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Contents

Power, Resistance, and Black Masculine Identity in Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer*

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Abstract

Attempts to reconstruct black masculinity can be traced to the nineteenth-century slave narratives that challenged white representations of black male identity. In the wake of Obama's rise to presidency and the recent surge in public killing of black men, contemporary African American writers have revisited the antebellum narratives through the neo-slave narrative genre to reconsider the question of black masculinity. Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer* (2019) is one such attempt to return to the Antebellum South to revisit the pain and suffering inflicted on generations of black men, women, and children while highlighting the significance of memory, narrative, and history in the pursuit of freedom. This article analyzes the text's representation of black male subjectivity, agency, and resistance through a conceptual framework drawn from Foucault's theorization of power and resistance; R. W. Connell's model of hegemonic masculinity; and bell hooks's conception of black masculinity. Through a close analysis of the representation of black male subjectivity in the novel, the essay explores how black men resist systems of white male hegemonic power through their memory's journey that not only allows them to understand their extraordinary powers but also redefine their masculinity. The essay concludes that through a representation of complex and multifaceted black male characters, Coates represents models of progressive black masculinity that challenge the received notions of hegemonic masculinity through their past consciousness.

Keywords: Hegemonic masculinity, black masculinity, memory, conduction, Ta-Nehisi Coates

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Ta-Nehisi Coates's debut novel, *The Water Dancer* (2019) has received considerable attention as a neo-slave narrative written by a contemporary black intellectual who enjoys widespread appreciation for his newspaper columns as well as non-fiction works, *Between the World and Me* (2015) and *We were Eight Years in Power* (2017). Emerging in the latter half of the twentieth century, the contemporary neo-slave narratives attempt to address the gap in the slave narrative genre foregrounding the historic impact of slavery on the descendants of former slaves in the wake of contemporary upsurge in violence against African Americans. In the wake of Obama's rise to presidency and the recent surge in public killing of black men, contemporary African American writers have revisited the antebellum narratives through the neo-slave narrative genre to reconsider the question of black masculinity (Siddiqa and Sohail 2023). *The Water Dancer* focuses on the life of its protagonist, Hiram Walker, a gifted slave with photographic memory and the power of Conduction. Mainly a neoslave narrative, the novel returns to the Antebellum South to revisit the pain and suffering inflicted on generations of black men, women, and children while highlighting the significance of memory, narrative, and history in the pursuit of freedom. Given that the novel is modeled on the nineteenth century slave narrative that documented the life and experience of a slave from an autobiographical perspective, Coates's protagonist has been compared to Frederick Douglass owing to the "parallels between the protagonist, Hiram, and the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass" (Grant 2020, para. 4). Like Douglass, Hiram is born to a slave mother and her master; is separated from his mother at a very young age; and proves to be an exceptional child (Grant 2020) who goes through the trials and tribulations of slavery to emerge stronger and with a renewed spirit. However, while both narratives are deeply concerned with questioning the mainstream American society's representation of black men, Coates's narrative also departs from Douglass's in profound ways.

Douglass is preoccupied with the dominant "construct of the 'self-made man', a construct most male ex-slaves embrace[d]" as it was unavailable to them under slavery. Douglass models his reconstructed identity on the Franklinian prototype of "self-made man" (Zafar 1990, p. 101-102) that emphasizes his masculinity to disrupt the feminized identities of black men. In his pursuit of the dominant model of an "autonomous and self-sufficient – masculine" (Drake 1997, p. 92-94), Douglass's narrative

ends up reinforcing the capitalist patriarchal structures that he sets out to dismantle. In emphasizing "his status as a representative American male", he compromises on his community, heritage, culture, and history. The result is a black masculine identity that climaxes in his physical overpowering of the overseer, Covey, in which his readers witness "how a slave was made a man" (Douglass 1995, p. 39). As Drake notes: "In achieving his masculine self-definition through physical power and a resulting measure of autonomy, Douglass turns away from both the maternal body and the maternal line, rendering them "nothing" (1997, p. 102). As such "Douglass's escape from slavery is the culmination of his "rebirth", his emergence into the patriarchy" (Drake 1997, p. 102). What ensues is a "Victorian model of masculinity" that is "precarious at best, and a sham at worst (Butts 2007, p. 58).

While Butts argues that "[o]ne hundred and sixty years later, the path to gaining and/or regaining, the manner of defining, and the spoils of obtaining black masculinity remain the same" (p. 55) as represented in Douglass's narrative, this paper foregrounds a different conception of black masculinity via Coates's *The Water Dancer*. The essay analyzes the text's representation of black male subjectivity, agency, and resistance through a conceptual framework drawn from Foucault's theorization of power and resistance; R. W. Connell's model of hegemonic masculinity; and bell hooks's conception of black masculinity. Through a close analysis of the representation of black male subjectivity in the novel, the essay explores how black men resist systems of white male hegemonic power through their memory's journey that not only allows them to understand their extraordinary powers but also redefine masculinity in relation to their history, community, and heritage. The essay concludes that through a representation of complex and multifaceted black male characters, Coates represents models of a progressive black masculinity that challenge the received notions of hegemonic masculinity through their past consciousness.

Reconceiving Black Masculinity: Discourse, Power, and Resistance

Michel Foucault's writing has long influenced scholarship on colonial discourse and power. In his notable works, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault has established connections between power, discourse, and subjectivity. Foucault contends that human beings structure their sense of reality through discourse which, in turn, influences and controls their thoughts and actions. For

Foucault, discourse is both a source of oppression and resistance thus enacting its destabilizing effects. In a society, various discourses contest to attain power, and power is exerted through discursive practices. These discursive practices in turn produce subjects; hence, Foucault's claim that "power is exercised rather than possessed" (Foucault 1977, p. 26). It is the productive rather than the repressive nature of power which produces binary oppositions that are then used as means of social control and authority. These binaries condition the subjects and others around them to view themselves according to the dominant discourse (Foucault 1978).

These discourses are thus a form of power that creates subjects. In *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault argues that "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere." (1978, p. 93). In *Power/Knowledge* (1980), Foucault reiterates that "power is 'always already there', that one is never 'outside it, that there are no 'margins' for those who break with the system to gambol in" (p. 141). Foucault believes that all social relations are relations of power. As such, the classification of certain segments of population as abnormal, sick, or criminal entails the need for surveillance by those in authority. This surveillance is coded as a discourse, a system of knowledge that maintains the superiority of the dominant power structures over the peripheries. However, power is also interlinked with resistance: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, p. 95). Indeed, resistance is formed "right at the point where relations of power are exercised" (Foucault 1980, p. 142). Whether it is "necessary, improbable" or "spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent", resistance, "by definition…can only exist in the strategic field of power relations" (Foucault 1978, 96). Thus, "like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies" (Foucault 1980, p. 142). It is a product of the power network originally. These "points" of resistance "are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way" (Foucault 1978, 96). Foucault's concept of power and resistance as interlocked provides a useful framework for understanding black manhood as a construction of the dominant discourse that also creates the possibility of resistance.

