
GE1204-Living with Unexpected & Unknown Modern Society
Individual Assignment



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Q1. In this article, it has explained how risk(i.e. risk exposure) is different from the underlying hazard. According to NTT Application Security, risk exposure is referred to the measure of potential future loss resulting from a specific activity or event. Hence, the specific events or activity would be referred to as COVID 19 pandemic in this article. Moreover, the underlying hazard is referred to as any source of potential damage, harm, or adverse health to a certain people or thing. In this situation, the hazard is referred to the potential development of an epidemic, caused by a specific virus that has certain characteristics, including the speed of its spread, the way it affects humans, and the terms of incubation, development, and disappearance as mentioned in the text. Hence, the difference among them would be listed below.

Firstly, the impact of the COVID-19 virus is not homogeneous. Instead, it is heterogeneous. During the pandemic of COVID-19, if the risk has the same definition as the underlying hazard, every country should have the same impact across affected countries and populations as mentioned in the article. However, it is not a real-life case. In the reality, every country is taking a different risk during the COVID pandemic. The more-developed countries(MDCs) and the lower-developed countries need to focus on different problems during the COVID pandemic. Given that they are facing different problems and the COVID pandemic is heterogeneous, the exposure and vulnerability factors are mediating the level of risk and the evolution of the disaster. As a result, it shows that the risk and the underlying hazard are different as the risk of COVID-19 should be homogeneous while the underlying hazard of the COVID is heterogeneous. Hence, it shows that they are different.

Secondly, the hazard is the element of risk but the risk is not the compulsory part of the element. According to the definition of hazard, it is the cause of perceived adverse consequences. Besides, it is narrow in scope. Hence, for the definition of risk, it refers to the possibility that something bad would have happened. According to the article, the risk is formed by the accumulation of different underlying hazards as mentioned in the article. It shows that the underlying hazard is one of the elements. Instead of being the same, it shows that the risk and the underlying hazard are different.

Thirdly, the risk and the underlying hazard have different characteristics. According to the article, the risks in the pandemic are extensive and intensive. Besides, the risk is sequential and cascading as it does not bring direct damage to the produced goods in the society. Unlike the normal hazard, the normal hazard may bring direct damage to the produced goods. For the underlying hazard, it has the characteristics of extremely mobile and constantly mutating in its intensity, effects, and in the territories and population affected. As the risk and the underlying hazard have different characteristics, it shows that they are different.

Q2. In this article, it has explained how risk exposure is contingent upon the social and cultural context under the COVID pandemic. Hence, the details would be listed below.

Firstly, considering the social perspective, there would be higher risk exposure under the COVID pandemic when there is more social contact among the people. According to the article, people are exposed to the risk when they are in contact with or close to people or surfaces through which they potentially are infected. In this case, when any social events require a group of people to join, it

would enhance the possibility of getting the COVID. It means that it would increase the risk exposure.

Secondly, considering the social perspective, the aging population brings a higher risk exposure under the COVID pandemic. According to the article, it mentioned that people over 65 have been identified as the most vulnerable age group in many countries. It is because the elderly have a poor immune system compared to the youth. Besides, they have higher chances to get high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, and high cholesterol. When these factors combine, it would lead to the elderly having a higher chance to get the COVID disease. According to the websites of the United Nations, the estimated number of people ages 65 years or over is 737 million in 2020 while there are 703 million in 2019. It shows that the aging population is becoming more serious in 2020. Hence, more and more people would suffer at a larger risk during the COVID pandemic. As a result, when more and more people have a higher risk of getting the COVID, the risk exposure of the society would be increased overall.

Thirdly, considering the social perspective, the social class would also affect the risk exposure in the society. According to the article, exposure is modified by occupational categories which many times reflect social class considerations. With a higher social class, the occupation of these upper class may have less contact with other people. For example, office work or accounting. Compared with the drivers or waitress, the upper class' occupation usually has few contacts with people compared with the job for the grass-root class. It is because the jobs for the upper class usually is knowledge-based. However, the occupation for the grass-roots class may need to have more face-to-face connections with other people. In order to maintain their daily life, they still need to work. Hence, the government is difficult to implement any policy to restrict their work. Hence, it is difficult to have any risk management policy to reduce the risk exposure.

Fourth, considering the cultural perspective, the culture of emphasizing economic value may affect the risk exposure in the society. According to the article, metropolitan cities such as London or New York are more exposed because they are core nodes in the global economy. As people emphasize economic value rather than society or health, there are more chances for them to travel to a different place to do their work. Hence, it may enhance the COVID to spread to the global easier. It is because COVID would spread to other countries if some of the passengers have COVID. Hence, it would increase the risk of other countries. As a result, the culture of emphasizing economic value may affect the risk exposure in society.

