Educate, Empower And Protect People Through Timely Authentic Information: Explore How Bangladeshi Newspapers Response To COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study analyzed the coverage of the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) news by three prominent Bangladeshi dailies named The Daily Star, The Daily Kalerkantho, and The Daily Ittefaq. The research aimed to explore the attention cycle of the selected newspapers about this ongoing outbreak. It also identified the significant differences in framing and used sources in the news stories by respective daily newspapers. The study period was 10 weeks from February 1 to April 10, 2020, considering the Global Health Emergency declaration by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020, and the announcement of the pandemic on March 11, 2020. This research applied the content analysis method on 761 news articles. The study shows that these three newspapers gave more attention after the pandemic announcement. This study also revealed that The Daily Star emphasized on attributing responsibility to the government and statistical data frames. On the other hand, The Daily Kalerkantho highlighted the individual's responsibility frame. The Daily Ittefaq concentrated on the economic consequence frame. Regarding the news sources, The Daily Star significantly used more sources from government officials. In contrast, The Daily Kalerkantho relied more on experts, and The Daily Ittefaq frequently used international sources. Due to time limitations, this study only covered the early stage of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. So more samples with a more extended period might clearly illustrate the focus of print media regarding this pandemic. Journalism and media studies students, academicians, and journalists will be most beneficiaries of this study. As appropriate framing helps to build awareness and in-depth knowledge of the community as well as policymakers, print media should pay more attention to proper framing.

Keywords: Bangladesh, COVID-19, newspaper coverage, news framing, news source, pandemic, print media.

JEL Classification: I1, L8.

ARMG PUBLISHING

Introduction

The word 'Pandemic' often not heard. When a new disease outbreak cross international boundaries and spread worldwide by affecting a large population, then it called pandemic (Last et al., 2001). Human history had experienced pandemic several times. COVID-19 outbreak in 2019-20 is the latest pandemic that first appeared in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December 2019 (Gralinski and Menachery, 2020). In early December 2019, patients were admitted to the hospital with a mystery virus. The local doctor suspected that the virus originated in the Wuhan Seafood Market (Liu et al., 2020). On January 9, 2020, The Wall Street Journal unveiled the outbreak of coronavirus, which was acknowledged by The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Gralinski and Menachery, 2020). Initially, the Chinese government locked down the province and imposed travel restrictions to block the spread. However, it was too late to stop the outbreak. Gradually South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Spain became the epicenters of COVID-19 (McKibbin and Fernando, 2020). At the time of writing this paper USA, Brazil and Russia were new epicenters.

WHO stated COVID-19 as the pandemic on March 11, 2020. Previously, on January 30, 2020, the WHO avowed coronavirus as a global emergency. January to March within this short time, super spreader COVID-19 spread across the globe. As of June 30, 2020, about 10,302,052 cases have been confirmed and 505,505 deaths in 188 Countries (JHCRC, 2020). Worldwide doctors and health care workers have been struggling to tackle this crisis. Scientists are trying their best to invent a vaccine against this disease (Tanne et al., 2020). Many countries like the USA, UK, Italy, Spain, Iran, Singapore, and India chose the lockdown option. For stopping transmission, people were urged to stay at home.

The economic impact of this crisis is devastating. Industries like retail, hospitality, food, service, and entertainment closed their operations (Mogaji, 2020). The U.S. Private Sector Job Quality Index recommended that nearly 37M jobs could be lost worldwide due to the coronavirus pandemic (MarketWatch, 2020). Because of the drop in demand, worldwide oil price collapses very dramatically (BBC, 2020b). To bounce back, most of the countries' governments announced stimulus packages to boost their economy (Mogaji, 2020). Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, considered this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as the worst global crisis after the 2nd World War. The global economy will face a recession that it had not been experienced in the recent past (BBC, 2020a).