This dominant construction of black masculinity can be understood through R. W. Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity". Drawing on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Connell theorizes "hegemonic masculinity

as the 'normative' model of masculinity, dominantly white and heterosexual: the "most honored way of being a man, it requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men" (2005, p. 832). Hegemonic masculinities express "widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires" (Connell 2005, p. 838) centered around the core elements of heterosexuality and whiteness. White men like the figures of Maynard and his father in *The Water Dancer* conform to hegemonic notions of masculinity. Although the concept has been widely debated, reviewed, and revised, its basic premise can be summed up as follows: "A set of values established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy" (Jewkes and Morrell 2015, 113). The hegemonic model of masculinity is a useful concept for understanding black masculinity as the dominant discourse that idealizes "hegemonic masculinity" also situates black bodies as others/external to this paradigm. In doing so, it shapes the dominant discourse on black masculinity. Constantly set against white hegemonic masculinity, black masculinity is generally perceived as demonic and savage. Through the history of the U.S. black, men have been varyingly stereotyped as "animals, brutes, natural born rapists, and murderers" (hooks 2004, p. x) so much so that the only possibility of black male visibility is "in relation to the stereotype whether by embodying it or seeking to be other than it" (hooks 2004, p. x).

Connell uses the concept of hegemony instead of domination since the former includes the possibility of agency (2005, p. 841). Like Foucault's interlocked conception of power and resistance, hegemonic masculinity also contains fissures. It is this resistant space where any notion of what hooks terms "counter-hegemonic cultural practice" of conceiving a "liberatory black subjectivity" (hooks 2015, p. 22). In theorizing her notion of a "radical black subjectivity", hooks notes that the narrow spaces of representation available to black men are not the only possibilities; rather, they must view and explore "marginal locations as spaces where we can best become whatever we want to be while remaining committed to liberatory black liberation struggle" (2015, p. 20). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity and hooks's notion of a "radical black subjectivity" within the context of Foucault's understanding of power and resistance provides a

productive framework for understanding Ta-Nehisi Coates's reconstruction of black masculinity in *The Water Dancer*. Foucault believes that structures of power that produce and discipline subjects through various discourses also create the possibilities of resistance. The most significant power structure that black masculinity interacts with is the hegemonic model of masculinity that marginalizes, stereotypes, and subjugates black masculinity. White hegemonic masculinity, as a Foucauldian power structure, gives rise to resistance or a "counter-hegemonic cultural practice" that allows room for reconstructing black subjectivity as "radical". This kind of black masculinity, as is evident in Coates's *The Water Dancer*, neither conforms to hegemonic masculinity nor is constructed in opposition to it. Rather, it draws on memory's power to probe the past for reconstructing it. The essay argues that Coates's black men, especially the protagonist Hiram Walker, resist systems of white male hegemonic power through their memory's journey that helps them understand their extraordinary powers and allows them to recreate their identities in relation to their history, community, and heritage.

Reconstructing Black Manhood

Ta-Nehisi Coates has widely written about social, political, and cultural issues pertaining to African Americans. Coates's non-fiction depicts the agony of living in America as a black man while his debut novel *The Water Dancer*, a neo-slave narrative, traces the plight of black slaves on the Virginia plantations. Influenced by writers like James Baldwin, Coates closely studies the dynamics of institutionalized racism in contemporary America in relation to the history of slavery. In *The Water Dancer*, Ta-Nehisi Coates looks at slavery and its ravages for individuals, their families, and the black community with a renewed interest. *The Water Dancer* explores the political and social implications of the institution of slavery while depicting the way power has come to shape and define the discourse on masculinity in the U.S. Coates's novel brings forth the inevitable interaction of the personal and the political and the way this relationship can be exploited by the writer to challenge and resist the controlling cultural discourses. While writing a neo-slave narrative in the post-Obama era, Coates re-visits the past to lay bare the close interaction of hegemonic structures of power and black manhood in order to challenge the dominant discourses on black masculinity.

A neo-slave narrative set in the American south; *The Water Dancer* narrates the atrocious conditions of black slaves under slavery, especially the pain of separation from their loved ones and the desire to be reunited with them. Hiram Walker, the black protagonist of the novel, suffers the agony of this separation from his mother at a very young age and grapples with his memory and imagination to find a trace of her. Bestowed with extraordinary memory, intelligence, and the power of Conduction through water, Hiram is able to discern the potential of the Tasked (slaves on the plantations) and the lack of the Quality (the white masters), which include his biological father and half-brother. After facing imprisonment and severe torture owing to his attempt to run away with his girlfriend, Sophia, Hiram decides to join the Underground. Working in close unison with Moses, the woman who familiarizes him with Conduction, Hiram hones his own power of Conduction that not only allows him to reunite other slaves with their families but also restore his own connection with his mother.

The novel opens with Hiram Walker driving his white brother, Maynard and his partner over the bridge upon the river Goose, after a hectic race day. The sight of the bridge on the Goose "stained with the remembrance of the mothers, uncles, and cousins gone Natchez-way" (p. 3) brings glimpses of his mother to Hiram. The "awesome power of memory" brings alive the isolated dancing images of his mother reflected in the opening sentence of the text: "And I could only have seen her there on the stone bridge, a dancer wreathed in ghostly blue, because that was the way they would have taken her back when I was young" (p. 3). In the blink of an eye, the chaise enters the water, and suddenly everyone is under water, fighting for their lives. This brush with the memory of his mother furnishes him with the insight to weigh the nature of his relationship with Maynard, who has practically been his ward. Despite being black, Hiram had been assigned the task of supervising his white brother by their father, Howell Walker, on account of Hiram's superior intelligence, faculties, and maturity. In this moment, Hiram recollects how his manhood has always been crushed under the restraining impact of his brother's hegemonic masculinity: "All my life, I had been subject to his whims" (p. 9). Under the institution of slavery, Hiram's manhood is defined by the power struggle against the hegemonic grip of this familial tie of brotherhood. Hiram's agency to compare himself with his brother and become aware of his own capabilities, therefore, shapes his masculinity. He can clearly see that the hegemonic power enjoyed by

Maynard had a reductive effect on his identity and his manhood: "slavery murdered him" and "made a child of him" (p. 7).

It is the institution of slavery that renders the two brothers unequal in the eyes of their father. The enslaved status of Hiram prevents his father from ever acknowledging the blood tie between the two, reserving, for Hiram, "a half smile held frozen in a macabre rictus" which more often hinged on "sinister" (p. 40). While Hiram is often naturally pulled towards his father, he is warned by fellow slaves against trusting the man: "They ain't your family, boy. I am more your mother standing right here now than that white man on the horse is your father" (p. 22). Although Howell Walker is aware of Hiram's extraordinary abilities and intelligence compared to the insipidness of Maynard, he only wants to exploit them to the service of Maynard as he often instructs Hiram: "mind your brother . . . mind my boy" (p. 43). Hiram is as well-suited to be the heir of Lockless as Maynard is ill-suited to be one: "I was better than Maynard, given so much less yet made of so much more" (p. 33), and it is this knowledge which does not allow his father to recognize or acknowledge the former's potential. While Walker bitterly grieves Maynard's death in the chaise accident as he was the last memory of his dead wife, he is unremorseful of the fact that he had snatched the only identity and the missing link that Hiram had with his past and his maternal line: "He had taken my mother from me. But that was not enough. He took my memory of her too" (p. 397). Ironically, Hiram who is made to suffer the pain of this loss by his own father has been assigned the task to save and protect his white brother despite the latter's outrageousness.

Although white men in the novel want to claim hegemonic masculinity, they fail to uphold the badge of superiority that entitles them to it. The degenerate behavior of white men is nowhere more apparent as on the race day. Engaged in insulting, laughter, and drinking throughout the day, these whites please themselves by physically targeting the slaves. The horse race is more an occasion for swearing, betting, drinking, and voluptuousness for Maynard as well. On the occasion of the Social, the season's celebration, at his father's place, Hiram has moments of admiration both for his father's "splendor and regale" (p. 19) and his guests' display of "grace in their smallest movements" and "gentlemanly things" (p. 26). However, his fascination is soon interrupted as he witnesses the flip side of things: "But when they tired of dignity, the bottom fell out" (p. 27). Ironically, the figure of Maynard, Howell Walker, and other white men exemplify "the image of the brute—untamed, uncivilized, unthinking, and unfeeling" man (hooks

2004, p. x), associated with black masculinity in the popular imagination. Thus, the appearance and attitude of the white men in various public and private events make Hiram regret his earlier idealization of white people.

