



The Impacts of Covid-19 on Family Relations & Social Integrity in the UAE: An Descriptive Study

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the community members' awareness regarding the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on family relations in the United Arab Emirates. The researcher analyzed the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis in terms of family relationship such as spouse, parents, siblings and others. By using the quantitative approach, the data is gathered from $n= 300$ randomly selected participants. Results revealed that, the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UAE led to strengthening the family relationships especially between the spouses. The mechanism behind strong relations involved shared household responsibility, giving more time to family matters, decreased distance leading to decreased conflicts, and others. Thus, the researcher concluded Covid-19 outbreak as a source of family reunion and strong relationships in general. As the lockdown, and social distancing confined people to stay at home, it provided communication and interaction opportunities to the family members. Therefore, the researcher recommends more studies to examine the impacts of other social and healthcare crisis, to further highlight their impacts in a more in-depth manner.

Keywords: Covid-19; Family Relations; Social Relations; Nuclear Family; Social Systems; Social Integrity

I. INTRODUCTION

Crises and disasters constitute fundamental changes in the social structure affecting its systems and its coordination. Entire world, especially the United Arab Emirates have dealt with the pandemic by following measure such as lockdown and social distancing to avoid the further virus dissemination (K Alhumaid 2020; Rappaport and Siegel 2020). For this purpose, the local government imposed several initiatives such as national sterilization program, closure of education institutions, offices, markets, parks, and other public places (Bhamani et al. 2020). As a result, people started staying at home, spend more time with their families, and paid more attention to the family matters around. As family is the primary unit in a society, the greater dependence on these relations is an inevitable phenomenon. Similarly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, family relations and their contributive role in society emerged as a necessity to build and sustain a stronger social life (Raymond 2020; Alnaser, Habes, et al. 2020). Moreover, during the current pandemic people also started to realize the importance of family in the broader social context. The realization of family as an important factor towards one's social development, psychological health, support, and healthy life is another major aspect of Covid-19 (K. M. Tahat, Habes, and Tahat 2020; Zhang 2020). It is also notable that, family relationships also provide with the courage to confront and cope the challenges confidently and effectively (D. N. Tahat, Tahat, and Habes 2020; McCoy, E, Cole 2011). Despite many demographical/ background factors also affect one's ability to cope with the challenges (Ali, Youssef, and Qamar 2020), if families are supportive, and unite, an individual finds it more convenient to stay confident and find support, when needed (McCoy, E, Cole 2011). One of the significant role of family is teaching self-control, by internalizing the social value among the members. For instance, if parents avoid any anti-social behavior, children will also dislike adopting delinquent behavior (Khadija Alhumaid 2019; Junger-Tas et al. 2012). That is the reason, family are the most resilient components of a society, as they fully provide social, emotional, and communal support. If family members consider their families as important, they will more likely to contribute to the family matters. Consequently, from the labor of love, affection, and motivation, a healthy life comes into existence (Alhawamdeh, et al 2020; Defrain and Brand 2008).

However, the current healthcare crisis not only raised several healthcare and social challenges; also they adversely affected the family system worldwide. Even many incidents also witnessed family reunion as a pathway to family conflicts and violence (Haq, Raza, and Mahmood 2020). But despite many cases of increased domestic conflicts, many examples also witnessed family reunions, decreased person-to-person distances, and increased understanding among the family members (Muhaisen, et al 2020; Fisher et al. 2020). For instance, a rapid switch to online learning resulted in an increased concern towards children well-being. Parents actively indulge in educational process, paying more attention, and seem more