World Health Organization (WHO) continually suggested countries to test and isolate each case of COVID-19 but the scarcity of testing kits, poor healthcare infrastructure make it impossible for many nations (Boseley, 2020). The country like Bangladesh, which is one of the world's most densely populated nations now facing lots of challenges to block the community transmission. The Healthcare system of Bangladesh is not well prepared to tackle this current pandemic; for instance, Bangladesh has a minimal number of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds to combat the COVID-19 patients' influx (Mostafa, 2018). The initial three COVID-19 cases in Bangladesh were identified on March 8, 2020. Among them, two men were returned from Italy and another woman was an infected person's contacted family member (The Daily Star, 2020). On March 18, 2020, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) confirmed the first death caused by COVID-19 in Bangladesh (SUJAN, 2020). At the time of writing this paper, as of June 30, 2020, about 141,801 cases have been confirmed and over 1,783 deaths in Bangladesh (IEDCR, 2020).

To halt the community transmission, the Bangladesh government took some effective actions like the lockdown of some vulnerable areas, banning flights, shutting down educational institutions, and encouraging people to practice social distancing and staying at home (Mahmud, 2020). Although there was some criticism like the government should take these actions earlier and the scarcity of personal protective equipment (PPE), testing kits, masks, and goggles would not be severe if authority realized the gravity of the crisis (MOLLA, 2020).

At this crisis moment as the fourth estate, Bangladeshi newspapers have a significant duty in disseminating information, creating awareness, and evaluate government actions to fight against the invisible enemy. Mass communication researchers agreed that media representation on any issues could shape public perception (Lee and Paik, 2017; Hasan and Dutta, 2019). In this pandemic situation, it could be more relevant as COVID-19 is a new phenomenon and directly connected to public safety. This study aimed to explore as a developing country, how Bangladeshi newspapers responded to this COVID-19 pandemic. Precisely, the purpose of the study was to find out the noteworthy variances of framing and used sources in news stories by The Daily Star,

The Daily Kalerkantho, and The Daily Ittefaq. It also scrutinized the attention cycle of the selected newspapers about this ongoing outbreak.

Literature review

The disease called COVID-19, caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), already been traveled to 188 countries across the globe (JHCRC, 2020). Commonly appearing COVID-19 symptoms are cough, breathing difficulties, and fever, but in severe condition may cause the severe acute respiratory syndrome, pneumonia, and death. The incubation period of COVID-19 for revealing the symptoms is 2-14 days. Now, COVID-19 is spreading community levels from person to person by contacting the infected person or secretions, cough, or sneeze (Heymann and Shindo, 2020).

The outbreak got extensive media attention, and gradually it became the top news with alarming spread across the world. As mentioned before, several studies proved that media has an influential role in shaping public perceptions regarding which issues are significant by highlighting specific features (McCombs, 2018). For instance, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the media will inform the public: what is the latest situation, how to tackle it, what is the government responsibilities, what is the individual's duty, how affected people will get proper health care access and so on. From media representation, people will also understand the depth of the issue (Seale, 2003; Kee et al., 2010).

How media coverage influences public opinion and attitude? To answer this question media researcher identified two significant processes: agenda-setting and framing (Kee et al., 2010). Mass media agenda-setting theory posited that the media set the public sphere by stressing some issues than other issues (McCombs, 2002). Framing is considered as another active process of media influence. According to Entman, news framing plays a vital impact in interpreting social problems and make it prominent to the audience. Selection and more salience communication about any issue and promotion of a particular narration, moral judgment, and solution illustrate the critical aspects of framing (Entman, 1993).

News framing navigates the audience by explaining 'how to think about an issue' (Nelson and Kinder, 1996). Audience understanding and interpretation of a social problem mostly depend on the way that a news story is framed (de Vreese et al., 2011). Especially in a crisis where the urgent decision needs to take, media framing plays a significant role for public and political elites (Berinsky and Kinder, 2006; Boin et al., 2009). The major contributing factors in the crisis period lay in how the media frame it and certain entities' responsibilities and actions (Lee and Paik, 2017).

Luther & Zhou (2005) analyzed SARS news frames in the United States and China, where they found both countries' newspapers used responsibility, human interest, economic consequence, conflict, and leadership frames (Luther and Zhou, 2005). Another research on SARS and Chinese media coverage demonstrated that Chinese national dailies highlighted the health severity frame; whereas, the economic frame was frequently employed by the Chinese web portal (Hong, 2007).

