

**Muhammad Awais Shabbir**

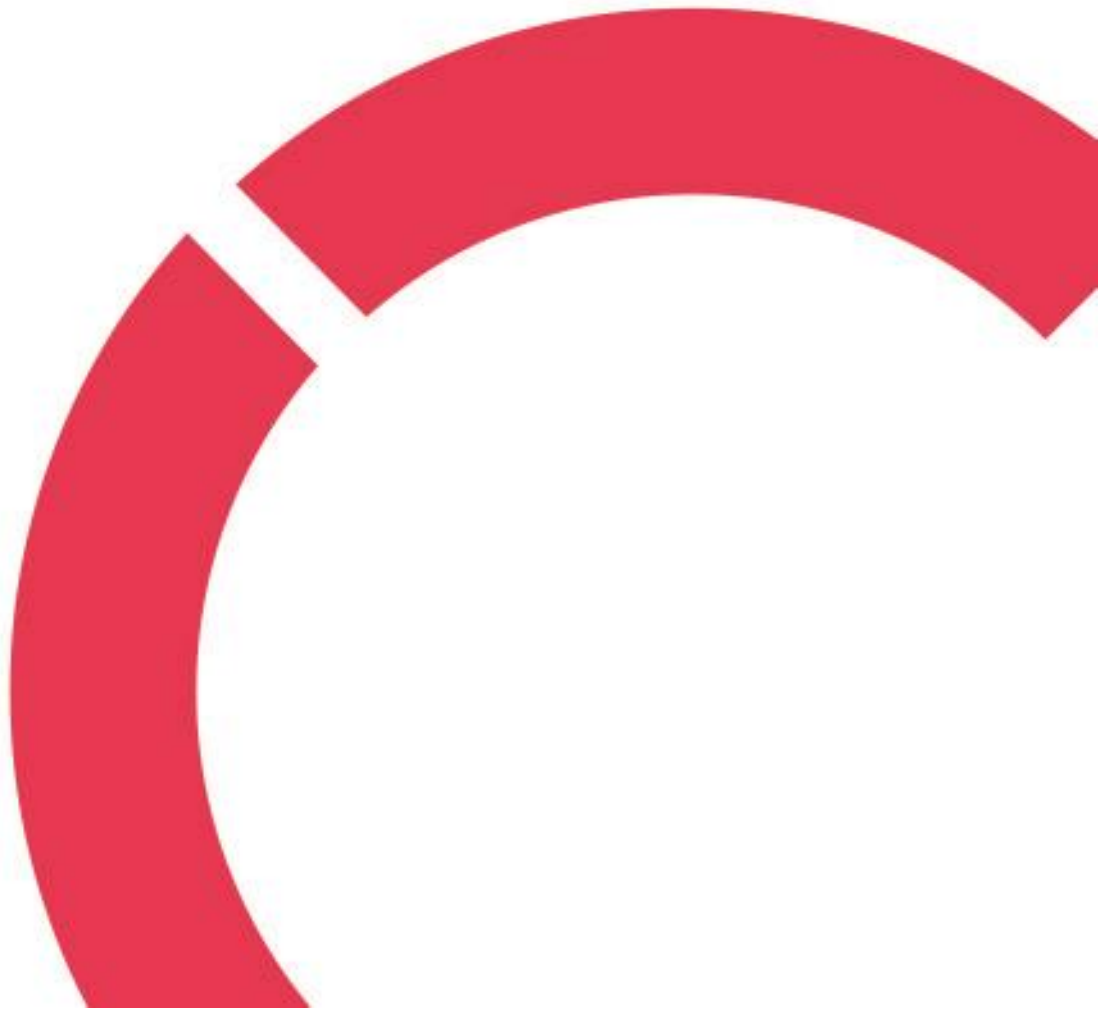
**THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE  
PERFORMANCE OF MEEZAN BANK IN PAKISTAN**

**Thesis**

**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business**

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**ABSTRACT**

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<p>This thesis examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Meezan Bank, within the context of the Pakistani Islamic banking industry. It specifically explores how this global event has influenced the bank's operations and financial stability. This study investigates the internal operational responses of Meezan Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic and assesses how such global crises affect employee experiences and perceptions. The study explores the bank's adaptation to the pandemic, communication effectiveness, resource availability for remote work, job security, and overall employee well-being within the context of Meezan Bank. The study began with a detailed analysis of the stock market's position in the global economy and its vulnerability to geopolitical, economic, and non-monetary events. A thorough literature study provided a theoretical framework for understanding the complicated relationship between global crises and financial market responses in the context of Islamic banking.</p> <p>The thesis surveyed 35 Meezan Bank banking sales professionals using a quantitative case study method. This primary data collection sought to understand pandemic operational issues, strategic adaptations, and employee impressions. The survey results showed that Meezan Bank's crisis management, communication, job security, and rapid move to digital banking in reaction to pandemic disruptions were crucial. Meezan Bank demonstrated that Islamic banking could adapt to a global crisis. The study emphasized the bank's ethical conduct, product knowledge, and human relationships in client retention and satisfaction. It also outlined the bank's strategic focus on digital transformation and innovation, which confronted epidemic concerns and laid the groundwork for future growth.</p>		

<p><b>Key words</b> Empirical research, Financial markets, Global events, Investor behavior, Market dynamics, Pakistan, Political changes, Stock market, Terrorism</p>
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The stock market, a vital component of the global economy, is characterized by its intricate nature, which refers to the complex interplay of factors such as investor behaviour, company performance, and economic indicators (Zhang 2021). Its constant dynamism is evident through the frequent fluctuations in stock prices, influenced by events ranging from geopolitical developments to financial reports. Global events and happenings are key drivers impacting the stock market. Significant occurrences that have the ability to influence market dynamics, investor behaviour, and overall stock performance are referred to as events. Politicians, investors, and financial institutions must all comprehend the impact of events on the stock market. Forecasting and assessing the probable effects of stock market events can provide significant insights into market trends, promote educated investment decisions, and enable the creation of effective risk management measures. (Gul, Khan, Saif, Rehman & Roohullah 2013.)

A wide range of events describe the stock market. Armed conflicts, political instability, and trade conflicts all have a considerable impact on global financial markets, causing stock price swings and increased market volatility (Bakshi, Kapadia & Madan 2003). Interest rate changes, monetary policy decisions, and important economic indicators such as GDP and employment data can all have a substantial impact on investor confidence and market performance (Li & Zeng 2019; Beaudry & Portier 2006). Financial reports, mergers, and new products can directly affect a company's stock price. These events can also affect the market. Non-monetary events like natural disasters, pandemics, and terrorist acts can affect the stock market. Investor sentiment and market activity change due to economic uncertainty and destabilization. (Brunnermeier, Rother & Schnabel 2020.)

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Meezan Bank in Pakistan. Specifically, the research seeks to analyze the impact of the pandemic on Meezan Bank's stock prices, investor sentiment, and the financial well-being of the bank itself. This includes assessing the bank's profitability, liquidity, and overall financial stability during the pandemic period.

Aside from the effects of the COVID-19 incident, no other potential factors that could have impacted the market performance of the bank are considered in the research. Additionally, it is predicated on data and literature that are accessible to the public and may not encompass every facet of the pandemic's consequences.

Meezan Bank of Pakistan, a pioneer in Islamic banking in Pakistan, is my thesis commissioner. This collaboration offers a unique viewpoint on banking, especially during exceptional pandemics like COVID-19. My study intends to help Meezan Bank plan and manage risk by revealing how important global events affect stock market performance. For my empirical research, the bank's support and data provide real-world context for theoretical notions.

The Shariah-compliant products and services of Pakistan's first Islamic bank, Meezan Bank, have shaped the banking industry. Al-Meezan Investment Bank began operations in 1997 and became Meezan Bank in 2002 after acquiring Société Générale's Pakistan operations, indicating a major shift towards Islamic banking. The bank's large network—over 1000 branches by 2023—shows its growth and market share in Islamic banking. (Meezan Bank, The Premier Islamic Bank 2024.)

