

# Journal of Human Resource and Leadership (JHRL)

**COVID-19 Impact on Employees Behavior and Mental Well-Being  
in UAE (Abu Dhabi Emirates)**

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## COVID-19 Impact on Employees Behavior and Mental Well-Being in UAE (Abu Dhabi Emirates)



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### Article History

*Received 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023*

*Received in Revised Form 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023*

*Accepted 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023*



### Abstract

**Purpose:** The paper aims to identify the main stressors during the pandemic, examining some moderating factors which may mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on UAE employees' behavior.

**Methodology:** Mixed method has been used to gather thorough information about the topic and identify the impact of COVID-19 using literature review of previous research and questionnaire.

**Findings:** COVID-19 has disrupted work and organizations across the globe as it implied unprecedented impact in the way organizations perform, affecting employees' performance and mental well-being. This paper examines the impact of coronavirus pandemic on employees' mental health and its association with shifting their performance. Literature reviews have signaled dramatic shifts in sleep, physical activity, and work productivity, which may have subsequent downstream mental well-being consequences. The impact of COVID-19 on employees differs from country to another due to the implemented measures including quarantine and technology readiness.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** COVID-19 had significant impact on Abu Dhabi Emirates employees' behavior, attitude and mental health. Based on this research outcome, UAE employees can be well prepared for any future pandemics by enhancing their health lifestyle through balanced diet and exercise as it will enhance their health and will reduce their fear from any potential viruses as well as employees should have a second income that will support them in case of losing their main job during any crisis and will mitigate their job insecurity as they will be more stable in their income. The UAE based on this research and other research have implemented the remote work policy across the UAE for any employee who prefers to continue working from home during and post the pandemic and this increased employee's well-being and satisfaction. Future research can use the suggested theories in potential pandemic or crisis research or post pandemic research to measure the impact on employee's performance and well-being as this research might be a reference for future research on similar study.

**Keywords:** *Coronavirus, COVID-19, Pandemic, Mental Health, Remote Work, Anxiety, Quarantine.*

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## INTRODUCTION

A cluster of atypical pneumonia cases was discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, which was designated as Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. Since then, the virus has rapidly evolved, now impacting around 195 countries worldwide, people's lives, as well as multiple aspects of the global, public, and private economy as result of implementing precautionary measures in all the countries (Arora, T. and Grey, I., 2020). COVID-19 is a contagious illness caused by a coronavirus. Coronaviruses (CoV) are a big family of viruses that cause infection varying from the common flu to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new type of virus that humans have not been previously infected by, and experts indicated that the virus was originated in bats then transmitted the infection to humans (Bhargava, 2021). The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the normal flu but its more serious and life threatening to people with Asthma, pneumonia and elderly people as the virus causes cough, tiredness, shortness of breath, loss of taste and smell sense, and other minor symptoms that differs from one person to another (Hamouche, 2020). Thus, the uncertainties, fears, lockdowns, and health deterioration associated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic led to negative affect on employee's performance and mental well-being (Xiong J et al., 2020), and in the context of covid-19 negative impacts on individual mental health few studies have indicated dramatic shifts in sleep, physical activity, diet, and social connection which caused a subsequent mental health and behavior consequence.

(Rutz et al., 2020) proposed the term 'anthropause' to refer to the COVID-19 lockdown period as at that time the human activities slowed down in drastic and sudden way, which caused a pause to the world, this had a positive impact on some of the wildlife and the environment, as people reported seeing more animals on the street than usual and the environment pollution decreased significantly as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) recorded 30% reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide levels in 2020 (MOCCAE, 2021). On the other hand, the pandemic had a profound impact on businesses, jobs across the country, since many companies have closed down because the economy of the UAE got impacted severely which led to increasing the unemployment rates and affected the employed individuals as they were uncertain and worried about their future (Al Mansoori et al., 2021). In addition to this, shifting employees work remotely due to COVID-19 has contributed to affecting three significant features in humans, such as 1) high degree of uncertainty on the crisis' criticality, reach, duration and economic impacts, 2) a degree of isolation due to quarantine and remote work and 3) a decline in employees' performance and productivity. Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic clearly affected three basic human needs; the need for control, the need for social connection and the need for motivation (Becker et al., 2022). Therefore, this paper examines the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on Abu Dhabi Emirates employees' performance and mental health. It aims at identifying the main stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic, examining the major factors which may mitigate or aggravate the impact of COVID-19 on the employees' performance and mental health. For example, DARROUE (2021) have reported in his study that 77% of UAE workers felt their mental health had negatively affected their work performance and productivity. Indeed, the coronavirus is spreading rapidly, and considering its novelty, studies which have examined its impact on employees' performance and mental health in Abu Dhabi Emirates are sparse. The objective of this systematic review is to summarize extant literature that