Kee et al. (2010) studied Malaysian print media framing on the H1N1 pandemic where government responsibility frame was heavily used frame among Malaysian papers which indicated that all newspapers urged the government to solve the crisis (Kee et al., 2010). Another study on the H1N1 outbreak scrutinized the U.S. news articles mostly employed action, attribution of responsibility, and reassurance frame than Korean news (Jung Oh et al., 2012). The Times of India covered the H1N1 pandemic as a war. They focused on six news frames named: severity, fear and panic, scientific information, attribution of responsibility, safety, and human interest frames (Gadekar et al., 2014).

In 2012, another pandemic occurred named Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). A study conducted on MERS coverage in South Korean newspapers concluded that government responsibility was highlighted by left-wing dailies in contrast, right-wing dailies stressed on individual responsibility frame (Lee and Paik, 2017). After analyzing health crisis like SARS, H1N1, and MARS, journalism and media studies scholars identified some common frames that media used frequently (Bardhan, 2001; Beaudoin, 2007; Gadekar et al., 2014; Jung Oh et al., 2012; Luther and Zhou, 2005; Wu, 2006) though, the use of this frame may differ in the country to country (Jung Oh et al., 2012). All the frames are discussed as follows-

Attribution of responsibility frame: When one issue considered as a crisis, attributing responsibility to certain entities seemed like a critical concern. Responsible bodies for the crisis as well as resolution are disclosed in

the attribution of responsibility frame (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991). People's perception of the crisis like a disease outbreak directly linked with how media discussed certain entities' accountability (Mastin et al., 2007). When the media are attributing responsibility to the government or authorities, public assess the crisis as complex and structural landed. In contrast, if media are assigning the responsibility of the individual, which results in dramatization, de-contextualization, and personalization of the crisis and it will lead the citizen to minimize the gravity of the crisis (Bennett, 2016; Iyengar, 1996).

Human interest frame: This frame tells about the problem by illustrating the individual or group of individual feelings or emotions. All stories that belong to the human interest frame focused on the human emotional angle (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000).

Reassurance frame: What action already been taken by authority or government to handle the disease is emphasized on the reassurance frame (Shih et al., 2008). This frame helps to alleviate public panic (Lee and Paik, 2017).

Economic consequence: The economic consequence frame shows in what ways and how a pandemic impact on national and international economic structure and what will be the future consequences (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000).

New evidence: New information about the disease such as how it spread, how to tackle it, what drug should be used discussed in new evidence frame. This frame exclusively suitable for a pandemic condition (Jung Oh et al., 2012).

Statistical frame: In this frame, the seriousness of the pandemic narrates statistically like describe how many people infected and died at a particular time. Here media could not use any journalistic interpretation (Jung Oh et al., 2012).

Affected regions frame: This frame focused on the place of disease outbreak, epicenters, and worldwide scenario.

Uncertainty frame: The severity and uncertainty about the outbreak are discussed in the uncertainty frame. Sometimes media used this frame in such a way that escalate public fare and panic (Jung Oh et al., 2012).

News source

News source is one of the potent textual tools in the news frame (Pan and Kosicki, 1993). Who is quoted in the news story, considered as a source for that particular news (Sundar, 1998). As Entman (1993) pointed out that, public cognition about the issue also influenced by source quotation and identity (Entman, 1993; Lasorsa and Reese, 1990). Previous studies indicated that media houses mostly rely on 'government officials' as an authentic source (Schudson, 2002). However, there is an argument that government officials advocate for the government (Schudson, 2002). In a crisis, journalists also depend on expert opinion. Experts explain the situation and show the solutions as well as future consequences (Conrad, 1999; Steele, 1995). Therefore, after analyzing several studies on newspapers coverage of pandemics, we also used other sources like; laypeople (person who have no expert knowledge but observed or experienced COVID-19), international sources (international organizations or sources from overseas), and politicians (Jung Oh et al., 2012; Lee and Paik, 2017) for content analysis.

Research questions

After scrutinizing previous studies regarding newspapers coverage on pandemics, the researchers constructed research questions as follows:

➢ During the study period, how was the attention cycle of the three selected newspapers (The Daily Star, The Daily Kalerkantho, and The Daily Ittefaq) about COVID-19 news?

➢ Whether there would be any difference in framing COVID-19 news articles by the respective newspapers?

