Impact of COVID-19 on HEIs: *challenges and lessons-learnt from the experience*

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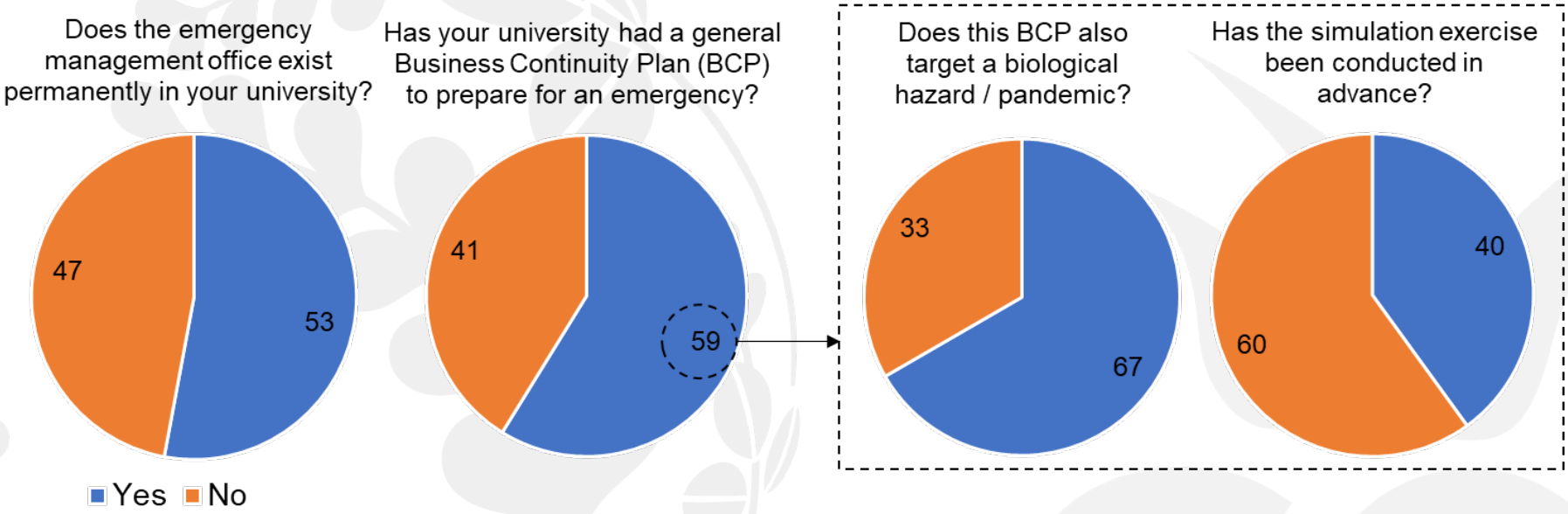
Survey among HEIs

- To understand the key challenges being faced by HEIs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

- The survey focused on 1) organizational preparedness and response, 2) key challenges at organizational level, and 3) personal responses and challenges.

