



## The Impacts of COVID-19 on Social Life of University Students in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2021: A Survey Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** By prevalence of new types of viral infections, coronavirus disease (COVID-19), has led the majority of world countries in a critical state. This pandemic affected all of life style and daily activities.

**Objectives and Methods:** The main aim of this survey is assessment of daily activities and social life of Kabul students in duration of self-quarantine. This is a survey study, with 74 students of university in Kabul of Afghanistan sample size, after prepare questionnaire in Google form platform, distributed by social media.

**Results:** The survey shown, daily activities of students like: sleeping and using the social media increased (57.3% and 64.4 %) respectively. The study also shows a significant correlation between online activities and physical activities ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $r_s = -0.31$ ). However, there was no significant correlation between online hour's activities and self-study. ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $r = -0.094$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the findings of this study, living during the quarantine of the Corona virus has affected the social life of university students.

### Keywords:

Self- quarantine, Social life of students and COVID-19

### Introduction

By prevalence of new types of viral infections, coronavirus disease (COVID-19), has led the majority of world countries in a critical state. This pandemic event affected all of mankind daily life activities (education, social life, mental effects, economic and etc). The majority of people making some self-quarantine to reduce the prevention of spread infection (COVID-19), yet leading to other effects on education systems. <sup>2</sup>

Ministry of public health of Afghanistan Stated the statics of infected by COVID-19 in the world (June 2021) were 171 million and

the statics of death was 3.55 million. In Afghanistan, statics of COVID-19 were different from the world. Until June 2, 2021, 74026 were infected by COVID-19, and 3007 deaths were recorded.

In the last months of 2019, in Wuhan, China has reported the first cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) and starting a novel respiratory disease. <sup>5</sup> To reduce and prevent the spread of COVID-19 respiratory infections, in more than 188 world countries, governments have created some public health emergency states (lockdowns of all schools and universities and social restrictions in public localities). <sup>2</sup> The

COVID-19 pandemic events have the largest disruption of education systems in human history, but unfortunately, the most effects are in low and middle income countries. Self-quarantine affecting nearly 1.6 billion students in more than 200 world countries. As of July 2020, in more than 200 world countries 98.6 % of students were affected by pandemic and self-quarantine from nursery to higher education. <sup>7</sup> In a survey (June 2020) on 30877 students in the world (13610 students were from Europe, 7036 students were from Asia, 4220 students were from South America, 2708 students were from Africa, 2419 students were from North America and 186 students were from Oceania). In this survey, 289 students (0.9 %) were from Afghanistan and it shows the impacts of COVID-19 on the lifestyle of students in all of the world. <sup>1</sup>

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 has increased the balance of stress, anxiety, and fear in all societies. These emotions can be considered normal regarding the fact that people are being faced with an unstable, unpredictable, and ambiguous situation. <sup>8</sup>

An interview survey of 195 students from the United States shows the increased stress and anxiety due to the COVID-19 quarantine in 138 students (71%).<sup>10</sup> A survey, cross-sectional study (April 2020) in Lucerne University of Applied Sciences on 557 students, shows the levels of anxiety on students. This survey shows 65 students were in the normal level of anxiety, 2990 students were mild level 75 and 28 students were in the moderate and severe level of anxiety, respectively. <sup>4</sup> Another survey study by online questionnaire on 983 students in Malaysia, which shown the 20.4%, 66%, and 2.8 % of all 983 Malaysian students experienced mild, moderate to severe levels of anxiety during the COVID-19 quarantine. <sup>11</sup> In another cross-sectional study on 280 students of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences in Iran, shows the relationship between mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic. This survey shows the impacts of COVID-19 quarantine on the social life of medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic (increased the level of stress and effects on daily activities. <sup>3</sup>

A cross-sectional study on 273 students of Pharmacy faculty at Zambia, shows the COVID-19 had negative impacts on the mental health and physical activities of Pharmacy students.<sup>6</sup> In a similar survey study on 927 children and families in the UK, showed that the behaviors and emotional states of children, duration of quarantine were changed. <sup>5</sup>

### Objectives And Methods

The main aim of this survey study is to investigate the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic or quarantine on the social life of University students. This survey was administered using the online questionnaire Google forms platform, which included a variety of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The questionnaire was spreading to students by social media (Facebook, Telegram and WhatsApp).

### Study design

The distribution of the questionnaire by Google online platforms was from 24 April to 2 May 2021. This questionnaire had three parts of questions (demographics, daily activities and learning systems) duration of quarantine.

### Statistical Analysis

This survey was a cross-sectional study with a 75 students sample size from different educational levels and institutions (medical and non-medical students) in Kabul, Afghanistan. Statistical tests were analyzed using IBM SPSS (21.0.0).

### Ethical consideration

The survey study was done in a properly informed manner with consent of all participant.

### Results:

#### Assessments of general demographic information:

This survey study was conducted on 75 students which responded to research questionnaire using online platform abovementioned. The participants were from different educational level with age categories ranging between 16-30 years old. The general demographic information of all 75 students is shown in table (1).

**Table (1): General demographic information of all 74 students**

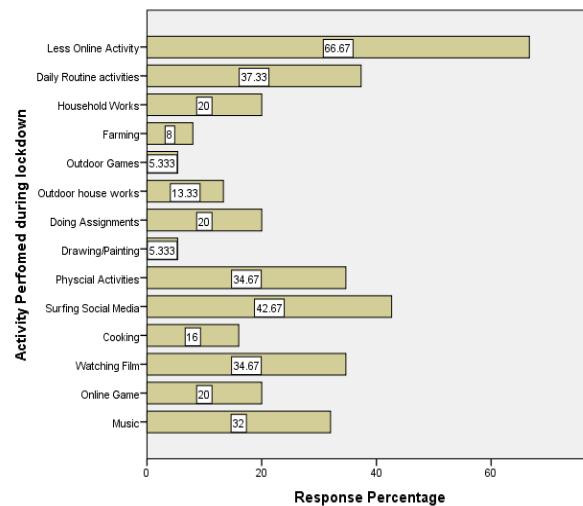
| Variables                     | No of students | Percentages (%) |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age (year)</b>             |                |                 |
| 16 - 20                       | 14             | 18.7 %          |
| 21 - 25                       | 51             | 68 %            |
| 26 - 30                       | 10             | 13.3 %          |
| <b>Sex</b>                    |                |                 |
| Male                          | 54             | 72              |
| Female                        | 21             | 28              |
| <b>Family economic levels</b> |                |                 |
| Very poor                     | 0              | 0               |
| Poor                          | 4              | 5.3             |
| Average                       | 48             | 64              |
| Good                          | 22             | 29.3            |
| Excellent                     | 1              | 1.3             |
| <b>Marital Status</b>         |                |                 |
| Single                        | 61             | 81.3            |
| Married                       | 14             | 18.7            |

**Assessments of daily activities:**

Participants were asked about their activity during lockdown with multiple response questionnaires.

Most of the respondents (66.67%) answered less online activity, while in contrary, 42.67% of respondents surfed the social media most of their times. Daily routine works (37.33%),

Physical activities (34.67%), watching film (34.67%) and listening to music (32%) were other most prominent activities during lockdown based on this survey. Due to restrictions, the least activity was outdoor games (5.33%).



**Chart (1): Daily activities**

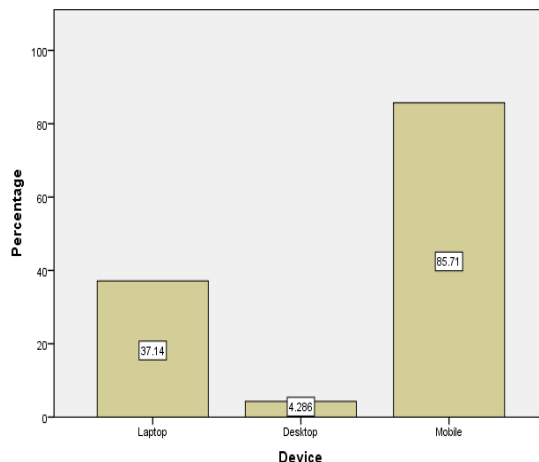
**Assessments of learning**

In this survey, access to different devices, time spent on online activity, type of social media and changes in self-study were observed. Access to device varied amongst participants as 85.71% used mobile devices

while only 4.3% used desktop for their daily activities. On total scale, 88.0% of respondents were online for an average of 0-4 hours while only 4% used to be online for more than 7 hours.

Chi-square correlation test revealed a significant correlation between gender and online hours spent ( $P = 0.005$ ,  $n = 75$ , Pearson Chi-Square (3) = 12.721). Cross-tabulation

procedure showed that male (48) spent at least 0-4 hours on online activities compared to female (18).



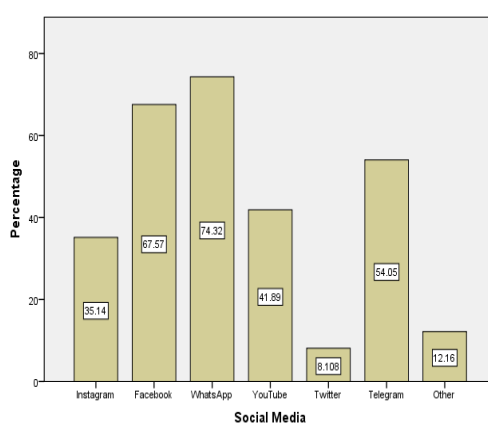
**Chart (2):** Devices used in online study

The most prominent social media was WhatsApp (74.32%) followed by Facebook (67.57%) and Telegram (54.02%). During lockdown, 62.7% of total participant’s showed increased usage of social media while contrary to this fact, 48.0% of respondents reported increase in self-study. Spearman’s rho rank order test did not show any significant correlation between changes in self-study with online activities ( $P = 0.422$ ,  $n = 75$ ,  $r = -0.094$ ). Using the same test, changes in using social media did not showed any significant

correlation with changes in self-study ( $P = 0.364$ ,  $n = 75$ ,  $r = 0.108$ ).

**Assessments of body health**

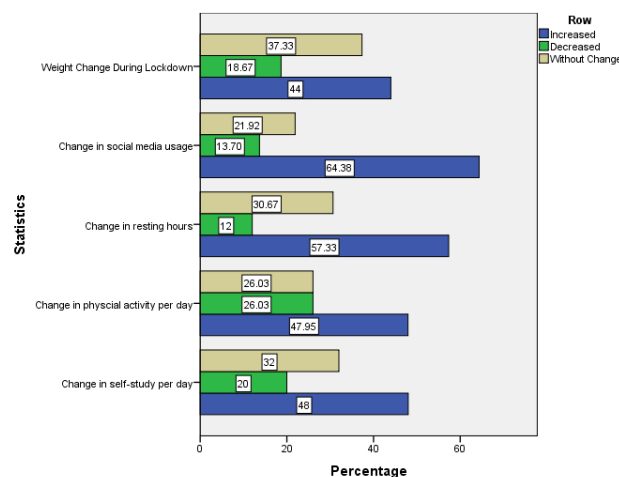
From total respondents, 57.3% reported increase in rest and sleep hours while 30.7% reported no change in sleeping hours. Physical activity during COVID-19 lockdown increased (46.7%). On the other hand, 44.0% of respondent’s weight increased during lockdown while 18.7% was decreased and 37.3% showed no weight change.



**Chart (3):** Use of social media

Spearman’s rho rank order test showed a significant correlation between the time of respondents being online and physical activity ( $P = 0.012$ ,  $n = 75$ ,  $r_s = -0.31$ ). This result describes that increase in online activities decreases physical activity rate. This result could represent the reason for increased weight change among participants during lockdown (44.0%). The Mann-Whitney U test showed there

is no significant difference between changes in physical activity based on gender ( $P = 0.239$ , Mann-Whitney  $U = 528.0$ ,  $Z = -0.237$ ).



**Chart (4): Assessments of body health**

**Discussion**

Living in self-quarantine had impacted all parts of the social life of students. One of the most vast changes in the behavior of university students in Kabul of Afghanistan and daily activities.

Unfortunately, these statics had very different from other countries, because Afghanistan is a backward country with unstable states in economic, security, and urban welfare services.

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