reported the impacts of Covid-19 on employee's behaviors, performance and mental health worldwide and to examine its significant impact on Abu Dhabi Emirates employees. In addition, to evaluate the main organizational interventions which may mitigate the negative effect of the pandemic, as there are only few studies that have identified the mitigation ways from an organizational perspective.

Lastly, the main criteria for selecting the impact of COVID-19 on employee's behavior and mental well-being in UAE topic relies on my personal experience during the pandemic since I was employed on the beginning of 2020, and I was very motivated, productive, and passionate about my work. Several factors impacted my performance at work and my mental well-being as I started being more stressed, pressured and less productive in my work due to remote work and other factors. Moreover, the novelty of the virus makes it more interesting to learn about and find efficient solutions to the negative impacts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The primary aim of the following literature review is to identify the main stressors during the COVID-19 epidemic, examining the main moderating factors which may mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on employees' mental health and behavior. The work is focused on filling the gaps in existing research associated with the impacts that COVID-19 had on UAE employees' behavior and mental well-being in order to develop sustainable employee's mental well-being during, post, and in future pandemics. Moreover, the organizational awareness of the psychological, social, and economic stressors of the COVID-19 epidemic on employees and the importance of providing psychological and mental support to employees can reduce the symptoms and the decline in employee's performance.

The literature review begins with reviewing qualitative studies that provide non-numerical data that can be used to understand existing concepts, methods, or experiences relevant to the topic. Subsequently, this helps in considering more comprehensive information based on the analysis of quantitative data. Several research with different study designs were conducted in the past with the objective to assess the psychological and mental impacts arising from COVID-19 and other pandemics. Literature suggests that precautionary measures such as quarantine, isolation, and social distancing, have a significant impact on the well-being of individuals (Hamouche, 2020).

The pandemic outbreak has resulted in the imposition of certain changes in the behavior and mental balance of employees that will be investigated in this study. One of the main stressors that shifted employees' mental well-being and productivity during the epidemic is quarantine and isolation. Quarantine refers to separating people who have potentially been exposed to contagious diseases from the rest of the community (Hamouche, 2020). (Popa et al., 2022) believes that quarantine and isolation at home have a negative effect on the mental health of employees and make them more dependent on the use of technology instead of socializing with people which causes them loneliness and isolation. Moreover, among employees, the excessive use and time spent on technology have been negatively correlated with sleep duration and associated with an increase in psychological symptoms, stress, headaches, and fatigue which led to increasing the technology addiction, this indicates that these impacts have also unbalanced the mental and physical health of employees.

(Brooks et al., 2018) Agree that the quarantine may cause a significant psychological, emotional and financial burden for people, the authors pointed out that quarantine during COVID-19 is correlated with poorer mental well-being with severe symptoms of psychological distress and disorder due to absence of usual routine, loss of social and physical contact with people which caused boredom, disappointment, and a sense of isolation from the world. This association is resulted due to the duration of the quarantine and the restriction on social distancing. In this case, the COVID-19 quarantine lasted for several months which severely affected the individuals' activity and mental health.

Another research suggests that epidemics lead to business disruption. According to (Hamouche, 2020) financial loss and job insecurity due to the closure of workplaces during the pandemic are the main stressors to employees' mental health. This will lead to negatively impact workers' financial capacity because of losing or reducing their income which will affect their financial responsibilities e.g., (family, housing, and debts). The individuals who are quarantined faced job insecurity as well since they were not able to maintain their professional tasks which led to cutting their incomes or losing their jobs. Consequently, these stressors significantly impacted the mental health of employees who are affected by the closure of organizations and the reduction of working hours during the pandemic.