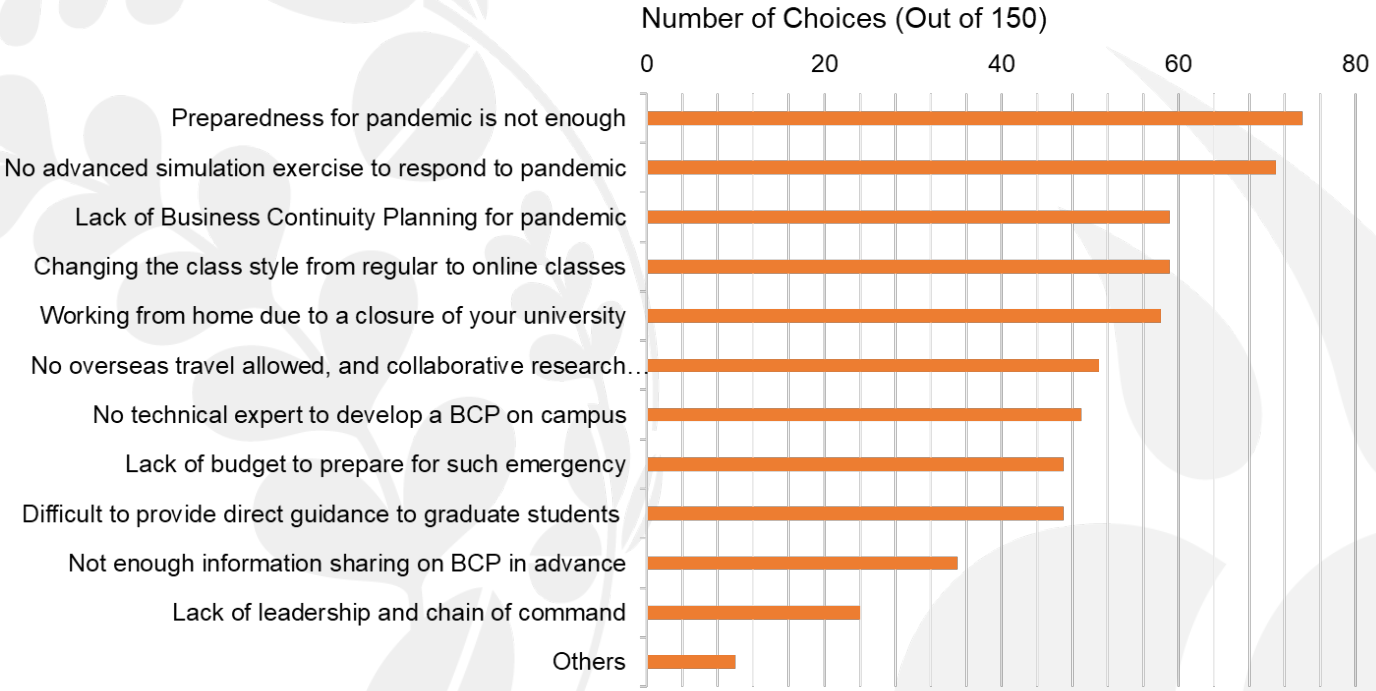
- 150 responses from 65 universities located in 29 countries (75% were from Asia)

Organizational preparedness



- 47% lacked a permanent or dedicated emergency management office
- 41% lacked a general BCP for an emergency
- Even with BCPs, 33% of the plans do not cover biological hazards and pandemic risk management
- 60% of the BCPs did not include conducting simulation exercises.
- Limited focus on biological hazards and advanced simulation exercises.

Key challenges at organizational level



- Top 2 key challenges are related to organizational preparedness: A lack of adequate preparedness for a pandemic and of pandemic-specific advanced simulation exercise.
- Other challenges : In relation to the change in the mode of teaching to online lectures and working from home
- Others category: the importance of strengthening internet access to students and faculty members was highlighted

Key lessons for future organizational preparedness

1. **Governance**: BCP, EMU
2. **Education**: multiple educational method and tools, blended learning approaches
3. **Awareness raising:** focus on all types of disasters, not only natural disasters and labo-based fire/chemical safety risks.
4. **Others**: Networking with various stakeholders to enable HEIs to be a part of DRR agenda in the larger system. Designated funding to scale up the preparedness capacity and research and innovation agenda in all forms of hazards.

Managing and responding to pandemics in higher educational institutions: Initial learning from COVID-19, *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment.* DOI : 10.1108/IJDRBE-06-2020-0054

An initial lesson from the experience of COVID-19

- How to prepare for different types of disasters: natural, biological, chemical, and others? *The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction emphasizes the importance of focusing on different types of disasters in a national strategy.* Need to work with different sectors and experts and for further collaboration at regional and international levels

- The preparedness plans at HEIs in the US have two approaches in common: 1) an **all-hazard approach** and 2) 4 phases of emergency management

- All-hazards approach in risk assessment, emergency response mechanism, information sharing, and risk communication (evacuation, early warning etc)

Thank you for your attention.

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