

## Pakistan Islamicus

An International Journal of Islamic and Social Sciences  
(Bi-Annual)

Trilingual: Urdu, Arabic, and English

pISSN: 2789-9365 eISSN: 2790-4911

<https://pakistanislamicus.com/index.php/home>

Published by:

Muslim Intellectuals Research Center

Multan-Pakistan

website: [www.mircpk.net](http://www.mircpk.net)

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Bi-Annual

Vol. 03 No. 02

(July - December 2023)

pISSN: 2789-9365

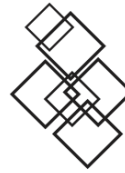
eISSN: 2790-4911



An International Journal of  
ISLAMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

پاکستان  
ISLAMICUS

[www.pakistanislamicus.com](http://www.pakistanislamicus.com)



Muslim Intellectuals Research Center  
Multan - Pakistan

### TOPIC

**SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY PERFORMING ARTISTS  
DURING PANDEMIC (COVID-19)**

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### How to Cite

Mehr, Rashina, Dr Nazia Rafiq, and Roheena Sajid. 2023.

“SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY PERFORMING ARTISTS DURING  
PANDEMIC (COVID-19)”.

*PAKISTAN ISLAMICUS (An International Journal of Islamic & Social Sciences)*

3 (2):158-65.

Retrieved from:

<https://pakistanislamicus.com/index.php/home/article/view/55>.

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## **SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY PERFORMING ARTISTS DURING PANDEMIC (COVID-19)**

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### **Abstract**

During the pandemic, artists faced many problems of varied nature related to health wise and socioeconomic changes whose significance hampered creation and its expression in a harmonized memory. The aim of the researcher is not only to promote art but to preserve it in writing and photography. The art institutes of Rawalpindi and Islamabad visited in order to do the writing and to capture data in relevance to the objectives of the research. The topic of the article is “**Socioeconomic Challenges Faced by Performing Artists During Pandemic (COVID-19)**”. The study aims to explore socioeconomic problems, and the challenges faced by artists during pandemics to advance the arts. Research uses the methods of case study by conducting in-depth interviews. The purpose of this research is to investigate and analyze these problems to comprehend their ramifications and provide effective tactics and interventions to assist performing artists during this critical era. By addressing the problem statement, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge and provide significant insights and recommendations for supporting the arts community's resilience, recovery, and long-term sustainability in the face of the pandemic's socioeconomic problems.

**Keywords:** Artist, Performance, Pandemic, Perception, Gender

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the arts and culture industry, causing significant economic challenges for performing artists and art institutions. The enforced social

distancing measures, travel restrictions, and closure of performance venues have disrupted traditional modes of artistic expression, affecting the livelihoods of artists. Artists lost their work, income, and even social connections during the Pandemic, which not only affected them but also left them with severe and challenging problems to face in the future (Samantha K. Brooks, 2022). This study aims to comprehensively analyze the specific socioeconomic hurdles faced by performing artists and art organizations during this crisis, including financial difficulties, reduced income opportunities, and limited access to resources. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing effective interventions to support artists and institutions in navigating these unprecedented times.

In this backdrop, this article will explore the socioeconomic concerns affecting artists as a result of the pandemic.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on performing artists and art institutions, particularly focusing on their socioeconomic challenges. It investigates financial hardships arising from cancelled events and reduced earning opportunities, as well as the operational and financial difficulties faced by art institutions. Additionally, the review delves into the mental and emotional well-being of artists during this period, emphasizing the need for further research to comprehend the full consequences of the pandemic on the arts community. Studies indicate a range of responses among artists to the pandemic, with some experiencing uncertainty and anxiety, while others have adapted creatively, experimenting with new mediums and technologies to sustain their work. Psychological well-being has emerged as a significant concern, particularly due to high organizational expectations, job insecurity, and difficulties in coping with critical feedback (Samantha K. Brooks, 2022). There are studies that indicate about the mental health struggles of the artists during Pandemic (COVID-19) (Janine H. Stubbe, 2021). The abrupt halt of in-person performances has added another layer of stress, impacting both career artists and those who engage in the performing arts for personal fulfillment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, performing artists had enormous financial challenges. With the cancellation of live performances and events, artists' income and financial security have suffered significantly (Daubney & Fautley, 2020). According to a survey performed by the Actresses Fund, a non-profit organisation that supports entertainment practitioners in the United States, 76% of creators and actresses reported a loss of revenue during the epidemic

(Dümcke, 2021). This loss of income has had serious ramifications for performing artists, many of whom rely on gigs and freelancing contracts for a living.

Furthermore, the epidemic has highlighted the already fragile financial status of performing artists (Hayashi et al., 2020). Before the pandemic, practitioners in the performing arts business suffered low job security, over-commitment, and a lack of acknowledgement for their work (Betzler et al., 2021). The epidemic has exacerbated these issues, putting artists in a vulnerable financial situation. The closure of entertainment venues such as theatres and music halls has had a significant influence on the earnings of performing artists. It can be further defined by Dilmaç (2020), that the closure of art institutes has put a significant loss towards the incomes of artists such as musicians and performing artists. As stated by Giannini & Bowen (2022) that without having live performances and audiences, artists have lost a significant portion of their income and so face financial instability (Spiro et al., 2021). Furthermore, performing artists who do not make a career entirely from the performance have been impacted. The social constraints and limitations on in-person performances have had a severe impact on artists' capacity to produce cash from their skills (Jeannotte et al., 2021). This loss of income has compounded performing artists' financial insecurity.

A critical issue that requires aid and support is the financial instability that performing artists encountered throughout the pandemic (Eikhof et al., 2020). The financial strain may be lessened by government measures, such as financial aid programmes and subsidies tailored expressly for artists (Ryan, 2020). Organisations and institutions in the performing arts sector can also make a difference by offering resources and support to help artists deal with these difficult situations. According to data from a survey conducted by the Actresses Fund in the United States, 62% of creators and actresses lost part-time or gig jobs, while 50% lost full-time careers as a result of the pandemic (Morse et al., 2021). These data show the devastating financial impact on performing artists, many of whom rely on a patchwork of concerts and contracts for a living.

In addition, the financial situation of the performing arts sector was precarious even before the pandemic. A lack of acknowledgment for their achievements, employment uncertainty, and an excessive workload were common problems for artists (Li et al., 2021). The epidemic has made artists' financial positions further more vulnerable, putting them at more risk (Simamora et al., 2020). The financial security of performing artists has been severely harmed by the closure of entertainment establishments. According to Carmine et al. (2021), the absence of live concerts and the inability to engage with audiences has resulted in a considerable decrease in earnings

for artists. Artists that rely largely on ticket sales and live concerts have suffered significant financial difficulty as a result of this loss of income.

Furthermore, even musicians who do not make a living entirely from performing have been impacted (Daubney & Fautley, 2020). Due to the constraints on in-person performances and the transition to virtual platforms, chances for making cash from artistic endeavours have been reduced. This loss of income has exacerbated the financial difficulties that performing artists have suffered as a result of the pandemic (Dümcke, 2021). Addressing the performing arts sector's lack of financial stability demands sustained efforts. Government help, such as financial relief programmes and subsidies, can provide much-needed assistance to struggling artists (Hayashi et al., 2020). Additionally, actions by arts organisations and institutions to generate other revenue streams and provide tools for artists to adapt to the changing landscape can assist lessen the economic problems faced by performing artists.

According to research performed by Choi & Kim (2021), and Khan et al. (2021), the creative business, especially performing artists, has seen a dramatic reduction in job possibilities. According to the survey, 77% of freelancers reported a loss in income since the start of the epidemic (Morse et al., 2021). This underscores the financial difficulties experienced by performing artists who rely on freelance employment for a living. Furthermore, according to a poll done by the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) in the United States, 90% of independent venues are at risk of permanent closure in the absence of government involvement (Ryan, 2020). This has resulted in the loss of performance spaces and platforms for artists, aggravating the unemployment issue (Eikhof et al. 2020).

International organisations including UNESCO have also underlined the precarious status of performing artists during the pandemic. According to Zierer (2021), venue closures and event cancellations have resulted in widespread job losses and income reductions for artists, threatening their economic stability. These sources, coupled with the previously indicated figures and references, highlight the amount of unemployment experienced by performing artists during the COVID-19 epidemic (Jeannotte et al., 2021). The closing of venues, the cancellation of events, and the loss of freelance opportunities have all contributed to the financial difficulties faced by artists worldwide.

According to Ludvigsson (2020), the epidemic has resulted in a catastrophic loss of work for performing artists around the world. Demertzis & Eyerman (2020), can also mention in their article that theatres, music halls, and other performance venues have been forced to close, leading to the cancellation of shows and events, leaving many artists without money. The International Federation of Actors (FIA) conducted a poll in 77 countries and discovered that

65% of performing artists were unemployed as a result of the pandemic (Jeannotte et al., 2021). This astonishing figure demonstrates the scope of the performing arts sector's unemployment crisis.

Furthermore, a Johnson et al. (2021), study found that the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry had one of the highest unemployment rates during the epidemic. According to Khlystova et al. (2022), the industry's unemployment rate reached 30.8% in October 2020, surpassing the national average. These sources emphasise the enormous unemployment experienced by performing artists during the COVID-19 pandemic (Spiro et al., 2021). The closing of performance venues, event cancellations, and the general economic slump have all had a substantial impact on artists' lives, leaving many out of employment and struggling to make ends meet.

### **Research Gap**

The existing literature on the socioeconomic challenges faced by performing artists and cultural institutions during the pandemic reveals several critical gaps. There's a need for more focused studies addressing the specific issues encountered by various creative forms like music, theatre, dance, and visual arts. Research needs to be conducted in order to better understand the problems that a pandemic can cause to the performing artists. It is also important to note that the artists are working in different geographical areas and depending on their area of residence the type and intensity of the problem varies up to a great extent that must be investigated properly. Additionally, there's a scarcity of comparative research across diverse geographical regions or cultural contexts. Long-term effects on artists' careers and the recovery of art institutions post-crisis remain underexplored. The effectiveness of support systems, including financial aid programs and mental health care, also requires further analysis. Moreover, the intersectional experiences of artists based on factors like gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background have received limited attention. Addressing these gaps would enhance our comprehension of the challenges faced by performing artists and art institutions, guiding the development of tailored interventions, policies, and support systems for bolstering the resilience and sustainability of the arts community during and after the pandemic.

### **Research Limitation**

It is important to realize the significant limitations that this study has. First and foremost, there is a time limit because the analysis, assessment, and interpretation of the acquired data must be finished within that time limit. There might be a biased opinion from the side of participants that influence the results and findings. Finally, the risk of human error is a big restriction

because people are prone to make mistakes and there is always a chance that faults may occur in any work.

## **Results and Discussions**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, performing artists faced severe financial challenges due to widespread event cancellations and limited income opportunities. A survey by the Actresses Fund revealed that 76% of creators and actresses in the United States reported income loss during the pandemic. This loss of income significantly affected the financial stability of many artists, especially those reliant on gigs and freelance contracts. The closure of entertainment venues like theatres and music halls further exacerbated the financial strain on performing artists. Even those who did not solely rely on performance for income were impacted by the restrictions on in-person events. Government financial aid programs and tailored subsidies, along with support from organizations and institutions in the performing arts sector, are crucial in alleviating this financial instability. The survey also showed that 62% of creators and actresses lost part-time or gig jobs, while 50% lost full-time careers due to the pandemic, underscoring the widespread economic impact on performing artists. Additionally, the financial situation of the performing arts sector was already precarious prior to the pandemic, marked by a lack of recognition for artists' contributions, job insecurity, and an uncertain income structure.

The pandemic amplified existing challenges for artists, including excessive workloads and financial vulnerability. The closure of entertainment venues significantly impacted artists' financial security, particularly those dependent on live performances and ticket sales. Even artists who don't rely solely on performance faced income reduction due to limitations on in-person events. Addressing the financial instability in the performing arts sector requires ongoing efforts, including government support programs and actions by arts organizations to diversify revenue streams and provide tools for adaptation. Additionally, research highlights a drastic reduction in job opportunities for performing artists, with 77% of freelancers reporting income loss. The potential closure of independent venues further exacerbates unemployment issues in the sector

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Pakistan's performing arts sector. Research by Daubney & Fautley (2020) highlighted abrupt cancellations of events, causing income loss for many artists. The shift to online platforms posed challenges, impacting artists' well-being. Limited access to necessary technology for online performances was a prevalent issue, and despite government efforts, financial support was unevenly distributed. Planning and

collaborations were hindered by the pandemic's uncertain nature. Artists faced emotional strain due to isolation from their community. Despite challenges, Pakistani artists displayed resilience, experimenting with new ways to engage audiences through virtual performances (Jena, 2020).

Financial instability emerged as a crucial issue, exacerbated by the sudden halt in live concerts. Government support, while beneficial, faced administrative challenges and inequitable distribution (Banks & O'Connor, 2021). Art institutions also suffered significant financial stress, leading to operational halts and staff salary struggles (Raimo et al., 2021). Audience engagement plummeted due to social distancing measures, impacting institutions' cultural impact and revenue (Choi et al., 2020). The survival and revival of these institutions are crucial for Pakistan's cultural legacy. Ensuring artists' livelihoods post-pandemic is a critical concern. Strategies include digital entrepreneurship, support networks, and collaboration with art institutions (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Establishing connections and support networks among artists facilitates adaptation and growth in the evolving arts landscape (Ryan, 2020). Partnering with cultural institutions can lead to new initiatives and revenue streams, benefiting both artists and the cultural environment (Eikhof, 2020).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted performing artists and cultural institutions, resulting in significant financial losses due to the abrupt cancellation of live events. The closure of entertainment venues and restrictions on performances further exacerbated their economic uncertainty. Art institutions faced challenges transitioning to virtual platforms, leading to reduced audience engagement. Financial support, targeted policies, and digital transformation are recommended to ensure sector resilience. Cultivating support networks, embracing innovative technologies, and enhancing arts education can foster long-term sustainability and enrich society's cultural vitality. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders are crucial for the arts community to thrive post-pandemic.

Governments and cultural institutions should create targeted financial aid and subsidy programmes that are designed especially for performing artists and cultural organisations. These initiatives can offer crucial financial support to artists who have experienced major income losses and support the ongoing operations of art institutions during the crisis. Artists and organisations can withstand the storm and carry on adding to society's cultural vibrancy by receiving financial backing.



Furthermore, in order to improve their technological capabilities and successfully adapt to virtual platforms, art institutions must invest in digital transformation. Utilising social media, interactive features, augmented reality, and virtual reality can be used to build more dynamic, immersive, and engaging digital experiences for viewers. Art institutions may support creative and interactive virtual experiences that keep audiences engaged by being on the cutting edge of technology.

Programmes for financial assistance and subsidies designed for cultural institutions and artists can offer much-needed support. In order to improve their technology capabilities and look into creative ways to engage audiences electronically, art institutions must invest in digital transformation. For the wellbeing and motivation of artists as well as to promote partnerships and financial assistance within the artistic community, support networks must be fostered. Maintaining audience engagement in the digital sphere requires embracing innovation, such as augmented reality and virtual reality technologies.

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