At the same time, workplace measures may maintain and support the mental health and performance of employees during the COVID-19 epidemic. (Sasaki et al., 2020) found that precautionary measure at the workplace has a significant impact on employees' mental health and performance, as employees pay attention to the measures taken in the workplace regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, workplace measures responding to COVID-19 may promote and maintain employees' mental well-being and performance, and visa-versa because of the fear of getting infected with COVID-19 at work. Sasaki & others identified the precautionary measures that are responsible for promoting or declining employees' mental health, which are social distancing, increased awareness, transparent communication, and constant covid-19 tests. The study also found that healthcare employees' mental health was heavily impacted due to continuously engaging with COVID-19 patients which caused them psychological disorders, therefore healthcare centers acquired intensive precautionary measures to protect both employees' and patients' health.

The study of Bai et al. (2004) on healthcare workers, showed that quarantined employees were more likely to report exhaustion and psychological disorder when dealing with infected patients which led to low levels of work performance and poor concentration. The study also found that healthcare employees were more likely to feel isolated and rejected by their relatives and friends because of their work at the hospital. This rejection may lead to poor psychological outcomes.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic had a positive impact on employees' performance as a recent study by (Narayanamurthy & Tortorella, 2021) indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak has included significant changes in the way organizations work, impacting employees' routine and activities. As a result, COVID-19 triggered interventions such as lockdown, social distancing, and remote work that have changed the way employees work which led to the introduction of new technologies to facilitate such activities and mitigate the COVID-19 crisis. Technology refers to techniques, frameworks, and devices that promoted and maintained organizations' operations and

employees' activities. The authors revealed that the technology readiness facilitated the virtual work which increased the employee's productivity as it provided them the flexibility to work, more available time due to lack of mobility which led to work-life balance and supported employees' mental health by reducing their exposure to the virus.

Another research conducted by (Hamouche, 2021) indicates that social media is one of the important channels providing up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 and plays a significant role in facilitating the communication of quarantined individuals with their friends and family. Yet, social media is not usually a trusted source of information regarding updates on the pandemic. Indeed, it may spread rumors or unclear information leading to an increase in misinformation which causes fear of the unknown and uncertainty among many individuals as well the media reporting about the new cases increases individuals' fear and anxiety. Moreover, the lack of clear information about the risks and mitigations led individuals to expect the worst and trigger their anxiety. The study showed that there was a high correlation between mental health issues that were positively associated with continuous social media exposure during the pandemic.