The hegemonic power structures created by white men are perpetually challenged by slaves. Hiram is discerning enough to observe that "[t]hey were no better than us, and in so many ways worse" (p. 62). Hiram's resistance not only lies in comparing himself with his white brother and concluding that he is far better than Maynard, but his agency also lies in his challenging the us/them binary. In fact, his own skills and abilities are way too extraordinary to be matched with any white men around him. His special gift of intelligence and discernment not only unsettles the normative binary created by the structures of hegemonic power but also makes him cognizant of his own identity as a black man and his understanding of superiority and inferiority: "I must live in fear of the Quality, I must necessarily live in fear of myself" (p. 48). Ironically, at the Social, Hiram's smartness and sharpness help boost the dwindling spirits of the guests who succumb to the allure of violence against the slaves present there, with a trick played with cards. The excitement that the guests experience proves that white men's leisure is as incomplete without black men's efforts as is their labor. Thus, virtues like those of hard work, associated with white men are exhibited by black men while the stigmas that the black men suffered are actually to be found in whites. This once more challenges the Quality/ Tasked, hegemonic binary. The negative branding of black men serves as a disguise for the lack in white masculinity so that the hegemonic masculinity constructs subjects of their choice. Ironically, the creators of void in black men's lives, hearts, hearths, and identities who "resented the pride of the Tasked" acknowledge that pride only if it "could be fitted to their profit" (p. 31). Thus, black men are capable of thwarting the dominant discourse created by white hegemonic masculinity through understanding their self-worth.

The novel makes repeated references to white men's use of violence and brutality to refrain black men from asserting their manhood and using their agency and power to resist power structures. Ryland's Jail is one such instance which was a daily reminder for black people that they "existed in the shadow of an awesome power, which, at a whim, could clap them back into chains" (p. 57). Such jails made the desire for freedom a crime. Masters kept their slaves in the dark regarding the Philadelphia freedom laws and threatened their families if they made any reference to freedom. At the same time, they tortured and killed their slaves if they dared to run away. Inflicted

with severe pain and torture, the old man in Ryland's prison succumbs to death. Hiram is engaged in mock manhunts by Ryland's hounds. The number of chasers and the distance covered increases every night to gauge his strength. Deprived of victuals in being "given a pittance of bread and water"; engaged in wild chases all through the night along with other prisoners; and finally, "taken, beaten, and tossed right back into the box", Hiram is made to manifest his suitability for the upcoming tasks to be assigned to him (p. 145). Likewise, Mary Bronson is threatened to follow the commands of her white master in the free state of Philadelphia. She feels tied to her white master through the invisible chain of slavery: "Chain is a power thing…a powerful, powerful thing" (p. 203) she tells Otha, the black man who delivers her from bondage. However, slaves find these acts of white violence liberating. Despite the wild manhunts, Hiram feels to have grown "stronger" and "faster": "I felt freedom … I was growing crafty" (p. 146). The old man liberates himself by confessing before Hiram while Mary Bronson resists white influence by refusing to call her son by the name her white master had given him. Indeed, slaves transform their violent encounters into acts of resistance.

Despite the disciplining tactics of the hegemonic power structures, the agency of black men in the novel lies in asserting their individuality and resisting the normative discourse through their ingenuity. Hiram and other black men around him must pretend to be docile to keep the white men satisfied with their own superiority. Even when he knows answers to the questions asked by Mr. Fields, the tutor, Hiram is forced to fake ignorance. This pretension, like Du Bois's "twoness", can be observed in everything related to black men as it becomes a condition for their survival. The Walker house has been designed in a way that the effort of the Tasked cannot be witnessed. The entrances, exits, and working stations for slaves are hidden so craftily from the eyes of the visitors as if the house ran on its own because it hurts white men's pride to acknowledge the toil of black men. So instead of acknowledging their effort, white men project their deception onto black men. Hiram's uncle, Nathaniel Walker, who is Sophia's master and calls her to his property over the weekends to satiate his carnal desires is full of Biblical references to hide his true self and to impress those who work under him: "And like the dumbwaiters and secret passages that the Quality employed to mask their theft, Nathaniel too employed means to take as not taking, and transfigure robbery into charity" (p. 46-47). White men encourage black men to practice the same deceptive tactics, and that is why

Hiram and other black men have to pretend to be what they are not, thus redefining their masculinity in the process.

White hegemonic power creates two models of black masculinity: one is portrayed through Hiram, Raymond, Hawkins, Otha, Macajah Bland, and other black men working for the Underground while the other is represented by Georgie Parks. The former is defined through resisting the white power structures and helping the slaves find their freedom and join with their families. On the other hand, Georgie Parks, considered "an officer of freedom, of some other life, of an Oregon for a colored man" (p. 62) by black slaves, emulates the ways of white hegemonic masculinity and becomes an agent in the perpetuation of slavery. Parks chooses to work for white men by spying on potential fugitives and is in turn "praised and esteemed by the whites" (p. 55). Envied by Hiram for his apparent freedom and agency and for living "like a man" (p. 59), Goergie Parks advises Hiram to smother the blooming man inside him, insisting that masculinity is no business for black men. Georgie Parks and Ryland's hounds are the disciplining apparatus of white men to control and subjugate the slaves.

However, these conditions of subjugation and oppression provide black men opportunities of resistance and agency in the Foucauldian sense: "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (1978, p 101). The agency of black men in the novel is closely linked with the memory of their traumatic past. This memory not only assists black slaves in envisioning the traumatic past with clarity but also works as the source of knowing their real powers. Their memory fully acquaints the slaves with their past and assists them in embracing their trauma, which helps them shape their subjectivity through the recognition of their extraordinary powers. Hiram's power of conduction is tied with the blurred images of his lost mother water dancing, and the power is triggered by the pain of having lost touch with the maternal line. Hiram suffers the trauma of missing the lost link with the past that will complete his mother's image and give him his identity. His traumatic memory acquaints him with his hidden power of Conduction: "a secret path that would deliver me from Lockless to reunite with my mother" (p. 13). The recovery of his mother's shell necklace, that his father had kept hidden from him, provides him with the missing link to his identity and his power. Similarly, the old man in Ryland's jail is haunted by the traumatic memory of his sinning against his only son and of his inability to honor his dead wife's wish, due to the exploitation of slavery. His agency lies in confessing his past to Hiram and finding liberation. Otha

White, a devoted worker of the Underground narrates his history to Hiram to realize that his memory of whippings and separation from his beloved wife, Lydia, enables him to show love towards the enslaved and find family among other blacks. In this way, the traumatic memory helps the enslaved in not only expanding their families beyond blood ties but also shaping their identity and giving meaning to their existence.

