



**The Effects of Lockdown on the Mental Health of Nuclear Families**

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## **Abstract**

**Aim:** The research study attempts to analyze and explore the effects of Covid-19 lockdown on the mental health of members of nuclear families, in the context of Pakistan. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in December of 2019, countless people have suffered from it, while significant number of lives have been lost so far, globally. However, to cease its growing transmission almost every country around the world opted for lockdowns, including Pakistan. The imposition of lockdown restrictions gave rise to many problems related to economic, social and psychological issues, worldwide. Therefore, this research aims to study the influence of lockdown situation on the mental health of nuclear families' members in Pakistan. All the relevant previous literature was reviewed and it revealed that lockdowns have adversely affected the mental health of individuals.

**Methodology:** In terms of methodology, the survey method was utilized as the research method to conduct this research and data was collected data from 100 respondents from Pakistani nuclear families, using Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale and PACS scale in the questionnaire which contains a total of 10 questions, while SPSS was employed for data analysis.

**Results:** A significant correlation was found between lockdown period and mental health problems in nuclear families.

**Conclusion:** The research study concluded that lockdown period negatively affected the mental health of members from nuclear families.

*Keywords:* Pandemic, Covid-19, Mental Health, Lockdown, Human Behavior

## **Introduction**

The research paper would primarily focus on analyzing the effects of Covid-19 related lockdowns on mental health of members of nuclear families in Pakistan. This research study will be chiefly concerned with examining the influence of lockdowns that were imposed to curb the recent pandemic, on the emotional and mental wellbeing of people from nuclear families, while the research would be conducted in terms of Pakistani context. The outbreak of Corona Virus which quickly took the form of a pandemic, brought many problems with itself besides the medical health issues. In order to counter the worsening situation due to Covid-19 pandemic, almost every country around the world enforced strict lockdowns which resulted in closure of businesses, workspaces and leisure places. It limited the unnecessary movement of people and restricted them to their homes. Pakistan was also among the states which imposed lockdowns, as all cities of Pakistan underwent a complete lockdown when the country's infection rate aggravated. The economy suffered heavily due to these lockdowns, besides that several social issues also emerged.

In addition, it is widely reported that the lockdown situation intensified the social and psychological problems, as emotional and mental health of people got affected because they were confined to their homes. Similarly, the members of nuclear families were no exception in terms of mentally suffering from negative influence of lockdowns and as Pakistan has a significant number of nuclear families, so it is important to study their experience. Therefore, this research would attempt to find out and investigate the adverse effects of lockdowns on nuclear families' members, in the context of Pakistan.

## **Background**

On 31st of December in the year 2019, the World Health Organization received information from Chinese authorities regarding an unknown disease which resembled the symptoms of extreme pneumonia. The initial cases of Covid-19 occurred in the city of Wuhan, China, which is inhabited by 11 million people, while it is the capital and commercial hub of Hubei province in China. After its breakout, the Chinese officials reported that the disease was highly contagious and lethal, as the whole city of Wuhan went under total lockdown. However, the outspread of virus could not be ceased, as it was abruptly transmitted worldwide, gaining the status of a pandemic. Subsequently, the reports revealed that the disease is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, which is a virus associated with deadly respiratory illness, as it severely damages a person's lungs making it hard to breath that might result in death. As of July 2021, the total Covid-19 cases rose to around 199 million, while over 20 million cases are active and on average 180 thousand cases are reported per day. The virus has caused over 4.2 million total deaths around the world, while approximately 4 thousand deaths are recoded daily. However, it is still not clear to researchers that how this virus came into existence and spread all over the world. Plus, the researchers are busy in developing its cure rather than focusing or studying its emergence (Chaplin, 2020).

Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that why the need for lockdowns arose amid Covid-19, as it would help in comprehending the lockdown situation. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is due to the nature of virus that imposition of lockdowns became necessary. It was revealed that virus is transmitted due to close human to human contact, especially by exchange of respiratory droplets through sneezing or coughing (Fishman, 2021). Therefore, people were advised to take necessary precautions, such as wearing surgical masks, sanitizing the

body and maintaining a reasonable distance of about 6 feet when meeting in public places, while unnecessary gatherings were completely prohibited through implementing the lockdowns. These actions were taken to restrict the transmission of virus and reduce the positivity rate of new Covid-19 infections.

