their types, format, characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, challenges, solutions and more also how the students were able to finish all their tasks instead of having various difficulties in that tough period. Moreover, this research will also help the policy makers to draw an actual picture of different types of online assessments and will be able to reform this accordingly. To conclude, this study is conducting in such period when most of the private universities are following the hybrid method so the results can slightly vary depends on the participants.

Therefore, the researcher hopes that this study will successfully provide all the necessary information with a new dimension on the particular topic to work further on this issue.

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# Appendix A

## Letter Of Consent for the Participants

 Dear ………………….

I am Rubyat Tahrim Rafa, an undergraduate student, pursuing my major in Applied Linguistics and ELT at the Department of English and Humanities in Brac University. I have to complete my thesis as a part of my degree and for this reason, I have chosen a research topic titled "Alternative assessment in the private universities during the Covid-19 pandemic: Impact and consequences." Therefore, I would like to invite you to be a part of an interview session to share your experience regarding alternative assessments you did during the online semesters in our university. The interview will be conducted through Zoom meetings where the camera will be turned on to have a face-to-face interaction and the whole session will be recoded. However, I am assuring you that your personal information will not be leaked and if you want, your name will keep anonymous. The experiences which you shared will be used only to analyse the data for conducting the study. If you are comfortable with these conditions and ready to participate in this interview session, then please read the details below and sign on to the mentioned section. Your contribution to this study will be highly appreciated.

 Regards

Rubyat Tahrim Rafa

Student of Department of English and Humanities, Brac University

E-mail: rubyat.tahrim.rafa@g.bracu.ac.bd

# Research Participation Consent Form

| | Statements |
|---|---|
| 1 | I have read the letter and understood the purpose of conducting the study. |
| 2 | I am voluntarily participating in the interview and sharing my personal experience. |
| 3 | I am allowing the researcher to record the interview session and can use this for analysing as a data. |
| 4 | The researcher has my permission to contact me if she needs any further clarification or other contributions. |

……………………………………….

Signature and Date

# Appendix B

**Sample Interview questions for the students regarding Alternative Assessment**

1. What is your name and which department are you form?

2. In which semester are you currently studying in?

3. How was your experience of doing alternative assessment during the pandemic?

4. How your university take the assessment? What is the procedure and platform tell me in detail.

5. Does your university make any platform to conduct the exams?

6. If yes, tell something about that.

7. Which procedure of taking assessment you like the most?

8. Which technique of assessment you dislike the most and why?

9. Is there any drawback of alternative assessment?

10. Are your teachers helpful enough throughout the process?

11. What is the impact of these alternative assessment according to you?

12. What factors influence you the most to remain engaged in alternative process?

13. Can you able to create a good bonding with everyone in this alternative process?

14. Do you experience any fear during the alternative assessments?

15. What are the consequences of these alternative assessment process according you?

16. Are there any possibility of some alternative assessments to remain amidst the pandemic as well?

17. What are your overall thoughts about this process considering all the positive and negative drawbacks, challenges or possibilities?