Indeed, black men in the novel reconstruct their manhood in close connection to their maternal line. Hiram's superpower of Conduction is triggered by the faint image of his mother and aunt water dancing. In fact, Hiram has inherited his water conduction power from his mother and his maternal grandmother, Santi Bess, who had been a renowned water dancer at Lockless. His perpetual search for the missing link with his maternal line, the shell necklace that his mother had passed on to him, is indeed a search for identity and a reunion with his lost mother. His association with Thena is in fact a struggle to create a maternal bond that assists him in this search. Thena inspires Hiram by frequently telling him about the dancing skills of his mother and his aunt, Emma. Thena's words of wisdom spoken to Hiram as a child reverberate in his mind as an adult, working for the Underground. The bond he shares with Thena and Sophia in Virginia is reflected in his ties with Kessiah, Thena's escaped daughter, and Moses while in the free state of Philadelphia. He claims to have found "some lost part of myself" (p. 253) in Kessiah. These two women shape his masculinity at an early age helping him to make sense of the broken images from his past and connect these with his present situation. While Hiram inherits most of his extraordinary qualities from his mother and his virtue from Thena, he masters the skill of water Conduction with the help of "Moses of the Shore" (p. 217). Framed after the historical figure of Harriet Tubman, Moses delivers slaves through her power of Conduction. Moses shares her powers with Hiram, "the boy with invincible memory, and Conduction" (p. 232). These powers are triggered by unlocking the power of memory: "To forget is to truly slave. To forget is to die. … To remember, friend…. For memory is the chariot, and memory is the way, and memory is bridge from the curse of slavery to the boon of freedom" (p. 271). Triggered by the memory of his maternal line and powered by the past consciousness of the misery of the enslaved, Hiram, under the guidance of the maternal figure of Moses, is able to deliver slaves from bondage.

Indeed, slaves reject the patriarchal model of manhood and attempt to re-define their masculinity in relation to their maternal line. Having enjoyed

the luxury of freedom and independence that the Underground offers him, Hiram deliberately urges Corrine to send him back to Lockless as a slave. The act defines his male identity as a patriarch who returns to the shackled South to save his beloved Sophia and old Thena, his "only unerring family" (p. 327) making his hometown the space where he can "return for renewal and self-recovery, where we can heal our wounds and become whole" (hooks p. 49). Endorsing Otha White's claim, "A man can't be too long without family" (Coates, p. 205) and obsessed with the voice of his lost aunt Emma "Don't forget, family" (p. 216 original emphasis), Hiram challenges his freedom in Philadelphia: "What was I without Sophia, without my mother, without Thena"? (p. 204) This marginal position chosen by Hiram challenges the stereotype of irresponsible, careless, and absent black men, and his masculine identity emerges as a courageous protector who risks his freedom for his loved ones. Upon his return, he yearns to see Thena with the new realization that the pain of parting with their flesh and blood brings the two together: "I was born and made by this great parting" (p. 325). Hiram is astonished at the way his fellow Underground worker, Otha White, treats Mary Bronson: "with the dignity of a free woman, not an escaped slave" (p. 203) because "We all family up here" (p. 193). Black men value their families and redefine their masculinity in relation to them, defying the master narrative which portrays them as absent fathers, loveless husbands, and ill-bred sons.

The familial ties through the maternal line join black slaves with their heritage. Coates's black masculinity is deeply rooted in African experience: folklore, dancing, and singing. The novel makes repeated references to the ability of black men to narrate and re-narrate their experiences and tell their own stories. The use of the first-person narrative furthers this agency of Hiram to tell his story in his own words. The old man that Hiram meets in the Ryland's jail, and Otha White, his Underground affiliate re-narrate their past to him. Their agency to narrate their past and put that up for perusal by another man brings absolution and penance for the storytellers. Conduction is triggered by the power of the oldest stories slaves have known. Hiram's maternal grandmother, Santi Bess was "a pure-blood African" whose "gift of stories was so prized that the Quality would bring her up during their socials and she would put her stories to songs and rhythms that they had never heard" (p. 279). During his long runs, Hiram's mind is powered by the songs he had sung with his black folks. Having learnt to talk and sing even before he could walk as a toddler, Hiram reproduces every song he hears once.

Water dancing grants Hiram and his people their identity and powers their ability of Conduction. Closely linked with the trans-Atlantic passage in African collective consciousness, Conduction through water to liberate the enslaved, connects slaves' present with their African heritage. Water becomes the liberating medium for black slaves representing a world where power does not govern as it does on the Virginian land. It is under the water of the river Goose that Hiram can shed the "nagging weight" of Maynard's presence as an act of resistance. Ironically, the water current of the Goose that liberates Hiram from the weight of power structures becomes fatal for Maynard, the white man.

Besides memory, imagination and dreaming are the specific traits of black men that render them capable of challenging and redefining white men's portrayal of black masculinity. Dreaming is Hiram's power that not only separates him from the world, people, and responsibilities that chain him but also connects his present with the promise of a future world "where a man can live as a man should" (p. 111). Hiram's imagination makes him escape the humiliation of being checked by the slave traders, the "lowest of low whites" who "gloried in their power to reduce a man to meat" (p. 126). Similarly, while working for the Underground, going through the letters and other papers belonging to slaveholders, Hiram is able to answer every question about that man's life or habits. His acute imagination coupled with his memory astonishes Corrine. And he is himself elated on knowing his powers so well. The act of forging the white man's signatures grants Hiram power "right at the heart of those who condemned us" (p. 169). At the end, memory and imagination coupled with the support of community finally enable Hiram to successfully conduct his people out of their chained existence under slavery towards freedom. The experience also redefines his own identity. Thus, finally, at the end of the novel, wearing his mother's shell necklace, Hiram is able to counter his father: "I wanted him to know that I now knew all that he knew, that to forgive was irrelevant, but to forget was death" (p. 403). The strength of memory, dreaming, and imagination empower black men to counter the normative discourse on their masculinity.

Thus, in Coates's neo-slave narrative, black men confront white hegemonic power structures and reclaim their manhood through their memory's journey, their connection with the maternal line, their community, and heritage. Black men in the novel counter the oppressive power structures in the form of hegemonic masculinity and challenge the negative stereotypes associated with black masculinity. The expansion of the Underground

following Howell Walker's death and Hiram's successful experience of conducting Sophia and Thena out of Lockless demonstrate the Foucauldian concept about the possibility of resistance at the sites of power. Hiram's resolve to work as the Underground agent in Lockless instead of living the life of freedom in Philadelphia, after his father's death, is emblematic of hooks's "radical black subjectivity" that finds liberation in the most marginalized spaces. Through Hiram's choices to return to Lockless as a slave and to serve the Underground, Coates stresses the need for African Americans to connect with their past, their community, and their heritage in order to redefine their identity. While hegemonic power relations attempt to subjugate black men, the novel notes that resistance to power structures through a revisioning of the past is fundamental for African Americans to attain a radical black subjectivity.

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Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements, Protocols (1809-1930) Impacting Pak-Afghan Relations: A Way Forward

Noor-Ul-Amin[1] & Saman Pari[2]

Abstract

This research article attempts to understand the British Imperial Policy towards Afghanistan in the early nineteenth century: Beginning with countering rival Imperial French influence in neighboring Iran and later, expansion of Imperialist Czarist/Soviet Russia into Central Asia. A critical analysis of Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements and Protocols, signed during 1809-1930, reveals, the research argues, that the British took these diplomatic initiatives to: protect British possessions in colonial India and beyond; Expand towards North; And ousting rival imperial powers' influence in the neighborhood. An unintended consequence has been definition, determination and demarcation of borders of modern state of Afghanistan, though, still vulnerable/questioned, especially, in times of stress. Lessons to be learnt by operatives of the successor state, i.e. Pakistan and current Afghan Taliban regime include: ensuring security; reaffirming inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity of respective successor states.

Keywords: Herat, Elphinstone, Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, Barakzai, Sadozai, Trans-Indus, Affirmation, Istiqlal Afghansitan, Sovereignty, Taliban regime, territorial integrity

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Introduction

Multinational Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions and Protocols between states/ countriescomprise important sources of International Law. Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice considers mandatory, applyingTreaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions and Protocols, general or particular, when resolving a dispute (Dr. H.O Agarwal, 2018). All Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions and Protocols recognized and ratified by the contesting States, may be granted preference over other sources of international law. Agreements between: two or more States; or other subjects of International Law creating or intend to create a relationship can be termed treaty. Such agreements, at times, may be referred to as convention, protocol, accord etc. Treaties are embodiment of unequivocal consent of the parties to the rule(s) laid in. Therefore, it became a tendency to transform customary international law into conventional law since consent granted in former can only be implied one.

In the beginning of 19th century British perceived rival Imperial power, France, together with Persia a threat that could invade Afghanistan and British Indian possessions (M. Anwar Khan, 1962).

Latter, nineteenth century-Britain's increased interest in Central Asia can be viewed in terms of rising British alarm at Czarist Russian Empire's expansion into Central Asia. It appears, annexation of Afghanistan or expansion beyond northern imperial borders might not have been constituting, at that time, aims of Britain.

In the beginning of the 19th century Afghan Durrani Empire (r.1747-1818), founded by Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722-61) extended from Herat[i] to Kashmir and from Balkh to Sindh (Razia Sultana, 1993). This undivided Durrani Empire was ruled by Shah Shajua ul Mulk, younger brother of Zaman Shah. In1809, first British mission, headed by Mountstrut Elphinstone[ii] visited Afghan winter capital, Peshawar. Shah Shuja, at that time has been in possession of this undivided empire of Ahmad Shah Abdali(M. Anwar Khan, 1962). Shah Kamran (1789-1842), son of Shah Mahmud, last representative of the Sadozai in Afghanistan and rival to the throne of Shah Shuja, kept on holding a wobbly foot at Herat[iii]. By the second decade of the nineteenth century political divisions in Afghanistan sharpened: The Barakzais (Mohammadzais) held Kabul and the Popalzais (Sadozais) ruled Herat. The weaker Popalzais hunted external assistance to

counter their powerful eastern rivals/cousins. Hence, they invited, both, Persian and Czarist Russian, interference and machinations to Afghan land. Since Herat was neither contiguous to British India nor Czarist Russian dominions, rather separated by a vast Afghan territory, in case of British Empire and Persia, in case of Czarist Russia. Eventually, Afghanistan fell under the British Indian and Persia under Czarist Russian sphere of influence, following the Anglo-Afghan treaty of 1853. Both Afghanistan and Persia had a claim over Herat, concurrently, each supported by its imperial ally (Dr. M.A. Khan, 2005).

Several reasons of Czarist Russian expansion into Central Asia/Turan have been in currency: Nineteenth-Century British historians termed it, continuation of the Czarist Russian traditional policy formulated by Peter the Great (1672-1725), i.e., the conquest of India to reach warm waters. More contemporary researches stress economic factors: Growth of Russian textile industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century; unsuccessful competition of Russian industrial goods in Western markets against superior European products; Russian dependence upon American raw cotton, interrupted initially, due to hostility with Britain at the eve of the Crimean War,[iv] and later caused by the American Civil War.[v] Emancipation of the serfs in Russia in1861, the growth of industry in Russia search for markets for Russian goods and the influence of the military class in Russia, comprised important reasons of the Russian expansion southwards. To thwart perceived threats from France-Persia and Czarist Russia, the British Empire took various diplomatic initiatives and signed a series of Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions and Protocols stated below. For Britain not only they aimed at securing British possessions in India but also ousting rival imperial powers' influence from the region.

Firstly, a treaty was concluded on 17th June 1809, in Peshawar, between Afghan King, Shah Shuja and Mountstuart Elphinstone[vi], special envoy of British Indian Government. It primarily aimed at aborting possible joint French-Persian invasion of Afghanistan. The British objective implied in the treaty had been to save British possessions in India and binding Afghanistan into a defense alliance. The treaty was to protect vulnerability of British Indian Empire from northwest. This brief treaty has been a solid evidence of successful British diplomacy in the region. Article 1, declared Afghanistan an impassable territory for the Persians, located in the immediate proximity of Afghanistan, and for the French, stationed far off Afghanistan. This treaty provided a basis to further friendship treaties to be

concluded, in the future, since it stipulated, "Friendship and union shall continue forever between these two states (Afghanistan and Britain)." The British considered that through Herat, Persia and French can challenge their possessions in India and invade Afghanistan. Hence, fortified Herat by concluding this treaty.[vii]

Secondly, on 9th June 1839, a memorandum was concluded at Kandahar between Major Todd of British Indian Government and Yar Mohammad Khan, a minister of Shah Kamran of Herat to ward off Persian influence in Herat and prevent possible tilt of Shah Kamran towards Persia. By signing memorandum, the British offered Shah Kamran, certain concessions, in Herat. Articles 3, 4, and 5 stipulated that in Herat, both, the British and Shah Kamran, shall work in each other's conformity, the British rather ensured, eliminating any weakness on part of Shah Kamran and Yar Mohammad Khan's descendants in Herat[viii]. The British tactfully bounded up the minister of Shah Kamran, in Article 3, stipulating, the minister shall work in league with the British.[ix]

British also found it imperative, in face of increased Persian influence coupled with secret intrigues of some officials of Shah Kamran with Persians, to enter into a defense treaty under the guise of friendship dealings with Shah Kamran to forestall Persian influence in Kamran's Court. On 13th August 1839, Major E. D' Arcy Todd, the envoy of Governor-General of India, and Shah Kamran of Herat, signed the treaty of Friendship and alliance. A very carefully worded defense treaty in the guise of friendship aimed at preserving British influence in the courts of both, Shah Kamran and Shah Shuja (Trevor Lawrence Borasio 2018). It simultaneously empowered the British to direct foreign relations of Kamran and protect anti-Persian interests of the British.

The treaty provides evidence of a successful diplomatic superiority of the British. Article 2 of the treaty compelled Shah Kamran subservient to the British diplomatic influence, making him a power on the Persian borders loyal to the British. Article 5, tactfully persuaded Kamran end slavery and prevent an excuse to neighboring power to invade Herat. Article 6 assigned British a pivotal role in case of dispute between Shah Kamran and Shah Shuja. Articles 7 and 8 allowed British to handle foreign relations of Shah Kamran. [x]

The official seizure, in 1849, of Sikh *Darbar Lahore Sahib* by the British, resulted into falling of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Abbottabad, Mardan and Dera Ismail Khan into British official control following the

defeat of Sikhs. Simultaneously, Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, a weaker descendant of Barakzai ruling Afghan family occupied the Court at Kabul (Noor-Ul-Amin, 2015). The British desiring Trans-Indus peace and strengthen Dost Muhammad Khan concluded on 30 March 1855 a treaty of Friendship and Alliance. The catchword of this treaty has been 'friend of friends and enemy of enemies'(Lal Baha,1980). Like numerous other treaties and memoranda, this treaty too was a defense treaty enabling the British, maintain authority over newly occupied territories in northwest of British India. Three articles of this brief and concise treaty solely aimed at acceptance of British territorial control over former Afghan lands by the Afghans.[xi]