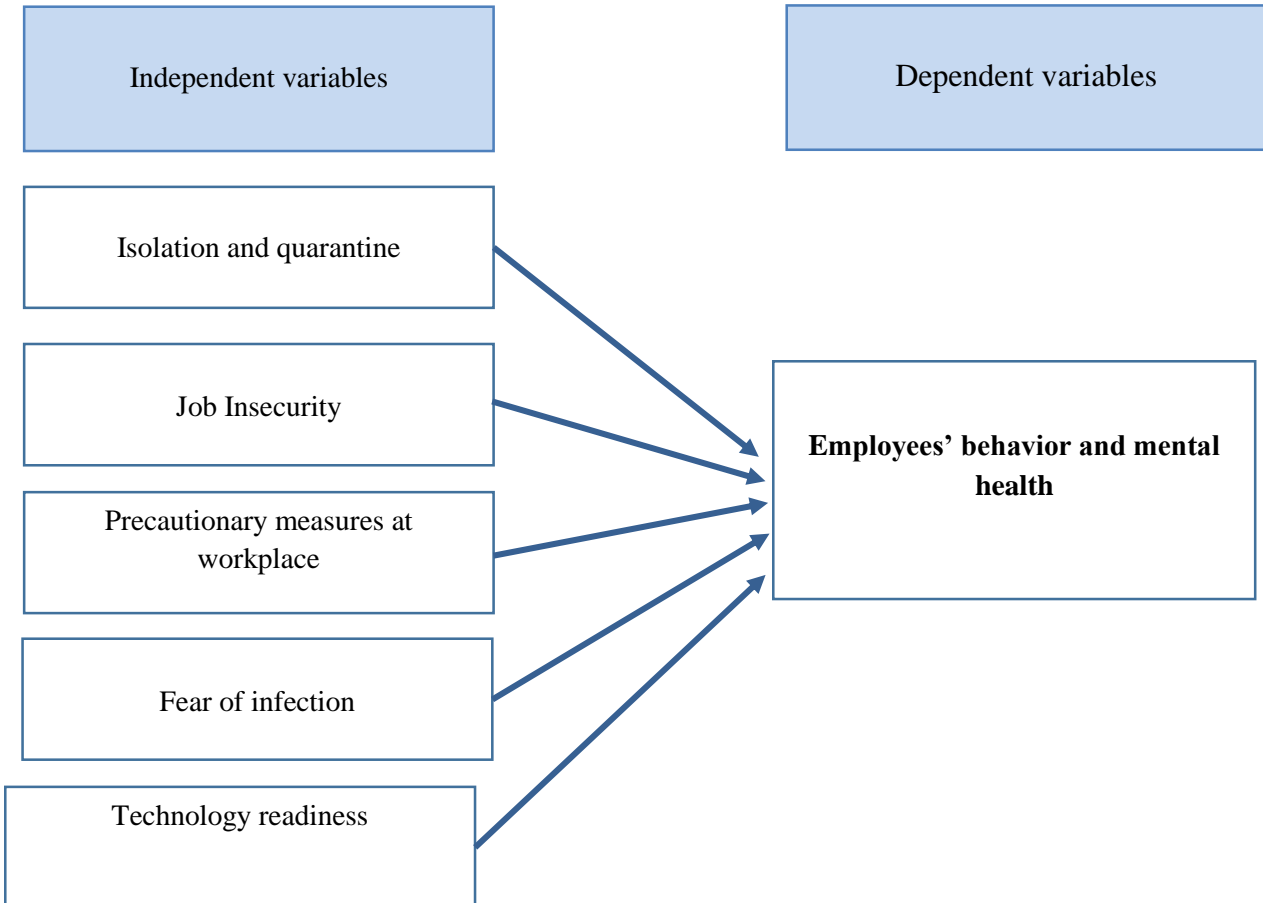
### **Mitigation**

Finally, extensive literature by (Ramesh et al., 2020) has developed on mitigating factors to COVID-19's effects on employees' mental health, including occupational safety and health management. During the COVID-19 pandemic, managers should work closely with human resource authorities and health institutions to create safety and health plan that will prevent the risk of coronavirus spread within the organization. An organization's policies play a significant role in reducing the spread of the virus. Consequently, organizations need to follow the guidelines of the ministry of health and their country's government, as well they need to be aware and train their employees about prevention measures and provide them with protective materials in the workplace (e.g., masks, sanitizers, social distancing, etc.).

Moreover, Greer (2014) suggested that organizations should implement strategies to support employees during organizational changes during pandemics to overcome the challenges of remote work. These strategies include constant communication with colleagues and managers, about availability, expectations, and work progress. As well as offering flexibility to the employees to organize their work schedule and tasks. Moreover, providing employees with technological equipment should be provided to employees to simplify their work and communication with their team and minimize their level of stress.

Another research conducted by (Xiang et al., 2020) asserted that social support at work is important to prevent mental health issues during the pandemic. Some studies indicated that inadequate social support from managers represents a risk factor for poor mental health. The social support could be through continuous communication in virtual meetings as well as providing them with flexibility during working hours to minimize their pressure and stress.

## Theoretical Framework & Hypotheses



**H<sub>1</sub>:** The isolation and quarantine are highly related with poor employee's mental health and performance

**Justification:** The literature review suggests that quarantine and isolation have a negative impact on employees. Considering the lack of social and physical activity and loss of usual routine which also resulted in financial pressure due to the quarantine's long duration and the need to consume large supplies, as well as the restriction on social distancing with others, hence the justification of this hypothesis.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The fear of getting infected by COVID-19 has negative impact on employee's behavior and mental well-being

**Justification:** The literature review reveals that increased media reporting related to the number of new COVID-19 cases and the number of deaths correlated with increasing employees' fear of getting infected by the virus. As well, employees who are more exposed to COVID-19 during work due to their work nature, have poorer mental health and high anxiety due to the constant fear of getting infected or infecting their family members.

**H3:** Technology readiness is highly correlated to the likelihood of facilitating and enhancing employees' performance during COVID-19

**Justification:** Modern technology during the pandemic facilitated employees' work, performance and supported their mental health as the majority of organizations in 2020 were equipped with technological equipment which facilitated their transformation to remote work to maintain their operation and ensure the health and safety of their employees, this led to control the risk of COVID-19 spread in the workplace.

**H4:** Precautionary measures at workplace is highly correlated to the likelihood of enhancing or declining employee's behavior and mental well-being

**Justification:** Intensive precautionary measures that involve social distancing, continuous COVID-19 test, strict rules for wearing masks, and reduced number of employees in the workplace play a major role in impacting employees' mental health. (Sasaki et al., 2020) asserted that workplaces that workplaces with low precautionary measures and more exposure to the virus tend to have employees with high mental disorders and anxiety, hence the justification of this hypothesis.