concerned regarding their children's wellbeing and educational development (Bhamani et al. 2020). Likewise, parents are also showing an increased concern towards children's health, leading to an increased affection among family members (Habes 2020; CSTS 2020). In this regard, Arab regions such as United Arab Emirates is also having greater opportunity to strengthen social ties within, and outside of homes. Although, the measures such as social distancing and isolation were criticized by many people, yet their importance regarding family reunion and affection cannot be denied (UN 2019). Thus we can assume that, Family solidarity is one of the crucial component to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19. Increased communication between family members, cohesion, and greater understanding of relationships through staying maximum hours together, further harmonized the social system in the United Arab Emirates (Reyad 2020). Therefore, by keeping in view the current measures of halting the virus transmission, the current research focuses on its their impacts on the social relationship particularly family relationships in the United Arab Emirates (Bhamani et al. 2020). This study is descriptive in nature and focuses on empirical approach to assess the relevant phenomenon. The basic research objectives include:

- a) Identifying the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on family relations in the United Arab Emirates.
- b) Identifying the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the spouse relationship with each other.
- c) Identifying the impact of the crisis on the parents-children relationship
- d) Identifying the impact of the crisis on the family's relationship with their other relatives.
- e) Identifying the most prominent propositions that may strengthen family relations in the Emirati society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Social Integrity & Healthy Parent-Child Relationships:

A healthy family constitutes a stronger infrastructure of society, due to increased cohesion and harmony among the family members. Here effective communication and confidence are two important factors that enable the member to communicate, share their thoughts, and bring constructive reformation in their family and overall social system (Maunah 2019). To further highlight the importance of healthy family relationships (Upali 2015) cited an example of families, their role, and child wellbeing in the Sri Lanka. As argued that, every individual is capable of bringing changes and sustainable development in a family. When children are facing difficult situations such as educational problems, the role of parents is of greater significance. Parents not only consult the teachers or institutional authorities, also provide their fundamental role to help, guide and support their children. Parents being a build block of a family, are notionally capable of their child's wellbeing and future development. As noted by (Callan 2014), a strong, harmonized, and well developed family can help in national, and social development. Home is a place which provides a basic ground from where an individual learn, work, and make their contribution in society. A society can only flourish, when individuals belong to stronger family background with greater cohesion, and interest in each other. (Habes, et al. 2020) On the contrary, if families fail to gratify the social, emotional, and physical needs, they will directly or indirectly impact the whole society (Fyfe 2014). Likewise, just like children, parents also need motional and moral support to further strengthen their home environment. If parents are demotivated, incapable of dealing with the everyday problems, and fulfill their responsibilities, it will adversely affect their children. Parents who raise their children well, tend to raise individuals who are more positive, constructive, and believe to contribute in constructive efforts (McCoy, E, Cole 2011). Also validated by (Petric 2019) as she argued that, family plays a special role in social development process. As a result, children can develop healthy cognitive capabilities, that are not only important for the relevant family, but also for the whole society and country as well.

2.2 Social Integrity & Healthy Spouse Relationships:

Marriage leads changes the lives of the both involved parties as they are expected to fulfill their designated roles. Here roles are the expected attitudes attributed to the marital union of two people, accompanied by several social and cultural norms (Piotrowska 2015). If the marriage relationship is pleasant, with a clear understanding of designated roles, responsibilities and rights of the both individuals, it constitutes a healthy family environment. On the contrary, if two individuals are having an insignificant, and unhappy relationship, it will more likely to disturb the whole family and the society as well (August, Kelly, and Markey 2016). Several studies also attribute to the sustainability of the other related people. Here marriage is not merely a signed relationship between two people, also it is an

agreement regarding the health and prosperity of the next generation as a healthy marriage constitutes positive results in two areas (Moore et al. 2004):

- i. People who are happily married and satisfied with their lives, live longer, perform well in their jobs, tend to pass on social support, can earn better, and are not prone to mental problem.
- ii. People who are satisfied with their marriage have physically and psychologically healthy children, perform well in their studies, and choose better careers