Nationally and internationally, Meezan Bank is known for its Shariah-compliant product innovation and Islamic banking concepts. Awards like 'Best Islamic Bank in Pakistan' and considerable deposits and branch expansion show its leadership. The bank's revenue, net income, and total assets have grown due to its operational success. Its aim and values are to promote Islamic banking as a fundamental tool for economic equity. The objective of Meezan Bank is to promote fairness and justice via banking. Meezan Bank's vision, mission, and values emphasise Shariah-compliance, integrity, and service excellence, delivering innovative and value-added products and services within Shariah. (Meezan Bank 2024.)

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The following chapters will explore the intricate dynamics of financial markets, focusing particularly on the impact of major global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This investigation aims to unravel the complex relationships between event-driven market fluctuations and the operational and financial stability of significant entities within these markets, specifically Meezan Bank in Pakistan.

### **2.1 Impact of Global Events on Financial Markets**

Global events effect stock prices, investor confidence, and market liquidity. These events include geopolitical tensions, economic policy shifts, natural disasters, and public health emergencies.

Historical data shows how geopolitical crises like wars or political instability cause market volatility. For instance, during the 1991 Gulf War, worldwide stock markets experienced significant declines due to the uncertainty and danger associated with the conflict (Frank 1992). This period of instability not only affected investor confidence but also had broader economic impacts across several countries, leading to recessions in regions including Canada, Australia, and Europe (Frank 1992). Similarly, market performance is also sensitive to economic policy changes, such as those made by the Federal Reserve. Unexpected interest rate reductions, often implemented to stimulate economic growth during periods of economic downturn, typically result in a short-term boost to stock markets. This demonstrates the market's sensitivity to monetary policy. (Lento & Gradojevic 2021.) Li and Zeng (2019) found that unexpected interest rate reduction usually boosts short-term markets, demonstrating market sensitivity to monetary policy.

Financial markets are also affected by storms, earthquakes, and pandemics. Global stock markets plummeted in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The S&P 500, a benchmark for U.S. equities, fell 30% in 22 days, the fastest drop ever. (Ramelli & Wagner 2020.)

Global events can impact financial markets, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses faced unprecedented obstacles as countries enforced lockdowns and travel restrictions, slowing the economy and increasing market volatility. Meezan Bank and other Islamic banks were affected by these outages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the KSE-100 index in Pakistan experienced significant fluctuations.

Initially, there was a substantial drop in the index from January to March 2020, where stock prices fell by more than 10%. (Gormsen & Koijen 2020.)

Islamic banks, such as Meezan Bank, face unique challenges during global crises due to their adherence to Shariah principles. Islamic banks cannot charge interest or trade speculatively, limiting their flexibility during market downturns.

## **2.2 COVID-19 Pandemic and Stock Market Dynamics**

In March 2020, financial markets faced unprecedented volatility due to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the fragile balance between public health and economic security. The Dow Jones Industrial Average saw its worst performance since 1987, dropping 10% in a single day, a loss of 2,352 points—its largest point drop ever recorded. Similarly, the S&P 500 fell sharply by 9.5%, marking the end of an 11-year bull market and transitioning into bear market territory, reflecting a 20% decrease from its recent peak. This period was also the worst for the S&P since October 1987, with a weekly decline reaching 16.54%, showcasing the deep impact of the pandemic on investor sentiment and stock prices. (Stevens, Fitzgerald & Imbert 2020.) The banking industry is important to any business, but it had a hard time during the pandemic. More people defaulting on their loans, big changes in how customers behave, and faster digital services were all caused by banking. In these tough times, Meezan Bank, a well-known Islamic bank in Pakistan, serves people online.

During the outbreak, Islamic banks did very well. The pandemic had an effect on Meezan Bank and the banking business as a whole, as shown by financial data from this time period. (Meezan Bank 2024.) During the recession, more digital banking activities happened, which shows that the whole sector is moving to online services. Even though it was part of a longer-term plan to reorganise the banking business, the pandemic sped it up. The market got better in the second half of 2020 thanks to moves by central banks and global fiscal relief. Meezan Bank changed its business strategy and focused on digital innovation and Shariah-compliant financial solutions to keep customers happy during the rebound. After the markets rebounded, it was clear that the pandemic had long-lasting effects on how investors behaved, how banks worked, and how the market worked. The pandemic has put the strength of financial institutions to the test and changed banking and finance, which has had an impact on the sector. (Meezan Bank 2024.)

### **2.3 Meezan Bank During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 outbreak presented new obstacles and opportunities for Pakistan's foremost Islamic bank, Meezan Bank. Pandemic harmed business and consumer activity. Meezan Bank, like other financial institutions, faced unprecedented problems like internet banking, rising credit risk, and a rapidly changing economy. Meezan Bank's financial performance fluctuated early in the epidemic as Pakistan's economy struggled with lockdowns and reduced activity. The bank exploited its digital banking infrastructure, which saw increased user activity as customers preferred online transactions over branch visits, to ensure operational continuity. (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024.)

Based on the data from the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (2024), during the COVID-19 pandemic, Meezan Bank showed resilience in its financial performance. In 2020, the bank's profit after taxation saw a significant decrease from PKR 28,355,157,000 in 2019 to PKR 22,165,606,000, reflecting the initial impact of the pandemic. However, by 2023, the bank demonstrated a strong recovery with profit after taxation climbing to PKR 84,475,642,000, indicating effective cost reduction and asset quality improvements. Additionally, the bank's annual EPS growth was remarkable at 87.59% in 2023, compared to 58.78% in 2022, demonstrating successful adaptation and growth in digital banking amidst market fluctuations. The bank's annual reports indicate customer and deposit growth, demonstrating public trust in Islamic banking during volatility. Meezan Bank survived the pandemic thanks to its Shariah-compliant products, customer service, and innovation. (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024.)

Meezan Bank's shares recovered from initial losses and demonstrated investor confidence despite economic uncertainties. While the global economy recovers from the pandemic, the bank's focus on digital innovation and Shariah-compliant banking positions it for success. Pandemic tested banking agility and resilience. Meezan Bank's COVID-19 pandemic experience shows how Islamic banks may adjust to new market situations while staying true to their ideals. Operations and economic recovery depend on digital transformation, risk management, and customer-centric services, as shown by the bank's pandemic experience. (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024.)



TABLE 1. Financials (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024)

## Financials

All numbers in thousands (000's) except EPS

Annual Quarterly

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Mark-up Earned	232,121,232	110,072,547	106,589,059	94,270,461
Total Income	140,806,813	83,812,909	74,920,780	55,859,567
Profit after Taxation	45,006,610	28,355,157	22,165,606	15,232,074
EPS	25.15	15.84	13.62	10.77

In the above table, Meezan Bank's financial performance from 2020 to 2023 highlights substantial growth across various financial metrics. In 2020, the bank's mark-up earned was around 106.6 billion, which dramatically increased to 431.7 billion by 2023. Similarly, total income rose from 74.9 billion in 2020 to 248.5 billion in 2023. Profit after taxation followed this upward trajectory, starting from 22.2 billion in 2020 and reaching 84.5 billion in 2023. The earnings per share (EPS) also grew significantly from 13.62 in 2020 to 47.18 in 2023, reflecting the bank's increasing profitability and financial health.

## 2.4 Future Outlook and Strategies for Resilience

COVID-19 has changed the banking business, forcing Meezan Bank to alter its operations. Meezan Bank's pre-pandemic investment in digital banking prepared it for internet banking when customers left branches. Future bank projects may include cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and online customer service. This digital revolution will continue as internet banking and digital commerce rise post-pandemic. After the pandemic, banks must adjust client expectations. Pandemic client service from Meezan Bank prioritises accessibility and ease, preparing for future services. The bank can personalise banking, offer Shariah-compliant online financial products, and analyse user data. Islamic institutions like Meezan want sustainable financial goods. This epidemic has heightened awareness of social and environmental issues, boosting demand for ethical and sustainable investments. Social justice and risk-sharing in Islamic finance may meet this need. Future services may include green financing, social impact investments, and economic recovery and sustainability. Epidemic lessons may affect Meezan Bank and Islamic banking strategy. Agile, digital, and ethical finance solutions are crucial. As the pandemic continues, Meezan Bank's resilience and expansion strategy will decide its success and Islamic banking's global adoption. (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024.)