**H5:** Job insecurity is highly correlated to the likelihood of declining employee's performance, productivity and mental health

**Justification:** This notion is based on research conducted by (Hamouche, 2020). The research indicates that the pandemic caused disruption in organizations' operations which led to their closure or reduced working hours, and this severely impacted the financial obligation that employees have. It implies that if employees were not feeling secured and felt financially pressured their performance will significantly decline.

## **METHODOLOGY**

COVID-19 outbreak was confirmed in UAE in January 2020. During the pandemic, UAE has faced significant changes that impacted the country's economy and work which lead to impacting employees' behavior and mental health. Consequently, Abu Dhabi emirates have developed some strict governmental measures to face the epidemic and eliminate the outbreak of the virus including a curfew, remote work, COVID-19 test, and developed Al Hosn application to track individuals' vaccination.

This study applied a mixed-methods approach as suggested by Creswell (2014). A qualitative method followed by a quantitative approach for data collection and analysis were in sequence. In the initial phase, a literature review was undertaken to understand the background on the relevant issue based on other researchers. Followed by the second phase which included a questionnaire that was adapted from the past studies' findings and suggestions. The questionnaire was developed using one of the well-known online platforms. The questionnaire of the current study started with collecting information about the respondents' demographics such as gender, nationality, marital status, age, employment status, type of sector, etc. This was followed by recording respondents' opinions about the study variables (Quarantine, job insecurity, fear of infection, technology readiness, and precautionary measures). Most of the items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. On average, 10 minutes were required to complete the survey. The survey was made



available in the English language only. The source of scale selection for the questionnaire has been gathered from previous research that studied the relevant issue, in order to measure and examine the 5 independent variables' impact on Abu Dhabi emirates employees' according to the studies conducted by Hamouche, Arora, Grey, and others. The sample unit used in this study was employees working across several organizations in Abu Dhabi emirates. A total of 100 potential employees were contacted randomly to participate and 61 questionnaires were completed voluntarily and anonymously. Reminders have been sent to participants and asked for additional participants via social networks. The purpose of the study was conveyed to the participants and ensured them that the sole purpose of this study is for academic reasons.

Due to time constraints, there was a data limitation, as the sample size used in this research is sixty-one which is very small compared to the Abu Dhabi emirates population and this may not reflect all the employees' behavior and perception in the various organizations in Abu Dhabi.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Sample Demographic**

The sample used in this research is Abu Dhabi emirates employees who are working in government, semi-government and private sectors for the purpose of measuring the epidemic impact on those employees.

Prior to data analysis, the validity and reliability of the scales were evaluated. Validity and reliability are concepts used to assess the quality of the study. Validity is about how accurate the measure is, while reliability is about how consistent the measure is in measuring the same thing repeatedly while getting the same results (Heale and Twycross, 2015). In this research, the validity of the results has been compared with existing research papers by other authors and the results indicated a presence of relevance to the previous studies and ensured accuracy of the used measures, as all 5 variables studied in this research reflected the intended outcomes. The reliability has been tested by ensuring that different items are measuring the same variable and provide the same outcome with each item, for instance, in this research, I measured the variable quarantine's impact on employees using different items/ questions which indicated the significant impact of quarantine on employees performance and mental health.

The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1. The sample consisted of 57.4% females, with the age group 20-25 years being the largest (39.3%). Of the sample, 67.2% are UAE citizens, 52.5% are single and majority of the participants are full time employees (78.7%). The respondents came from different organizational sectors in Abu Dhabi emirates: government/ public sector (37.7%), Semi-government sector (34.4%) and (27.9%) are from the private sector.

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### **Model Testing**

The items used to assess each construct were verified using regression analysis to prove the correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variables (Freund et al., 2006). In this study, three variables were proven, and two variables were rejected. Firstly, previous studies indicated that quarantine and isolation during COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on employees' performance and mental health. According to that, in this study it was proven that

COVID-19 is highly correlated with poor employee's mental health and performance, as shown in Table 2 the p value is  $< 0.05$  (0.002421) which indicates that when quarantine and isolation duration increase the negative impact on employee's behavior and mental well-being increase. Moreover, the correlation between the fear of getting infected by COVID-19 and employees' performance and behavior was proven in this study, as shown in Table 3. The p-value is 0.04789 which indicates that the fear of infection is highly correlated to the likelihood of declining employee's performance, productivity and mental health. Lastly, various researchers suggested that technology readiness during the pandemic played a significant role in enhancing employee's behavior as well as their performance. The hypothesis in this study was proven as shown in Table 4, the p-value is 0.052746 which indicates that technology readiness is highly correlated to facilitating and enhancing employees' performance during COVID-19 which reflect to their mental health.