Consequently, marriage quality and wellness is directly linked with the subjective wellbeing and development. A society relies on two individuals, recognizing their responsibilities, and rights. If both individuals appraise each other, their contributions, and value their existence, a family can be ideal and capable of bringing overall social and economic prosperity (Carr et al. 2014). Furthermore, motivation and commitment also play an important part in strengthening the marriage relationship. Two individuals share the common interests, values, and even perceptions that further guarantee the health prosperity of the future generation in general, and the entire society in particular (Cox et al. 2013). A study conducted by (Wilson and Oswald 2005) also witnessed the relationship between healthy marriages, psychology and social prosperity in the United Kingdom. Results from the longitudinal analysis revealed that, healthy marriage is a direct pathway to psychological wellbeing and social development. Marriage is one of the most crucial social ties, as human with the better marriage relationships can maintain a healthy, and satisfied environment even for the future generation (Sprecher and Hatfield 2017).

2.3 Social Integrity & Relationship with Other Family Members:

Due to daily activities, our exposure to other relatives such as decrease, leading to disintegration from several social situations. Especially after the marriage and formation of nuclear family, people find it hard to integrate in family situations, and meet up with the other members. This not only affects the family relations; also adversely impact the social structure and the whole society (Olanrewaju, Dominic, and Osasogie 2015). A survey conducted by (Beckett 2002) also revealed the importance of family member (relatives) in social and psychological development of children in the United Kingdom. Data gathered from $n= 1701$ young students of Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield University also indicated that meeting their family not only provide them social support; also it helps them to learn the importance of kinships in a complex social system. The respondents also expressed their greater dependency on online platforms such as social networking applications (Habes, et al 2020) besides face-to-face visits, to enhance their experiences and strengthening their bonds with the family members. Another study to validate the importance of kinship was conducted by (Yubero et al. 2018) in Spain. The researcher utilized the case study approach and found that, the group of respondents having an increased and frequent exposure to their family members and relatives tend to perform well in studies than those having less or no exposure. The respondents also demonstrated a higher social interaction abilities and psychological health due to their exposure and experiences.

According to (Hirsch 2010), exposure and interaction with family members and relative also learn the individuals their socio-cultural norms, traditions, and values. Learning the family and social norms also helps them to act favorably in social situations, and even problem-solving skills as well. Turning adults, these individuals become even more civilized, receptive, and flexible beings, that also benefits the society on a collective level. Thus, families play an integral role in personality building and teaching the children about social acceptance, and socially acceptable conduct. Children learn from their elders, and other peers, leading to greater understanding of outside world (Topor et al. 2006).

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

The current research is supported by the "*Family Systems Theory*", that emphasizes the exchange of certain behaviors that take place during the interaction of family members. Family Systems Theory asserts that, the nature of interaction and relations between family members further determine the adaption of problematic or non-problematic behaviors. Nonpathology based Family Systems Theory conceptualizes the importance of family interaction regarding their nature and potential outcomes (Johnson and Ray 2016). The origins of this theory can be traced back to the times when researchers and scholars began to question the importance of ecological system for the integrity and sovereignty of a society. Their primary concern was to discuss and affirm the importance of ecological system to strengthen the family system in general and social systems in particular (Segal 1982). These families have designated set of rules, values, norms, and members are obligated to follow them. These family rules and

norms limit the behaviors, that are subjected to the common wellbeing of all the members (Morgaine 2001). Similarly, the Emirati social system also contains various social, cultural, and religious norms and values, that obligate every social member to act and behave accordingly. These values have always been a fundamental component of Emirati social system, followed by every Arab and non-Arab family residing there (Morris 2005). Especially, the local Emirati Arabs strictly adhere to these social values, that further leading them to cultural conformity and cultural recognition. These family support each other, based on social cohesion, bound to their traditional norms, and having sense of their group identity(Callan 2014). As a result, Emiratis stand close to each other in times of thick and thin. Their social system is strong due to greater family cohesion and religious harmony. As a result, living status is comparatively higher in the United Arab Emirates, with greater socio-economic prospects, and social stability (Khalaf 2001). Due to greater attention towards nuclear family and marriage customs, Emiratis are more likely to live closer to their families. Parents, siblings, spouses, and other relatives frequently meet and greet each other. Both cultural and religious festivals are celebrated with family reunions, close interactions, leading to stronger family ties and stronger social system in the United Arab Emirates (Katzman 2020).