Q3 In this article, it has mentioned what sort of challenges the social and cultural context poses to instituting an equitable and fair risk management strategy.

Firstly, considering the social perspective, the social construction of the countries may lead to a lack of manpower in the public health system. According to the article, the social construction of vulnerability is concatenated with lack of access to and the quality of public health services. In some LDCs, their citizens have low affordability to the medical need. Even though they have enough income to support their medical need, the quality of the medical system may not be able to treat their illness. In my opinion, I think this is due to the poor education level and lack of resources in the LDCs. Hence, lack of resources may and lack of manpower would lead to the poor quality of the medical system. However, it is very difficult to adopt a risk management strategy to

resolve it in a short term. It is because the education for the medical professional may require more than 4 years normally. Besides, it is very difficult to solve the economic issues of the LDCs in the short term. Therefore, the social construction of the countries may lead to a lack of manpower in the public health system. Hence, it is difficult to have a risk management strategy to tackle this issue in an equitable and fair risk management strategy.

Secondly, considering the social perspective, the social class of the citizen may pose some challenges to instituting an equitable and fair risk management strategy. According to the article, the grass-roots class may need more financial help as they have a higher probability to get unemployed. However direct financial help by the government may lead to the unsatisfactory from other social classes. It is because other social classes may not be able to enjoy social welfare as they can not fulfill the requirements. As a result, the government is difficult to balance the additional welfare for the grass-roots class and the opinions from the other classes. As a result, the social class of the citizen may pose some challenges to instituting an equitable and fair risk management strategy.

Thirdly, considering the cultural perspective, the culture of freedom may pose challenges to instituting an equitable and fair risk management strategy. According to the article, some Countries such as Sweden do not impose quarantine as their risk management policies. In my opinion, I think this is due to their culture of freedom. In Western society, people always mention that they have the freedom to choose what they want to do. In this case, the government of some western countries tries to respect the opinions of their citizen. Hence, they may not adopt the policies of confinement and social distancing of the population. Hence, it may enhance the spread of the COVID. Besides, if the government cannot adopt a suitable policy to stop the spread of the COVID due to the willingness of the citizens, the culture of freedom and freedom of speech would become a barrier to controlling the risk of COVID. Hence, it is difficult to balance the freedom of the citizen and the risk management strategy.

Q4(i) In this article, the authors talk about different kinds of risks COVID 19 has exposed the world to. Further, they talk about the risk management strategy implemented to mitigate those risks. Hence, those risks and the risk management strategies implemented to mitigate them would be listed below.

Firstly, mechanisms of epidemiological control have been implemented in some countries with different degrees of success. By implementing the mechanisms of epidemiological control, it can reduce the hazard and slower the spread of the pandemic. In this risk management strategy, it very relies on the resources of the countries. Hence, some countries have used this strategy as their main strategy for their risk management during the pandemic. However, in my opinion, some lower-developed countries(LDCs) would be very difficult to use this strategy because they are difficult to afford the necessary equipment such as test kits and medical equipment. As a result, the effectiveness of the policy has been eliminated. However, if the mechanisms of epidemiological control were implemented with appropriate resource and timing, it would get high effectiveness to reduce the risk of the pandemic.

Secondly, policies of confinement and social distancing of the population have been adopted in most of the countries. Since people need to work and they would have a lot of contact among the

people, there would be a higher risk of getting COVID through face-to-face contact. Therefore, the government of most of the countries has adopted the policies of confinement and social distancing. For this policy, it would require the citizen to quarantine and confinements in order to reduce the social distancing among the people. It allows the citizen who is in incubation period to know they get COVID during the quarantines. Besides, decreasing social contact can allow the spread of the COVID to become slower.

Thirdly, the financial subsidy is given by the government in order to reduce the risk. According to the article, fiscal and monetary measures have been done during the pandemic. During the pandemic, the economic environment of the market and society would become worse. More and more people would become unemployed. According to International Labour Organization(ILO), the unemployment rate has increased to 6.5% in 2020 which increased by 1.1% overall. It implies that there is an increasing number of people getting unemployed. Hence, the government has provided different financial help to these people as mentioned in the text. For example, defer payment of taxes, the partial payment of the salaries of unemployed workers by governments, and the injection of more liquidity into the financial system. By these policies, it is believed that can mitigate the financial need of these people. As a result, this risk management strategy can reduce the risk to the grass-roots class or some people who need financial help. Also, it can reduce the overall risk exposure.