TABLE 2. Ratios (Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited 2024)

**Ratios**

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Net Profit Margin (%)	19.39	25.76	20.80	16.16
EPS Growth (%)	58.78	16.30	26.46	54.52
PEG	0.07	0.52	0.29	0.16

In Table 2, the financial ratios for Meezan Bank from 2019 to 2023 are illustrated. The Net Profit Margin (%) shows the bank's efficiency at converting sales into actual profit, with a noticeable increase to 19.57% in 2023 from 19.39% in 2022, peaking at 25.76% in 2021. EPS Growth (%) indicates the growth of earnings per share, where there was a significant jump to 87.59% in 2023, reflecting substantial profitability improvements. The PEG ratio, which helps in assessing the stock's value while considering expected earnings growth, improved from 0.07 in 2022 to 0.04 in 2023, suggesting that the stock might be undervalued.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research process is important while analysing a research question. This thesis emphasises primary data. Initial thesis data was collected from original sources. The thesis contains primary sources and data connected to the research topic. The survey will serve as the main research method upon which the thesis will be arranged.

#### **3.1 Quantitative Research Approach**

This exploratory research employs a quantitative approach to examine how Meezan Bank adapted its operations and supported its employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focuses on internal responses, communication strategies, and employee well-being within the bank. This methodology is suitable when studying complicated real-world phenomena like how the COVID-19 outbreak affected Meezan Bank's performance and operations. This method is valued for its comprehensiveness, design flexibility, and data source integration (Creswell & Poth 2016).

Meezan Bank promotes Islamic banking, provides excellent customer service, maximises shareholder value, and expands financial inclusion through Islamic banking solutions. The board of directors, regional, and branch management help the bank develop and implement Islamic banking initiatives. Structure and strategic goals give a solid platform for analysing employees' responsibilities and difficulties, especially in the context of market volatility and global events. (Meezan Bank 2024.)

This case study examines how Meezan Bank, an Islamic financial institution, reacts to and is affected by global events like the COVID-19 epidemic. Meezan Bank's responses, tactics, and market performance during such catastrophes can reveal the Islamic banking sector's durability, adaptability, and overall impact with global crises. The paper examines Meezan Bank's Islamic banking principles and market tactics during global instability.

This case study will reveal Meezan Bank's operational changes, staff experiences, customer engagement methods, and financial success during the COVID-19 pandemic and other major events. This quantitative research will illuminate the interplay between global events and the Islamic banking

market, highlighting Meezan Bank's specific problems and potential. The case study shows how Islamic banks may handle uncertainty while maintaining market stability and client trust.

### **3.2 Analysis and Data Collection by Survey**

The research on world events and the stock market using Meezan Bank as a case study uses a structured survey (Appendix 1). This poll collects quantitative data from Meezan Bank personnel to determine their views on the bank's response to major market events like the COVID-19 epidemic. Understanding operational concerns, strategy changes, and bank performance following such catastrophes is the objective. Structured questionnaires collect and analyse patterns, trends, and staff opinions on the bank's navigational methods during turbulent times.

The survey results will be analysed to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Meezan Bank's operational adjustments, staff perspectives, and adaption measures. This thesis examines how the bank helped staff and adjusted operations during global disruptions. It will focus on employee-centric actions and operational flexibility during the epidemic to understand financial institutions like Meezan Bank's adaptability to global crises.

## **4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

This section will examine 35 Meezan Bank workers' responses to the COVID-19 outbreak and how the bank's operations and employee support changed. During this time, internal communications, remote work efficacy, job security, and employee well-being will be examined.

### **4.1 Research Outcome**

Structured questionnaires were given to 35 full-time Meezan Bank employees. This internal vantage will give insight into how Meezan Bank's share price was fluctuating throughout the pandemic and what was underpinning those movements, including changes in behavior by investors and market mechanics, along with the resilience of the bank's fundamentals.

Stock price trend analysis shows the fact that the initial months of the pandemic showed much higher volatility, with very sharp falls in stock prices. The market's initial reaction is almost tantamount to other market uncertainties witnessed in global financial markets. Since then, strategic steps by Meezan Bank for the reduction of risks associated with the pandemic brought about later stabilization. As the staff explained, such actions involved more communication in the internal environment about the issues of safety and operational changes, which largely seemed successful and helped in regaining confidence of investors.

The financial analysis of Meezan Bank shows that it was strong enough to maintain liquidity and support its operations during a pandemic. The study presents a discourse on key financials such as net interest income, non-performing loans, and cost-to-income ratio in the light of the pandemic. For example, majority of the respondents felt that the bank had made satisfactory health and safety provisions that assisted the operations to continue.

The remaining part of the analysis now delves into the broader market dynamics that influenced Meezan Bank's stock performance, including the respective market share the bank held prior to and throughout the pandemic, and an assessment of competitive and regulatory changes that dramatically influenced the financial sector throughout this time period. The inferences from these employees of the bank indicate that, in spite of adversities, Meezan Bank has placed itself relatively properly in the

changed market scenarios by way of focusing on digital innovation and transformation with greater focus and specificity.

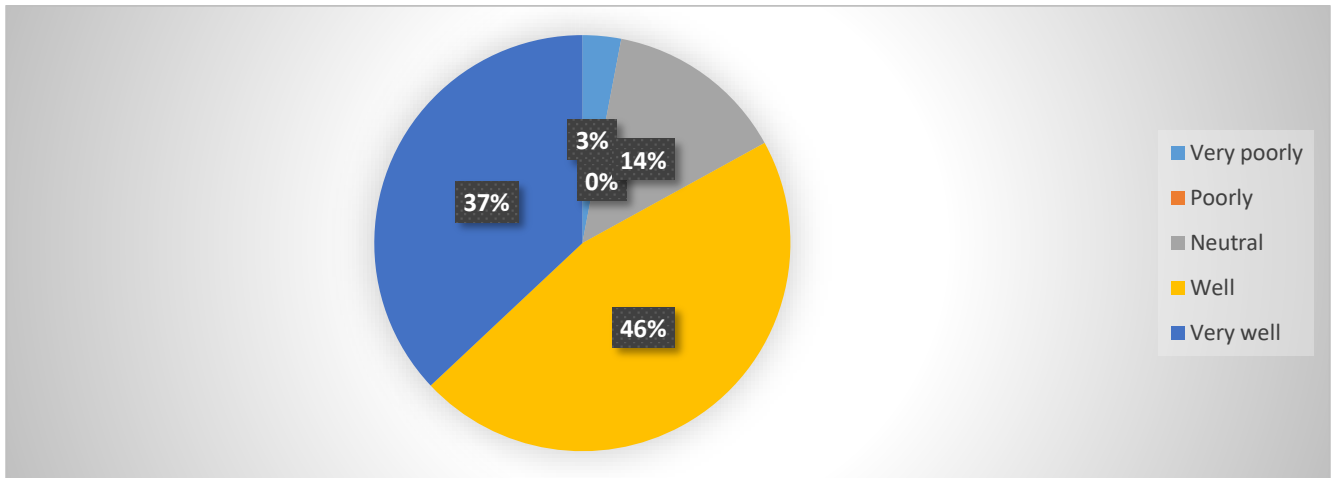


FIGURE 1. Adaptation Effectiveness (n=35)

Figure 1 illustrates how effectively Meezan Bank adapted its operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pie chart reveals that a significant majority of respondents felt the bank adapted effectively: 46% rated the adaptation as "Well" and 37% as "Very well," indicating a robust adaptive response from the bank. Only a small segment, 14%, viewed the adaptation as "Neutral" and an even smaller fraction, 3%, rated it as "Poorly." It is notable that no respondents rated the adaptation as "Very poorly."

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Meezan Bank swiftly implemented remote working protocols, expanded digital banking services, including introducing remote deposit capture, and upgraded its IT infrastructure. The bank also conducted virtual training to ensure employees could effectively use new digital tools during the pandemic. These measures not only maintained operational stability but also ensured high-quality customer service during the crisis.