➢ What are the variations among cited sources?

Methodology

Sampling

The content analysis of COVID-19 news stories was performed conducted by utilizing three Bangladeshi dailies named The Daily Star, The Daily Kalerkantho, and The Daily Ittefaq. These three prominent mainstream dailies were considered due to their circulation and social impact. The Daily Kalerkantho and The

Daily Ittefaq are the two most influential Bengali dailies and The Daily Star is a popular English newspaper in Bangladesh. The study period was ten weeks from February 01 to April 10, 2020, considering the World Health Organization's declaration of Global Health Emergency on January 30, 2020, and the announcement of the pandemic on March 11, 2020. Content analysis was confined to the front page. We have chosen the front page because of the most important news displayed on the newspaper's front page (Zhang and Fleming, 2005). In this study, single news was considered as an analyzing unit. For collecting articles from three selected papers, we used their archived option where they displayed their digital copy of printed newspapers. Among a total of 761 articles, The Daily Star comprises 249 articles, The Daily Kalerkantho 280 articles, and The Daily Ittefaq 232 articles. For framing analysis, we have excluded 36 articles as these articles did not fit in selected frames.

Coding procedure

The authors analyzed all articles from the sample. We often found that some stories have more than one frame, at this circumstance following the previous study on pandemic and print media, we have selected a dominant frame as the principal organizing feature of the news (Entman et al., 2009). The lead paragraph of the article was considered as the dominant frame (Jung Oh et al., 2012).

Data analysis

For analyzing data, SPSS 25.0 software (IBM SPSS, Armonk, NY, USA) was used to perform the Chi-square test to find the association between variables.

Result and Discussions

Attention cycle

A total of 761 news stories was identified throughout this research period. Data presented in Figure-1 indicated that after WHO announced the pandemic of COVID-19 on March 11, 2020, newspapers' coverage on this issue was dramatically increased. However, on January 30, 2020, WHO alarmed these diseases as a Global Health Emergency, selected newspapers' coverage was on average during the Global Health Emergency period (February 01 to March 06, 2020), the first five weeks of the study. This Global Health Emergency period could be considered as preparation time for the outbreak. The second phase of the study started from March 07 to April 10, 2020; these five weeks were during the pandemic period. Bangladesh's first death caused by COVID-19 also happened during this time frame. Therefore, in this phase, the number of COVID-19 patients was increasing at an alarming rate. At this stage, selected newspapers' front pages were entirely focused on COVID-19 issues, internal or external news on the front page was somehow related to this outbreak.
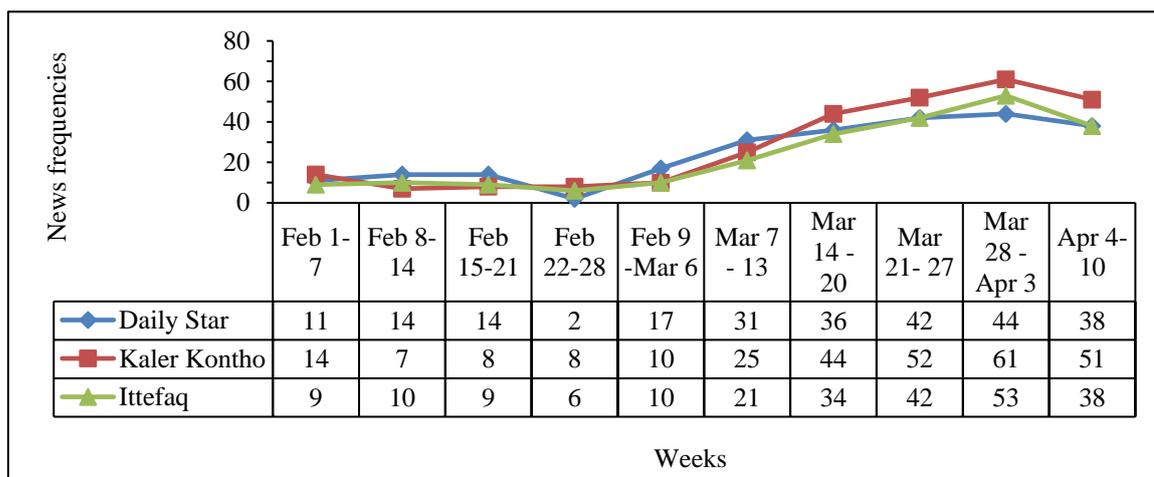
	Feb 1-7	Feb 8-14	Feb 15-21	Feb 22-28	Feb 9-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3	Apr 4-10
Daily Star	11	14	14	2	17	31	36	42	44	38
Kaler Kontho	14	7	8	8	10	25	44	52	61	51
Ittefaq	9	10	9	6	10	21	34	42	53	38