Globally, the first ever lockdown was enforced in China around January, 2020 while the rest of the world was eventually led to lockdown situation in March and April of the same year. Moreover, as of July 2021, the partial or complete lockdown situation still exists in many parts of the world. Pakistan reported its first two cases in the end of February, 2020 and the country implemented completed lockdown around end of March that year. Pakistan has witnessed a total of more than 1 million cases and around 50 thousand remain active, while the country reported over 23 thousand deaths due to Covid-19. This situation has made the lockdowns mandatory and there is a huge possibility that if situation persists, more strict lockdowns would be enforced in future, which is not a good sign for numerous reasons concerning Pakistan. The lockdown related restrictions have not only threatened the economy but several psychological and social problems have emerged as well because of them, which has made the population extremely worried and that is adversely affecting their mental health (Ghosh, 2020).

The research studies have revealed that the pandemic has increased the depression and anxiety related to the fear of contracting the deadly virus. Furthermore, besides the fear, the emotional wellbeing of people have suffered, as they got disconnected from their friends. Moreover, the constant uncertainty regarding Covid-19, that whether it would ever end or not, has created extreme sense of worry among the subjects who are confined in the boundaries of their homes. In addition, the realization of fact that individual freedom has diminished under lockdowns, caused a sense of helplessness among the people. A survey was conducted in 2020, which

suggested that young adults, teenagers and children would be among the most affected, in terms of mental health, due to lockdown restrictions (Saladino, 2020).

In Pakistan, majority of people spent the duration of lockdown trapped with their families at home, which could prove to be challenging due to increasing mental health issues in the country. The family members were forced to adopt a lifestyle at home which they were not accustomed to, as Covid-19 related lockdowns seriously affected the living conditions and standards. In terms of nuclear families, as the interaction between parents and children increased in lockdown, so it was up to the parents to guide their children through this difficult and uncertain situation, but it made them suffer from mental health issues as well. As, the responsibility of parents increased, in terms of educating their children to adopt a new lifestyle and daily routine, the chances increased that their emotional wellbeing in the process, would be adversely influenced as well. In addition, the parents had to manage other matters solely on their own, as earners had to provide for the family, while homemakers had to perform all the housework and other household chores.

Furthermore, it was reported that these tasks were proving to be complicated due to lockdown situation, as offices were closed and earners had to adopt the work from home policy which was not easy for many, as it increased the daily workload. Plus, homemakers also had to perform double the work they used to do pre-lockdown. Moreover, due to worsening state of economy and increasing unemployment, many families lost their source of livelihood, which contributed to severely affecting their mental health amid lockdown. It implies that duty of parents became more tough and laborious in the lockdown restrictions, which could have serious implications for their emotional and mental wellbeing, which also put their children at the great risk of developing mental health problems. Although, the lockdowns brought family members together and gave them the chance to revive their relationships, the increased responsibilities and

sudden change in living conditions have produced a lot of negative feelings for that to actually happen.

The mental health experts suggest that this whole situation would have extreme negative effects on the children, as the parents are stressed out. Even though the lockdown proved effective against growing positivity rate of Covid-19 infections, its social implications are proving to be far worse. Several researches revealed that in the context of nuclear families, the family members feel trapped as they get exhausted by interacting with the same people at their home. Plus, hearing about the death of any individual known to the family, further intensifies the mental health issues. Several experts stated that in past due to pandemic-like situations, numerous psychological problems occurred in subjects, so Covid-19 would be no exception and countless research studies support their claim. Further, some reports suggest that children are at a greater risk of developing mental health problems than adults in nuclear families. Another research which was conducted in China revealed that children exhibited fear, lack of attentiveness, careless behavior and extreme irritability which are alarming effects of mental health problems. Nonetheless, it cannot be stated with complete certainty that whether these negative psychological effects of lockdowns would influence the children's personal, academic or professional life or not, in future (Msherghi, 2021).

### **Significance of the Study**

Since this research is mainly concerned with providing an analysis of effects of lockdown on mental health of members of nuclear families in Pakistan, so it is significant as it would prove to be beneficial in comprehensively understanding the mental health issues in Pakistani society. Moreover, not many studies have been conducted in this regard, especially in the context of



Pakistan, therefore, it would provide a deeper insight and thorough understanding of mental problems that occurred in nuclear families of Pakistan, amid lockdowns. Further, the findings of this research would contribute towards developing the solutions for mental health issues faced by the population. Plus, the study aims to aid the researchers who would plan to conduct a research in future regarding the same or relevant issues. Lastly, the research focuses on raising awareness among the masses about mental health, while it would highlight the problem, so relevant authorities could devise a resolution to curb the growing issues related to mental wellbeing. Therefore, this research would be noteworthy, as it would specifically study the mental health issues occurring in Pakistani nuclear families due to lockdowns, while hardly any notable research is conducted in this particular regard.