On the other hand, two variables got rejected in this study as they were not statistically significant on the dependent variable which indicates that the two variables hypothesis do not apply on Abu Dhabi emirates employees. Various studies suggested precautionary measures at workplace is highly correlated to the likelihood of enhancing or declining employee's behavior and mental well-being. However, this hypothesis got rejected in our study which demonstrates that precautionary measures at workplace have no impact in enhancing or declining Abu Dhabi employee's performance and mental well-being as shown in Table 5, the p-value is  $> 0.05$  (0.394638). In addition, the second hypothesis that is not statistically significant is that job insecurity is highly correlated to the likelihood of declining employee's performance, productivity and mental health as shown in Table 6, the p-value is 0.551025 and this indicates that Abu Dhabi emirates employees might not experience job insecurity during the pandemic or for other reasons.

**Table 1: Sample Characteristics**

Variables	N=61	
Gender	Male	42.6%
	Female	57.4%
Age	20-25 years	39.3%
	25-30 years	34.4%
	30-35 years	18%
	35-40 years	6.7%
	40 years and above	1.6%
Nationality	UAE citizen	67.2%
	UAE resident	32.8%
Marital status	Single	52.5%
	Married	37.7%
	Divorced	9.8%
Employment status	Full time	78.7%
	Part time	14.8%
	Self employed	6.6%
Organizations' Sector	Government/ Public	37.7%
	Semi-Government	34.4%
	Private	27.9%

**Table 2: Hypothesis 1 (Quarantine and Isolation)**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	3.051387	3.051387	10.0457	0.002421
Residual	59	17.92129	0.303751		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20.97268</b>			

**Table 3: Hypothesis 2 (Fear of Infection)**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1.357121	1.357121	4.081972	0.04789
Residual	59	19.61556	0.332467		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20.97268</b>			

**Table 4: Hypothesis 3 (Technology Readiness)**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1.302773	1.302773	3.907675	0.052746
Residual	59	19.6699	0.333388		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20.97268</b>			

**Table 5: Hypothesis 4 (Precautionary Measures at Workplace)**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	0.258161	0.258161	0.735307	0.394638
Residual	59	20.71452	0.351093		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20.97268</b>			

**Table 6: Hypothesis 5 (Job Insecurity)**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	0.127052	0.127052	0.359599	0.551025
Residual	59	20.84563	0.353316		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20.97268</b>			

### Discussion and Implications

This study has examined the relationship between the five variables of COVID-19 (Quarantine, job insecurity, fear of infection, technology readiness, and precautionary measures) and employee's performance and mental health in Abu Dhabi emirates. Of these five variables, it was indicated that three of them, namely, quarantine, fear of infection, and technology, have a substantial effect on Abu Dhabi emirates employee's performance and mental well-being.

The study found that quarantine and isolation strongly impact employee behavior and mental health. The quarantine is the most significant variable of the COVID-19 pandemic ( $p = 0.002$ ) is also supported by a number of other studies (Popa et al., 2022); (Hamouche, 2020). Such that the more intensely they felt threatened by quarantine and isolation effects such as the loss of routine, lack of physical activity and loss of social connection. The fear of infection ( $p = 0.04$ ) is the next

most important factor in the study findings. The interaction with infected people and the not knowing the sources of the virus as well as losing friends and family due to getting infected by the virus declined employees' performance and severely impacted their mental well-being. As employees felt threatened due to the novelty of the virus and its deadly symptoms (Bai et al., 2004). The technology readiness variable ( $p=0.05$ ) has also been found to significantly contribute to the employees' performance and mental health (Narayanamurthy & Tortorella, 2021). Moreover, employees valued the technology readiness variable, which is the organization's ability to work remotely during the pandemic as well as having the technical equipment for the employees to perform their jobs. This implies that organizations should strive to ensure that they maintain proper technology readiness for future pandemics or crises.