IV. STUDY METHODS:

The current study is comprised of descriptive nature as the intent was to examine the impacts of Covid-19 on family life in the United Arab Emirates(Habes, Ali, et al. 2020). The current research involves close-ended, structured questionnaires having $n= 38$ queries, based on five-point Likert scale. Subjects experts and professors also affirmed the suitability and validity of research instrument, to ensure the generalizability of potential results. Moreover, the researcher randomly selected a sample of $n= 300$ individuals at different age levels, gender and occupation. Here the respondents were also provided with an informed consent, that highlighted their consensus, and also autonomy to withdraw from the research process whenever they want(Salloum, Al-Emran, Khalaf, et al. 2019; Salloum, et al. 2019; Perry 1999).

V. DATA ANALYSIS:

The researcher used the following diverse techniques for the data analysis:

- Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, and standard deviations.
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), to examine statistical differences of more than two variables.
- Cronbach Alpha test for tool reliability.

5.1 Characteristics of the Participants:

Table (1) shows the frequency and relative distribution of the study sample according to the demographical characteristics of the participants. As visible that, the majority of participants were females (84.6%0) and only 15.3% were males. Similarly, regarding the age of respondents, 50.0% of them were between 30-39 years of age, 30.0% were 20 to 29 years old, 12.4% were from 40-49 years of age, and 3.3% of respondents were 50 or above. Moreover, regarding the social status of the respondents, a majority of individuals (79.3%) were married, 18.6% were single or unmarried, 1.6% were absolute, and only 0.3% were widowed. Concerning the education of the participants, 45.0% of respondents were having post-graduation level education, 23.3% were having bachelors level degree, 18.0% were having diploma, and 13.3. % were having school level certificate.

Table 1: Demographics of Study Participants

Variables	Categories	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	46	15.3%
	Female	254	84.6%
Age	20-29 years	134	30.9%
	30-39 years	232	53.5%
	40-49 years	54	12.4%

	50 and Above	14	3.2%
Social status	Unmarried	56	18.6%
	Married	238	79.3%
	Absolute	5	1.6%
	Widower	1	0.3%
Educational Level	High school or less	40	13.3%
	diploma	54	18.0%
	Bachelor	70	23.3%
	MA and PhD	136	45.3%

5.2 Reliability of Research Instrument:

To measure the validity of the questionnaire, external truthfulness was tested by viewing the study to a group of academic and researchers in media who assessed the study instrument. Under the advised revisions, the researcher made some corrections and ensured the validity (Dikko, 2016). Likewise, the researcher also ensured the reliability of research tool by using intercoder reliability analysis (Mohajan 2017). Thus, the results of Intercoder Reliability Assessment indicated that the research tool is strongly reliable and acceptable. A brief overview of Intercoder Reliability Analysis is represented in the table below:

Table 2: Reliability of the Study Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Status
.892	38	Strongly Reliable

VI. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS:

Covid-19 & Spouses:

Regarding the descriptive analysis of the responses, results indicated that $n= 125$ or 41.7% agreed that Covid-19 and lockdown, have remarkably increased the spouses' interest towards domestic chores, leading to an explicitly decreased ($n= 125$ or 41.7%) in quarrels between them. As result both husbands and wives ($n= 138$ or 46.0%) are jointly performing the domestic chores, and having increased communication ($n=141$ or 47.0%) between them. Due to the lockdown and staying at home, now spouses have also developed common interests ($n= 142$ or 47.3%), and giving much more attention ($n= 127$ or 42.3%) to each other. These couples have also increased the sense of shared responsibility ($n= 149$ or 49.7%). As a result, evading responsibilities has decreased to only $n= 94.0%$ or 31.3% with 31.3% of negligence, and 97.0% quarrels.

Table 3: The Impact of Covid-19 on Spouse Relationships

S/R.	Variables	SD	DA	N	AG	SA
1.	Increased interest	13 (4.3%)	15 (5.0%)	81 (27.0%)	125 (41.7%)	66 (22.0%)
2.	Marital disputes	19 (6.3%)	25 (8.3%)	80 (26.7%)	125 (41.7%)	51 (17.0%)
3.	Domestic chores	19 (6.3)	27 (9.0%)	73 (24.3)	138 (46.0%)	43 (14.3%)
4.	Increased dialogue	11	29	57	141	62(20.

		(3.7%)	(9.7%)	(19.0%)	(47.0%)	7%)
5.	Increase common interests	10 (3.3%)	27 (9.0%)	70 (23.3%)	142 (47.3%)	51 (17.0%)
6.	The couple's attention	7 (2.3%)	24 (8.0%)	75 (25.0%)	127 (42.3%)	67 (22.3%)
7.	Sense of shared responsibility	11 (3.7%)	24 (8.0%)	54 (18.0%)	149 (49.7%)	62 (20.7%)
8.	Evading responsibilities	31 (10.3%)	12 (4.1%)	62 (20.7%)	53 (17.7%)	29 (9.7%)
9.	Negligence	25 (8.3%)	94 (31.3%)	79 (26.3%)	68 (22.7%)	34 (11.3%)
10.	Increased quarrels	28 (9.3%)	97 (32.3%)	80 (26.7%)	61 (20.3%)	34 (11.3%)

Covid-19 & Parent-Children Relationships:

Concerning the impact of covid-19 on parents-children relationship, $n= 129$ or 43.0% individuals revealed that the parents have increased their interest in children's matters, leading to their increased participation ($n= 128$ or 42.7%) in children's matters, and realization of their responsibilities ($n= 137$ or 45.7%) towards children health and wellbeing. Likewise, among the $n= 300$ participants, $n= 127$ or 43.0% respondents were working mothers, and due to closure of their workplace, these mothers ($n= 133$ or 43.3%) have having an increased inclination in improving children's academic performance. These parents ($n= 129$ or 43.0%) are staying at home for longer time period, and are not having hostility towards children ($n= 124$ or 41.3%). It is also notable that, both parents and children have decreased outside activities ($n= 103$ or 34.3%) which is resulting into an increased sense of responsibility ($n = 134$ or 44.7%) among parents. **Table 4** below gives a brief overview of the responses regarding parents and their relationship with children during Covid-19:

Table4: The Impact of the Covid-19 on Parents-Child Relationship

S/R	Variables	SD	DA	N	A	SA
1	Mothers 'interest	2 (.7%)	9 (3.9%)	32 (10.7%)	128 (42.7%)	129 (43.0%)
2	Increased parents' participation	8 (2.7%)	12 (4.0%)	39 (13.0%)	128 (42.7%)	113 (37.7%)
3	Parents' social responsibility	2 (.7%)	12 (4.0%)	36 (12.0%)	137 (45.7%)	113 (37.7%)
4	The employed mother	11 (3.7%)	11 (3.7%)	28 (9.3%)	123 (41.0%)	127 (42.3%)
5	Increase interest in academic achievement.	5 (1.7%)	15 (5.0%)	28 (9.3%)	119 (39.7%)	133 (44.3%)
6	Staying at home longer	3 (1.0%)	11 (3.7%)	33 (11.0%)	129 (43.0%)	124 (41.3%)
7	Increase domestic violence	54 (18.0%)	124 (41.3%)	63 (21.0%)	34 (11.3%)	25 (8.3%)

8	The lack of outside activities	12 (4.0%)	63 (21.0%)	103 (34.3%)	80 (26.7%)	42 (14.0%)
9	Sense of shared responsibility	3 (1.0%)	9 (3.0%)	51 (17.0%)	134 (44.7%)	103 (34.3%)

Covid-19 & Other Family Relations:

Regarding the impact of Covid-19 on relationship with the other relatives, $n = 108$ or 36.0% respondents said that staying at home and contacting relatives has reduced distances. Earlier, ($n = 142$ or 42.0%) professional activities were adversely affecting the interaction with relatives however, virtual communication during Covid-19 has positively affected $n = 138$ or 46.0% respondents' relations with their relatives. Now family gathering and functions are increased opportunities for $n = 126$ or 42.0% of the participants to visit their relatives. As a result, for ($n = 147$ or 49.0%) respondents' social solidarity has much increased leading them ($n = 104$ or 34.7%) to fulfil their social and strengthening their ($n = 128$ or 42.7%) family relations as well.

Table 5: The Impact of the Covid-19 on Family Relations

S/R	Variables	SD	DA	N	AG	SA
1.	Coldness in relations	18 (6.0%)	83 (27.7%)	57 (19.0%)	108 (36.0%)	34 (11.3%)
2.	Lack of realistic contact.	8 (2.7%)	36 (12.0%)	74 (24.7%)	126 (42.0%)	56 (18.7%)
3.	Virtual communication	5 (1.7%)	20 (6.7%)	97 (32.3)	138 (46.0%)	40 (13.3%)
4.	Less interaction	10 (3.3%)	36 (12.0%)	84 (28.0%)	126 (42.0%)	44 (14.7%)
5.	Social solidarity	3 (1.0)	19 (6.3%)	71 (23.7%)	147 (49.0%)	60 (20.0%)
6.	Social customs	8 (2.7%)	53 (17.7%)	99 (33.0%)	104 (34.7%)	36 (12.0%)
7.	Strengthening family relations	7 (2.3%)	13 (4.3%)	85 (28.3%)	128 (42.7%)	67 (22.3%)

Table No. (6) reviews the results of the sample, to answer the second question, what are the suggestions that may contribute to strengthening family relations in the UAE society in light of the pandemic? The phrase (I believe that activating the educational informative role through various virtual means of communication will greatly help in strengthening family relationships and helping them to adapt to the current changes) came in first place with an arithmetic mean (3.09) and a standard deviation (0.751) as well as the phrase (I believe that legalizing the holding of events Family gatherings and setting controls and conditions for them by the state may contribute significantly to reviving family relations again) in second place with an average of (3.08) and a standard deviation (0.856) and finally came the phrase (I think that intensifying workshops and counseling courses directed to the family may contribute effectively to Inculcating awareness and strengthening family relationships) ranked third, with a mean (3.03) and a standard deviation (0.827).

Strengthening the Family System:

When the respondents were asked about any potential suggestion to strengthen the family system in UAE, $n= 160$ or 53.3% suggested educational program on importance of family system can play this part. Similarly, $n= 144$ or 48.0% of participants also recommended workshops and counseling opportunities to improve the local family system. In this regard, legalizations of family events and gathering is also important for $n= 137$ or 45.3% of participants, besides employing artificial intelligence strategies ($n= 110$ or 36.7%). Moreover, according to $n= 110$ or 38.3% of participants, parents should also focus more on children's wellbeing and resort to ($n= 56.0%$ or 52.0%) mobile applications, that can further help to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 and reinforce constructivism among families. **Table 6** below summarizes the results of suggestions to improve the family system in the United Arab Emirates:

Table 6: Suggestions to Strengthen the Family System

S/R.	Variables	SD	DA	N	SA	AG
1.	Educational advisory	2 (0.7%)	5 (1.7%)	45 (15.0%)	160 (53.3%)	88 (29.3%)
2.	Workshops and counseling sessions	2 (0.7%)	11 (3.7%)	53 (53.0%)	144 (48.0%)	90 (30.0%)
3.	Legalization of family events and gatherings	2 (0.7%)	14 (4.7%)	44 (14.7%)	137 (45.7%)	103 (34.3%)
4.	Employ artificial intelligence	10 (93.3%)	33 (11.0%)	73 (24.3%)	110 (36.7%)	74 (24.7%)
5.	Parents towards their children in light of the pandemic.	8 (2.7%)	42 (14.0%)	74 (24.7%)	115 (38.3%)	61 (20.3%)
6.	Create mobile applications	3 (1.0%)	14 (4.7%)	47 (15.7%)	156 (52.0%)	80 (26.7%)

VII. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that the effect of the Corona pandemic on the relationship of the spouses with each other as reflected in the opinions of the sample showed, improved, leading to an increased interest in each other. Here the majority of participants (47.7%) indicated the relevant results which are consistent with the study conducted by where they also found a greater intimacy between spouses during to quarantine and lockdown situation (Al-Azab, Al-Jawhari, 2020). Similarly, with the 45.7% of responses, we also found an increased and improves nature of parents-children relationship, as parents are staying at home, actively taking interest in their children's well-being, and even playing their part to improve the students educational performance as well (Khadija Alhumaid et al. 2020). These results are also compatible with the report represented by (CSTS 2020), where the authors indicated an increased interest in children well-being during Covid-19 especially due to the brisk switch to eLearning, parents are more concerned about their children (Habes 2020).

Moreover, the results also showed a strong interaction and communication between relatives and other family member during the Covid-19. As, $n= 138$ or 46.0% individuals also told that, despite the lockdown and strict social distancing policies, they are able to contact their relatives. They resort to different social networking applications such as WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, Facebook, and others to interact with their relatives, that also facilitates them to attain information about the healthcare crisis (Ali 2020). Here, the respondents ($n= 156$ or 52.0%) also seemed much concerned about improving their family relations by resorting to other different resources such as Mobile Applications to further strengthen their family relation and bonding. These results are also compatible with the study conducted by (Alnaser et al. 2020),

where the researchers attributed digital platforms to strengthen the interpersonal communication, and providing opportunities to learn new things and modify the existing skills.

It is also notable that, the current healthcare crisis widely impacted the families in different contexts (Khalid and Ali 2020). Emirati people are staying at home, taking interest in domestic chores, giving more attention to their spouses, and children, all are somehow the positive aspects of Covid-19. To further reform the family system in the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of Community Development announced the establishment of family initiatives aimed at strengthening harmony between family members under the current circumstances (Federal National Council Affaris UAE 2020). Initiatives are taken with the belief that social distancing and home quarantine provide an opportunity for social communication. For this purpose, remote working, online learning, and restricted movements are benefiting the people relations at different levels (Federal National Council Affaris UAE 2020). These initiatives also represent a non-recurring opportunity to rethink life, get close to the family, and provide time to communicate with parents, siblings, friends, and other relatives through online platforms (Ferreira and Borges 2020).

VIII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH:

Results clarified the fact that the Covid-19 outbreak has strengthened the relationship between the spouses in all its aspects, such as sharing in household burdens or feeling the value of the other party and taking responsibility jointly, leading to reduced conflicts between them. Similarly, the parents-children relations have also improved as parents and children are staying at home and giving more time to each other. In this regard, the relations with other family members and relative are also improved, that were marginalized and weak due to busy working activities and other social responsibilities. However, there many studies also witnessed an increased domestic violence and conflicts between the family during Covid-19. We can also assume that these conflicts are based on some cultural and regional matters, as United Arab Emirates is more likely to be a traditional and cultural society, where family reunion, gathering, and family life is preferred. Furthermore, a strong obligation to religious values is another main factor, leading to increased harmony and interest towards family life (Elbasir, et al 2020) (Morris 2005). In this context, the current study also recommends future studies to examine the impacts of Covid-19 on family bonding and relations. Especially in other regions, where family life is prioritized but, due to professional responsibilities, is often taken for granted.

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