The research paper plans to achieve it all by exploring the basic knowledge of Covid-19 pandemic and situations related lockdown restrictions, while thoroughly investigating the nuclear families and their home environment in Pakistan. Plus, the relationship between parents and their children in these families would also be studied. Moreover, the response of individuals from nuclear families towards the lockdowns would be analyzed as well, while their adaptability of new lifestyle would be examined. It was expected that the Covid-19 pandemic would adversely affect the emotional and mental health of both parents and their children of nuclear families residing in Pakistan.

## **Hypothesis**

The lockdown restrictions negatively influenced the mental health of members of Pakistani nuclear families.

## **Variables**

In this research the independent variable is lockdown restrictions while the dependent variable is mental health of individuals from nuclear families.

## **Literature Review**

As, the research is chiefly concerned with the effects of lockdown on mental health of members from Pakistani nuclear families, so the previous researches which were selected for review, had relevance with the topic. All the available literature that was relevant to the topic, was searched and the most appropriate research studies were selected for further study. Then, from those studies the suitable research articles were chosen for review. Hence, the research related literature was reviewed, in order to guide the research into right direction.

The Covid-19 related lockdowns have caused various issues around the world, as they disrupted the daily life of individuals, which led to different mental health problems among them. Similarly, the situation in Spain was also quite severe, especially as far as the children were concerned. Therefore, a research was conducted by Ezpeleta et al. (2020) to explore the effects of lockdown on Spanish adolescents and their parents. It must be stated that not many credible research studies on children's mental health, amid Covid-19 were conducted, but this study comprehensively analyzes their emotional wellbeing during the pandemic. It revealed that Spanish children had to experience a 72 day long lockdown, which disturbed the normal routine of their life. The research selected 226 Spanish parents to fill a questionnaire regarding their children. After analyzing the results, the study concluded that lockdown restrictions, isolation and emergency

situation has caused a great deal of mental stress among the children. Plus, parents also had to go through various stressful situations involving their children, under the Covid-19 related circumstances. Moreover, the living conditions and social environment in a home also contribute towards the mental health issues. The research also suggested that lack of social activities and increased use of media were also the factors which led to growing mental health problems in children (Ezpeleta et al., 2020).

At the end of 2020, another research study was conducted by a group researchers at University of Sheffield, which focused on examining the depression and anxiety among people due to lockdown restrictions. The researchers belonged to Austria, Belgium and UK, therefore, they conducted the research with regards to their countries. It revealed that about 10 percent of the population suffered from fear of developing the symptoms of Covid-19 or contracting the disease, as they were scared for their lives. Furthermore, around 10 percent of the adult population faced unemployment and financial issue, while more than half the population had work from home, which was not desirable for the majority of them. The research further reported that significant number of adults felt extreme form of loneliness and sad thoughts while a lower number of adults faced anger and irritability issues during lockdown. The young population also reported feelings of distress, as it was revealed that many of them feel that their relationship with their friends and parents had suffered negatively under lockdown restrictions. The research further suggested that stress and anxiety developed rapidly among the young population in the lockdown period. They were seriously worried about their future and many of them showed signs of frustration, while others complained that they were unable to adopt the new life routine and its workload.

After analyzing the research by University of Sheffield (2020), it is evident that lack of social activities and physical interactions during lockdown, played a huge role in creating mental

health problems for people. In addition, the research study further revealed that these mental health issues led to behavioral problems, as a significant number of people exhibited negative attitude in their daily life, under lockdown. However, those people who claimed to have good company during lockdowns developed lower mental health and behavioral issues. Although, the teenagers were confined to their houses, more than 90 percent of them managed to remain connected with their friends through online platforms, which reduced the risk of mental health issues. The report further revealed that during the imposition of lockdown restrictions, the instances of people seeking help from therapists and psychologists increased significantly. Nonetheless, it was evident that under lockdown restrictions the depression and anxiety among people saw a significant rise as it almost tripled, which confirms the negative influence of lockdowns on mental health (University of Sheffield, 2020).