On the other hand, the  $p$ -value between precautionary measures and job insecurity ( $p=0.39$ ) and job insecurity ( $p=0.55$ ), respectively, cannot support hypotheses 4 and 5. Therefore, the two COVID-19 variables did not directly affect the employee's performance and mental well-being. This indicates that precautionary measures at the workplace in Abu Dhabi emirates weren't one of the significant factors that employees faced during the pandemic and might not impact their performance and mental health severely such as providing employees with masks, sanitizers, and social distancing. In addition, in this study job insecurity variable didn't indicate a decline in employees' performance and mental well-being compared with previous research. This means that Abu Dhabi emirates employees might not face major job insecurity during the pandemic including job loss or salary reduction, it may be due to government or organizational support.

Lastly, the majority of the employees believe that implementing remote work, providing employees with the latest technologies to perform their job and the organization's ability to continue its business during the pandemic is one of the essential practices that can minimize the impacts of future pandemics on employees. Moreover, other employees believe that management support (mentally, financially, and psychologically) is important to help employees cope with the pandemic and reduce the negative impacts. Lastly, reducing employees working hours and securing employees' jobs is a significant factor that can enhance the employee's performance and mental health during COVID-19 or future pandemics.

### **Implications**

COVID-19 pandemic is novel in terms of infection, and how rapid the virus spread to several countries, affecting the world's economy. Organizations are not all ready to cope with this pandemic or future pandemics, in terms of data, competencies and resources. Human resources management in organizations need to find innovative and useful solutions to continue their operations while ensuring the protection of their employees. Furthermore, providing employees with the required mental and psychological support during pandemics would lead to better results and will not impact their performance, the government measures during the pandemic including the reduce of quarantine duration and limiting the spread of the virus is essential to employee's performance and mental health.

## **Recommendation**

The results of two tested variables in this study have indicated a negative correlation with the dependent variable compared to previous studies which led to the rejection of two hypotheses. The precautionary measures and job insecurity variables in this study indicated that they are not correlated to impacting employees' performance and mental health while previous studies supported that with evidence. The reason behind the rejection of this hypothesis might be because of the limited number of questions that measure each variable properly or the limited sample size of the participants as the sample is very small compared to Abu Dhabi emirates population which led to affecting the results of each variable, and not being able to indicate the correlation between the two variables with the dependent variable.

It's recommended for future research, to increase the number of questions that measure each variable to assess the correlation between the independent and dependent variables properly and comprehensively. Moreover, choosing a bigger sample size either from Abu Dhabi emirates or the whole UAE to accurately reflect the results as the sample size was not enough compared to other studies. Lastly, gather more evidence on the variables that got rejected to understand the concept better and reflect it on the selected sample size.

## **Conclusion**

Most of the COVID-19 studies have been focusing on mental health outcomes. It is fundamental to create a better understanding of the likely behavioral changes in the UAE population and their impact on mental and physiological well-being, which are most likely to be negative. Our study provided preliminary evidence of the significant impact of COVID-19 on Abu Dhabi emirates employees and explored how these impacts have affected workers' sedentary behaviors and mental well-being. Further evidence is needed to explore whether the effects of the outbreak of COVID-19 on employees' behavior and mental health are permanent and how changes in future pandemics may affect workers' health behaviors and outcomes. Further evidence is needed to explore whether the effects of the outbreak of COVID-19 on employees' behavior and mental health are permanent and how changes in future pandemics may affect workers' health behaviors and outcomes. This information is necessary to develop efficient mitigations ways and interventions to promote and support employees in the future pandemics and avoid the existing impacts. Systematic research on health-related behaviors, such as the mental well-being, is urged to better understand the short and long-term outcomes of the current pandemic impacting many individuals.

The main limitation of our study is that the sample used in this study covers only Abu Dhabi emirates employees, we cannot generalize the findings to all organization's workers or other professions in other emirates. Moreover, two variables got rejected even though we had existing studies supporting the hypothesis.

The novelty of the COVID-19 and its negative impact on employees' performance and mental health requires this type of review. The aim of this research is to provide the required information to prevent or reduce the impact of COVID-19 on employees. We consider that the quality of the studies reviewed in this research support the achievement of this aim. The contribution of the study should be considered in light of some limitations. The informative character of this study and its main goal to provide beneficial information for employees and organizations will reduce the

number of systematic literature reviews, as the research is contributing with comprehensive, and a well-structured paper based on data obtained from various literature reviews on the impact of COVID-19 on employees' performance mental health.

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