

Perceptions of UAE citizens regarding the effects of pandemics on the banking system and economy: an exploratory study

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Abstract

This exploratory study delves into the perceptions of UAE citizens concerning the multifaceted impacts of pandemics on the banking sector and the broader economy. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research synthesizes quantitative data from the literature and qualitative insights from interviews to paint a comprehensive picture of public sentiment. The findings reveal a nuanced understanding among citizens of the challenges posed by pandemics, such as disruptions in banking operations and economic activities. The study also highlights the adaptive measures taken by financial institutions and the government's strategic responses to mitigate adverse effects. Furthermore, it explores the long-term implications of pandemic-induced changes on consumer behaviour and financial stability. This paper contributes to the discourse on pandemic resilience in the financial sector and provides policy recommendations to bolster economic recovery and preparedness for future crises.

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1. Introduction

COVID-19 has been one of the major challenges of our time. This deadly virus initially emerged in China in December 2019 and has since spread to every continent, except Antarctica. For the poor, who are struggling already, the coronavirus has added to their existing struggles. With very low or no income at all, they have been dragged further down into poverty. This infectious disease has impacted most of the world in political, economic, and social ways. Due to its highly contagious nature, many of the streets of the world's major cities have been deserted as people were told to stay at home.

Everywhere, malls, places of entertainment, hotels, schools, and universities have been closed. Some researchers argue that the chances of such a pandemic have been increasing due to the exploitation of previously uninhabited areas (Jones et al., 2008; Morse, 1995). Many countries have initiated programs and formulated policies to limit the effects of such outbreaks known to have caused high numbers of deaths. These efforts have been made to create economic stability as well as promote good health (Smolinsky et al., 2003).

Some international organizations have already started to plan for this rising concern in order to reduce the impact of such pandemic. Previously, some parts of the world experienced a similar health outbreak known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), during which issues similar to today's were faced. Many issues arose related to the threat caused by many countries being forced to initiate pandemic management plans (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

This model, updated by the International Health Regulations, formed the response to the 2009 SARS pandemic (Katz, 2009), during which many donors started to act internationally to help build health capability (Wolicki et al., 2016).

These pandemics have both short-term and long-term effects on businesses. The initial efforts made by health workers to reduce the spread of the SARS pandemic incurred various costs (Achonu et al., 2005). The demand for better health facilities is constantly rising and many countries are investing heavily to buy medicines, testing kits, and other healthcare products (Herstein et al., 2016).

When the Ebola epidemic occurred in Liberia in 2014, the effects were similar. The prices of goods and services increased significantly, economic activity staggered, and many precautionary measures were adopted, such as curfews and social distancing. All of these measures reduced the capacity of the government to gain revenue for the country (World Bank, 2014).

In addition to the direct impacts of these pandemics, there are also many indirect ones. Several sources have stated that the indirect impact of pandemics can be seen in the equilibrium situations of the respective countries. The World Bank has said that during a pandemic, the gross

domestic product (GDP) of a country can fall by as much as five percent (Burns et al., 2006). In general, the demand is significantly reduced because of reductions in travel, and the closing down of restaurants and public areas, which increases the economic impact.

It has been found that in most situations, a pandemic of low severity can reduce one-third of a country's economy by one percent. On the other hand, in severe pandemics, the GDP can be cut by four percent (Smith et al., 2009). Estimates from the World Bank say that during the 2014 Ebola pandemic, the crisis was worse in countries with very little income. For example, in Liberia, the estimated GDP was around three percent against six percent, and in some other African nations, it was around two percent against almost nine percent (Thomas et al., 2015). Estimates of the financial loss caused because of falling stock prices, or even the closure of organizations, cannot match the value of the lives of lost loved ones. Fan et al. (2016) considered this new side of economic loss by estimating the value of excess deaths across different levels of modelled pandemic severity, finding that the majority of the expected annual loss from pandemics is driven by the direct value of mortality, notably in the case of low-probability, severe events (Erdem 2020).

Research Objectives:

The main objectives of this study are the following:

1. To explore the impact of a pandemic on the economy.
2. To explore the rise of digital banking due to the coronavirus impact.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent does COVID-19 affect the economy?
2. What role does digital banking play during a health pandemic?