In addition, a research by Sellgren (2020) indicated that as the time progressed lockdown restrictions got stricter in areas with worsening infection rate. It not only raised medical issues but also aggravated the mental health concerns, as stress levels of the subjects from those areas increased rapidly. Parents were mostly worried about their children's academic life and future amid lockdown, which caused a great deal of depression in them. Furthermore, the families with lower monthly incomes were also at a great risk of developing mental health problems, while families with single parents and special children were also threatened by the issues of mental wellbeing (Sellgren, 2021).

According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (2021), a significant majority of children around the world have developed severe feelings of anxiousness, they are worried about their future, while fear and isolation also proves to be detrimental for their mental health. However, the UNICEF is trying to help the children to come out of Covid-19 related

stress and depression by positively guiding them through the implications of the virus. Another issue which is prevailing is that countless children are trapped in abusive households, while they are at a great threat of becoming victims of domestic violence, which would further traumatize their mental wellbeing. Plus, the mental health needs of street children or disabled children are also ignored during the lockdown period (UNICEF, 2021).

A research article by Yam (2020) focused on the effects of lockdown on the mental health of women, as majority of the woman had to perform double the work amid pandemic. They performed their hectic duties as homemakers at home and as nurses and medical health personnel at hospitals, which affected their mental health in adverse ways. Moreover, during lockdown restrictions the incidents of domestic abuse against women increased rapidly, which further contributed towards their mental health problems. The research reveals that this situation also indicates the mental health issues of men as they exhibit frustrated behavior due to loss of employment and for being confined in homes with nothing much to do during lockdown period. The emotional wellbeing of people who were in abusive relations during lockdown, got seriously affected because of the behavioral problems of their partners. Nonetheless, the report concluded that women are still at a much larger risk of developing mental health problems as compared to men during lockdown, due to their economic dependency and workload of household chores (Yam, 2020).

Pakistan is also among the nations which suffered heavily due to the pandemic, in terms of economic, social and psychological issues. The people of Pakistan also witnessed a rise in the mental health issues among them amid Covid-19 pandemic, as lockdown restrictions have negatively influenced the emotional and mental wellbeing. As far as the American citizens are concerned, it was revealed that four out of every ten people in the US have experienced anxiety or

depression during pandemic related lockdowns (Drillinger, 2021). Furthermore, a research was conducted by Morelli (2020) regarding the effects on mental health of parents and children under lockdown restrictions in Italy. A significant number of the respondents reported that their children have displayed some sort of mental health problem since the lockdowns were imposed (Morelli, 2020).

In 2020, a research study was conducted by Bülow et al. which concluded that the imposition of lockdown has greatly influenced the relationship between parents and children, as parents have started to demand help in housework from their children. It is observed that performing household chores is not desired by children, so that raises their frustration, plus, lack of social activities have also caused distress among them. Moreover, parents have restricted the activities of children in various ways at home, as this whole situation has created several conflicts and developed negative feelings between the relation of parents and their children. The study concluded that children have been displaying high levels of irritability due to boredom, therefore, their mental health has suffered to great extent, while they go through different phases of stress and depression during lockdown (Bülow et al., 2020).

Another study related to mental health during pandemic was conducted in China by Wang (2021), as it found out circumstances related to being confined at home, online education and work from home were a factor contributing towards increased levels of depression among people. The research study also implied that in teenagers, the excessive use of internet in lockdown period has led to mental health issues as well, while parent-child relationships in households are constantly suffering (Wang, 2021). According to Sandoiu (2021), credible evidence reveals that pandemic related lockdowns have given rise to extreme form of depression around the globe. A survey was

conducted in this regard which confirmed that 42 percent of the population showed signs of extreme depression in US, during the lockdown period of December, 2020 (Sandoiu, 2021).

In UK, a research was carried out by Evandrou (2021), which indicated that a lot of young adults lost their jobs due to pandemic and their parents had to bear their financial burden which created disruption in the families, as reports of occurrence of major arguments between siblings or parents surfaced during lockdowns. Plus, the economic stress on parents have also caused great deal of depression among them. In addition, the sudden change in living conditions have created extreme frustration, which led to unnecessary disputes between family members (Evandrou, 2021). In addition, another research was conducted by Walitza (2021) in the context of Switzerland. The findings of the study revealed that majority of young women and men went through a severe phase of mental health problems, when the very first lockdown was imposed. According to statistical data collected through the research, more than 54 percent woman and 38 percent men displayed severe symptoms of depression. In addition to that, the levels of anxiety were high among 47 percent women and 33 percent men. The study further suggests that whenever the pandemic ends, people would face serious mental health issues in order to get back to their normal life (Walitza, 2021).