Figure 1. News articles according to the week from February 01 to April 10, 2020 (10 weeks)

Source: Researcher's field data.

Table 1. News articles according to newspapers

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The Daily Star	249	32.7
The Daily Kalerkantho	280	36.8
The Daily Ittefaq	232	30.5
Total Sample	**761**	**100**

Source: Researcher's field data.

In terms of daily newspapers, The Daily Kalerkantho contributed the most units with 280 counts or 36.8% among all news (Table 1). It followed by The Daily Star (249 units or 32.7%) and The Daily Ittefaq (232 units or 30.5%). These data revealed that during this study period, The Daily Kalerkantho paid more attention to these issues in contrast to The Daily Star and The Daily Ittefaq.

Framing the news stories

Table 2. Various types of news frames used in three prominent Bangladeshi newspapers

Frames	The Daily Star		The Daily Kalerkantho		The Daily Ittefaq		Test
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
New evidence	5	2.0	9	3.4	5	2.3	
Attribution of govt. responsibility	63	25.4	51	19.5	36	16.7	
Human interest	19	7.7	16	6.1	11	5.1	
Reassurance	48	19.4	56	21.5	47	21.8	Chi-square=90
Economic consequence	16	6.5	12	4.6	23	10.6	df=81
Statistical Data	42	16.9	30	11.5	22	10.2	p=0.231
Uncertainty	4	1.6	1	0.4	1	0.5	
Affected regions	43	17.3	43	16.5	52	24.1	
Individual's responsibility	8	3.2	43	16.5	19	8.8	
Total	**248**		**261**		**216**		

Source: Researcher's field data.

The second research question served whether there would be any difference in framing COVID-19 articles by respective daily newspapers. As illustrated in Table-2, The Daily Star emphasized on the attribution of government responsibility frame (25.4%), followed by reassurance (19.3%) and statistical data (16.9%) frames. In Kalerkantho, the reassurance frame seemed most frequent (21.5%) followed by government responsibility (19.5%) and individual responsibility (16.5%). In The Daily Ittefaq news coverage, the affected regions frame was highly used (24.1%), followed by reassurance (21.8%) and economic consequence (10.6%) frames.

Data shows that significant differences existed in news frames used by three dailies. For instance, The Daily Star emphasized on attributing responsibility to the government. The newspaper wrote a headline on February 5, 2020, "Measures at airport still found wanting" another news like that "Screening still lax at Dhaka airport" (The Daily Star, March 10, 2020). Both stories described that international airport safety measures need to increase, the screening process should be vigorous and incoming passengers from the highly infected countries must be isolated for 14 days.

"Virus can cause havoc in Rohingya camps" (The Daily Star, March 18, 2020), in this news The Daily Star warned the government about the Rohingya refugee camp's safety. If coronavirus spreads in the southern region where more than a million Rohingya refugees settled, it would be devastating. The Daily Star continuously scrutinized government actions. A headline on March 19, 2020, "Govt now scrambles for testing kits, PPE, Experts slam failure to act timely" where they narrated the scarcity of testing kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) would not be severe if the government act timely. Another report reads "Govt should ramp up contact tracing" (The Daily Star, March 21, 2020) suggested that the Bangladesh government should take more initiatives to trace and quarantine suspected cases. "Tests too few to rule out possibility" (The Daily Star, March 23, 2020) described that the government needs to run more tests around the country to unveil the actual scenario of virus transmission. Because of lockdown, thousands of marginalized people became jobless. "HELPING THE POOR, Govt needs to do more, faster say experts as authorities prepare list of those in dire need of food aid, other support amid coronavirus fallout" (The Daily Star, March 28, 2020) with this report Daily star urge government immediate action to help those marginalized people.

Here more examples that attributed government responsibility frame: "Import 1,000 ventilators immediately" (The Daily Star, March 31, 2020), "Low test rate may be belying reality" (The Daily Star, April 01, 2020), "Govt to help affected SMEs; Move designed to protect the industries that employ 2.45 Cr people" (The Daily Star, April 02, 2020), "Enforce total LOCKDOWN, Experts urge govt as new infections, deaths surge; track the hidden cases" (The Daily Star, April 09, 2020).

The Daily Star also emphasized on statistical data frame compared to The Daily Kalerkantho and The Daily Ittefaq which indicated that this daily was trying to highlight the seriousness of the COVID-19 by showing the increasing number of patients in a statistical manner. During this study period most of the day, The Daily star used a box in its front page, named "update" where they displayed the increasing cases in Bangladesh along with total world cases. Therefore, compare to other dailies, this newspaper also used more human interest frame.

The Daily Kalerkantho, which is a prominent and one of the highest circulated dailies in Bangla language focused on the Reassurance frame. They discussed government efforts to handle this crisis. A headline reads "Bangladeshe china der on arrival visa sthogit" (The Daily Kalerkantho, February 03, 2020) trans: Bangladesh Government temporarily stops on arrival visa facilities for all Chinese citizens". Another headline reads "Deshe tin joner corona sonakto, Muib Barsar March 17 parade Ground ar mul onusthan sthogit" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 09, 2020) trans: Bangladesh recorded its first three coronavirus cases, the government postponed the key event of March 17, 2020, at National Parade Ground in Dhaka planned for mega 100th birthday celebration of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Father of the Nation). "Corona mokabelay 12 te bisesaeto hospital prostut" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 22, 2020) trans: government prepared 12 specialized hospitals to tackle corona. To halt the community transmission government also imposed a nationwide lockdown and implement penalties. Here two headlines about this decision: "Aj theke sob bondho. 4th April porjonto manush ke ghore rakher sorbatok prostuti" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 26, 2020) trans: from March 26 to April 4, 2020, government-imposed countrywide lockdown; all public transport should be banned. "Corona rodhe nirdesona na manle sasthi" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 26, 2020) trans: penalties should be applied if break the rules aimed to stop coronavirus. Another headline on April 06 "72750 koti taka pronodona" (The Daily Kalerkantho, April 6, 2020) trans: To support the economy of Bangladesh, the government announced Tk 72,750.00 billion stimulus package.

Compare to other dailies, The Daily Kalerkantho significantly used individual responsibility frame that may reflect individuals could protect themselves by taking some actions to avoid this disease. Washing hands frequently, covering cough, maintaining social distance, staying at home are some steps that individuals can follow to stop or slow the spread of the virus. The Daily Kalerkantho discussed these messages with graphics. Here some headlines from this frame: "Barbar dhorte hoy amon jinish porisker rakhun" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 11, 2020) trans: clean everything that you frequently use." Koromordon noy, baire barole basi sotorkota" (The Daily Kalerkantho, March 18, 2020) trans: No handshake; more careful when going outside. "Ghore thakun nijer jono onoder jono" (The Daily Kalerkantho, April 18, 2020) trans: for yourself and others safety, please stay at home.

The Daily Ittefaq continually illustrated world scenarios using the affected regions frame. For instance, on February 15, 2020, a headline read "Coronavirus: bishhay akranto 64 hajar" (The Daily Ittefaq, February 15, 2020) trans: globally 64,000 people were affected by the coronavirus. "Mask songkot bishho jure" (The Daily Ittefaq, March 3, 2020) trans: face mask shortage across the globe. "Sobche basi akranter talikay Juktorastro tritio" (The Daily Ittefaq, March 24, 2020) trans: the USA was the third among most affected countries in the world. "Bisshojure mritu 46 hajar chariyeche" (The Daily Ittefaq, April 2, 2020) trans: worldwide COVID-19 death toll crossed 46,000.

The Daily Ittefaq also concentrated on the Economic Consequence frame. Global rescission and its impact on Bangladesh, upcoming socio-economic consequences elaborately discussed here. Some headlines from this frame: "2008 saler monda ke o chariye jate pare coronar provab" (The Daily Ittefaq, February 29, 2020) trans: Coronavirus rescission will severe than 2008 rescission. "Corona atongke sharebazar e potoner record" (The Daily Ittefaq, March 10, 2020) trans: Dhaka stock exchange faced massive fall because of corona fear. "Chottogram bondore containerer stup" (The Daily Ittefaq, April 1, 2020) trans: containers congestion on Chattogram port.

There was a commonality in three newspapers that the uncertainty frame was almost absent in their news article. Another previous study conducted by Jung et al. (2012) claimed a similar scenario that if official organizations like WHO provide accurate and precise information to journalists, then it will be easy to avoid dramatic uncertainty frame which creates fear and panic among the public (Jung Oh et al., 2012).

News Sources

The third research question explored the differences among the used sources of COVID-19 articles among selected daily newspapers. According to Table-3, in The Daily Star, the maximum quoted sources were the government (36.7%), followed by international (27.3%), laypeople (18.9%), and experts (16.8%). In The Daily Kalerkantho, the highly mentioned sources were the government (37.4%) following international (25.9%), experts (22.3%), laypeople (14.3%). On the other hand, The Daily Ittefaq most cited sources were international (37.9%), the government (33.9%), experts (17.8%), laypeople (10.1%). There were some similarities and differences in how three respective dailies used sources. One similarity was that all selected newspapers highly relied on government sources. Therefore, selected dailies rarely used politicians as a source, which indicated that regarding COVID-19 newspapers did not pay much attenuation to politician's voices.

Table 3. Cited sources in respective dailies

Source	The Daily Star		The Daily Kalerkantho		The Daily Ittefaq		Test
Government	374	36.7	319	37.4	187	33.9	
Experts	171	16.8	190	22.2	98	17.8	Chi-square=30
Politicians	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.4	df=25
Laypeople	192	18.9	122	14.3	56	10.1	p=0.224
International	278	27.3	221	25.9	209	37.9	
Total	**1018**		**854**		**552**		

Source: Researcher's field data.

According to the presented data, the differences were, The Daily Star cited more government officials as mentioning that the newspaper focused on the government responsibility frame. On the other hand, The Daily Kalerkantho relied more on expert sources. The Daily Kalerkantho may view COVID-19 as a medical issue, and mass people would get more suggestions with expert quotes. Compare to other dailies, The Daily Ittefaq frequently cited international sources as this paper emphasized on affected region frame to describe world scenario.

Conclusion

In Bangladesh, COVID-19 patients' numbers are increasing day by day. At this stressful time, authentic, accurate, and in-depth information will play a key role to educate, empower, and protect people from this fatal disease and its multi-dimensional consequences. Like global media, print media in Bangladesh is fully concentrating on this ongoing pandemic. Although this study depicts that The Daily Star, The Daily Kalerkantho, and The Daily Ittefaq, three prominent newspapers in Bangladesh gave more attention after the pandemic announcement on March 11, 2020, before that the coronavirus issue was not well focused. However, it would be more beneficial if they paid more concern about this fetal virus and public awareness after the WHO's Global Health Emergency declaration on January 30, 2020. This study also revealed that The Daily Star emphasized on government responsibility frame, which indicated that this daily insisted the government for taking appropriate measures to solve the difficulties linked to the outbreak.

On the other hand, the responsibility of the individual frame was highlighted by The Daily Kalerkantho, which pointed out that citizen's action is also significant to halt the diseases. Compare to others, The Daily Ittefaq concentrated on the economic consequence frame. Regarding the sources used in articles, all the newspapers mostly cited government officials as a source. In a crisis, journalist mainly relies on 'government officials' as an authentic source. This study also aligned with this hypothesis. Therefore, experts, laypeople, and international sources also got great attention. This is the first reported study on the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladeshi newspapers. Journalism and media studies students, academicians, and journalists will be most beneficiaries of this study. The findings can be used to compare with other countries' print media coverage on the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to time limitations, this study only covered the early

stage of COVID- 19 in Bangladesh. So more samples with an extended period might clearly illustrate the focus of print media regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

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