The Persian refusal to evacuate Herat under Treaty of Persia concluded between England and Persia in 1857 alarmed the British official in India (J. F. Standish, 1966). The situation was complicated further following reported Persian intent to interfere in the territories under control of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1792-1863)[xii]. To thwart Persian design and with drawl of Persian from Herat, a lengthy agreement was concluded between Amir Dost Muhammad Khan and Sir John Lawrence (1811-78)[xiii] and Lieutenant Colonel H.B. Edwards, representatives of East India Company. The agreement enhanced the British subsidy to Amir Dost Muhammad Khan to Rs.100000/ month, to effectively meet Amir's military expenditures to face Persians (Mark F. Honnenm, 2013). The agreement comprised 13 articles manifesting the British desire to entice the Amir Dost Muhammad Khan into their fold in case of a possible Persian incursion into Amir's territories. Besides increasing Amir's subsidy, the articles 4 and 5 tactfully limits the use of this subsidy for the military purpose alone.[xiv] Putting British troops at the Amir's disposal provides further evidence of defense nature of this agreement. The dictum of friend of friends and enemy of enemies fully reflects this too.[xv]

On 21st November 1878 the Second Anglo-Afghan War broke out. The British forces advancing through Kandahar, Kurram and Khyber tribal areas towards Afghanistan, occupied districts of Kurram, Sibi, Pishin, Khyber and Michni Passes. On 26th May 1879, the treaty of Gandmak was concluded between the British envoy Major P.L.N. Cavagnari (1841-79)[xvi] and Amir, Muhammad Yakub Khan. An imposed, by the British treaty, costing Afghans annexation of districts Kurram, Pishin, Sibbi, and Khyber and Michini Passes. Importance of the Treaty of Gandmak lay in that it confirmed stronger British position in the region. The Afghan foreign affairs

were taken over by the British under article 3 of this treaty (Ijaz Hussain, 1985). Under this treaty the British troops could enter Afghanistan at will to quell any foreign threat to Afghanistan. The British got assurance under articles 4-5 of the Afghan Amir due honor and respect to British envoy in Afghanistan. Interestingly, the British began stressing expansion of trade, commerce and communication links with Afghanistan as evident from articles 6, 7 and 8 of the treaty (Amanda Lanzillo, 2022). Article 9 seems to be a prelude to the most [in] famous 'Durand Line Agreement 1893'(Arka Biswas, 2013). This article allowed British to cede control cities of Kandahar and Jalalabad to Afghans. The British admitted temporary seizure of Kurram, Pishin and Sibbi districts. Article 9 of the treaty does allocate no special status to Khyber and Michini passes, neither commits return of these areas to Afghan government in future. The British paid Amir Yakoob Khan[xvii] Stipend to the tune of Rs.0.6 million/month to keep the Amir silent over the important issue of British occupation of Afghan lands. The treaty also dispelled the impression that the British had faced another defeat in Afghanistan as in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42).[xviii] In fact wars were not the deciding factor, only the post-war treaties and agreements defined victory /defeat in concrete terms. The contents of this treaty stipulate British victory, not defeat in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-79).[xix]

Colonel Sir West Redgeway and Privy Councilor Zinoview signed the protocol on behalf of British and Imperial Russian government respectively at St. Petersburg, on 10 (22) July 1887. Despite British and Russian efforts, since 1869, the North-Western Frontiers of Afghanistan had remained unsettled during the reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan (1825-79). The Russian advance, in 1880s, from Caspian to Merv (Mary), alarmed some senior Russo-phobic British-Indian officials. The Russo-phobia resulted into signing of a protocol to settle the north-western frontiers of Afghanistan with Imperial Russia. British Empire and Czarist Imperial Russia concluded an agreement settling North-West frontiers of Afghanistan between Hari Rud[xx] and Oxus (Amu) rivers.[xxi] On Afghan behalf, the British ceded Sarik Turkomans area of Penjdeh, earlier claimed by Afghanistan, to Russians. The Russian Empire accepted Afghan sovereignty over Khamiab, Dukhei to Amu Darya areas. Final Protocol for settlement of North-West Frontier of Afghanistan with Imperial Russia of July 1887, in reality, put a halt upon further Russian expansion into Central Asian region. Following this protocol British Indian Empire became less vulnerable from the north-west than

presumed previously. Consequently, a buffer, between two contending Imperial powers, the British and Imperial Russia, was established.[xxii]

Sir Henry Mortimer Durand (1850-1924), the British Foreign Secretary visited Kabul, in 1893. Primarily, the visit aimed at resolving border dispute between Amir Abdur Rahman (r.1880-1901) and Czarist Russia over the areas situating south and north of River Oxus (Dr. M.A. Khan, 2007). Durand was to reach a casual understanding with Amir Abdur Rahman on the question of Indo-Afghan frontier too (S. M. M. Qureshi 1966). The negotiations between Sir Henry Mortimer Durand and Amir Abdur Rahman led to two agreements signed on November 12, 1893. One agreement was about relinquishing Amir's control over areas located north of upper River Oxus. Hence, Amir's Political and territorial control was to be reduced to the southern part of River Oxus. The second agreement, later termed, as Durand Line Agreement, was signed too (Fida Younas, 2008). The eastern and southern Afghan frontiers, stretching from Wakhan to Persian border with British Indian Empire were demarcated. It is amazing the British Indian Empire not only determined the eastern and southern Afghan frontiers with the British-India,[xxiii] but also with the Czarist Imperial Russia (Mehro-e-Nesia, 1995. The spheres of influence of not only Amir and the British India but also of Czarist Empire were decided, both Amir and the British India resolving not to interfere into others' sphere of influence. In 1809, the British launched against Afghans both, military and diplomatic offensive, eventually culminated, on 12th November 1893, into the signing of Durand Line Agreement.

Almost all the treaties, agreements and protocols, signed between the British and the Afghan rulers, prior to Durand Line Agreement, emphasized two objectives: Firstly, the British and Afghan rulers were not to interfere into each others' affairs; Secondly, the Afghan rulers were not to allow any foreign power use Afghanistan as conduit to attack the British possessions in the region. Durand Line Agreement enabled to fulfill both of the British objectives. As a result of this treaty, Afghanistan turned into mere a buffer between British-India and Imperial Russia (M. Anwar Khan, 1962). Amir of Afghanistan surrendered territorial claim over Swat, Bajaur, Chitral Arnawai/Bashgal[xxiv] valley, Waziristan and Chageh (Chaghi) (Lutfur Rehman, 2021). The British returned Birmal area to Amir. Afghan's loss had been profound, British gains were substantial. The agreement tightly bounded both sides not to interfere into one another's affairs. Keeping in view lust of Afghan rulers, the British doubled stipend to Amir Abdur

Rahman i.e., Rs. 1.2 million/month. Seemingly the British appeased Abdur Rahman for not to object British takeover of Afghan territories.[xxv]

On 26th February 1895, Joint British and Afghan Commissioner defined the Afghan-Baloch boundary from Domandi to the Persian border. Baluch-Afghan boundary westward from Chaman to the Persian border was defined on 13th may 1896. Under Durand Line Agreement of November 13, 1893, a Joint Anglo-Afghan Commission demarcated the border line between Afghanistan and British-India in accordance with a map mutually agreed upon by Durand and Abdur Rahman. This border map lacked necessary topographic details. Therefore, the Commissions during their work faced insurmountable problems. The line was to dissect a single nation. These agreements may be considered annexure to original Durand Line Agreement, full of technical details, covering a period of around two years. The content narrates views, of both accord and discord, of either side, on demarcation, explaining further the original agreement. Resultantly the Durand line agreement has been termed the 'most well-defined' frontier agreement in the world. Amazingly, the term "State" has been used in November 21, 1894 agreement, while defining Afghan-Kurram Frontier. Prior to this no Anglo-Afghan treaties, agreements /protocols, mentioned the term 'state'(Ijaz Hussain, 1985). The term "government" or an abstract/vague not concrete term 'sphere of influence' was used during the diplomatic discourse. The usage of term 'state' recognized politically the statehood of both British-India and Afghanistan and its completion after Durand Line Agreement.[xxvi]

On 21st March 1905, at Kabul, Mr. Louis Willam Dane (1856-1946), Foreign Secretary to the Government of India and Afghan ruler Amir Habibullah Khan (r.1901-19) signed the treaty reaffirming all existing British and Afghan agreements, concluded in the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. It is not clear why the British needed reaffirmation of agreements by the Afghan Amir, Habibullah Khan, signed by his father. The language of this treaty has been at variance to a formally written diplomatic document. For instance, it claims Amir Habibullah Khan said, "I also have acted, am acting and will act upon the same agreement and compact, and I will not contravene them in any dealing or any promise." Amir did not concede all this at his free will, it appears, rather had been coerced/ compelled to concede this. Interestingly, British Foreign Secretary records, "I confirm them (the treaties with Abdur Rahman) and write that they (the British government) will not act contrary to those agreement and engagements in

any way or any time" (Mehro-e-Nesia, 1995). The language of British Foreign Office reflects sense in an orderly manner, however, uttering of Amir Habibullah seem an outcry of a slave.[xxvii]

On 28th February 1919, following death of Amir Habibullah Khan, Amanullah Khan was declared as a new Afghan King. He proclaimed complete independence of Afghanistan declaring holy War (*Jehad*) against the British in April 1919. King Amanullah developed Afghan ties with Russians, Turks, and Emirs, of Bukhara and Khiva, and Muslim Indian revolutionaries. His desire of relations with the British based on equality and complete independence of Afghanistan led to an open war, known as the "Third Anglo-Afghan War". A peace treaty confirming independence of Afghanistan both internally and externally was signed at Rawalpindi on 8th August 1919 by A. H. GRANT, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, and Chief of the Peace Delegation of the British Government, and Ali Ahmad Khan, Commissary for Home Affairs, Chief of the Peace Delegation of the Afghan Government. 'The Afghan Government accept [sic.] accepts the Indo-Afghan frontier accepted by the late Amir', ostensibly understood by many as, acceptance of Durand Line Agreement (Fida Younas, 2008). This peace treaty is a live witness to British anger and displeasure at the Afghans. After this treaty, the British government ceased all kinds of assistance to Afghanistan including stipend to Afghan Amir rather arrears were confiscated. The original treaty does not mention terminating British control over the Afghan external affairs, however, an annexure to this treaty stipulates officially leaving Afghanistan free and independent both in its internal and external affairs(Lutfur Rehman, 2021). Astonishingly, last statement of the annexure, reads 'Moreover this war has cancelled all previous treaties,-Usual conclusion'. The statement declares Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements, Protocols signed prior to 1919, including Durand Line Agreement, if not totally redundant, at least cast effective doubt over their validity. To some, Afghan frontier and Durand Line Agreement, therefore, became suspect too.[xxviii]

The forward-looking young Afghan King Amanullah began efforts to modernize his country soon after Third Anglo-Afghan War. He tried to mend his differences with British government in India launching efforts in this direction since November 1919. He also contacted Russian socialist government of Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870-1924). Russians welcoming the initiative actively pursued and signed The Russo-Afghan Treaty of 28th

February 1921. This treaty provided a basis for bilateral relations, trade, commerce and establishment of full-scale diplomatic relations between the two countries, alarming the British. Hence, Sir Henry Dobbas and Sardar-I-Ala, MehmudBaigTarzi (1865-1933)[xxix] inked an agreement at Kabul on November 22, 1921(Rosanne Klass, 1988). The British reaffirmed Afghan independence both internally and externally (Article I). Both sides reaffirmed accepting the Indo-Afghan frontier as accepted by Afghan government (article v) concluded in Rawalpindi on 8th August 1919, presumably Durand Line Agreement by some (Arka Biswas 2013). Trade, commerce and full-scale diplomatic relations were established under the treaty. The treaty simultaneously reflects three different aspects: On political side, Articles I, II reaffirm mutually honoring Indo- Afghan frontier. British and Afghan governments inserted Article III in the treaty recognizing each other on equal footings. Full-scale diplomatic relations were established between the two states under Article IV,V,VI and VIII. The third dimension, trade and commerce relations, i.e., Articles VII and IX provided for, Transit Trade, a Treaty in the post-independence period between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Establishment of Postal Service between British-India and Afghanistan took place under Article X of this treaty. Frontier tribes, in no way a party to the acceptance of Indo-Afghan frontier (Durand Line Agreement?), constantly caused disturbance to the British India. Article X of the treaty provided for a procedure to solve tribes-related problems through mutual deliberations. The Great Game in Central Asia came to a tame draw following signing of 1907 Anglo- Russian Convention effectively diminished Russian influence in Afghanistan, though British retained some leverage in the Afghan affairs. The 1921 Anglo-Afghan Treaty carried a definite link with Afghanistan's signing of a treaty in February 1921 with Socialist government in Russia. The British, 'so called' masters of statecraft and diplomacy tracing an iota of Russian rather socialist tide inside Afghanistan, responded briskly. The British in November, the same year, signed this treaty with Afghanistan and previously under Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, introduced in 1919, had expressed their intention to remain in India for an indefinite period. Warmer Afghan-Socialist Russian relations could impede rather threaten these intentions, i.e. their Indian possessions.[xxx]

The Anglo-Afghan Trade Convention of 1923 comprising five articles has been an extension of the trade-commerce aspects of Anglo-Afghan Treaty of November 1921.The convention officially regularized the trade traffic between Afghanistan and British-India. This convention had in

fact enhanced the importance of traditional and historical trade links and routes between Afghanistan and North-West and Balochistan provinces of undivided India. It was made compulsory that the trade traffic between Afghanistan and British-India shall follow Peshawar-Khyber-Torkham, Thal-Parachinar-Peiwar and Chaman-Kila-i-Jadid routes. Afghanistan transit goods were exempted from Customs duty under the Convention.[xxxi] In October 1929, King Mohammad Nader Shah.[xxxii] Acceded to Afghan throne. The British government desired to reconfirm validity of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 and Trade Convention of 1923. It is evident that following change of Afghan rulers the British India sought reconfirmation of Afghanistan adherence to previously signed Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements, Protocols, including Durand Line Agreement. Fourth time the two governments exchanged Notes, as earlier successive Afghan Governments had reaffirmed Afghan frontiers ostensibly Durand Line, in 1905, 1919 and 1921 respectively. In 1930 notes were exchanged again between British Government and Afghan Minister in London to reaffirm validity of Treaty concluded at Kabul on 22nd November 1921 and Trade Convention of 1923. The exchange of notes had also reaffirmed the Trade Convention of 1923 enabling the British and Afghan Governments to continue business and trade ties.[xxxiii]

Conclusion

Pakistan, the successor state to British India, claims to inherit all Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements, Protocols, including Durand Line Agreement signed by the British with Afghanistan. Ironically, since 1947, Pakistan neither sought reaffirmation of Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Memoranda, Conventions, Engagements, Protocols, including Durand Line Agreement, following change of rulers in Afghanistan, nor successive Afghan governments ever showed any intention to ratify these treaties….protocols including Durand Line Agreement.