Q4(ii) Other than the above risk and risk management strategy, the world has also faced other risks during the COVID pandemic. Hence, they also have different risk management strategies to address the risk.

Firstly, considering the social perspective, children are facing the suspension of class during the outbreak of COVID. According to the website of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region(news.gov.hk), the primary school student and the secondary school students were facing the suspension of class at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID. However, if the high school students are not allowed to attend the lessons, they would have a difficult time with their public exams. Hence, it would affect their career pathway. As a result, the schools in Hong Kong have used an alternative method for the students to have lessons. The students are required to attend the class online through the online platform such as zoom. This allows the students to have an opportunity to keep learning. Besides, in order to ensure the public exam can be held with good hygiene and let the students have more time to study, the government has postponed the public exam. Hence, it shows that the government and schools have postponed the public exam and organized online lessons in order to eliminate the risk for the children to get the disease and the risk of getting poor results in the public exam.

Secondly, considering the economic perspective, the government and the entrepreneurship in Hong Kong have organized some lottery events in order to attract the citizens to take the vaccines. According to Our World in Data, there are only 12% of the population have taken at least 1 vaccine in the late-June. Hence, it is not enough to provide complete protection to the citizen in Hong Kong. Therefore, the government and some entrepreneurship have organized a lottery event for those who have taken at least 1 vaccine. Hence, this event has attracted a lot of citizens to start taking the vaccines. Currently, 62% of the population in Hong Kong has already taken at least 1 vaccine. Hence, it is believed that it can bring complete protection to the citizen. As a result, it shows that

this lottery can reduce the risk of the citizens getting the COVID as it can attract more citizens to take the vaccines.

Q5. In this article, the author has suggested that the COVID 19 pandemic risk have been overplayed compared to some other dangerous risks facing our society such as earthquakes and hurricane. It is because earthquakes and hurricanes would bring direct damage. Besides, COVID 19 pandemic risk has changed the economy and culture of the society with some positive impacts.

In my perspective, to a large extent that I agree with the point of view of the authors.

Firstly, from the perspective of society, the COVID-19 pandemic gives a great opportunity for some certain industries. Hence, people in the society may change their lifestyle and have more opportunities to know these industries. According to BBC News, the Financial Time Stock Exchange 100 Index (FTSE 100) has decreased by 14.3% in 2020. Hence, it is the worst performance since 2008. Even though some people think the COVID-19 only bring the negative effect to the economic perspective, the COVID pandemic also brings some positive effect to the economic perspective. During the COVID pandemic, the pandemic gives some positive effects on some specific industries. For example, online education industries, social media platforms. According to the World Economic Forum, the COVID pandemic has changed the education system around the world. As mentioned by World Economic Forum, global education technology has reached \$18.66 billion USD while it is predicted that it would reach \$350 billion by 2025. It shows that the COVID has brought a great change in the education market as it changes the whole education system. Besides, it provides other platforms or channels for children to learn. Now, children can learn everything online instead of just learning at schools. Hence, I think the risk has been overplayed compared to other hazards.

Secondly, the risk for COVID-19 can be prevented by taking the vaccines. Compared to other hazards such as earthquakes or flooding or drought, we have a higher ability to prevent COVID as we can take the vaccines and decreases the chances of getting COVID. However, for these natural hazards, it is basically impossible to predict when it would happen and it is impossible to prevent it. According to Yale Medicine, there is 72% of overall efficacy for the vaccines against the COVID. Hence, it is already a very large difference between the risk of COVID and the natural hazard. It is because it is basically impossible to prevent the natural hazard as it is unpredictable. It is just allowed to solve the aftermaths of the hazard. As a result, I do think the risk has been overplayed compared to other natural hazards.

Thirdly, COVID has the risk that people cannot travel to other countries easily. Since most of the countries have adopted policies that restricted the tourist and citizens from traveling unless they have any special reason, people cannot go to trip for entertainment easily. However, this has significantly improved the global environment. Since there are fewer people going on trips as they cannot do so, the demand for airplanes has decreased significantly. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the total energy use has decreased by 7%-8% in 2020 in which the emission of air pollution also decreased together. It is because the demand for airplanes and entertainment has decreased. Comparing the natural hazard, it would only damage the environment of the society. However, the COVID has brought a positive effect to the

environment in an indirect approach. Therefore, I do think the risk has been overplayed compared to other natural hazards.

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