



### **Impact of COVID-19 on Lifestyle in Herat City, Afghanistan**

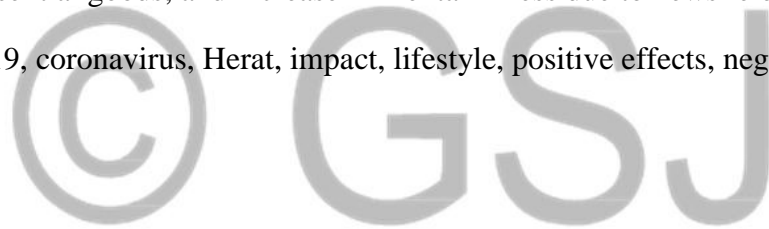
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#### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 outbreak on lifestyle in Herat city, Afghanistan. The statistical society of this research was professors of Herat University. A total number of 91 informants including male and female were participated to fill the online questionnaire. The collected information of this paper was coded by using MS Excel program and then the data was analyzed based on descriptive statistics. The outbreak of coronavirus, in addition to the damage it has caused and endangered communities, has had some positive outcomes on lifestyle. Hygiene, reduction in clothing consumption, staying with family and using leisure time to study are some of the positive effects of coronavirus in Herat city. Negative impacts of COVID-19 include; economic losses of educational centers and halls; harm to small professions; high dependence on social medias; increasing prices of essential goods; and increase in mental illness due to news release.

**Key words:** COVID-19, coronavirus, Herat, impact, lifestyle, positive effects, negative effects



## **Introduction**

Over the past 2 decades, coronaviruses (CoVs) have been associated with significant disease outbreaks in East Asia and the Middle East. COVID-19 is considered one of the seven members of the CoV family that infect humans. This disease is emerged in late 2019, and it has posed a global health threat, causing an ongoing pandemic in many countries and territories (Dhama et al, 2020). The coronavirus triggered a new type of recession that was different from the past triggers of a recession (Ozili and Arun, 2020). For instance, the Asian debt crisis of 1997 was caused by the collapse of the Thai baht in July 1997, which created panic that caused a region-wide financial crisis and economic recession in Asia (Radelet and Sachs, 1998).

The 2008 global financial crisis, which translated to a recession, was caused by loose monetary policy which created a bubble, followed by subprime mortgages, weak regulatory structures, and high leverage in the banking sector (Allen and Carletti, 2010). The 2016 recession in Nigeria was caused by the fall in the price of crude oil, balance of payment deficit, adoption of a fixed-float exchange rate regime, an increase in the pump price of petrol, activities of pipeline vandals and infrastructure weaknesses. The 2010 recession in Greece was caused by the after-effect of the global financial crisis, structural weaknesses in the Greek economy, and lack of monetary policy flexibility as a member of the Euro zone (Rady, 2012).

COVID-19 is a global burden which continues to redefine daily lifestyle-related habits in a significant manner as the pandemic progresses through its different phases. Public health recommendations and government measures taken to abate infection have indirectly impacted food availability, dietary quality, normal daily activities, and access to recreational public settings, social activities, work and financial security (Chopra, et al, 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 and measures of its containment has evident impact on the lifestyle related behaviors in the population (Narayanan et al, 2020). Since the outbreak of COVID-19 around the country, people's lifestyle has also changed. COVID-19 special circumstances require us to have a certain lifestyle. Policies such as the 'stay-at-home policy' and the 'social distancing policy' severely damaged the incomes of restaurants, pub, shops and hotels in many locations, in some cases resulting in them closing down. It destroyed many businesses in the hospitality industry in ways that were not anticipated, and the government failed to take responsibility for the failure of small and large businesses that did not survive the coronavirus outbreak due to the government-imposed social distancing policy and lockdown restrictions (Ozili and Arun, 2020).

The control on adaptation of negative lifestyle related behaviors becomes a crucial preventive step in containing the spread (Pietrobelli et al, 2020). Certain experts believe that a proportion of individuals may have marginally improved metabolism and other health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic by adhering to the following dietary behaviors: (i) reducing meal frequency, (ii) consuming regular (i.e., breakfast (about 40% of daily total energy)), lunch (30% of daily total energy) and dinner (30% of daily total energy) and having good quality meals (Narici et al, 2020). Many import-dependent countries were severely affected during the coronavirus pandemic. Many countries imported their essential commodities from major exporting countries like China, India and Japan, and depend largely on these countries for the consumption of essential commodities. The reduction in goods flowing through the global supply chain, and substantial reliance on China for imported goods, led to shortages of supplies to import-dependent countries as China shut down many of its export factories. This led to increases in the price of the remaining stock of imported supplies already in import-dependent country, which also triggered inflationary pressures on the price of basic commodities despite the general low demand for imports due to the coronavirus pandemic (Ozili and Arun, 2020).

## **Research objectives**

To finds the positive impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle in Herat city of Afghanistan.

To specifies and negative impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle in Herat city of Afghanistan.

## **Research questions**

What positive impact has the outbreak of COVID-19 on people's lifestyle?

What negative impact has the outbreak of COVID-19 on people's lifestyle?

### Research method

**Research design:** This paper is designed on the bases of quantitative research design. A descriptive research method is used for analyzing the research data.

**Date collection and sampling:** The research population was lecturers and professors of Herat University. A total number of 91 informants were participated in filling the validated online questionnaire. The data were collected using Google Form web survey platform. Questionnaire was combined of demographical questions as well as main and sub research questions. The electronic survey questionnaire was designed to assess changes in multiple lifestyle-related behaviors such as healthcare, business activity, following the news and other health related behaviors during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Date analyzes:** Descriptive statistics of the participants’ baseline characteristics and responses were provided as frequency and percentage for categorical variables. Continuous variables were reported as mean and standard deviation or median and range according to the distribution. Collected information was recorded in Excel software and after coding; all research questions were analyzed by using charts, diagrams and tables.

### Research findings

Few preliminary studies from the west have highlighted a negative impact on various lifestyle-related behaviors as a potential implication of COVID-19. However, these studies were done during the complete lockdown phase and suffer from methodological limitations like less representative sample and non-validated tools for data collection. Moreover, the interplay of the severity of COVID-19 infection with different social, economic and cultural constructs in determining the extent of changes in lifestyle-related behaviors might vary from country to country (Chopra et al, 2020).

This study is a web-based survey conducted to understand the impact of COVID-19 on different lifestyle behaviors, severity of this impact across a specific group of informants and COVID-19 specific reasons for changes in lifestyle. The findings indicate that the participants improved slightly in terms of being with family members, taking care of elders and getting engaged with Social Medias. The findings also indicate that decline in physical activity and increase in stress outweighed marginal improvement in dietary behavior, which might have led to a positive calorie balance, further leading to weight gain in the sample. Overall, the prevalence of COVID-19 has had positive and negative effects on people’s lifestyle in Herat city, Afghanistan.

**Figure 1. Gender of Informants**

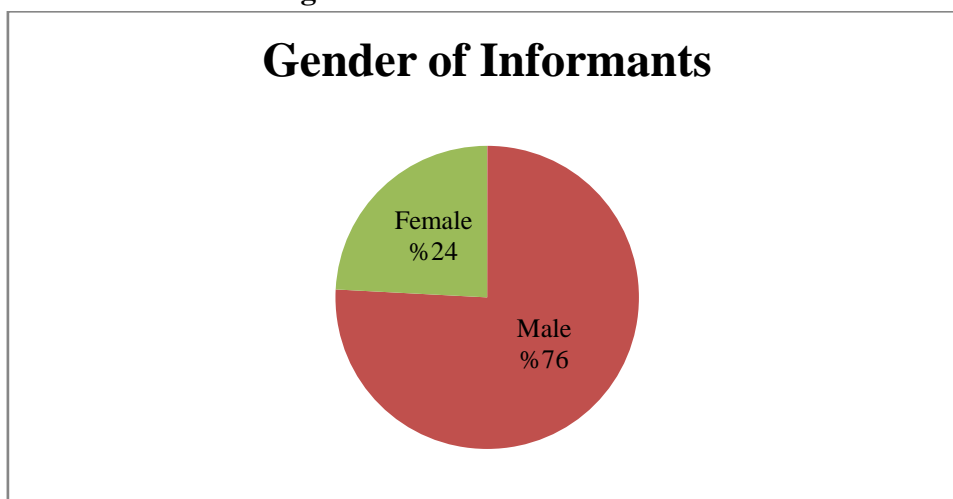


Figure 1 presents the gender of informants in which out of 91 informants 24% of them were female and 76% of them were male. The figure shows that the female participant is in a good position in Herat University.

**Figure 2. Education of Informants**

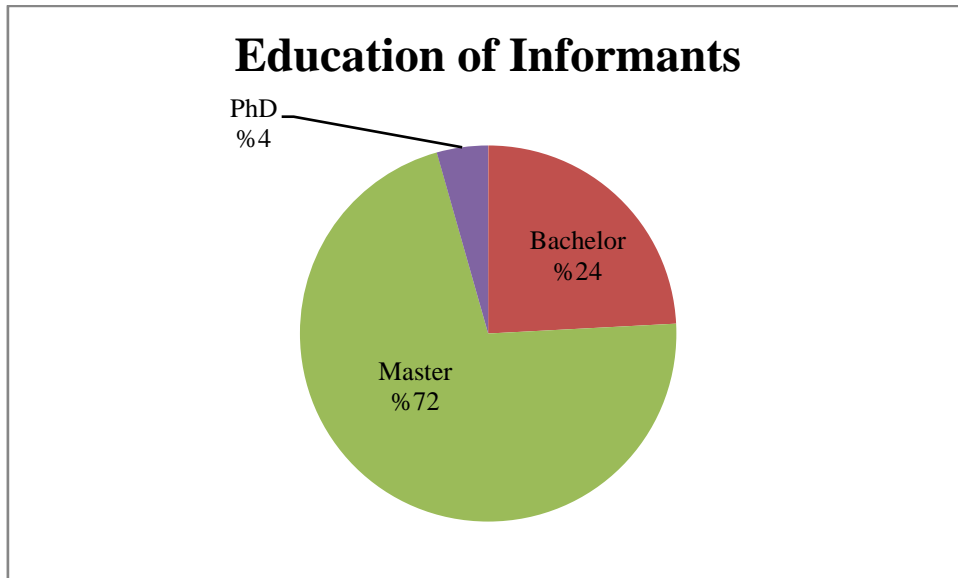


Figure 2 shows that research informants have high academic degree in which 24% of them were bachelor, 72% of them were master and 4% of them had doctoral degree. It was very important to hear from such a group of people about the impact of COVID-19 on their lifestyle. This group of informants was able to interpret the real situation on COVID-19.

**Figure 3. Age of Informants**

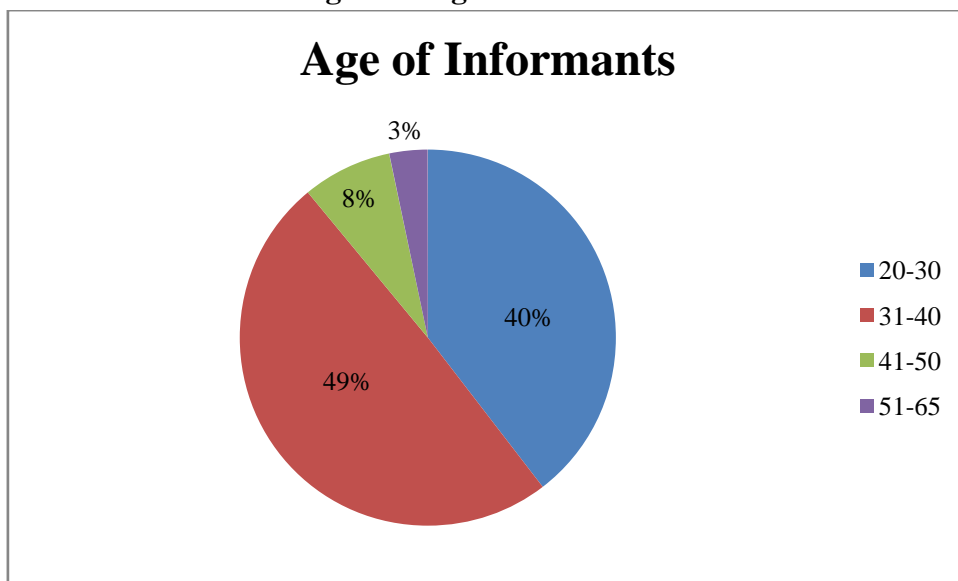


Figure 3 presents that most of informants were young age. As it is shown in figure 3, the lowest range of age (20-30) was 40%, the middle range of age (31-40) contains 49% of informants, 8% of informants were between 41-50 years old and only 3% of informants were more than 51 years old.

**Figure 4. Positive and Negative Impact of COVID-19 on Lifestyle**

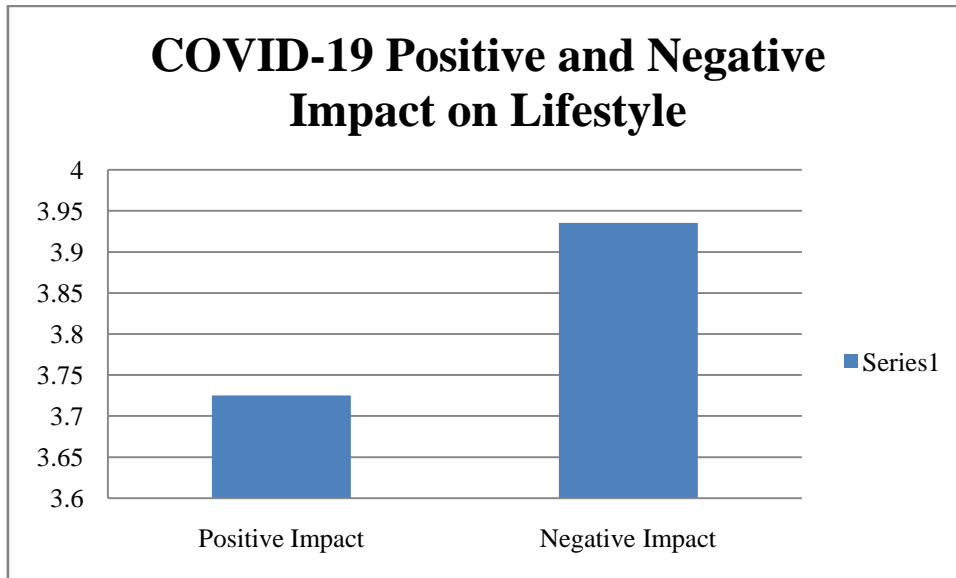
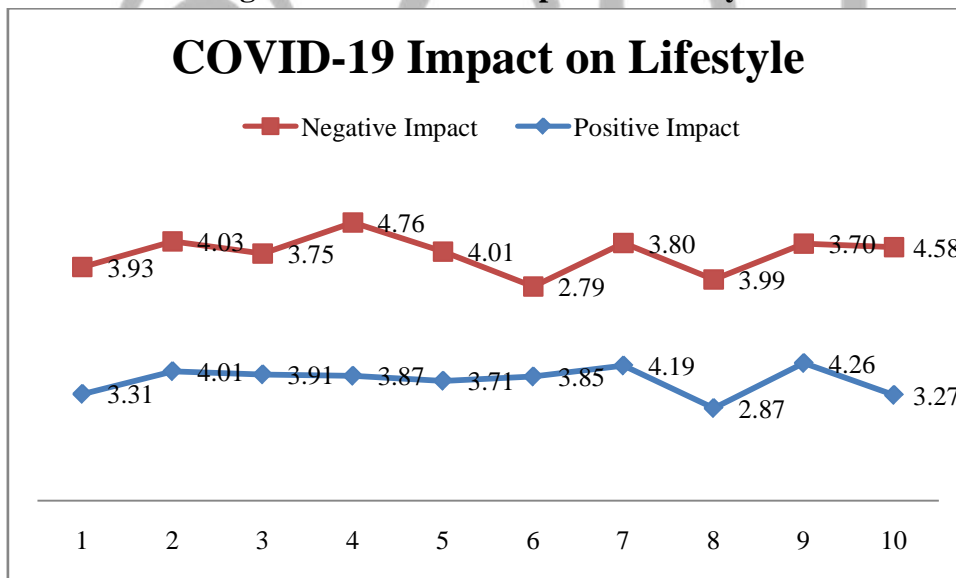


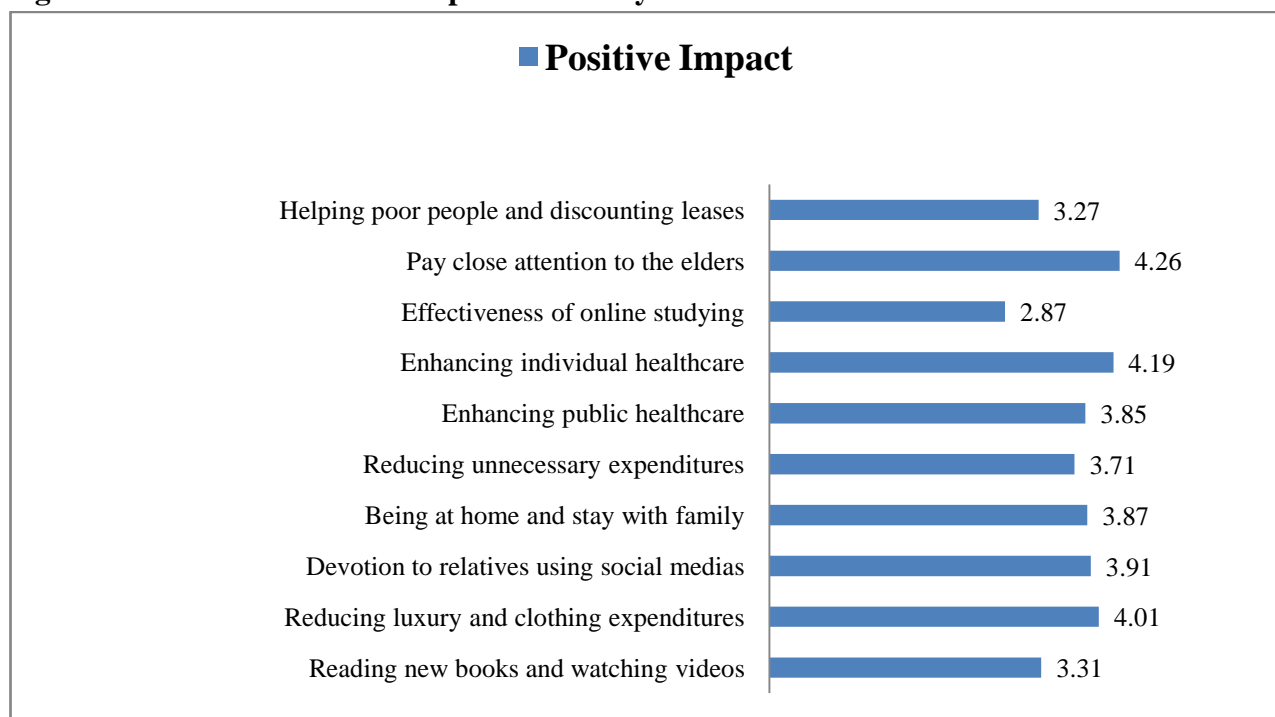
Figure 4 presents that in general negative impact of COVID-19 was higher than positive impact on lifestyles in Herat city of Afghanistan. It is worthy important to mention that experiences such a disease was new for all communities around the world. Therefore, it is acceptable that the negative impact of coronavirus pandemic can be high and force human being to continue their life with many unwanted challenges.

**Figure 5. COVID-19 Impact on Lifestyle**



On the bases of research design, there were 10 questions about the positive impact of COVID-19 and 10 questions about the negative impact. The rate of impact was coded between 1 to 5, which 1 presents the minimum impact and 5 present the maximum impact. Generally, figure 5 shows that the level of negative impact was higher than positive impact.

**Figure 6. COVID-19 Positive Impact on Lifestyle**

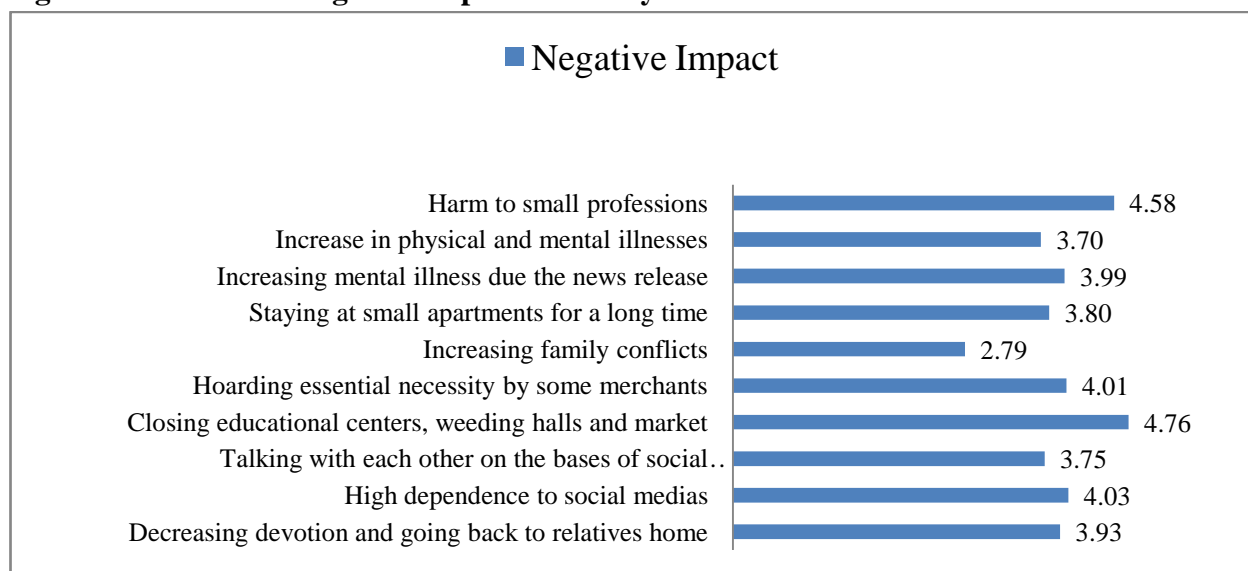


The research questionnaire was including of 10 questions about positive impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle. The figure 6 shows that the top five positive impacts were; pay close attention to the elders, enhancing individual healthcare, reduction of luxury and clothing expenditures, devotion to relatives using social medias, and being at home and stay with family. The other positive impacts of COVID-19 are shown in figure 6 with their level of impact.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistic of COVID-19 Positive Impact on Lifestyle**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Mean	3.30769	4.01098	3.91208	3.86813	3.71428	3.84615	4.18681	2.86813	4.26373	3.27472
Standard Error	0.11766	0.09310	0.09198	0.10031	0.09918	0.09234	0.08402	0.11611	0.07787	0.09641
Median	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3
Mode	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
Standard Deviation	1.12242	0.88812	0.87747	0.95694	0.94617	0.88094	0.80155	1.10763	0.74289	0.91973
Sample Variance	1.25982	0.78876	0.76996	0.91575	0.89523	0.77606	0.64249	1.22686	0.55189	0.84590
Range	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4
Minimum	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Count	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91

**Figure 7. COVID-19 Negative Impact of Lifestyle**



The negative impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle was asked from informants on the bases of prepared questions. There were 10 questions about the negative impact of coronavirus on lifestyle in research questionnaire. Therefore, figure 7 presents the COVID-19 negative impact on lifestyle from the viewpoints of informants. The 5 top negative impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle include; closing educational centers, weeding halls and market; harmful to small professions; high dependence to social Medias; hoarding essential necessity by some merchants; and increasing mental illness due the news release. The decline in time spent in engaging in physical activity was accompanied by increased screen and sitting time. A substantial increment in the number of hours spent in front of the screen for the recreational or work purpose was seen in this study as well.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistic of COVID-19 Negative Impact on Lifestyle**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Mean	3.93406	4.03296	3.74725	4.75824	4.01098	2.79120	3.80219	3.98901	3.70329	4.58241
Standard Error	0.10223	0.09038	0.07749	0.05917	0.08486	0.10542	0.08001	0.09177	0.09944	0.05648
Median	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	5
Mode	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	5
Standard Deviation	0.97527	0.86217	0.73927	0.56451	0.80958	1.00572	0.76332	0.87552	0.94861	0.53884
Sample Variance	0.95115	0.74334	0.54652	0.31868	0.65543	1.01147	0.58266	0.76654	0.89987	0.29035
Range	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2
Minimum	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Count	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91

COVID-19 has limited day-to-day social engagements such as workplace interactions, participation in recreational activities, socializing and eating out which might lead to an increase in mental health distress.

**Conclusion**

COVID-19 has affected day to day lifestyle and economic situation of households in Herat city of Afghanistan. This pandemic has affected thousands of peoples, who are either sick or are being killed due to the outbreak of this disease. As a new viral disease COVID-19 affecting humans’ lifestyle for the first time all around the world. Since the virus was spreading exponentially across the city, Government of Afghanistan has locked down the city for almost five months. During the first two months of spreading of the virus, populations were enforced to follow the strict quarantine in order to control the spread of the

havoc of this highly communicable disease. Despite two months strict quarantine COVID-19 has rapidly affected our day to day life including health, social and economy, businesses, and movements. On the basis of data and analyzing, both positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 are discussed in this paper. Top five positive impacts of COVID-19 on lifestyles include; pay close attention to the elderly; observance of health level; reduce luxury spending; devotion to relatives using social medias; and staying with family. In addition to positive impacts, negative impacts of COVID-19 on lifestyles include; economic losses of educational centers and halls; harm to small professions; high dependence on social medias; increasing prices of essential goods; and increase in mental illness due to news release.

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