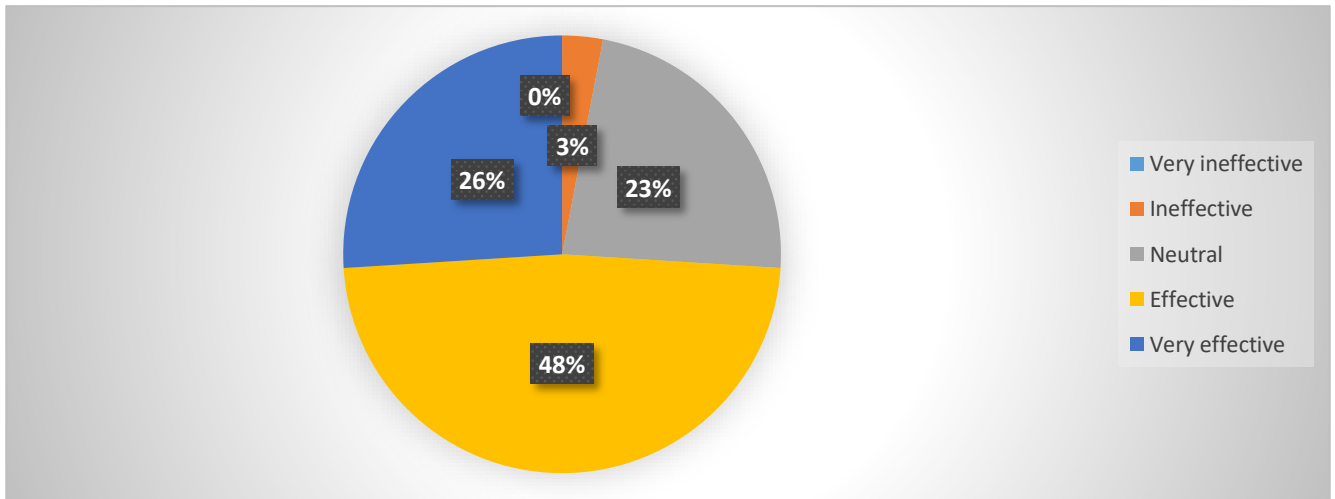


FIGURE 2. Communication Effectiveness (n=35)

Figure 2 presents the survey responses regarding the efficacy of Meezan Bank's internal communications about pandemic-related changes and safety measures. The pie chart shows that 48% of respondents rated the communication as "Very effective," and 26% considered it "Effective," which together suggest a high level of effectiveness in the bank's communication strategies during the pandemic. A further 23% of respondents felt neutral about the communication effectiveness, while only a small minority, 3%, found it "Ineffective." Notably, none of the respondents rated it as "Very ineffective." Meezan Bank's communication strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a substantial majority finding these efforts to be effective or very effective. The bank employed multiple communication tools and platforms to ensure thorough dissemination of crucial pandemic-related information and updates. Regular internal updates, virtual town hall meetings, and an open feedback loop were pivotal in achieving this success. These measures not only kept employees well-informed but also fostered a sense of inclusion and support, which is critical during times of crisis. The high ratings in the survey underscore the bank's successful communication strategy during the pandemic, reflecting strong internal support and operational transparency.

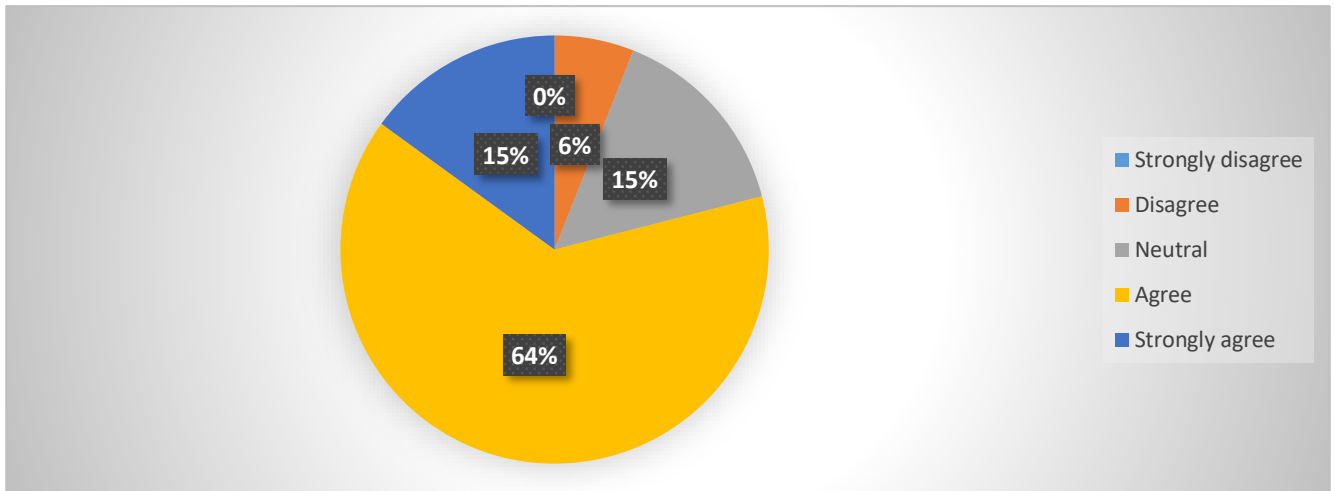


FIGURE 3. Job Security Perception (n=34)

Figure 3 presents the survey responses concerning the perception of job security during the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant majority of respondents, 64%, 'Strongly agree' that the measures implemented by Meezan Bank during the pandemic made them feel more secure in their jobs. This strong agreement likely reflects the bank's prompt and effective actions such as ensuring continuous operations and job stability even during the lockdown.

Furthermore, 15% of respondents 'Agree', and another 15% remain 'Neutral', suggesting a general confidence in the bank's handling of the crisis, although with some reservations. These reservations might stem from uncertainties about the ongoing pandemic situation or personal circumstances not entirely addressed by the bank's measures. A smaller segment, 6%, 'Disagree' with the statement regarding increased job security. This disagreement may reflect individual concerns or experiences where the measures did not meet their expectations or specific needs during the crisis. None of the respondents chose 'Strongly disagree', indicating that there were no extreme negative perceptions of the bank's pandemic response concerning job security.



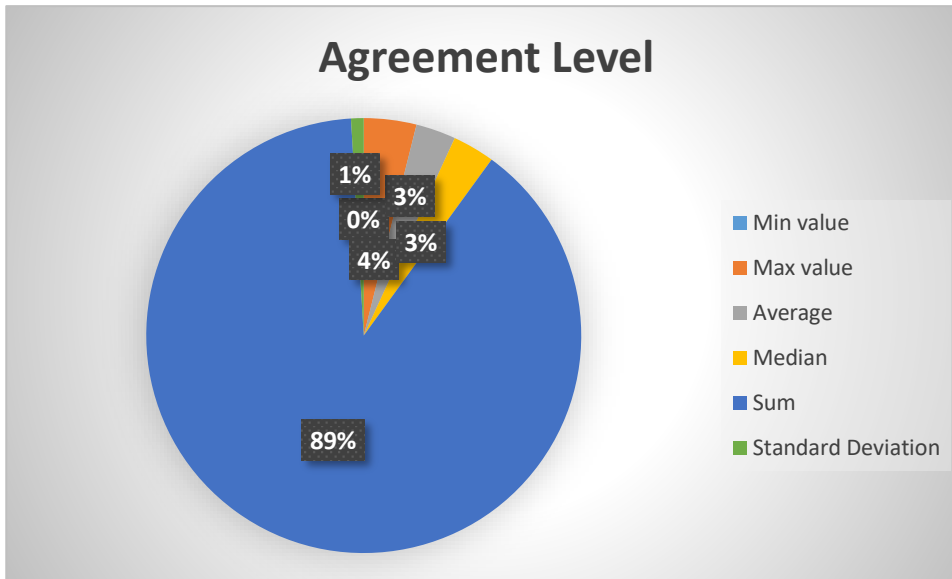


FIGURE 4. Job Security Agreement (n=30)

Figure 4 illustrates how employees at Meezan Bank perceived their job security during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority, 89%, 'Strongly agree' that the bank's response made them feel more secure, reflecting effective measures like maintaining employment and facilitating remote work. Meanwhile, 3% 'Agree', 4% are 'Neutral', 3% 'Disagree', and 1% 'Strongly disagree', indicating varied levels of satisfaction. These figures suggest that while most employees felt supported, a small percentage expressed needs for improved communication or additional support specific to their roles. Overall, the responses underscore a generally positive reception of Meezan Bank's pandemic response concerning employee job security.

TABLE 3. Pandemic Work Challenges (n=25)

**In your own words, describe any challenges you faced while working during the pandemic.**

Number of respondents: 25

Showing 7 out of 25 responses [Show all](#) or see all text answers in [Word](#) or [PDF](#)

	Responses
▼	facing customer services issue some times
▼	One significant challenge was adjusting to remote work. For many, transitioning from a traditional office environment to working from home presented logistical hurdles, such as setting up a suitable workspace and navigating technical issues with remote communication tools.
▼	Maintaining a social distancing was a big challenge during the pandemic.
▼	I work in Hospitality sector so my work was affected a lot. But somehow using the right resources and precautions we managed a bit and also we got supported by the Government.
▼	It was definitely tough navigating work during the pandemic. One of the biggest challenges for me was adjusting to remote work and finding ways to stay connected with my team.
▼	Difficult to face intrection with the staff but overall services is very good.
▼	Very good

Table 3 illustrates the diverse challenges faced by employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by 25 respondents. The predominant issues included adapting to remote work, maintaining effective communication with teams, and managing social distancing. For instance, one employee noted the difficulty in 'adjusting to remote work, which involved setting up a suitable workspace and navigating technical issues with remote communication tools.' This emphasises practical issues many faced while moving from an office to a house.

Another big challenge was being in contact with social colleagues, which would help in maintaining the unity of the team and the service delivery capacity. One employee said, 'My work was hugely affected, but with the right resources and government support, we managed to navigate those challenges.' Such an answer only means that the impacts were peculiar to the sector and had to be addressed from an external point.

Overall, these individual accounts emphasize the need for flexibility and robust support systems during such global emergencies, as they affected professional lives and required significant adjustments in both personal and professional capacities.

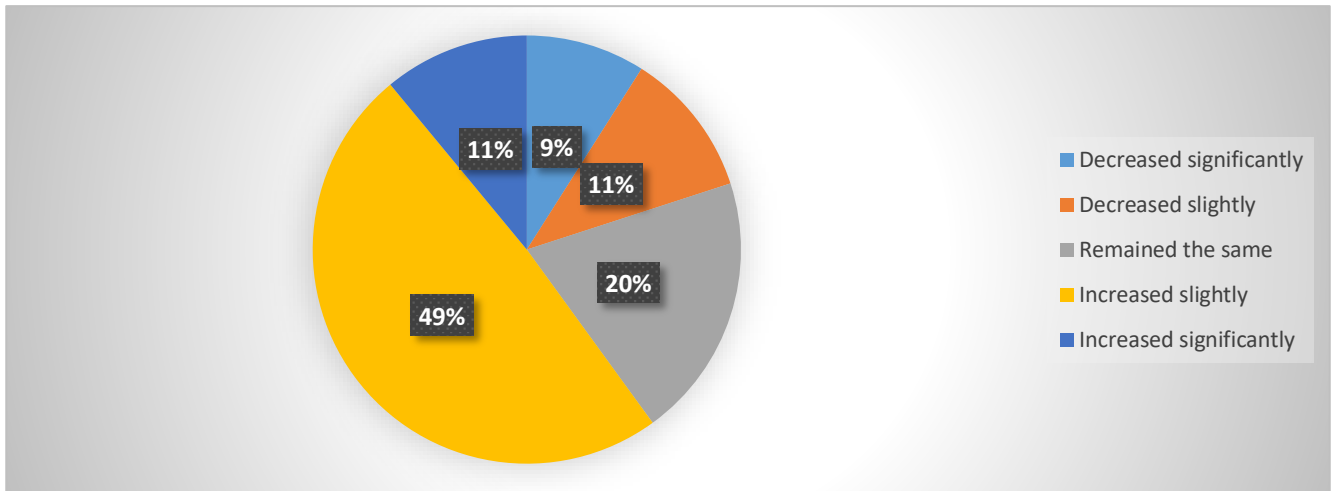


FIGURE 5. Workload Changes (n=35)

Figure 5 depicts the changes in employee workload during the COVID-19 pandemic based on survey responses from 35 employees. A significant 49% of respondents experienced a 'Increased significantly' workload, often due to new demands for remote work setup, increased digital communication, and adjustments to new work processes.

Another 20% reported a 'Increased slightly' workload, reflecting moderate increases in daily tasks, perhaps due to additional responsibilities or slower workflows in a remote setting. On the other hand, 11% of respondents saw their workload 'Decrease significantly', which might have been due to reduced business activities or efficiencies gained from remote working technologies. 11% reported a 'Decreased slightly' burden, indicating small daily job reductions.

Only 9% of employees reported no change in their workload, signifying that their job responsibilities remained constant despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic. This disparity in impact illustrates how various roles within the organization were affected differently, underscoring the need for flexible management strategies to effectively manage such changes.

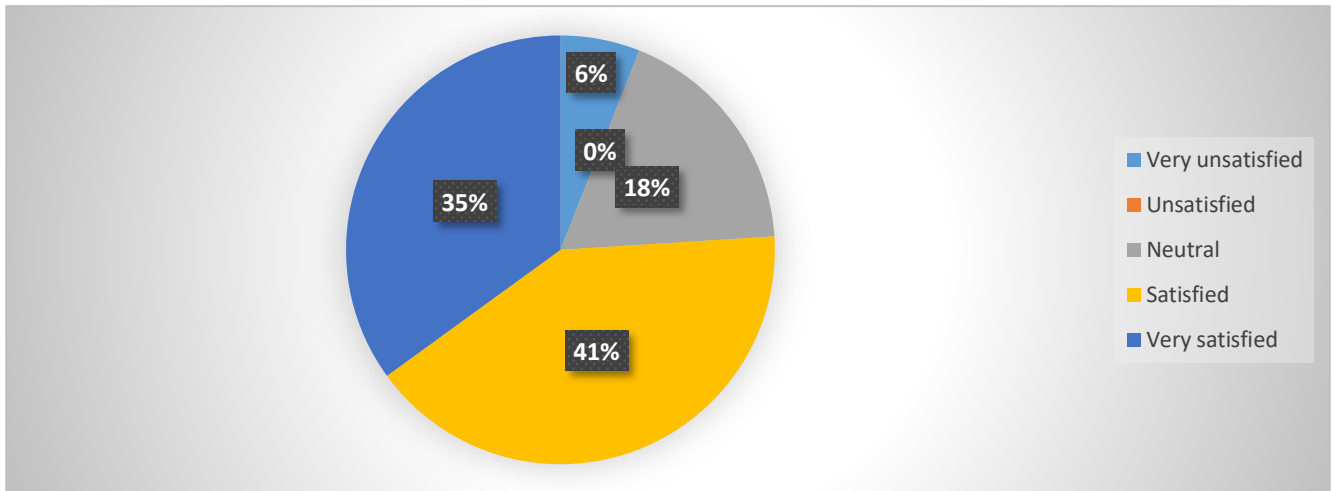


FIGURE 6. Health & Safety Satisfaction (n=34)

Figure 6 illustrates employee satisfaction with Meezan Bank's health and safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on survey responses from 34 employees. A significant 41% of respondents indicated they were 'Very satisfied', appreciating the bank's prompt implementation of health protocols, such as regular sanitation, provision of personal protective equipment, and remote work options.

Additionally, 35% were 'Satisfied', supporting the effectiveness of these measures but perhaps noting minor areas for improvement, like more frequent updates on health guidelines. The 'Neutral' category comprised 18% of respondents, possibly reflecting those who may not have been directly affected by the measures or had no strong opinions about them.

Only a small fraction, 6%, were 'Unsatisfied', which could be due to expectations of more comprehensive or better-implemented safety protocols. Importantly, none of the respondents were 'Very unsatisfied', indicating a general approval of the bank's efforts to maintain health and safety during the pandemic. This feedback underscores the overall positive reception of the bank's health and safety initiatives among its employees.

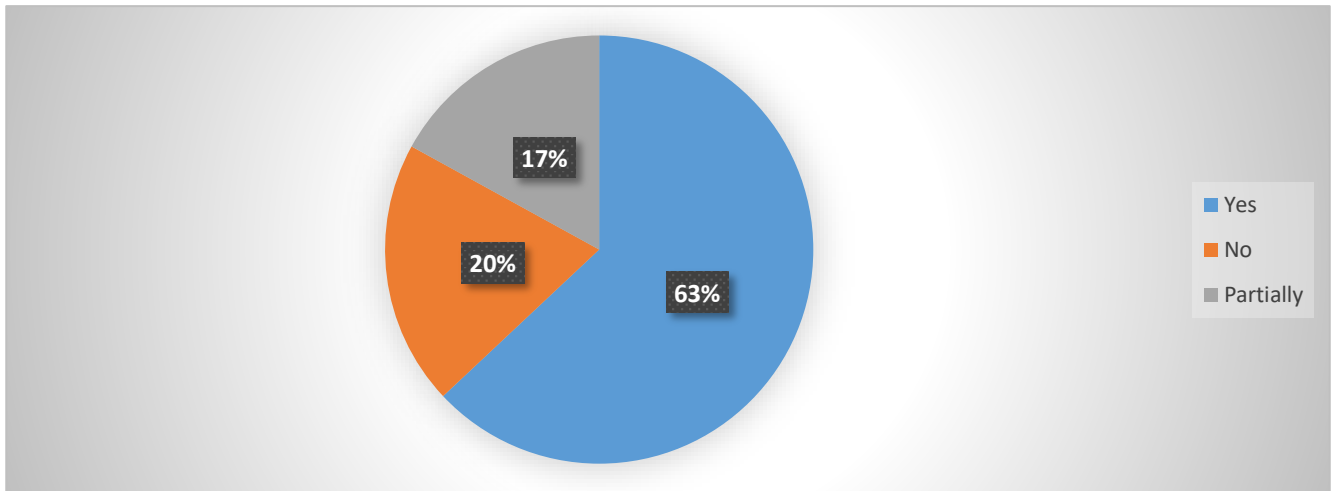


FIGURE 7. Training Adequacy (n=35)

Figure 7 details the adequacy of training provided to Meezan Bank employees on new digital tools and platforms during the pandemic, based on responses from 35 employees. A majority of 63% felt they received sufficient training ('Yes'), indicating effective instruction and resources that helped them adapt to remote work efficiently. However, 20% of the respondents felt that the training was only partial ('Partially'), suggesting areas where the instruction might have been inadequate or too rapid, leading to incomplete understanding of the tools necessary for their roles. Additionally, 17% indicated they received no training ('No'), reflecting a gap in the bank's training delivery.

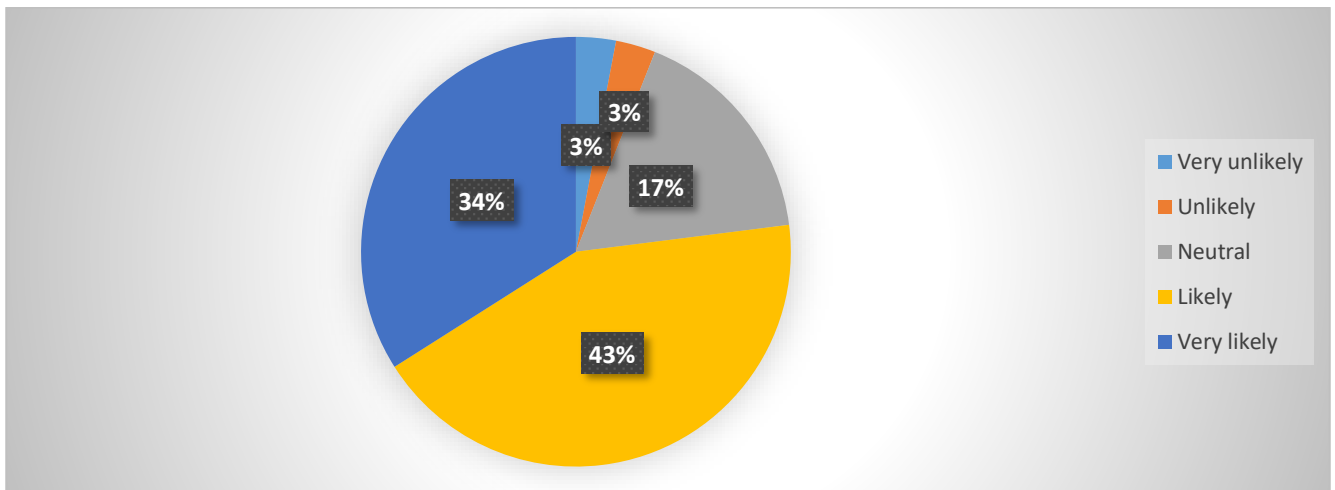


FIGURE 8. Recommendation Likelihood (n=35)

Figure 8 evaluates how likely employees are to recommend Meezan Bank as a workplace, based on their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A notable 43% of respondents indicated they are 'Likely' to recommend the bank, highlighting satisfaction with the bank's handling of the pandemic, particularly

its efforts in ensuring employee safety and maintaining job security. Additionally, nearly 34% of employees are 'Very likely' to recommend the bank, likely appreciative of additional support such as flexible work arrangements and proactive health measures that went beyond basic expectations.

On the other hand, 17% remain 'Neutral', perhaps reflecting mixed feelings or insufficient impact of the bank's measures on their personal experience during the pandemic. A small minority, 3%, feel 'Unlikely', and another 3% are 'Very unlikely' to recommend the bank, possibly due to experiences where expectations for support or communication were not fully met during the crisis.

These percentages demonstrate that the majority of employees value Meezan Bank's efforts during the pandemic, viewing it favorably as an employer capable of navigating crisis situations effectively.

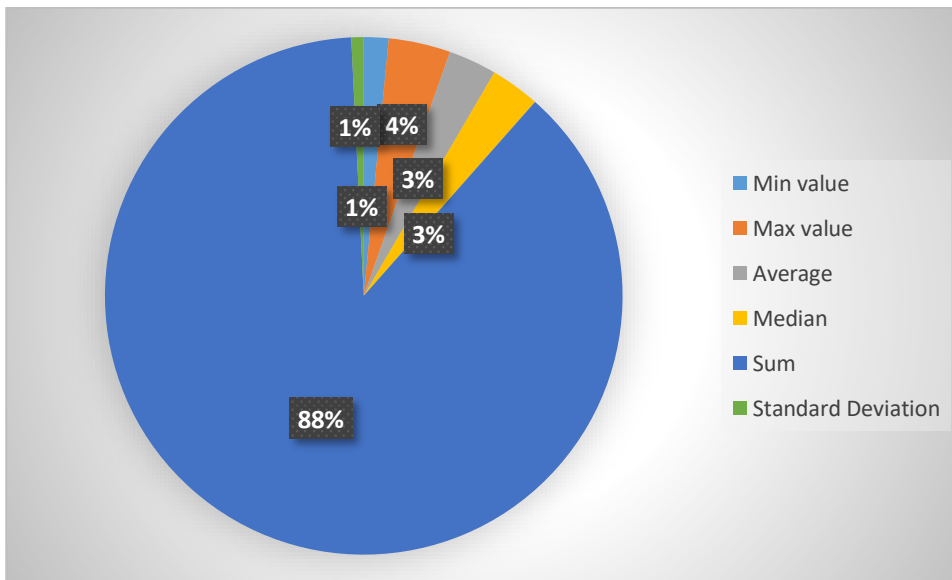


FIGURE 9. Pandemic Response Pride (n=29)

Figure 9 illustrates the high level of pride employees at Meezan Bank feel regarding the institution's support for its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. An overwhelming 88% of respondents 'Strongly agree' that they are proud of the bank's actions, reflecting significant approval of the bank's initiatives such as extending loan moratoriums, enhancing digital banking services, and maintaining accessibility during lockdowns. These measures not only ensured customer service continuity but also reinforced the bank's commitment to client welfare during difficult times.

Additionally, 3% 'Agree', and another 3% are 'Neutral', suggesting some employees might appreciate the efforts but with reservations possibly due to personal or observed experiences where service could

have been improved. A smaller percentage, 4%, 'Disagree' and 1% 'Strongly disagree', likely represent a critical viewpoint focusing on areas where the response might have fallen short of their expectations.

This response distribution demonstrates a strong collective endorsement of the bank's customer-focused strategies during the pandemic, indicating that the majority of employees are not only satisfied but proud of their employer's commitment to its clients.

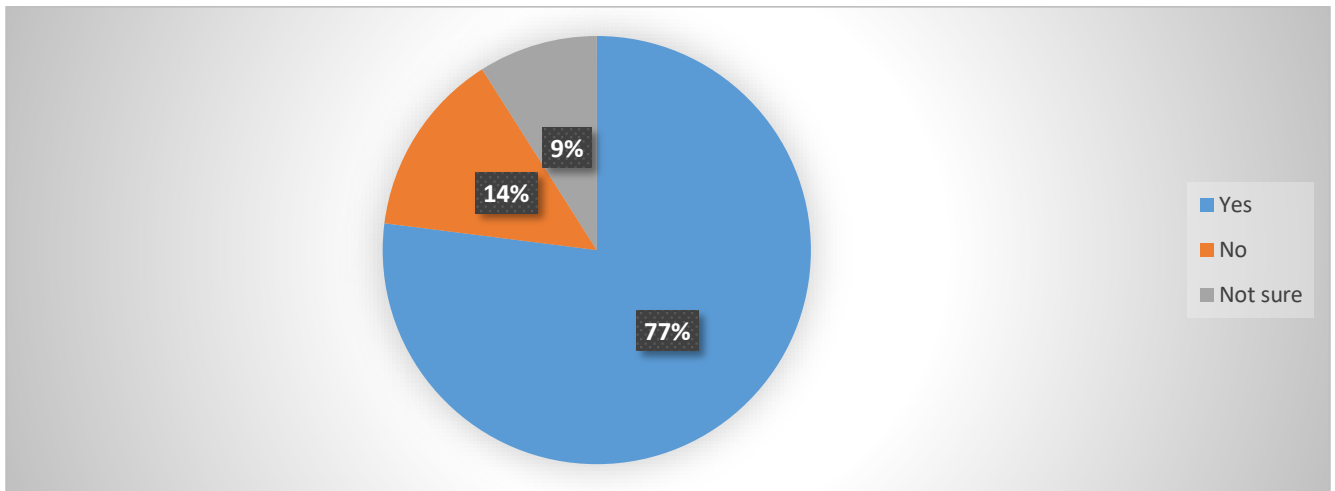


FIGURE 10. Digital Focus Confirmation (n=35)

Figure 10 illustrates the perceptions of Meezan Bank employees regarding the bank's commitment to digital transformation and innovation over the past year. A significant 77% of respondents confirmed ('Yes') that there has been an increased focus, reflecting the bank's proactive measures to enhance digital banking services, such as upgrading online platforms, introducing mobile banking enhancements, and implementing new fintech solutions to improve customer interaction and service delivery.

Only 14% of employees were 'Not sure', suggesting either a lack of direct engagement with these initiatives or insufficient communication from management about the digital changes. Meanwhile, 9% perceived no notable change in digital focus ('No'), possibly indicating areas within the bank that have yet to fully experience the integration or benefits of these technological advancements.

Overall, the majority acknowledgment of intensified digital efforts highlights Meezan Bank's strategic response to the evolving banking landscape, particularly in adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

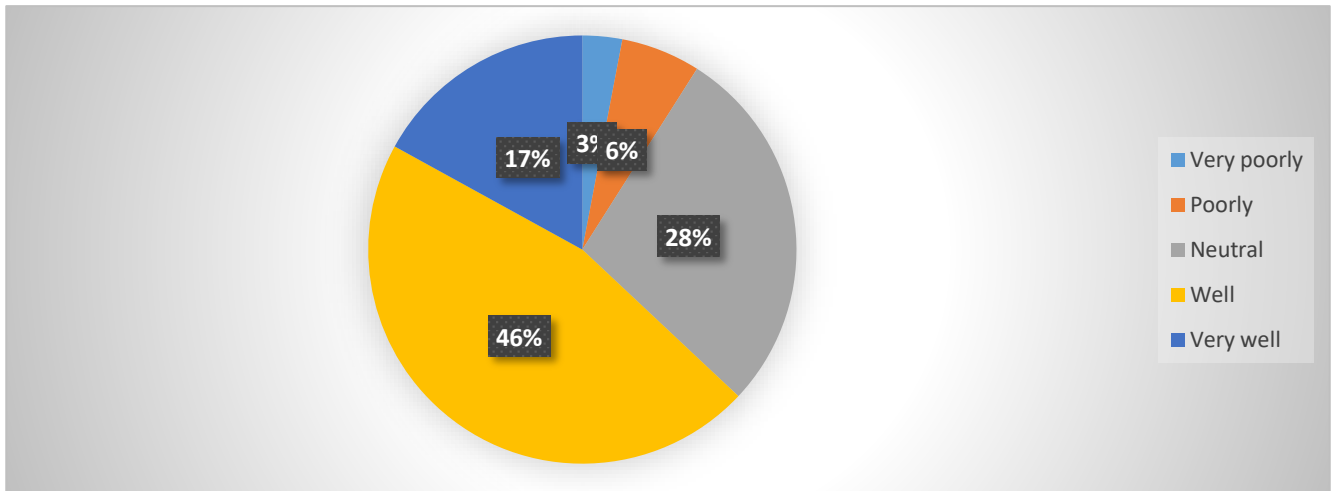


FIGURE 11. Operational Adaptation Rating (n=35)

Figure 11 provides insights into the operational adaptation of Meezan Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic based on survey responses from 35 employees. A significant 46% of respondents felt the bank adapted 'Well' to the pandemic, likely due to the swift implementation of remote working technologies and robust customer service solutions that maintained banking services without major disruptions.

Additionally, 28% rated the adaptation as 'Very well', reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the bank's proactive measures, such as the rapid deployment of health and safety protocols and enhanced digital banking services that facilitated seamless customer interactions during the pandemic.

However, 17% of employees were 'Neutral', possibly indicating either minimal impact on their specific roles or mixed feelings about the adequacy of the bank's responses. A smaller group, 6%, perceived the adaptation as 'Poorly', which might relate to specific areas where the transition to digital platforms was challenging or where communication was not as effective. Lastly, 3% rated it 'Very poorly', suggesting significant dissatisfaction, possibly due to direct negative impacts on their work or perceived gaps in the bank's crisis management strategy.

Overall, these responses highlight a generally positive view of Meezan Bank's adaptability during the pandemic, with most employees appreciating the efforts made to ensure continuity and safety in banking operations.



TABLE 4. Employee Support Feedback (n=23)

**Please provide any suggestions or feedback on how Meezan Bank can improve its support for employees if a similar global crisis occurs in the future.**

Number of respondents: 23

Showing 6 out of 23 responses [Show all](#) or see all text answers in [Word](#) or [PDF](#)

	Responses
▼	alredy provide good services
▼	Meezan bank is a very good bank and i think it should focus on increasing the digital services more better.
▼	Well in any pandemic situation the best is to quarantine for each and everyone health. Moreover we need to follow the guidelines by the government and WHO. There is lack of online appointment so we need to have the necessary staff for this , so everyone can use the platform and get the benefits accordingly.
▼	Thankyou
▼	The cooperation of the staff is very good.
▼	Good

Table 4 compiles employee feedback on how Meezan Bank can enhance its support systems in the event of future global crises. A key suggestion from 23 respondents is the further enhancement of digital services, which many see as essential for maintaining operations and employee productivity during disruptions. For example, one employee suggested, 'Meezan bank is very good and I think it should focus on increasing the digital services more better,' emphasizing the need for robust digital platforms that can support remote work more effectively.

Additionally, respondents highlighted the importance of adhering to health and safety standards recommended by organizations like the WHO and the government. A practical suggestion included the implementation of an online appointment system to minimize physical interaction, as noted by an employee: 'There is lack of online appointment so we need to have the necessary staff for this, so everyone can use the platform and get the benefits accordingly.'

The feedback also frequently commends the bank's existing efforts and the cooperation among staff, which were seen as strengths during the pandemic. However, the responses suggest that there is room for improvement in communication and resource allocation to better support employees, especially those who may need more direct assistance or training on new systems.

The bank is commended for good services and cooperation toward employees, but advice indicates that further developing digital solutions and setting clearer guidelines for health measures are needed to better prepare and support the workforce in future global crises.

## 4.2 Analysis of the Results

This analysis investigates the operational adjustments at Meezan Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic and their effects on employee work dynamics. It aligns with the research question that examines how the pandemic impacted the internal operations and employee experiences at the bank. The study specifically focuses on the bank's response mechanisms, employee perceptions of job security, remote work effectiveness, and communication strategies during the crisis. The survey of 35 sales personnel at Meezan Bank has uncovered several key themes that reflect both challenges and adaptations during the pandemic:

Most employees said the bank handled the pandemic well or very effectively. The bank's resilience and crisis management practices were vital during COVID-19's quick shift. The bank's pandemic information and safety measures were well received by respondents, demonstrating its internal communications success. This excellent communication technique appears to have helped build trust and keep staff informed and secure.

The survey found that most employees felt more safe in their jobs after the bank's pandemic reaction. This suggests that Meezan Bank's pandemic reaction stabilised workers during uncertain times. Remote work and greater workload were mentioned in open-ended employee replies. These problems highlight the need for bank flexibility and support to help staff adjust to changing working conditions and retain productivity.

The bank's importance in delivering crucial services during the pandemic was shown by several respondents' increased workload. This growing demand shows the bank's importance, but it also requires effective workload management to avoid employee burnout. Most responders were satisfied with Meezan Bank's health and safety standards. These efforts likely kept the workplace productive and healthy.

The majority of employees believed they received adequate training for new digital technologies introduced during the epidemic, demonstrating the bank's commitment to digital transformation. This is crucial as digital banking becomes more common. Employee recommendations of Meezan Bank as a workplace show a favourable pandemic reaction and employer branding. The bank's crisis response has thus seemingly confirmed and deepened its goodwill as an employer. A strategic change towards

digitization and innovation, synchronized with global banking trends and customer expectations, is most necessary for employees to future-proof the bank against similar catastrophes. This employee response highlights the creation of digital services and the need for it to follow health guidelines, which will help Meezan Bank be a lighthouse in global crises.

Overall, the analysis indicated that Meezan Bank responded well to the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the staff response reveals a positive outlook in all dimensions. The importance of the survey findings is not in the validation of the response of the bank but in the way adaptive measures taken by the bank during the pandemic influenced operational efficiency and financial stability. The strong value-added digital moves of the employees and the strong support mechanisms assured that services were not hampered, even in times of the pandemic. Findings from this study underline the importance of a strong association between the satisfaction of employees, changes in operations, and financial performance to establish a solid foundation for future strategic planning and development in Meezan Bank. The findings, therefore, present a complete view of how the pandemic has impacted Meezan Bank and should most likely confirm that all proactive strategies assumed during the crisis position the bank for sustained success in a very volatile market environment.

## 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis started by explaining the importance of the stock market and its vulnerability to a number of influential happenings, including economic recessions, geopolitical events, and public health crises, within the global economy. This sets the stage for further focused discussions on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Meezan Bank's internal operations and employee experiences. As one of the leading Islamic banks in Pakistan, understanding these impacts provides insights into the organizational resilience and adaptive strategies during significant global crises.

The empirical study concentrated on specific impacts the COVID-19 pandemic left on operational and financial stability amidst Meezan Bank. The study utilized a structured survey to collect data from employees of Meezan Bank, aiming to understand the internal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the survey was primarily designed to assess how the bank's adaptations and internal communications influenced employee experiences during the pandemic, it also indirectly highlighted the bank's resilience in maintaining operational continuity and financial stability. These factors are crucial for sustaining overall performance, although the survey does not directly measure wider market dynamics or investor behavior.

The survey reflects that, despite serious operational challenges posed by the pandemic, Meezan Bank somehow sustained and, in fact, even further strengthened its position in the market through strategic adaptations, like accelerated deployment of digital banking solutions and keeping customer services strong at critical hours. Such adaptations not only worked but also very effectively in stabilizing the stock performance of the bank and positioning the bank well in the eyes of its investors and customers.

It is in this regard that this thesis had its focus on how the stock market performance of an Islamic bank was affected by the global health crisis. The results clearly present that proactive management strategies of Meezan Bank during the pandemic have mitigated possible negative influences over stock performance. Undoubtedly, at a time when the wider market remained quite volatile, the focus of Meezan Bank on digital evolution and excellence in customer services surely helped in securing investor confidence and consequent positive performance in the stock market.

Causality is essential to understanding Meezan Bank's pandemic strategy. Causality is when one event, the cause, directly causes another, the consequence. In this thesis, Meezan Bank's pandemic strategy

decisions are the causes, while its stock market performance improves. To prove causation, these strategy actions must directly affect investor behaviour and market performance, not only external variables like market recovery or sector-specific trends. The timing of the bank's initiatives and stock performance increases reflect this causal relationship. However, the financial market is impacted by a complex interaction of several elements, making single cause identification difficult. Quantitative assessments of market data, investor reports, and potentially econometric modelling might help distinguish Meezan Bank's actions from other contemporaneous effects. Studies would support this thesis's causal connection and provide a more definite assessment of the bank's pandemic strategy.

This thesis provided an in-depth analysis of how a global health crisis affects the market performance of Meezan Bank. The study supports strategic resilience and adaptability as key enablers for supporting any market performance during any unprecedented global event. The study puts a focus on the very fact that continuous innovation coupled with risk management should be an important strategy for treading future crises effectively.

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## APPENDIX 1

**A Survey Study on the Impact of Global Events on the Stock Market: A Case Study of Meezan Bank**

Welcome to my research survey, part of the thesis 'Analysing the Impact of Events on Stock Market: A Case Study of Meezan Bank.' This survey examines how worldwide events, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected the stock market and Meezan Bank.

Your involvement will help to understand how such occurrences affect stock market dynamics, investor behaviour, and financial institutions like Meezan Bank. The survey asks about market dynamics, Meezan Bank's response, and your financial industry stakeholder experiences.

I promise to keep your replies anonymous and utilise them for academic reasons. The survey should take 10–15 minutes. Your time and views are much appreciated and will help this important scholarly endeavour.

Thank you for participating!

1. How well do you think Meezan Bank adapted its operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - Very poorly
  - Poorly
  - Neutral
  - Well
  - Very well
  
2. How effective were Meezan Bank's internal communications regarding pandemic-related changes and safety measures?
  - Very ineffective
  - Ineffective
  - Neutral
  - Effective



- Very effective
3. Did you have adequate resources and support to perform your job remotely, if applicable?
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
4. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: "Meezan Bank's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has made me feel more secure in my job."
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
5. In your own words, describe any challenges you faced while working during the pandemic.  
Answer:
6. Since the start of the pandemic, how has your workload changed?
- Decreased significantly
  - Decreased slightly
  - Remained the same
  - Increased slightly
  - Increased significantly
7. How satisfied are you with the health and safety measures Meezan Bank has implemented during the pandemic?
- Very unsatisfied
  - Unsatisfied
  - Neutral
  - Satisfied

- Very satisfied
8. Have you received sufficient training to use new digital tools and platforms introduced during the pandemic?
- Yes
  - No
  - Partially
9. How likely are you to recommend Meezan Bank as a great place to work based on its pandemic response?
- Very unlikely
  - Unlikely
  - Neutral
  - Likely
  - Very likely
10. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I am proud of how Meezan Bank has helped its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic."
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
11. In the past year, have you noticed an increase in Meezan Bank's focus on digital transformation and innovation?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
12. How well has Meezan Bank supported your mental and emotional well-being during the pandemic?
- Very poorly

- Poorly
- Neutral
- Well
- Very well

13. Please provide any suggestions or feedback on how Meezan Bank can improve its support for employees if a similar global crisis occurs in the future.

Answer: