



Impact of Social Media Coverage of Taliban's Takeover on the Mental Health of Afghan Scholars in Pakistan



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Abstract: *Taliban re-controlled Afghanistan on August 15 2021, for the second time in its history. This rapid takeover left immense effects on the lives of Afghans globally. It also affected the economy, politics and routine affairs of the country. Some of the Afghans lost their lives while others lost their jobs. Using thematic analysis, the current study probes the frequency and priority of social media use for information about the Taliban takeover (TTO). This study majorly investigates the effects of social media's coverage of the TTO on the mental of Afghan scholars in Pakistan. The findings of the study show that the majority of respondents spend 3.7hrs on social media sites daily. They spent more time on social media during the TTO than on normal days, resulting in a range of mental health issues. However, the majority of them rely on Facebook as the primary source of information, followed by Twitter and YouTube.*

Key Words: Social Media, Taliban Takeover, Mental Health, Conflict

Introduction

Under the Mula Omer's leadership and Saudi-sponsored Madaras (schools) in Pakistan ([Saidy, 2020](#)), Taliban (Students) was the name of the group, according to Satar Saidy's report

in BBC, The Islamic Tehreek-e-Taliban (Taliban Islamic Movement) entered Afghanistan from the southern province (Kandahar) and announcing "Implementing Islamic Sharia" and fighting "evil and corruption in Afghanistan, in middle of that

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decade, they quickly conquered cities and provinces. In 1995 the Taliban reached their most significant victory, capturing the strategically important province of Herat on the Iranian-Afghan border. As reported by Saidy, a year later Taliban succeeded in capturing Kabul, the capital, in 1996, Burhanuddin Rabbani, the head of the Mujahidin group at that time, moved with his headquarters to Mazar-e-Sharif in the north after Kabul fell in the hands of the Taliban. As one of their first acts in the capital, they killed Mohammad Najibullah, the last president of the Soviet-backed regime who had taken refuge in the U.N. office. By 1998 the Taliban had got control of nearly 90% of Afghanistan.

The Taliban government was only in power for a short time. After the 9/11 al-Qaeda's attacks on the U.S., The Taliban leadership refused to hand over Osama bin Laden. The U.S. invented Afghanistan's new government and The Taliban quickly lost their power over the country and dispersed to the south of Afghanistan and to the border of Pakistan. They began a mutiny against the Kabul administration backed by Western countries and international coalition soldiers under U.S. leadership. The US-led forces eventually ended their fight missions in 2014. However, the Taliban still targeted rural areas by carrying out suicide strikes in mainstream cities ([Hassan et al., 2016](#)).

Finally, The U.S. and Taliban concluded a peace accord in Qatar on February 29, 2020, which is known this agreement as to the "Doha Agreement" under this agreement; all U.S. troops will depart Afghanistan within 14 months if the Taliban adhere to their commitment.

[Saidy \(2020\)](#) adds that U.S. forces continued their evacuation from different parts of Afghanistan and Taliban attacks continued throughout Afghanistan. The only clear move made by Biden, the president of the U.S., was to oust the Americans from Afghanistan, but no other decisions have been made. Eventually, on August 6 2021, when they succeeded in capturing the first province in southwestern Nimrooz, which is bordering with Iran, they moved to capture other cities of Afghanistan.

The Taliban's rapid advance has allowed its militants to seize control of various areas without firing a single shot, finally, on August 15 2021, they surrounded Kabul, and after leaving Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf "Ghani" from Kabul, the Taliban entered to capital and took control over all Afghanistan for the second time after 20 years, unlike before, they seized power in all of Afghanistan's provinces. Afghan people witnessed a great change in history.

Twenty years later, the Taliban's rise shocked the world once more. The rise of the Taliban in 2021 was attributed to the United States, which overthrew the Taliban regime in 2001. Despite billions of dollars spent by the U.S. and NATO to train Afghan security forces, the Taliban took control of the entire country on August 15.

Social Media an Overview

Social media sites are the means of communication or the online platforms where people develop their social interactions with people of similar interests, backgrounds, or real-life contacts ([Akram & Kumar, 2017](#)).

[Twenge & Campbell \(2019\)](#) believe that users utilize social media for numerous purposes which include entertainment, communication, and gathering information. Social media has been the most widely used instrument of communication in the world. According to a data reporter, out of the 7.87 billion people around the world, 4.48 billion people will utilize social media in July 2021., In January 2021, Afghanistan had 8.64 million internet users, which there were 4.40 million social media users which is equal to 11.2% of the total population of Afghanistan. This report shows that among the various media, youth and students are the most engaged in social media because it allows users to easily access a variety of data at any time without restriction, In some cases, People's mental health can be harmed by social media ([Kemp, 2021](#)).

According to a study by [Altai Consulting \(2017\)](#), In Afghanistan, Facebook and Twitter pages, primarily news and political pages, have the most likes and followers, with 80% of users being between the ages of 18 and 30, which are youth.

Facebook

It is one of the most widely used social media networks worldwide. The site was established first on February 4, 2004. [Statista \(2022\)](#) reported that Facebook has grown to over 2.89 billion monthly active users in the world. According to the meta company, at least one of Meta's primary products was utilized by 3.51 billion individuals. (Facebook, Instagram, What's App, or Messenger) each month in the first quarter of 2021.

Twitter

A social media site is a platform which enables users to read and write short messages that are known as tweets. Although we may believe that limiting our posts to 250 words is an ineffective way to promote our business, we will be surprised to learn that this social networking platform has approximately 330 million monthly active users who can exchange content using the 280-character restriction. The use of Twitter in businesses is to engage new clients, respond to inquiries, and share news. Twitter's headquarters are in San Francisco, California, where the company was started on March 21, 2006 ([Statista, 2022](#)).

Youtube

On February 14, 2005, three former PayPal employees established the largest and most well-known video-based online networking site. In November 2006, Google paid \$1.65 billion for it. In terms of users, it is the second most dominant platform after Facebook. YouTube has 2 billion monthly and 122 million daily active visitors and is the second most popular internet search engine after Google (Statistics, 2022).

Mental Health

A study by [Sperry \(2016\)](#) confirmed that a person's mental health refers to their psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. He argue that it has an impact on how we think; feel, and act those who interact with social media, it is natural social media coverage has an impact on human mental health. In adults and adolescents, common signs of mental illness include:

- Fear, anxiety, tension, or worry: Feeling fearful, apprehensive, panicked, or nervous.
- Deep sadness, inability to express delight, indifference to surroundings, feelings of hopelessness, inappropriate laughter for no apparent cause, or suicidal thoughts are all examples of mood shifts.
- Problems with thinking: Inability to concentrate or memory, thoughts, or speech problems are difficult to explain.
- Changes in sleep or appetite: sleeping and eating significantly more or less than normal; substantial and rapid weight gain or reduction.

Withdrawal: Sitting and doing nothing for extended periods of time or abandoning previously enjoyed activities.

Literature Review

Social Media's Impact on Mental Health

Several researchers have found a significant relationship between social media use & mental health symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and negative wellbeing. Because of the nature of the information and interaction provided on social media sites, these studies suggest that social media has a direct influence on mental health and wellbeing.

[Ashford et al. \(2018\)](#) investigated that using social media sites may cause social isolation, despair, insecurity, jealousy, and low self-esteem. Some people encounter incorrect thinking when attempting to compare their life with other users, which could possibly lead

to emotions of melancholy and depression, he says. As a result, vulnerable populations, such as people suffering from mental disorders, are more likely to be influenced by social media, which has the potential to exacerbate mental health symptoms.

[Brailovskaia & Margraf \(2016\)](#) found that Facebook users have been found with higher levels of various claimed personality characteristics and favorable mental health indicators than non-users. [Masedu et al. \(2014\)](#) observed that Facebook use leads to positive impacts on users' mental health aged 25 to 54.. [Naslund et al. \(2018\)](#) revealed that Facebook can assist those suffering from major mental illness in changing their health behaviours.

Twitter has been used to promote awareness of a wide range of mental health concerns, as well as to connect individuals and help them feel less isolated ([Berry et al., 2017](#)). According to [Cavazos-Rehg et al. \(2016\)](#), Helpful and information-based depression awareness tweets were the most common, accounting for 40% of all tweets. According to the findings of this study, health practitioners utilize Twitter to modify and target mental health prevention and awareness campaigns.

Social Media Coverage of War and Mental Health

Most studies show that being exposed to negative or war-related news has an impact on how a person interprets the world around them ([Rozanov et al., 2018](#)). We can see that the length of time an event is broadcasted and watched on television is directly proportional to the severity of the symptoms displayed ([Silver et al., 2013](#)).

Petersen et al. (2014) explored that news can make a person feel anxious or sad. They also found that people are subconsciously more focused on negative or threatening events and that there is a chance of observing regular events in a negative light. When exposed to threatening or war-related news, there is a risk of being exposed to images and video clips portraying actual violence. Even if this has a minor impact, there is a risk of internalizing negative stimuli, which can negatively impact the individual's mood and cause them to feel negative. The images change the overall mood to a negative, resulting in sadness and anxiety, as well as psychological changes.

Maio (2021) concluded that employees in the media who are regularly exposed to unfiltered images of violence or negative images in nature experience emotional distress, and journalists or workers who are regularly exposed to violent video and picture footage score high on the PTSD index, which includes general anxiety, avoidance, and other symptoms. Overexposure to graphic violence causes sensitization in individuals, where they become more sensitive and emotionally distressed when exposed to images, resulting in a numbing process where individuals become accustomed to seeing these types of images or videos, having a negligible effect on emotional responses or observation of war news.

Conflicts in Afghanistan & Mental Health

According to the AOV analysis, In Afghanistan, a country struggling from the aftereffects of decades of strife, the

psychological consequences of armed bloodshed are palpable. Conflict and explosive violence, as demonstrated in this research, not only increase the prevalence of mental health difficulties in a community but also injure and destroy the health infrastructure created to address such conditions. It is obvious that efforts must be made to improve mental health services and raise awareness of these problems in order to effectively treat victims and combat stigma ([Thoompail & Tacchi, 2020](#)).

A study by [Panter-brick et al. \(2001\)](#) on 1011 Afghan students show that Afghans have mental health problems in different aspects of life, which 82.7% having been relocated due to violence or economic reasons

According to the International Psychosocial Organization (IPSO), which is a non-governmental organization that provides professional help and cultural dialogue in Afghanistan, 70% of the country's 37 million people require psychological help. Years of conflict have displaced millions and harmed wellbeing, while terror attacks remain a constant threat in many areas. According to this study's findings, 67.7% of the 699 nondisabled respondents showed depressive symptoms, 72.2% had anxiety symptoms, and 42% had PTSD ([Cardozo et al., 2004](#)).

A recent study by [Davis \(2021\)](#) has indicated that 90% of Afghan war vets with a history of mental illness have reported new or worsened symptoms after the Taliban's takeover. 75% had new or worsening depression symptoms, 74% were experiencing new or worsening angry outbursts, and 64% were having new or worsening suicidal thoughts. 58% have begun or increased their

use of drugs and/or alcohol. After the Taliban retook Afghanistan, one-third of veterans with a history of mental illness began visiting a mental health professional.

Afghanistan's continuous conflict of more than 3 to 4 decades has resulted in human misery and population displacement. In terms of breadth and findings, two research from this country stands out. Depression symptoms were found in 67.7% of respondents, anxiety symptoms in 72.2 %, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in 42%. Women and the mentally ill had worse mental health, and there was a definite link between mental health and traumatic events. As for coping mechanisms, religious and spiritual rituals were implemented.

Scholte et al. (2004) identified resources used for emotional support and risk factors and assessed the current coverage of basic needs. A total of 1011 people aged 15 and above are included in the sample. Almost half of the population has been subjected to traumatic incidents. Structured interviews and self-rating measures demonstrated that PTSD (48%) and depression (41%), respectively, were present in 38.5% of respondents.

Research Methods

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is purely qualitative i.e. using in-depth interviews. The study tends to focus on the impacts of social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) coverage of the TTO on the mental health of Afghan scholars currently studying in Pakistan.

Using the purposive sampling technique, the data will be collected from 6 PhDs and 15 M.S./MPhil Afghan scholars (This is 50% of the total PhDs and MPhil Scholars) who are currently enrolled in different departments of Hazara University Mansehra under the Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarship. The researchers used in-depth interviews which helped them to gain a comprehensive understanding of a little-known aspect of student mental health that arose from social media coverage of the Taliban takeover.

Once the data was collected (Interviews recorded), the researcher did the thematic analysis. Before that, the researcher followed [Braun & Clarke \(2006\)](#) presented a step-by-step procedure for conducting an effective theme analysis in their research. To begin, the researchers familiarise themselves with their data by transcribing it and reading and rereading it while taking notes on their initial conclusions. The researchers then generated initial codes and collected data associated with each code in a methodical manner. The authors then organized the codes into potential themes and ensured that these themes made sense in relation to the extracts and the total data set. The writers later defined and labelled the topics.

Results

A participant mentioned a variety of mental health issues as a result of TTO social media coverage. We discovered a variety of mental health outcomes based on participant responses, as shown in Table 4.

Table 1. The Demographic Information of the Participant is detailed in the Table Below.

Degree Program		Age Average	Gender
M.Phil.	15	26.4	Male
PhD.	06	33.3	Male

*Participants' Demographic Information***Social Media Use**

The data gathered from the interview shows that all participants used social media to keep themselves updated with the daily situation in

Afghanistan. They explained that during TTO and after, the frequency of using social media has increased. They further added that they check their mobile phones to stay up to date on the newest events in Afghanistan, especially information and news from their area.

Table 2. Show the Frequency and Priority of Social Media Use

Time on Internet	5.14 hour/day
Total Social media users	21
Time on social media	3.76 hour/day
Social media site	Frequency
Facebook	15
Twitter	04
YouTube	02

Frequency and Priority of Social Media Use

The data reveals that during the Taliban's takeover, they used social media platforms as information and news source. During this incident, out of 21 participants, 15 used Facebook as the primary source of information, while 4 declared Twitter to be the primary source. 2 respondents said that they get themselves updated via YouTube. The average time spent on social media by participants is 3.76 hours per day. And they use these websites for a variety of purposes. They use Facebook and Twitter to get daily news and information while the majority of them use YouTube to watch academic videos.

For instance, an interviewer asked a participant the following question:

For What purpose do you use Social media sites most often?

Participant replied by saying the following:

Out of three social media sites that you mentioned earlier, I used Facebook for receiving news and information but now I have deactivated Facebook for peace of my mind and I use Twitter for information and news. Also, I use YouTube for sometimes listening to songs and watching learning videos.

In response to a reply from a respondent that he had deactivated his Facebook account, the interviewer asked him the following question:

Why have you deactivated just Facebook for Peace of Mind while you still use other sites for receiving information and news?

The participant responds the following:

Because the majority of people use Facebook and the majority of the information is inaccurate and causes mental health problems, but on Twitter, more often, people publish accurately, so Twitter is relatively better than Facebook.

The results show the platform which participants prefer the most regarding receiving news is Facebook. Out of the 21 participants, 13 of them prefer Facebook the most, while 4 of them prefer twitter and 4 others prefer YouTube.

When the interviewer asked them why they preferred this platform?

A scholar said about Facebook:

"I prefer Facebook to other sites because most of the people use it today, and wherever there is any incident or news happened, people post it on Facebook at the same time and at the same time reach us" the participants who prefer Twitter mostly replied:

"Twitter because we have given a lot of time for it also Twitter gives us accurate information

and it is like a complete news agency that publishes very good and accurate information and news it's very rare that we see inaccurate tweets on Twitter".

A participant regarding YouTube said the following:

"I like YouTube because we can get information whenever we want, along with videos and documentaries, and in our academic section, it helps us a lot to make the most of the instructional videos it contains".

Social Media Sites with High Impact

During the TTO, all of the participants used social media to receive information. The majority of them used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. During this time, most of the participants said that our tendency towards social media had increased and they spent a lot of time on social media because everyone wanted to know about their near and dears, also to get themselves updated about their motherland.

Table 3. Social Media Sites with High Impact during TTO

Sites	Number of Users	%
Facebook	15	71.42
Twitter	04	19.05
YouTube	02	9.53

The impact of Facebook on participants' mental health was more than any other social media sites that I mentioned. For instance, a participant described how he had been affected by Social media coverage during TTO:

"When the Taliban took over Afghanistan, there was a lot of post and news on social media that we followed, and we were very scared. Our

family was at home and we were worried about them and also our relatives and friends. We were worried about our future. We spent our whole life in war, so the Taliban were not out of the past. So when they come back, they have the same idea as the past and we are worried that we do not have good memories from their previous record and then they will do the same thing as before and so they

have no new idea. These people are not familiar with the new world so, what can we expect from them?"

Then the interviewer asked him the following question:

"When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, as you said, you followed this TTO from social media, do you feel alone and stressed?"

The participant said the following:

"Of course, we felt alone also we felt destitute as we couldn't do anything in that situation. we didn't activate any relationship with our far relatives or friends and we did keep in touch with everyone there was so destitute."

Another scholar explained the following:

"Most of the time, I use social media but I call this takeover the darkest day of my life because we have never tried such a revolution. It was the first time in my life that this had happened. We would be notified via Facebook".

The interviewer asked him the following question:

"Can you explain what happened to you on this day, which you said those days were your darkest day?"

He responded the following:

At that time, I had a feeling that we had lost everything that I had and I was nothing and I was no one anymore because I came here to Hazara University. I had a nation behind me. I came here on their behalf and I was an Afghan representative here. When the Taliban came to power over the republic, I felt that I had lost everything, not only

because my diet had changed, but because my spirits were so disturbed that I could not help but cry when I saw the national Flag Day and night. We didn't even express our feelings to him because the hosts were all in a bad mood and we all felt that we had lost twenty years of national dignity.

As revealed from data that most of the Afghan scholars' mental health are affected by Facebook. Out of the total participants, 71.2% of them used this platform for receiving information and news regarding TTO. Twitter was ranked second with high impact after Facebook with 19.3% of users and YouTube, with 9.5% of users, remained in the third position in terms of its impact on mental health.

Mental Health Outcomes

The results of the in-depth qualitative interviews revealed that TTO coverage on social media was a major source of mental health issues for a large number of Scholars. Social media coverage of TTOs caused them mental, emotional, and spiritual problems, many participants said. They believed that the social media coverage they watched on their phones from time to time had a negative impact on their mental health. The interviewer asked participants about mental health outcomes such as anxiety, alone, stressed, depressed, worry, sleeping and eating habits, hopelessness, and missing something. The following table shows the mental health outcomes that the participant described in the interview.

Table 4. Mental Health Outcomes became Apparent after Reading the Transcriptions of the Interview and Looking for Answers to the Research Questions.

Mental Health Outcomes	Frequency
Anxiety	21
Feeling Alone	15

Mental Health Outcomes	Frequency
Stressed	19
Depressed	19
Feared and worried	20
Affected eating behavior	20
Affected sleeping behavior	20
Missing something	20
Tired	21
Taken away happiness	21
Hopeless	21

After evaluating the gathered data from participants' interviews, it was discovered that what actually occurred in Afghanistan caused negative mental health consequences, resulting in negative mental health symptoms in the Afghan scholars. They are still worried about their own and their family's fates.

For instance, a scholar explained the following:

"I was worried because I was going through that situation and seeing those events makes me completely worried. There was a lot of stress. I was worried about my future. I still don't know what will happen, we studied up to this level Taliban don't accept it, we're still worried so there's been a time when we've been isolated for a week".

Thereafter, the interviewer asked the following question:

"Let me know if the social media coverage of the Taliban takeover has made you feel missing something like (Friends and Family)"?

The participant replied by saying the following:

"There were so many things that not only made us feel missed but we lost, we lost our job, we lost the way of our life, the way we grew up and lived our lives. Now we live in a very different reality as we

have learned and what we have done now it is not applicable anymore. We can no longer live in that way, so we have lost so much now. If we look at our society, only our family will accept that we are studying for a doctorate level. No one else in the society and the government will accept and it hurts us."

As a result of the interview, social media coverage of TTOs affected the participants' sleep and eating behaviors, out of 21 participants, 20 of them both affected their sleep and eating behavior.

For instance, a participant said the following:

Of course, before the TTO, my sleep duration was 7-8 hours but after TTO, this duration decreased to 5 hours and now it has become my habit. In this time also, sometimes I even couldn't sleep well because some of those thoughts didn't let me sleep.

Regarding eating behavior, a participant adds the following:

The routine had changed. Sometimes we wouldn't have a meal in a time we were like we were drowning in grief. If that was the case, we would not have had our routine. Sometimes we would never have lunch or a time was left.

In summary, our qualitative results show that participants in this study use social media

for a variety of purposes regarding receiving information and news. They use Facebook being the most popular, Twitter second, and YouTube in the third position, and during the Taliban TTO, the average of usage increased because the situation forced them to use social media to follow events in Afghanistan step by step, as they explained.

The results also show that social media coverage of TTO has caused them to experience mental health issues, as they were asked in the interview about the mental health outcomes they have experienced. Anxiety, Tired, Hopeless and taking away of happiness were the problems, which answer to this question from all participant was “yes”, but everyone describing the various concerns they had.

The second negative mental health outcome that was answered positively affected eating behavior, affected sleeping behavior and missing something. They all felt with mentioned mental health outcomes. There were other mental health issues for which positive responses were given, and they dealt with these mental health issues such as feeling alone, stressed, depressed, and Feared and worried.

Discussion

Social networking sites have a significant impact on people's mental health. Understanding the relationship between social media use and mental health is crucial for using internet platforms to identify mental health consequences and build a better world in a rapidly increasing world where people receive more social media coverage than traditional media. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the world's most po-

pular and widely used social media platforms, interacting from all around the world and allowing people and communities to rapidly access news and information, as well as band together and establish the movement. Its potential to facilitate worldwide information sharing is unparalleled since it can bring together individuals of many faiths, countries, and orientations on a common platform to seek common goals and mobilize reformers. Social media may be used to connect the worlds of many people in a relatively small location by supporting health campaigns and community activities to improve wellness and social engagement.

Our finding was based on the research purpose of this study which looks at the impact of social media coverage of the Taliban's take over on the mental health of Afghan scholars in Pakistan. Qualitative in-depth interviews with Afghan scholars who study at Hazara university through Allama Iqbal scholarship were used to answer “What are the impacts of social media coverage of the TTO on the mental health (anxiety and social behavior or fear and excitement) of Afghan scholars in Pakistan?”, “Which social media site (Facebook, Twitter & YouTube) remained the primary source of information during the period of the Taliban takeover? And which social media site (Facebook, Twitter & YouTube) had a high impact on the mental health (anxiety and social behavior or fear and excitement) of Afghan scholars in Pakistan?”

The study's research objectives were to examine and better understand the overall mental health of Afghan scholars, to be more specific, to determine the impact of TTO on mental health issues among Afghan scholars in Pakistan. It has been well established that TTO

has a seriously detrimental and potentially long-lasting effect on Afghan scholars' mental health.

The qualitative findings for this research in terms of mental health indicate that participants' usage of social media has a detrimental influence on an individual's mental health. Our study shows that social media can and has been utilized to increase mental health via delivering TTO coverage to Afghan scholars who were studying in Pakistan. Our analysis also shows that Social media promoted mental health issues among Afghan scholars by giving people in Afghanistan the ability to promote and share their experiences regarding the TTOs on social media that Afghan scholars impacted with this coverage and caused mental health challenges, making them feel more anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, our analysis shows level up of social media coverage during the TTO had negative mental health consequences. In addition, several researches in our study found that social media use is a contributing factor to different mental health symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, low self-esteem, and negative wellbeing. Because of the nature of the information and interaction found on social media sites, these studies conclude that social media has a direct influence on mental health and wellbeing. Despite the fact that most studies indicate that young people are more vulnerable, adults are also associated with high levels of mental health symptoms as a result of social media use.

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are large platforms where participants receive the most information and news from these platforms.

Our research found that Facebook had a significant impact on individual scholars' mental health, promoting a large number of mental health issues among participants; Facebook users have a direct relationship with mental health issues; 71% of participants said that Facebook was their first source of information, and the reason they prefer it the most is to access events in a short period of time. In Afghanistan, among the social media Facebook has the most users and when an accident occurs, individuals share it on social media, and it reaches a large number of people in a short period of time also, the findings of this study showed that extensive social media coverage of TTO caused a drop in happiness. Common mental health outcomes that surfaced regarding negative impacts included: Anxiety, missing something, depression, fear and worry, effect on their sleeping and eating behavior, tiredness and hopelessness.

Principle Finding

Our results show that all participants use social media for different purposes, especially for receiving information and news. The primary motive for the use of social media was to inform themselves about their daily information and the selected social media sites fulfil this need in full. The findings of this study also show that Afghan scholars were affected differently by social media coverage. Some participants stated unequivocally that the situation in Afghanistan and the arrival of the Taliban had a negative impact on their mental health. The respondents expressed that the daily news and information received via social media disturbed them to a great extent. They feared for the safety of their families and relatives. There were a few of them who had

relatively good mental health symptoms and no longer had concerns about family or friends, but they were unsure about the future and what they had learned so far, and the economic situation had a negative impact on them. They made their way to Afghanistan. These were usually people who were either neutral or whose subordinates had no duties in the previous administration.

Conclusion

Mental health is a broad concept that is influenced by a variety of personal and societal factors. This study describes the social media coverage of TTO on the mental health of Afghan scholars in Pakistan, with the aim of understanding the frequency & priority of social media use for the information regarding the TTO also to probe which social media sites (Facebook, Twitter & YouTube) has highly influenced the mental health of Afghan scholars in Pakistan.

Results of this study reveal that the majority of respondents use a variety of social networking sites and spend 3.7 hours per day. During the TTO, the participants spent more time on social media than usual days, resulting in a variety of mental health issues. The majority of participants use Facebook as their

primary source of information, with Twitter coming in second as well as YouTube coming in third.

The researchers found that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the leading platforms for Afghan scholars, where they get themselves informed regarding their family and friends back home. The findings revealed that Facebook has a significant impact on individual scholars' mental health, creating numerous health issues among participants. Facebook users have a direct relationship with mental health issues; 71.2% said that Facebook was their first source of information, and the reason they prefer it the most is the way to access events in a short span of time.

[Statista Counter Global Stats \(2022\)](#) found that most people in Afghanistan use Facebook more than any other platform and when an accident occurs, people share it on social media due to it reaching a huge number of people in seconds, characteristics. The researchers found that the social media coverage of TTO caused a loss in happiness, anxiety, missing something, depression, fear and worry, affected their sleeping and eating behavior, and tired and despairing were some of the negative mental health consequences that arose.

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