1.1 Characteristics of a Pandemic

The characteristics of a pandemic can be identified through certain similarities and differences.

- **Vast geographic expansion:** A pandemic is a disease that covers a large area and significant numbers of people. One instance is the plague, which occurred in the 14th century, called the Black Death. According to Taubenberger & Morens (2009), pandemics are defined as trans-regional. More than one hundred and seventy-eight countries were affected by the Swine Flu, popularly known as the H1N1 pandemic, in 2009 (Rewar et al., 2015).
- **Transmission:** Another feature of a pandemic is the transmission of the virus from one place to another. Transmission is one of the most important characteristics of a pandemic; it is how it spreads from one individual to another. Transmission can be seasonal, it has been noted that widespread transmission can often occur in each hemisphere in April and September, respectively (Barrelet et al., 2013).

- **Intensity:** Pandemics cause high mortality and morbidity rates. They occur when an infectious virus enters a person's body that has little or no immunity and causes harm. Then, the pandemic starts spreading by human transmission through sneezing, coughing, etc. (Rewar et al., 2015). We can calculate the severity of the disease by examining the mortality ratio of the country (Donaldson et al., 2009). In the case of the Ebola pandemic, people died approximately 10 days after catching the initial infection (WHO, 2003). The H7N9 pandemic reached around over 6500 cases were reported in 2013 (Tanner et al., 2015).
- **Risk:** Pandemics are usually considered to be risky. Two examples of the riskiest pandemics were the Swine Flu and the Ebola pandemic. In cases where the transmission of the pandemic is below that of these two pandemics, then we would consider the attack to be an epidemic. This is the case of the virus (NAME OF THE VIRUS) which was spread in Russia in 1999. The rate of transmission was relatively low and safe, and therefore it could not be classified as a pandemic (Donaldson et al., 2009).
- **The power of immunity power:** The pandemic and the power of the immune system both play a significant role in such events. To be able to fight against a pandemic, be it the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV or SARS-CoV-1) or Ebola, the immune power of the population needs to be powerful enough to limit such transmission (Taubenberger & Morens, 2009). For instance, during the H7N9 pandemic, because the affected population had low immune power, the number of cases grew at a rapid rate in a short time (Wildoner, 2016).
- **Infectiousness and contagiousness:** Pandemics are generally those diseases that are communicable and dangerous. Pandemics are so contagious that they can be easily transferred from one person to another, directly or indirectly. The public should always take precautionary measures to stay safe and healthy (Morens et al., 2009).

Different pandemics are transmitted in different ways. While the SARS pandemic spread among people who lived under the same roof or who worked together, the H7N9 only infected livestock or anyone in contact with it (Su & He, 2015).

The concept of social distancing has helped in fighting the coronavirus. In addition, the use of digital services, including banking services, has helped slow down the rate of infected cases in many countries by reducing human contact. Digital banking also enables people to send or transfer money to their beneficiaries. In this way, they can help their families and their loved ones without needing to go out and meet them. Initially, the banks initiated their digital services slowly, and as a result people are now slowly learning to operate the digital system.

The research objective of this paper is to show the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy and how it has led to an increase in the use of digital banking services. The objective is to gather and analyse qualitative data on this matter and to analyse the diverse perceptions in this regard.

This research paper examines the views and perceptions of the study participants on how the pandemic affected them economically.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital Banking

Digital banking means not only to digitalize the front face of the service but also to go deep into the roots of the service; i.e., to digitalize the back end of the service. The concept of digital banking is based on analytics and technology, which are used to develop and increase the customer base and customer satisfaction. This research seeks to explore why digital banking is important in serving the needs of the banking industry.

First, digital banking is needed to reduce costs. Although the digitization of banking services requires initial and maintenance costs, it is imperative for the banks, who need to increase efficiency to handle their growing business activities. Second, through having a digital platform, the banks can accumulate knowledge about their customers.

Digital banking platforms also help in retaining customers by providing new services regularly. Before COVID-19, the industry experienced new growth and prosperity. Despite increasing client expectations and enhanced competition from non-traditional monetary establishments, most banks and credit unions were performing better after the monetary crisis of 2008.

2.2 The Global Spillover of the Coronavirus Pandemic

At the initial stages of the coronavirus pandemic, it was thought the crisis would only be faced in China. However, through transmission, the disease began to gradually spread to other countries. The aviation industry suffered an economic crisis as flights between many countries were banned. Many international and local sports events were revoked, which affected the sports sector as well. Many other occasions and events involving mass gatherings, such as weddings; had to be cancelled (Horowitz, 2020; Elliot, 2020). The economic crisis that exists now due to the coronavirus pandemic and that which occurred in 2007/8 are similar but there are also differences. The 2007/8 crisis was a general monetary crisis, which caused harm only to the financial and economic sector (Elliot, 2020). Whereas the coronavirus pandemic is also affecting public health (El-Erian, 2020).

2.3 The Spread to the Financial Sector

There has been a significant slowdown in the financial sector during this current situation, which has increased the demand for loans in the banks. Due to lockdown measures, the banks have been found collecting fees from customers which, in turn, has had an impact on the banks' profits. The business of FinTech's has also been affected: they have witnessed a sizeable loss of

customers because they have been unable to invest, resulting in a heavy loss of profits (Ali et al., 2020; Erel & Liebersohn, 2020). [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

However, the lockdown and quarantine have increased the demand for online shopping and various other portals that provide online services.

2.4 The Spillover to the Financial Markets

The most visible outcome of the COVID-19 crisis on monetary markets can be seen in the effects on the global securities markets. International stock markets lost \$6 trillion on the 27th of March 2020, as did the Dow Jones Industrial Average indices (Sharif et al., 2020).

The pandemic has had a major impact on the US stock market and has brought about a high level of economic uncertainty (Sharif et al., 2020). In comparison to earlier pandemics, research shows that the US stock market has been severely affected by this current pandemic (Baker et al., 2020; Ashraf, 2020).

2.5 The Spillover to the Educational Sector

The pandemic has also significantly affected the educational sector. It has been speculated that it could suffer losses of up to \$600 million covering several universities (Devinney & Dowling, 2020)(Devinney & Dowling, 2020)(Devinney & Dowling, 2020)(Devinney & Dowling, 2020)(Devinney & Dowling, 2020)(Devinney & Dowling, 2020).

One positive aspect is that due to the pandemic, new online platforms have emerged whereby students can sit at home and learn through online sessions (Tam & El-Azar, 2020). Universities in many countries have lost millions of dollars in their revenues as many students have dropped out of colleges and schools or have been forced to go back to their hometowns (Gallagher & Palmer, 2020).

2.6 Unemployment due to the Coronavirus

During the pandemic, more than 30 million people have been reported to be unemployed in the USA (Ivanova, 2020). According to Béland et al. (2020), in the USA, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic have caused a significant increase in the unemployment rate; they have also reduced working hours.

2.7 Information Technology Security

A major concern during this pandemic is that there has been a rise in cybercrime in the UAE. The coronavirus has given an opportunity to hackers to attempt fraudulent behaviour. One vulnerable point in the system is that people tend to access digital banking platforms more than usual, which offers more opportunities for fraud to occur (Lallie et al., 2020).

2.8 The Positive Impact of the Coronavirus on Fintech

The increased use of digital banking services has forced many banking institutions to shift from traditional operating methods to digital banking platforms. The demand for digital platforms has increased since the beginning of the pandemic (Tut, 2020). These banking changes require funding usually supplied by the governments. Countries with very weak require more financial aid.

2.9 The Pandemic's Effect on the Financial System

Over the years, many pandemics have severely affected the financial systems of countries with weak economies. These systems have been affected mainly through the huge costs and expenses that are incurred. For this study, an analysis was undertaken of various research papers that have focused on the costs incurred during past pandemics (Hailu & Vural, 2021). These included the SARS and the HIV/AIDS pandemics, which were particularly problematic. The analysis has suggested how future pandemics might be handled most efficiently.

The papers that were studied covered the prices and costs that were incurred during the great epidemics and pandemics (Haacker, 2004). They considered how the pandemic acted as a barrier in the process of development in various countries (Santaeulalia-Llopis, 2008).

Bloom et al. (2018) examined various sectors and areas where economic problems arose during the SARS pandemic. They observed health systems, medical treatment, and public facilities costs, among other costs related to the epidemic. They observed that in such a situation, the economies were most vulnerable to-depression.

Leoni (2013) recognized that in the case of the HIV pandemic in countries with huge economies, the main problem was related to the deposit turnover. Legoarde-Segot and Leoni (2013) concluded that the banking sector might face a huge downfall because the number of pandemics might increase. In particular, the banks in economically poor countries would face the greatest pressure (Skoufias, 2003)

Sawada and Shimizutani (2008) observed that the repercussions of the pandemic were related to the question of insurance.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

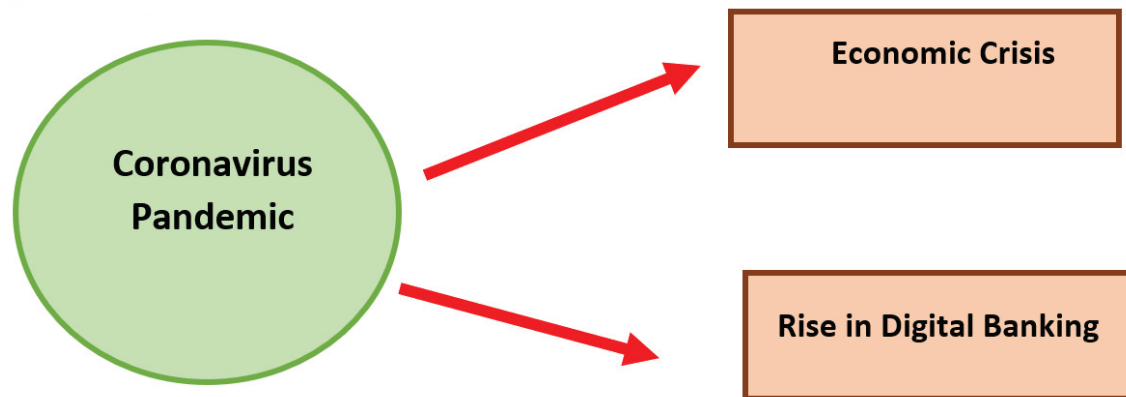


Figure 1.1 The research framework of the study

The research framework graphic demonstrates the cause-and-effect relationship between the independent variable which is the coronavirus pandemic and the two dependent variables which are the economic crisis and the rise in digital banking.

Using the United Arab Emirates as the base country for the research, the rise of digital banking in the country during the pandemic has been examined. Since the public population has been restricted to their homes due to the lockdowns, customers now prefer to access their banking services online, without personally visiting their banks.

It is worth mentioning that the lockdown has led people to use digital banking services more. Customers have been encouraged to use contactless payment by credit and debit cards. The coronavirus pandemic has affected many sectors, be it the financial, educational, health, or even the entertainment sector. Each of these sectors is faced heavy consequences.

3. Research Methodology

This study sought to throw light on the rise of digital banking services during the pandemic. Many consumers prefer using banking services from home instead of going out since there is a fear of catching the virus the moment step outside. Banks encouraged this behaviour by providing various kinds of benefits, discounts, promotions, and lucky draws. Through semi-structured interviews with 15 industry professionals from diverse roles, the research explores the perceptions of UAE citizens regarding the effects of pandemics on the banking system and economy.

1.1 Sample Size

Interviews were carried out with 15 participants, five of which were female and 10 were male. Male and female participants were chosen to enrich the study, as there may be differences in their perceptions of how the pandemic has affected them. By selecting a mixed-gender interview sample, we were able to obtain a better understanding of the issues faced by the different genders during the period of recession (Boddy, 2016).

Data was collected from different individuals working in different sectors to get varied and detailed information about their experiences. The participants were contacted by phone and asked if they were prepared to participate in the interview. The interviews were semi-structured, lasted for 15 minutes, and were recorded in the form of notes.

3.2 Data Collection

The interviews took place over the telephone due to the restrictions enforced by the UAE authorities in April 2020. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), qualitative methods like semi-structured interviews enable a comprehensive exploration of complex phenomena by collecting detailed narratives directly from the participants.

- **Interview Format:** Interviews will be conducted using a telephone to accommodate the geographical spread of participants, ensuring flexibility and convenience for all involved.
- **Duration and Detail:** Each interview is expected to last between 45 to 60 minutes, providing sufficient time to dive into detailed discussions on specific topics.

Both primary and secondary data were used in this paper. The primary data were collected using qualitative research, whereby a sample of 15 individuals were asked questions related to the research objective. A brief description of the qualitative research is given below.

This research used open-ended questions. These were employed to focus on the research objective and to collect useful data.

In the first section, the participants were asked to state how the pandemic had affected them economically, how they were dealing with it, and what they did to overcome the situation. In the second section, the participants were asked about their experiences with digital banking during the pandemic. It comprised questions that helped gain knowledge about whether and how the use of digital banking was increasing.

Interviewing people is the most suitable approach to get an in-depth understanding of the current evolving situation. Through conducting the interviews, the researcher sought to know about the real consequences and problems faced by the participants and how they were managing their situation. This method helped the researcher to better understand individual perceptions.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using a narrative analysis, following Glen’s (2006) and Berg’s (2007) guidelines. It involves a detailed thematic explanation of what the participants said in the interview. It focuses on using their stories and experiences to answer the research question.

4.2 Participant Overview

The primary data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews, aimed at uncovering the diverse experiences and insights of professionals involved in the retail and marketing sectors in UAE. A total of 15 interviews were conducted, with participants representing a variety of roles from project coordinators and managers to data analysts and marketing professionals, see Table 1 below.

Participant Demographics:

Table 1. Demographic Information of Interview Participants

| Participant Code | Job Title | Years in Sector | Sector of Operation |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| P1 | Project Coordinator | 7 | Furniture |
| P2 | GM | 8 | Car Spare Parts |
| P3 | Credit Analyst | 4 | Financial Services |
| P4 | Geophysicist | 5 | Oil and Gas Industry |
| P5 | Marketing Assistant | 4 | General Marketing |
| P6 | Property Manager | 5 | Real Estate |
| P7 | Engineer | 4 | Banking |
| P8 | Retail Operations Analyst | 4 | Consumer Electronics |
| P9 | Business Owner | 15 | Apparel and Accessories |
| P10 | Manager | 3 | Real Estate |
| P11 | Secretary | 7 | Medical |
| P12 | Internal Audit Director | 3 | Various |
| P13 | Senior Project Manager | 7 | Security |
| P14 | Section Head | 2 | Customer Care |
| P15 | Digital Marketing Manager | 6 | Clothing |

4.3 Findings

The findings of this research revealed that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on the economy. The findings identified five main themes, unemployment issues, salary reduction, the educational sector, safety and security in digital banking along with frequency of using digital banking.

- **Unemployment Issues**

One of the major issues that was highlighted by all the participants was that of unemployment.

Participant 5, a woman currently working in a well-known multinational company, stated that she had seen the termination of employees as one of the main strategies the company used to avoid extra costs or to reduce operational costs.

“I have seen many people getting fired in the company as many teams are getting merged in order to remove redundant people; this is where two people are involved in doing the same activity. So now, we are focussing on removing the extra ones.”

Participant 12, a graduate, was facing great difficulty in finding a job during the pandemic. He noted:

“Due to this pandemic, my father has been dismissed from his office. I have been searching for a suitable job which will be sufficient for basic living. Even after attending many interviews, I haven’t got a call back so far. Despite being a high achiever in my university, I’ve failed to get a job.”

Here we see how a young graduate who is willing to work is unable to find a suitable job for himself due to the pandemic.

Participant 7, a procurement manager in a landscaping company, stated:

“Before the COVID-19 situation, we used to have different purchase teams in different countries in order to maintain the smooth functioning of the company. But now, since the COVID-19 situation, we have removed all of those purchase teams and created a single hub from which all of the purchase transactions take place. People appointed in those teams will get terminated and, sadly, remain unemployed.”

These results show that the employment sector has been seriously impacted and people are being either directly or indirectly affected by the situation.

- **Salary Reduction**

Another issue that was highlighted in the interviews was that companies significantly reduced employees’ salaries as they did not have enough cash flow in the company. This may have been due to a lack of upcoming projects, restricted by the pandemic, or because payment for previous projects had not been received.

Participant 5 talked about this situation:

“Companies prefer to cut a minimum of 15% of the basic salary due to this coronavirus crisis. Many of the benefits that were provided earlier have also been taken away from us as the company has insufficient funds to provide these facilities to all the employees.”

Participant 2, a sales lady from a noted shopping centre, said:

“Reduction in salaries has definitely caused a major effect on the consumer’s spending behaviour. It has an in turn effect on the consumer’s behaviour. We here in the shops have witnessed people refraining from purchasing anything else other than the basic necessities.”

The removal of benefits, like transport allowances, housing allowances, and many others, is also a significant move as many employees were dependent on them.

Participant 15, a security guard of a residential building, said:

“The management staff of the building has not paid my salary for the past four months because of coronavirus. My family back in my hometown is suffering as I haven’t sent a single penny back home. I work every day hoping that one day they’ll pay me.”

A reduction of salary or payment being delayed was apparent in most companies.

- **The Educational Sector**

Due to the pandemic, most schools and universities have been shut down and have practiced distance learning for several months now. This situation posed many issues for the participants, as shown below.

Participant 1, a mother of two primary school children, talked about the issues they faced during this pandemic. She said:

“Since the start of the distance learning we had to get two electronic devices for both of our kids as they were in different classes and they couldn’t share one single device. The prices of these electronic devices, such as tablets, laptops, etc., are very high indeed and it has caused a huge hole in the pocket, especially during this crisis.”

Participant 8, a father who had recently faced a salary cut of 25% of his basic salary, told us:

“Schools should definitely consider having a reduction in their school fees as, right now, we are in a very big crisis and every other parent might be facing a salary cut. It is very difficult for me to pay the school fees for my three children with my current salary.”

Here we see that due to the pandemic and the salary cut, parents are finding it difficult to cope with their expenses. Furthermore, the pandemic is creating a state of fear in the minds of the parents as the future is very uncertain.

Apart from questions related to the pandemic's effect on the economy, other questions showed the rise of digital banking in the country.

- **Safety and Security in Digital Banking**

One of the issues noted in the interviews was the safety and security of digital banking. Many of the participants felt that using digital banking services while they are at home felt safer as they did not have to go out during the lockdown to access banking facilities.

Participant 7 said:

“I access the digital banking services now as it makes me feel safer and more secure by staying at home. Now, I can easily transfer funds. The banks have encouraged most of us to use digital banking services during this period of the pandemic. For this, they have provided us with various kinds of benefits and discounts.”

Here we see how the banks have taken up the initiative to spread the message to stay at home by encouraging the public to use digital banking services rather than visiting branches.

Participant 9, a recently joined intern, talked about how he had been using digital banking services before the coronavirus began. He said:

“I have been using digital banking services even before COVID-19 came into the world. I have always felt that digital banking is way better than traditional banking. It is because in tradition we have to take out time of our busy schedule and visit the bank where there will be long queues in which we have to wait for a very long time. Whereas, in digital banking, we can easily access the services while we are at our workplace or even at home.”

Participant 14, a father who has been living in the UAE for the past 15 years but has his family back in India, said:

“Digital Banking has made it easier for me to transfer funds from my account to my family's account in a split second. Just a phone call from them and I can transfer money in a jiffy.”

From this, we see that digital banking has played an important role, stretching back even before the COVID-19 situation.

- **The Frequency of Using Digital Banking**

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a tremendous increase in the use of digital banking. All the participants admitted that the frequency with which they used digital banking services had increased.

Participant 1 said:

“We prefer ordering everything online rather than visiting the shop in person because there is always fear of catching the coronavirus. So, by ordering this way, we have been using our credit cards and debit cards much more than before on online platforms. It is more convenient.”

Participant 5 said:

“Sometimes we even order food from outside for which we pay online instead of cash on delivery which is a very good way of promoting social distancing as well as increasing the use of digital banking services.”

Participant 11, a homemaker, said:

“I would highly recommend using digital banking not only because it’s safe but it’s convenient as well. You can order food online, and shop online, everything happens at home and in a single click.”

This use of digital banking has increased enormously. Participants prefer using digital methods rather than traditional ways of payment. That paves the way for the more advanced application of artificial intelligence (AI) in financial services where it improves customers’ expectations (Mehrotra, 2019).

5. Discussion

The findings of this research have revealed that the coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on the UAE economy. A review of the literature has helped to answer the following objectives of the study:

1. To explore the impact of the pandemic on the economy.
2. To explore the rise of digital banking due to the coronavirus impact.