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study applies the social isolation theory in order to conduct the research regarding lockdown restrictions and their effects on mental health of nuclear families in Pakistan. The social isolation theory states that lack of social interaction with society, family and friends can lead to extreme loneliness which might give rise to different issues. The lack of social interaction

can be caused by various factors including loss of mobility, which in this context relates to the lockdown restrictions. Therefore, this research aims to describe the effects of lockdowns on the mental health of members of Pakistani nuclear families.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Quantitative research method was employed to conduct the study regarding the influence of Covid-19 pandemic related lockdown restrictions on the mental health of members of nuclear families in Pakistan. The survey method was used to carry out the research because it helps in investigating and finding out about the first hand experiences of respondents, in terms of mental health, amid lockdown restrictions. Human behavior, emotions and social relationships are quite volatile and unpredictable constructs, as they vary subjectively, therefore, qualitative research design was not opted.

At first, nuclear families from Pakistan were identified in order to carry out the research and for this purpose the city of Lahore is selected, as it is easier to find nuclear families in the city. Therefore, the sample of this research is at least 100 participants who belong to nuclear families in Lahore, Pakistan. Then, an online cross-sectional survey was conducted using Google Forms, as the link to the questionnaire would be provided to the members of these nuclear families, so they could fill it before submitting. An anonymous questionnaire is used to conduct the research, as it does not contain any question which is related to confidential information of the respondents. An interval scale was used to distinguish between the different options selected by the respondents,



in order to get the clear results. The interval scale is applied for the purpose of conducting an extensive statistical analysis regarding a certain topic.

## **Procedure**

The survey includes a total of 10 multiple choice questions which are designed to facilitate the research, so the perspectives, behavior and viewpoints of the respondents related to lockdown restrictions could be explored in order to analyze the effects on their mental health. All the questions in the survey form a deep connection with matter being researched, as they would aid in examining the influence of lockdowns on emotional and mental wellbeing of members of nuclear families.

## **Research Instruments**

The Likert Scale is used in the questionnaire to record the responses of participants. It is a simple yet effective scale which usually consists five options to choose from, as this scale is beneficial for clearly understanding the perspectives and attitudes of the respondents. These options include strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree, while the respondents choose the option which best suits their experience (Demystifying Scales in Social Science Research, 2020). To explore the effects of lockdowns on the mental health of nuclear families the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale is being used (Tennant, 2007). The question numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 were made by using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale (see Appendix B). Further, another scale which was opted to analyze the parent-child relationship is the PACS, which is the Parent Adolescent Communication Scale (Houck et al., 2006). The question numbers 3, 5 and 7 were made by using the PACS scale (see Appendix B).

## **Data Collection**

To conduct the research, primary data was required as the questions in the survey follow a personal and experimental pattern designed by the researcher, in order to collect the valid responses. The questionnaire was created on Google Forms and it would be distributed through web-based and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Email and Twitter, while in some cases paper-based questionnaires were used as well. It should take no more than 5 minutes for the participants to complete the survey, as it contains several questions to recall the experience of lockdown period in the minds of participants. Survey method is an effective data collection method, as it is cost-effective and does not consume a lot of time, while it offers evident decision-making ability.

. The participants of this research were given relevant information about the context of the research to avoid ethical errors, confusion, or concerns. After the collection of data, it was thoroughly analyzed and evaluated. Plus, to further support the research the secondary sources were used, such as use of relevant news articles, available literature, previous research studies and governmental reports. They were used along with primary data to guide the research into right direction, while they would assist in analysis and discussion when concluding the findings of the research.

## **Sampling Strategy**

In order to conduct the research, at least a 100 respondents are required to fill the survey questionnaire. The research study has set the target of respondents to at least a 100 individuals

from nuclear families of Pakistan, before beginning to analyze the results. Initially, it was decided that if the research receives more than hundred response from different participate, then, it would be still acceptable, as it would bring further diversity and credibility to the research. However, the targeted number of responses were reached and the data analysis was started. The participants were selected through convenient sampling method, which allowed the members of nuclear families, whether male or female of any age group to fill the survey. Convenience sampling methodology has been used to collect primary data. A nuclear family consist of a husband, wife, and their children, so they would be targeted in order to get the surveys filled. Plus, there is no pre-requisites such as financial or social status to fill the survey except for the condition of being a member of nuclear family. In addition, it is important to state that the research focuses on getting responses from educated respondents, who can understand English language, but, only if the educated participants could not be identified, then, the questionnaire, informed consent form and all relevant information would be translated in Urdu.

### **Statistical Procedures**

The responses were collected, and the data attained was processed with the help of the latest edition of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is the 25th edition currently by IBM, to highlight the prominent trends and behaviors amongst the participants (Powers, 2021).

## **Implications**

The analysis of the data obtained through surveys is very crucial because this procedure transform all the relevant data into a concrete conclusion. The answers would be examined through the analysis process, which would facilitate the research in building the relations between variables. Therefore, the responses would provide a clear understanding about the influence of lockdown on mental health of nuclear families' members in Pakistan.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher guarantees the utmost care of the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. To ensure that no ethical boundaries are crossed, the names of respondents would not be recorded and their consent would be taken before collecting their responses. They would be provided with an option of quitting the research if they have any concerns towards it. The vocabulary used would be easy to understand. The information provided to the participants would be transparent and defined clearly to gain their trust, while promoting accountability amongst the researcher.

## Results and Data Analysis

**Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Scales**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>* Factor Loading</b>	<b>† Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Lockdown</b>		0.809
Item 1	0.588	
Item 2	0.647	
Item 3	0.675	
Item 4	0.636	
<b>Family</b>		0.608
Item 1	0.540	
Item 2	0.588	
Item 3	0.560	

\* Construct Validity

† Internal Consistency/Reliability

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Statistics	Lockdown	Family Relations
Mean	2.55	-1.45
S.D	3.79	2.46
Range (upper)	-8, 8	-6, 5

**Table 3:**

Family Relations				
	R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE <sub>B</sub>	p-value
<b>Lockdown</b>	0.335	0.378	0.05	<.001

R<sup>2</sup> = Validity in D.V because of I.D.V

1 unit change in I.D.V is resulting in 0.378 units change D.V

Weight (kg)

Age (years) 0.476

1 year, 0.476 kg

**Result of linear regression shows that a variability of 33.5 % was generated in deteriorated family relation in lockdown.**

**The result of unstandardized beta shows that one unit change in mental health cause of lockdown will result in deteriorated family relation by 0.378 unit and this consider statistically significant.**

After getting the survey results, the data was processed using the statistical procedure, as SPSS 25 was used to assess the data, in order to generate final results. As, the hypothesis had one independent variable as lockdown restrictions and one dependent variable as mental health of family members, therefore, their correlation was needed to be assess in order reach a conclusion, that whether lockdowns affected the mental wellbeing of individuals in nuclear families or not.

The Table 1 shows Psychometric Properties of Scales which represents the two variables along with a number of measures. Three items for each variable were presented as the factor, to determine their construct validity. Construct validity is used to check the level of consistency of the measures to prove theoretical hypotheses. As, it is evident that all the items of both variables have almost similar or close numerical readings, which are positive in between 0 and +1. Therefore, it implies that variables have positive correlation between them. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha represents the measure of internal consistency/reliability. Internal consistency is used to evaluate the reliability of survey items. The Cronbach's alpha for lockdown is above 0.8 which is a good rating, while the result for family is just above 0.6 which makes the reliability questionable, but it is still acceptable because other results are satisfactory.

Meanwhile the Table 2 the measurement through Descriptive Statistics of Variables as the mean, standard deviation and range of both the variables are presented. The Table 3 is regression

table, as it presents coefficient of determination, unstandardized beta, standard error and p-value, in terms of both the variables. The measures in both of these tables suggest that there is a clear relationship between both the variables as dependent variable is assessed to be affected by dependent variable.

## **Discussion**

The final results and data analysis have proved the hypothesis to be true, as the analysis revealed significant correlation between independent and dependent variable. Therefore, a significant amount of data shows that lockdown restrictions did indeed negatively influenced the mental health of members of nuclear families in Pakistan. The survey results implied that lockdowns in Pakistan seriously affected the mental wellbeing of individuals who were a part of nuclear families and had to spend the lockdown period at home with other family members.

The research was concerned with identifying that whether such individuals who belong to nuclear families in Pakistan faced mental health problems during lockdowns or not. The study assessed that these individuals have some sort of fear towards the lockdown aspect, as a majority of participants in survey revealed that they were scared of being under lockdown restrictions which suggest that they had issues with staying at home all the time with other family members. Moreover, the study also focused on examining the level of frustration shown by respondents during lockdowns, as many of them stated that they often felt annoyed and frustrated while interacting with other family members. In addition, a significant number of participants revealed that they never felt so frustrated in their entire life because of facing the exact same daily routine and environment at home. Further, it is evident that due to being annoyed or frustrated at all times,



the chances of getting into fights increase and it was acknowledged by the participants as they stated that they often got into heated arguments and fights with other family members. All this evidence imply that these individuals were going through mental health issues during the period of lockdown.

Furthermore, the research inquired from participants that whether they became emotionally closer to their family members during lockdown or not, as the survey received mixed answers, but inclination was towards denying the statement. Consequently, many of the individuals agreed that a communication gap emerged between them and their families when they were going through the lockdown period. This shows that family members failed to give mental or emotional support each other during that time. Moreover, most of the participants agreed that their anxiety levels increased during the lockdowns, as they felt extremely anxious while being stuck at home. A great majority of respondents expressed that they often failed to comprehend things happening around them, as their mind was not in a good state to react. This is fairly a concerning situation as far as the mental wellbeing is concerned because it is not a good sign that a person's mind frequently fails to understand the surroundings. In terms of education, the participants agreed that they had almost zero motivation to study under the lockdowns, as it obvious that individuals going through mental health issues find it quite hard to study, in most cases.

Lastly, the research tried to determine the level of hope participants had during that period, as the study investigated that whether such individuals faced any difficulty in having a positive outlook of life or were they hopeful, however, their replies were the same. Most of them agreed that they faced it extremely difficult to have a positive outlook of life during lockdowns. These responses from members of nuclear families clearly show that they faced serious mental health

problems in the midst of Covid-19 related lockdowns. Thus, the research concluded that lockdown restrictions negatively affected nuclear family members' mental health.

As, the research by Ezpeleta et al. (2020) also suggested that parents and children went through great mental toll during lockdowns due to isolation and emergency situation, while lack of outdoor activities added stress. Moreover, the study presented by University of Sheffield (2020) revealed that young people underwent more mental health issues as compared to other age groups. It showed that the individuals faced problems in maintaining a good relationship with friends and family, while many had to go to therapy during that time period as levels of depression and anxiety almost tripled among population. Similarly, Sellgren (2020) revealed that parents remained worried throughout the lockdown due to various reasons, as their stress levels increased. A report by UNICEF (2021) showed that such households where domestic violence persists, the lockdown period proved extremely stressful and depressing for the members of that household due to obvious reasons as they were stuck in an abusive and toxic household.

The research carried out by Yam (2020) concluded that women did more work during lockdown period, therefore, they develop serious mental issues during that time, while Morelli (2020) revealed that children were also at the risk of developing severe mental problems. Wang (2021) published a research which stated that parent-child relationships suffered under lockdowns, while Evandrou (2021) concluded that sibling rivalry highly increased. Moreover, Sandoiu (2021) in US and Evandrou (2021) in UK published two different researches suggesting that due to lockdowns mental health issues increased significantly in both the countries. All in all, these previous researches also proved and confirmed the results of this research study that families went through extreme mental health problems during lockdown period.

## **Limitations**

The following are the limitations of this research study:

- The sample mostly included young adults, however, people from other age groups could have also contributed to the research.
- The data gathering process remained limited to a single city, while people from other cities could have participated in the research as well.
- The questionnaire was in English language as it was not translated in Urdu due to time restrictions, therefore, responses from only those respondents who could understand English were recorded.
- The research process took longer time to be completed than expected, due to Covid-19 related restrictions.

## **Recommendations**

This research contributes towards the field of social sciences concerned with mental health issues on an individual and societal level, therefore, this study can serve as part of literature in that regard. The emergence of mental health problems due to the pandemic related restrictions have been researched from other aspects before, however, this research also supports the claims made by previous researches but from the aspect of nuclear families. Thus, this research study provides credibility to available literature and it could facilitate potential researches in future in similar field. Moreover, the research recommends the experts to devise such psychological or social techniques which can decrease the mental health problems among family members, as this research has analyzed the nuclear families. Furthermore, the study suggests the policymakers to give priority to

mental health issues and implement such policies that can eradicate such issues. Lastly, on an individual level, this research study focuses on raising awareness among people, so they could seek help if they are facing mental health problems.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this research study analyzed and explored the effects and influence of lockdown restrictions on the mental health of members of nuclear families in Pakistan. The research was designed in a way that it produced significant results which helped in indicating that how the mental wellbeing of families got affected during the lockdown period. It was expected that negative influence of lockdown on mental health of family members would become evident, as the secondary data which was collected pointed in that direction. Moreover, almost all the previous researches which were discussed and reviewed for this research paper, showed how the parent-children relationships have been affected during the lockdown restrictions. The studies also revealed that frustration and anxiety has been building up over the past year and a half, therefore, it is becomes crucial to study the matter in Pakistani context.

After completing the whole research process which included surveying the participants from the sample and performing statistical procedures to comprehensively analyze the results. The findings revealed that the lockdown restrictions period have indeed put members of nuclear families through a great mental toll. The participants agreed to have experienced and exhibited levels of frustration, anger and annoyance while interacting with other family members at home during the lockdown period. The also showed to have low levels of hope during that period and lack of motivation to do anything. The respondents also agreed that they found it quite hard to

communicate with their family members at home, as their levels of understanding decreased and they could not comprehend most of what was happening during that time. All in all, the research clearly showed that members of nuclear families suffered from mental health problems owing to the lockdown period.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter**

#### **TITLE OF STUDY**

The effects of lockdown on the mental health of nuclear families

#### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

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#### **PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The primary purpose of conducting this research is to find out and investigate the mental health issues that are occurring in nuclear families of Pakistan due to lockdown restrictions, so solutions could be devised in future, for rectifying this situation. The secondary purpose of this research is to raise awareness regarding the mental health issues among the masses of Pakistan, highlighting that the mental wellbeing is an important aspect of an individual's life, while drawing attention towards the factors that can prove to be detrimental for it.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

This research study would be conducted by using the survey method, as a questionnaire has been developed, which is available both online on Google Forms and in hardcopy form, for the participants to fill it. The target is set to at least 100 responses, which means that at least 100 respondents from nuclear families of Lahore, are required to complete the data collection process, before the analysis and discussion of results could begin. The findings would be revealed after concluding the research.

#### **RISKS**

There are no risks associated with this study, as this research does not collect any sort personal data, not even the names of respondents. However, still if any respondent does not feel to participate or change his/her mind later, they can ask to cancel their participation and they would be immediately terminated from research process.

#### **BENEFITS**

The following are the benefits of this research:

- Mental health awareness would spread among the masses.
- Effects of lockdown restriction on emotional wellbeing would be highlighted.
- Proper authorities would be facilitated through this research, in order to find solutions related to mental health problems.
- It would be beneficial for conducting future researches in this regard.
- People might be able to find resolutions regarding their mental health issues, on their own.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The responses of participants in this survey will be anonymous. They would not be obliged to provide any identifying information in the survey. However, just in case, every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve the confidentiality of respondents, as the data would not be shared with anyone before the analysis and after the analysis findings would be discussed anonymously.

Participants' data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If any participant has any questions regarding this research or he/she experience any adverse effects due to participating in this study, they can contact the researcher, as his contact information is provided on the first page. If any respondent have questions regarding his/her rights as a research participant, or if any problem arises which they feel they cannot discuss with the Primary Investigator, they can contact the Institutional Review Board of FCCU through their email [irb@fccollege.edu.pk](mailto:irb@fccollege.edu.pk).

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

The participation of respondents in this research is voluntary. It is up to them to decide whether or not they want to participate in the research process. If they decide to participate in the research, they will be asked to sign a consent form. After they sign the consent form, they could still withdraw from research at any time they want and without providing a reason. Withdrawing from the research will not affect the relationship participants have, if any, with the researcher. If they withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, their data will be returned to them or destroyed.

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**CONSENT**

By signing this consent form you agree that you have read and understood the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time you desire, without even giving a reason and without any cost. You understand that you will be given a copy of this consent form and you voluntarily agreed to take part in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Research Questionnaire for the Survey**

### **1. Did the thought of lockdown make you feel scared?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### **2. Any question asked by your family makes you feel frustrated/annoyed?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### **3. Has the lockdown made you closer with your family?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### **4. Did you ever feel so frustrated at home because of facing the same environment every day?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### **5. Did you fight more with your parents/children during lockdown?**

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**6. Did you feel that your anxiety level has gone higher in the lockdown?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**7. Did the lockdown create a communication gap among the family?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**8. Did you feel you couldn't understand how your mind was reacting to the Covid-19 situation?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**9. Did your education motivation was less during Covid-19?**

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**10. Did the lockdown made it difficult to have a positive outlook on life?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree