

# The Psychological Impacts of the Coronavirus Crisis on Adults in Jordan (An Empirical Study)

Mohammad Rafe' Naser Dahadhah  
Email: mohdahadha@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to explore the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan. Through this study, respondents were asked to offer suggestions for handling such impacts. An analytical approach was adopted. The researcher selected a purposive sample that consists from 13 female and male psychologists. Those psychologists were chosen from 8 hospitals, and 3 psychiatry clinics in Amman, Jordan. Interviews were conducted with those psychologists to collect data. It was found that the Coronavirus crisis has various psychological impacts on adults in Jordan. Such impacts include: depression, anxiety, stress, addiction, violence, anger and behavioural problems. Some respondents recommended creating support groups for the ones who got infected with this virus. Some respondents recommended activating the role of media channels in promoting reliable and adequate information about this virus to reduce people's panic.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus crisis, Jordan, adults, psychological impacts, psychology.

## 1. Introduction:

Due to the spread of the Coronavirus, several campaigns and measures were carried out. In addition, much attention has been given to the Coronavirus crisis by people, organizations, and governments. That is attributed to having numerous people infected with this virus worldwide. To be specific, till 23-9-2020, there were 31,174,627 people diagnosed with this this virus worldwide. In addition, till the latter date, 962 613 people died due to such infection worldwide (The World Health Organization, 2020)

The COVID 19 virus is a respiratory disease that may cause severe pneumonia. It emerged for the first time in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is transmitted through inhalation or having a contact with infected droplets. The incubation period of this virus is within the range of (14-2) days. The symptoms of this virus include: cough, fever, breathlessness, sore throat, malaise, fatigue and etc... They are mild for most people. However, this virus may be life threatening for healthy elderly and the elderly with comorbidities. In fact, it may progress into acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), pneumonia, and multi organ dysfunction. Many infected people are asymptomatic. Regarding the fatality rate of this virus, it is within the range of (2% - 3%) (Singhal, 2020).

After the outbreak in China, the virus significantly spread in Japan, Thailand, and South Korea. Later on, it spread worldwide and became a pandemic. Till today, there isn't any effective treatment for recovering from this virus. Hence, people must continue carrying out preventive measures, such as: social distance, and home isolation (Singhal, 2020).

The Coronavirus crisis led to taking several measures. Such measures include: the lockdown, social distancing, self-isolation, and quarantine measures. Due to such measures, this crisis has several negative health, social and economic impacts on people. Such social impacts include: social isolation. To illustrate more, people suffered from social isolation due to enforcing major restrictions on cultural, religious and social activities. They suffered from social isolation social isolation due to the temporarily closure of cinema halls, health clubs, gyms and museums. Due to the temporary closure of facilities, people suffered from a major financial loss, and the rates of poverty and unemployment rose. Thus, the world suffered from a global economic recession (Poudel and Subedi, 2020).

Due to the health, social and economic impacts of this crisis, this crisis has psychological impacts on people worldwide. In other words, it negatively affected people's mental health and psychological well-being. For instance, it led to the rise of suicide, anxiety, depression, and stress rates. It led to the rise of the number of abuse, domestic violence and family conflict incidents. Such rise may be attributed to the increasing concerns about financial issues and suffering from social isolation. In addition, the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of the feelings of anger, helplessness, and nervousness. That is because people shall feel incapable to address the implications of this crisis (Poudel and Subedi, 2020). In addition, the Coronavirus crisis led to reducing people's happiness and satisfaction with their lives. That is

because people became highly concerned about their health and the health of their family members. It is because people started to spend less time doing leisure activities and less time with friends (Li et al., 2020).

The Coronavirus crisis increased the social discrimination, especially against the ones who recovered and the healthcare workers who are at risk of getting infected. The fear of being stigmatized makes many people hide their symptoms which hinders governments from fighting against the spread of the virus (Poudel and Subedi, 2020). Because the Coronavirus crisis has major negative impacts on people and countries in various areas, the researcher of the present study believes that it is significant to conduct studies about such impacts in general and the psychological impacts in particular. That is because exploring such impacts shall enable governments to carry out measures and develop policies for addressing such impacts. Therefore, the researcher aimed to explore the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan.

## 2. Objectives:

The present study aimed to:

- 1)-Explore the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan
- 2)-Make suggestions for handling the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan

## 3. Questions:

The present study aimed to answer the following question:

- Q.1. What are the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?
- Q.2. What suggestions could be made for handling the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?

## 4. Significance of the Study:

The present study is significant because:

- It promotes awareness among Jordanian officials about the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on Jordanians. Thus, it shall enable those officials to make effective decisions for addressing such impacts.
- It promotes awareness among healthcare professionals about the feelings and experiences of the ones infected with Coronavirus. Thus, it promotes sympathy among healthcare professionals with those patients.
- As far as the researcher knows, there isn't any study that sheds a light on the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan. Hence, the present study contributes to filling a gap in the relevant literature.

## 5. Limits:

The limits of this study are listed below:

- Temporal limits: The present study was conducted during August and September, 2020

- Spatial limits: The present study was conducted in Jordan
- Human limits: The present study targets adults in Jordan

## 6. Definition of Terms

-COVID 19: It is an infectious respiratory disease that may cause severe pneumonia. It emerged for the first time in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is transmitted through inhalation or coming into contact with infected droplets. The incubation period of this virus is within the range of (14-2) days. The symptoms include: cough, fever, breathlessness, sore throat, malaise, fatigue and etc. They are mild for most people. This virus may be life threatening for healthy elderly and the elderly with comorbidities. In fact, it may progress into acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), pneumonia, and multi organ dysfunction. Many infected people are asymptomatic. Regarding the fatality rate of this disease, it is about (2% - 3%) (Singhal, 2020).

-Adults: (Operational definition): The ones who are 18 years old or older and living in Jordan

## 7. Theoretical framework

The pandemic outbreak, higher mortality rate, and the self-isolation, quarantine and social-distancing measures contributed to the prevalence of mental health problems. They increased the severity of the symptoms among the ones having such problems. The social isolation and disconnectedness during the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of feelings of loneliness among people. Due to such prevalence of such feelings, depression and anxiety became prevalent (Rana et al., 2020). It should be noted that the lockdown measures due to the Coronavirus led to the rise of the domestic violence incidents in various countries, such as: Italy, Germany, Brazil, UK, China, and USA. The rise in such incidents led to the rise of the suicide rates (Das et al., 2020).

Henning-Smith (2020) suggests that the Coronavirus has major impacts on the ones who live in rural areas, especially the elderly in those areas. That is because the ones living in the rural areas have limited access to technology, which hinders those people from gaining knowledge about the way of preventing the spread of this virus. It is because the ones living in the rural areas have limited access to medical services. Thus, it would be difficult to those people to get diagnosed and receive medication when getting infected. In addition, the poor financial status of people at rural areas and the lack of well-equipped medical facilities at these areas shall negatively affect the health and well-being of old people at these areas. Thus, the probabilities of having old people in rural areas infected with this virus are greater than the probabilities of having old people in urban areas infected (Henning-Smith, 2020).

The Coronavirus crisis has major impacts on the healthcare workers. For instance, it led to the prevalence of anxiety and depression among those workers due to the fear of getting infected when dealing with infected people (Luo et al., 2020). In this regard, it should be noted that the quarantine led to the experiencing financial loss, and

promoting stigma against the ones infected and the ones who have high probabilities of getting infected. The quarantine led to the prevalence of infection fear, confusion, traumatic and anger among people. It is associated with suicide, frustration, bad mood, emotional disturbance, irritability, and insomnia. It has been suggested that people after the quarantine carry out avoidance behaviours, such as: reducing direct contact with people due to the fear of getting infected. It has many negative psychological impacts on people because it is associated with a sense of loss of freedom and separation from loved ones. It is because the quarantine makes one concerned about his/her own health (Brooks et al., 2020)

The Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of addiction. It is because it is challenging to deliver medical services and treatment to addicts during this crisis. It is because families have concerns about sending their addicted family members to the treatment centres due to having fears about getting infected. In addition, new patterns of behavioural addictions are likely to form during the lockdown period (Pirni et al., 2020). Serafini et al. (2020) suggest that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of mental health problems among people, such as: stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness and frustration. Such crisis led to suffering from loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness and social isolation are positively associated with alcohol and drug abuse. As for anxiety, it is negatively associated with one's cognitive functions and decision making capabilities. In order to reduce people's anxiety and stress, the public health authorities must provide people with adequate information (Serafini et al., 2020)

The Coronavirus crisis led to making significant changes to people's life style and routine. For instance, it hindered people from engaging in social activities. It hindered many people from getting the supplies they needed –specifically during the quarantine. Having inadequate supplies during the quarantine led to the rise of people's anxiety and frustration (Serafini et al., 2020).

## 8. Empirical Studies

Khan et al. (2020) aimed to explore the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of the home-quarantined students in Bangladesh. They collected data from 505 students who were home-quarantined in Bangladesh. Data was collected through using a questionnaire. 28.5 % of the respondents suffered from stress, and 33.3% of the respondents suffered from anxiety. 46.92% of the respondents suffered from depression. In addition, it was found that there is a statistically significant relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, and post-traumatic symptoms from one hand and financial uncertainty, fear of infection and the inadequacy of the food supply from another hand (Khan et al., 2020)

It was found that there is a significant relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, and post-traumatic symptoms from one hand and the extent of practicing physical exercise and having restrictions over the recreational activities from another hand. Engaging in healthy activities –e.g. playing sports- serves as a coping strategy that improves one's mental health and well-being during the Coronavirus crisis. In

addition, governments must promote sufficient and reliable information about this crisis, in order to improve the way people perceive this crisis. That shall positively affect people's mental health and well-being (Khan et al., 2020)

Islam et al. (2020) aimed to explore the prevalence of panic and generalized anxiety during the Coronavirus crisis among people in Bangladeshi. An online survey was used for collecting data. 1311 respondents. It was found the extent of prevalence of panic and generalized anxiety among people during the Coronavirus crisis is high. It was found that panic and anxiety are higher among females, married people and the ones with high academic qualification. It was found that the extent of people's compliance with preventive measures is high. For instance, 79.8% of the respondents use tissues or handkerchiefs when coughing/sneezing and wash hands frequently using water and soap. 79.7% of the respondents avoid touching their faces and eyes. 79.4% of the respondents maintain social distance. 78.8% of the respondents comply with the rules set by the government in this regard (Islam et al., 2020).

Alkhamees et al. (2020) aimed to explore the psychological impacts of COVID 19 on people in Saudi Arabia. They used a survey to collect data. They surveyed 1160 individuals who live in Saudi Arabia. It was found that 23.6% of the respondents suffered from moderate to severe psychological impacts that are derived from the Coronavirus crisis. It was found that working in the medical field, being a female and having a mental disorder are associated with higher stress, anxiety, and depression levels. It was found that the extent of carrying out the precautionary measures —e.g. washing hands- positively affect one's mental health during the Coronavirus crisis. It was found that the amount of time spent indoors (intensity of self-isolation) doesn't have any impact on depression, stress and anxiety (Alkhamees et al., 2020)

Tee et al. (2020) aimed to explore the psychological impacts of COVID 19 on people in Philippines. Data was collected from 1879 individuals in Philippines. An online survey was used. Several results were reached. For instance, it was found that one-fourth of the respondents reported moderate-to-severe anxiety. In addition, one-sixth of the respondents reported moderate-to-severe depression and psychological impact. Single people and the ones who don't have any child show significantly higher stress, anxiety, and depression levels than others. The ones who aren't healthcare workers show higher levels of stress and depression than others. Students show more anxiety than others. The lower the academic qualification is, the higher the higher the stress level shall be. There is a positive relationship between the extent of staying at home from one hand and anxiety and depression levels from another hand (Tee et al., 2020) The ones who didn't receive adequate information about this virus reported higher scores of depression and anxiety. The ones who received information through social media and internet show higher levels of anxiety and depression. The ones who are dissatisfied with the information broadcasted about this virus show higher anxiety levels. 60.7% of the respondents worry about having a family member infected with this virus. Having confidence in the doctor shall reduce one's depression, stress and anxiety levels. The respondents who felt unlikely to survive after getting infected and

the respondents who face discrimination show higher depression, stress and anxiety levels (Tee et al., 2020)

## 9. Methodology

### 9.1. Approach

The researcher adopted an analytical approach in order to analyse the answers of the interviewees.

### 9.2. Population and Sample

The population is represented in all the adults who suffered from the Coronavirus crisis in Jordan. The researcher selected a purposive sample from the population. The sample consists from 13 female and male psychologists. Those psychologists were chosen from 8 hospitals, and 3 psychiatry clinics in Amman, Jordan. Interviews were conducted with those psychologists to collect data. Information about the respondents are listed below

**Table (1): Information about the respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	6	46.153
	Female	7	53.84
Workplace	Hospitals	9	69.230
	Psychiatry clinics	4	30.769

N=13

46.15% of the respondents are males and 53.84% of the respondents are females. 69.23% of the respondents work in hospitals and 23.76% of the respondents work in psychiatry clinics.

### 9.3. Instrument

The researcher conducted interviews with the respondents in order to collect data form them. He drafted the questions of the interview. Those questions are shown below:

Q.1. What are the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?

Q.2. What suggestions could you make for handling the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?

### 9.4. Validity of the Instrument

To make sure that the questions of the interview are valid, the researcher passed those questions to two experts in the field of psychology. Those experts are faculty members in a Jordanian university. They were asked to assess the interview questions. They suggested that those questions are clear and capable of meeting the intended goals.

## 10. Discussion and Results:

The answers of the respondents were analysed and the following results were reached:

### 10.1. Discussion and Results related to the first question:

Q.1. What are the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?

1- Depression

9 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis lead to the prevalence of depression. That is consistent with what's suggested by Poudel and Subedi (2020). Some psychologists attributed that to the fear of death and becoming sick. Some psychologists attributed that to the rise of unemployment and poverty rates in Jordan and the increase of the financial challenges. Some psychologists attributed that to the social isolation. For instance, a psychologist said: *'I believe that Coronavirus crisis shall lead to the rise of the number of depressed people. That is because the unemployment rate has been rising dramatically''*.

#### 2- Stress and anxiety:

10 respondents suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of stress. That is consistent with what's suggested by Serafini et al. (2020). Some psychologists attributed that to having many financial problems. For instance, some respondents suggested that the lockdown measures led to incurring much financial loss by the owners of business entities and employees. Some psychologists attributed stress to spending much time in isolation. Some psychologists attributed that to having many restrictions imposed on social visits, gathering and occasions. For instance, a psychologist said: *'During the lockdown, people suffered from much stress due to spending much time in isolation''*.

8 respondents suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of anxiety. That is consistent with what's suggested by Serafini et al. (2020). Some psychologists attributed that to having concerns about getting infected or having a family member infected. Some psychologists attributed that to the preventive measures. For instance, a psychologist said: *'The social distance and lockdown measures taken during this crisis led to the spread of anxiety among people''*.

#### 3- Violence and anger

4 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of anger. That is consistent with what's suggested by Brooks et al. (2020). Some of those psychologists attributed such anger to the uncertainty of the future and feeling frustrated about the future. For instance, a psychologist said: *'This crisis led to the prevalence of anger, because people feel frustrated about the future''*.

5 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of violence. That is consistent with what's suggested by Poudel and Subedi (2020). For instance, a psychologist said: *'During this crisis, the number of violent incidents increased, because violence is a mean for expressing the suppressed feelings of hopelessness and anger''*.

#### 4- Suicide

2 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the rise of the suicide rate. That is consistent with what's suggested by Das et al. (2020). For instance, a psychologist said: *'This crisis increased the rates of suicidal incidents. That is because people are living in social isolation. For instance, people aren't able to go out much with their friends like they used to''*.

#### 5- Behavioural problems:

5 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of behavioural problems. That is consistent with what's suggested by Brooks et al. (2020). For instance, a psychologist suggested that this crisis led to showing obsessive behaviour (e.g. obsession in washing hands). A psychologist suggested that this crisis led to having eating-related problems due to spending much time at home. Another psychologist suggested that this crisis led many people to carry out avoidance behaviours to avoid getting infected.

#### 6- Addiction

2 psychologists suggested that the Coronavirus crisis led to the prevalence of addictive behaviours. That is consistent with what's suggested by Pirni et al. (2020). For instance, a psychologist said: *'This crisis hinders drug addicts from getting medical help due to having concerns of getting infected in medical facilities. That increased the number of addicts'*. Another psychologist said: *'This crisis made some people become addicts to drug, alcohol or a habit to cope with the social isolation and the fears and concerns associated with this crisis'*.

#### 10.2. Discussion and Results related to the second question:

Q.2. What suggestions could be made for handling the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus crisis on adults in Jordan?

##### 1- Providing people with counselling services by medical facilities

4 psychologists suggested that medical facilities should provide counselling services to the ones who are vulnerable to getting infected, such as: sick people, old people and healthcare workers. For instance, a psychologist said: *'Counselling services should be provided to healthcare workers because they face daily risk of getting infected. That makes them experience much stress and anxiety'*.

3 psychologists suggested that medical facilities should provide counselling services to the ones who are infected and didn't recover yet. That shall enable them to recover fast and identify which effective coping strategies should be adopted.

##### 2- Developing support groups for the ones who are infected with this virus

5 psychologists suggested that the ones who got infected with this virus must join support groups. For instance, a psychologist suggested that joining a support group shall enable the infected people to overcome the stigma associated with getting infected. Another psychologist claimed that joining a support group shall promote awareness among the ones infected about the way of preventing this virus from spreading. She added that such groups contribute to meeting public interests and improving the psychological well-being of the infected people.

##### 3- Developing governmental policies and programs for providing people with financial support to improve their psychological well-being during the Coronavirus crisis

2 psychologists recommended developing governmental policies and programs for providing people with financial support to improve their psychological well-being. Developing such policies and programs shall contribute to reducing the depression, anxiety, stress and frustration rates that are associated with this crisis.

4- Activating the role of media channels in encouraging people to notify the authorities about any violent act committed against them or their family members.

A psychologist recommended activating the role of media channels in encouraging people to notify the authorities about any violent act committed against them or their family members. That shall enable the government to assist the victims of violence. The latter psychologist recommended enacting legislations that require enforcing deterrent punishments on the ones who commit violence acts.

5- Activating the role of media channels in promoting reliable and adequate information about this virus

3 respondents suggested that media channels should provide reliable and adequate information about the way of carrying out preventive measures and the significance of such measures. Providing people with reliable and adequate information in this regard shall enable them to be careful when dealing with infected people and people who are likely to be infected. It shall reduce people's feelings of panic. In addition, 2 respondents suggested that media channels should provide reliable and adequate information about this virus, such as: fatality rate, symptoms, and updates regarding treatment. Delivering such information shall promote a sense of security among people.

6- Improving the quality of the medical services provided in public hospitals

2 respondents recommended improving the quality of the medical services provided in public hospitals. That shall reduce people's feelings of panic during the Coronavirus crisis and any other health crisis.

## 11. Conclusion

It was found that the Coronavirus crisis has various psychological impacts on adults in Jordan. Such impacts include: depression, anxiety, stress, addiction, violence, anger and behavioural problems. Stress and depression may be attributed to the social isolation that was enforced by the government. They may be attributed to incurring financial loss and having financial challenges during this crisis. Anxiety during this crisis may be attributed to having concerns about getting infected or having a family member infected with this virus.

Some respondents suggested that the number of violent incidents increased during this crisis. That is because many people use anger and violence as means for expressing their feelings of anger, frustration and helplessness. Some respondents also suggested that the suicide rate rose during this crisis. Such rose may be attributed to being socially isolated and away from friends and relatives during the crisis. Some respondents suggested that this crisis led to the prevalence of behavioural problems. For instance, some people may seek avoiding people to avoid getting infected. Other respondents suggested that this crisis led to the prevalence of addictive behaviours.

However, several suggestions were made by the respondents to address the psychological impacts of this crisis on adults. For instance, some respondents recommending providing counselling services by medical facilities to the ones who are vulnerable to getting infected. In addition, some respondents recommended

activating the role of media channels in promoting reliable and adequate information about this virus. Some respondents recommended developing support groups for the ones who are infected with this virus.

## 12. Recommendations:

The researcher recommends:

- Providing counselling services by the Jordanian hospitals to health care workers and infected people during the Coronavirus crisis.
- Promoting awareness among Jordanians –through media channels- about the way of handling the Coronavirus crisis and preventing the spread of this virus.
- Developing policies by the Jordanian government for improving the psychological well-being of individuals during the Coronavirus crisis. Such policies must address financial aspects of Jordanians
- Holding lectures at universities, schools and companies to fight against the stigma associated with being infected. That shall encourage people to report their infection
- Holding lectures for instructors at schools and universities in order to promote awareness about the significance of carrying out preventive measures to prevent this virus from spreading.

## 13. Suggestions for Researchers:

The researcher recommends:

- Conducting a study about the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus on elderly people in Jordan
- Conducting a study about the psychological impacts of the Coronavirus on healthcare workers in Jordan
- Conducting studies about the impact of the Coronavirus on the rates of violence (e.g. violence against children, domestic violence, spousal violence and etc..)

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