The first objective encompasses how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the world economy. The pandemic has severely affected people through unemployment and salary cuts, among other ways. The education sector has also been affected. Students have had to learn through distance learning. The results from the analysis suggest that the public has found it difficult to endure the phases of the pandemic (Neuwirth et al., 2021).

There is a strong relationship between the pandemic and the economic crisis. Due to the pandemic, there have been very few or no cash flows, which is has forced companies to terminate employees. The interviews with the sample of participants show this. The results of the analysis have confirmed the expectations that were made before starting this research (Yach, 2006).

Regarding the second objective, the use of digital banking has increased. The analysis shows that people are more comfortable with this method of banking than with traditional banking because they feel safer given the circumstances. One unexpected result of the study is that digital banking had already played a major role in the lives of people before the pandemic (Erel, & Liebersohn, 2020).

The study has limitations, which we should note. Primarily, these findings are not representative of the entire working population; they should be considered as reflecting the views of only a small part of it. Despite all this, these results contribute to the knowledge concerning the possible impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economic crisis, which has affected the working, financial, and educational sectors.

During the research, a bond of trust was established for this qualitative study by involving various people from different work profiles to get an in-depth study. Regarding future trends, it may be better that further research includes other sample groups and individuals to compare their views regarding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the rise in the use of digital banking services. Furthermore, AI could improve financial services, but research has suggested that it should be integrated with human involvement for an optimal customer experience and better engagement with financial services providers (Mogaji et al., 2020).

6. Conclusion

COVID-19 has completely reshaped the world's economy. In just a few months, the virus has brought the world into an economic crisis, one that is even worse than that of 2008. This report shows that the pandemic has affected the economic and educational sectors globally. This has led to the worst recorded recession.

Many countries have formulated policies to overcome this situation, which can have both a positive and negative effect on their economies. As mentioned earlier, due to the quarantine and social distancing policies, the population has been forced to remain at home. This has caused entire economies to come to a standstill. The analysis shows how each participant's experience and perceptions differ. However, the effect of the social distancing policies impacted the economy of many countries including the UAE.

Our analysis shows how each participant's experiences and perceptions differ as many say the effect of the social distancing policies can be seen in the local economy.

In conclusion, the coronavirus pandemic has caused many problems and affected many people in the UAE. It has also affected the country's economy. Now, we all should all work hard to fight against this dangerous disease. We need to cope with the economic crisis we are facing.

7. Managerial and Theoretical Implications

The study assumes significance as it covers the economic crisis and the rise of digital banking during times of economic crisis. This can help formulate policies to control such situations from a managerial perspective.

The compilation of relevant literature and summarized views collected through qualitative research offers a blended set of concepts, information, and insights to banking practitioners, academics, researchers, students, consumers, and other stakeholders in various ways.

8. Limitations and the Direction of Future Research

8.1. Limitation

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the data used in this research were limited to publicly available financial reports and economic indicators, which may not capture the full extent of the pandemic's impact on the banking sector and the economy. Secondly, the study's scope was restricted to a specific timeframe, which may not account for long-term effects that could manifest in subsequent years. Additionally, the research focused predominantly on qualitative analysis, potentially overlooking quantitative factors such as consumer confidence and behavioural changes in banking practices. Furthermore, the sample size was small and lacked generalization by nature. The outcomes and conclusions were subject to bias. Hence, the findings may not be scientific enough to generalize as a theory.

8.2. Future Research Direction

Future research should aim to address these limitations by incorporating a broader range of data sources, including qualitative interviews with banking professionals and consumers to gain deeper insights into the behavioural shifts caused by pandemics. Longitudinal studies are also necessary to understand the enduring impacts of pandemics on the banking system and the economy. Moreover, comparative studies between different regions and banking systems can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the resilience and vulnerabilities exposed by such global crises. Finally, the development of predictive models to anticipate the effects of future pandemics could be invaluable for policymakers and financial institutions in preparing more robust economic defences, which could enhance the understanding of the intricate relationship between pandemics, the banking system, and the economy.

Further work can be conducted on constructs closely related to this study, such as Fintech, higher education, and logistics, among others. In addition, future research could employ other constructs or methods using statistical tools to produce empirical work.

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