It is amazing to mention that Pakistan has similar objectives to that of British India i.e.: Its possessions are not challenged; ensuring not use of Afghan soil by rival powers against Pakistan. Pakistan launched and promoted armed resistance and diplomatic offensive successfully when Soviets invaded Afghanistan, however, failed in seeking reaffirmation of

Anglo-Afghan treaties….protocols including Durand Line Agreement. Successive changes of rulers in Afghanistan warranted reaffirming Anglo-Afghan treaties….protocols including Durand Line Agreement.

Following promulgation of 1973 constitution in Pakistan; unanimously passed 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010 (without dissent) that included renaming erstwhile NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; merger of erstwhile tribal areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in 2018, have unequivocally defined north western frontiers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan with the State of Afghanistan.

Following Soviet and US invasions of Afghanistan in 1979 and 2001 and their respective withdrawals in 1989 and 2021, various elected or unelected regimes hostile/friendly to Pakistan, dominated Afghanistan. However recent take-over of Afghanistan by Pakistan supported Taliban has provided Pakistan an opportune time to launch diplomatic offensive to seek reaffirmation of Anglo-Afghan treaties….protocols including Durand Line Agreement. It shall effectively deny Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) safe heaven on Afghan soil, and secure Pakistan's territorial integrity (possessions). Pakistan, in return, shall revoke seeking erstwhile colonial sphere of influence, respect Independence of Afghanistan, render assistance in continuity of transit trade, reconstruction ensure non-interference and peace in Afghanistan.

End Notes

[i]Herat is located at 34 20' 30" North and 62 11' 0" East: 2500 feet above sea level. It is situated in the Hari Rud Valley. Its name comes from the Sanskrit word Arya (Husbandman) which after many variations like Aria, Heri, Hiriva finally settled on the present form.

[ii]Elphinstone's book,*An Account of the Kingdom Caubul* first published in London in 1815 by M/S Longman Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Murray is the product of his assigned visit to Peshawar, he could only visit the eastern portion and most information was collected at Peshawar from February to June 1809. It took him five years to compose his data in poona and give the work a book form. He entered the area beyond Indus (7th January 1809) and recrossed Indus (June 20, 1809). It is not mere oral collection of data on Afghanistan but is based on all then known Oriental (Persian) and European books plus travel accounts. Mountsturat Elphinstone was a Scottish peer: his father John was Lt. Governor of Edinburgh castle, whose two sons James and Mountsturat joined the East India Company at very young age and earned political position. He learned both Sanskrit and Persian. Elphinstone served in India for 31 years (1796-1827) retiring as governor of Bombay. Elphinstone remained bachelor, yet his house remained attached to India. He was died in 1859.

iii Herat was seized by Ismail Safavi in 1509 and remained under Persian Influence over a period of two centuries. It was in 1715 that the Abdalis of Heart defied the Persian authority there.

ivThe Crimean War was a military conflict fought (1853-56), Russia lost to an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, the United Kingdom and Piedmont-Sardinia. The immediate cause of the war involved the rights of Christian minorities in Palestine (then part of the Ottoman Empire) with the French promoting the rights of Roman Catholics, and Russia promoting those of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Longer-term causes involved the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the expansion of the Russian Empire in the preceding Russo-Turkish Wars, and the British and French preference to preserve the Ottoman Empire to maintain the balance of power in the Concert of Europe.

vThe American Civil War (1861-65); was a civil war in the United States. It was fought between the Union ("the North") and the Confederacy ("the South"), the latter of which was formed by states that seceded. The central cause of the war was the dispute over whether slavery would be permitted to expand into the western territories, leading to more slave states, or be prevented from doing so, which was widely believed would place slavery on a course of ultimate extinction.

viNapoleon's threat to India via Persia alarmed the British Empire and amongst many missions sent to the Oriental courts, Kabul /Peshawar was assigned to Mountsturat. Shah Shujaa then ruled over Afghanistan/Peshawar

viiTreaty of Friendship and Alliance Concluded with Shah Shuja of Kabul, dated 17th June 1809, C. U. Aitcheson, *Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Conventions, Engagements and Protocols,*

viii In 1818 the Barakzai expelled the ruling house of Sadozais from Kabul, Mahmud, the last Sadozai ruler of Kabul, sought refuge in Heart (r.1818-29). He was followed by his son Kamran (r.1829-42). He was murdered by his Vizier/ Minister, Yar Muhammad in 1842. At the death of Yar Mohammad in 1851, his son Syed Mohammad came to the throne of Herat.

ixMemorandum of the Wishes and Expectations of Yar Muhammad Khan of Herat dated 9th June 1839.

xTreaty of Friendship and Alliance Concluded with Shah Kamran of Herat on 13th August 1839,Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13.

xiTreaty of Friendship and Alliance Concluded with Amir Dost Muhammad Khan of Kabul, dated 30th March 1855

xiiDost Mohammad Khan Barakzai, the titled Amir al-Mu'minin, was a member of the Barakzai dynasty. With the decline of the Durrani dynasty, he became the Amir of Afghanistan in 1826. He was the 11th son of Payinda Khan, chief of the Barakzai Pashtuns, who was killed in 1799 by Afghan Emperor Zaman Shah Durrani.

xiiiLawrence was born in Richmond, North Riding of Yorkshire. His father had served in India as a soldier in the British Army and his elder brothers included Sir George Lawrence and Sir Henry Lawrence.

[xiv]This treaty provided him with one lakh of Rupees a month to rise and army of eighteen thousand men and to receive a supervisory British mission under Major H.B Lumsden at Kandhar

[xv].Agreement entered into by Amir Dost Muhammad Khan for a Subsidy from the British Government dated 26th January 1857, Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13,

[xvi]Cavagnari was the son of Count Louis Adolphus Cavagnari, Parma in the service of the Bonaparte family, by his marriage in 1837 with an Anglo-Irish woman, Caroline Lyons-Montgomery. Cavagnari was born at Stenay, in the Meuse département, France, on 4 July 1841. He was killed on 3 September 1879 during the siege of the British Residency then at BalaHissar in Peshawar.

[xvii]Mohammad Yaqub Khan(1849- 1923)was the son of the Sher Ali Khan. Mohammad Yaqub Khan was appointed as the governor of Herat province in 1863. In 1870, he decided to rebel against his father but failed and was imprisoned in 1874. The Second Anglo-Afghan War erupted in 1878, leading Sher Ali Khan to flee the capital of Afghanistan, and eventually die in 1879. Sher Ali's successor, Yaqub signed the Treaty of Gandamak with Britain in 1879, relinquishing sole control of Afghanistan foreign affairs to the British Empire. The British defeated the Amir Sher Ali's forces. In 1879, Yakub Khan travelled to Gandamak, a village, Jalalabad and entered into negotiations with Cavagnari as a result of which the Treaty of Gandamak was signed whereby the Amir ceded territories to the British and accepted a British envoy in Kabul.

[xviii]The First Anglo-Afghan War was fought between the British Empire and the Emirate of Kabul. The British initially successfully invaded the country taking sides in a succession dispute between Amir Dost Mohammad and former Amir Shah Shujah, whom they reinstalled upon occupying Kabul in August 1839.

[xix]Treaty of Gandmak Concluded with Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan of Afghanistan, for the Restoration of Peace and Amicable Relations with the British Government, dated 26th May 1879,Aitcheson Collection, Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13.

[xx]The Hari River/Herat River is a river flowing 1,100 kilometers from the mountains of central Afghanistan to Turkmenistan.

[xxi]The Amu Darya also called the Amu River historically known by its Latin name Oxus or Greek is a major river in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Rising in the Pamir Mountains, north of the Hindu Kush.The river forms part of Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In ancient history, the river was regarded as the boundary of Greater Iran with Turan / Central Asia.

[xxii]Final Protocol Embodying the Settlement of the North-West-West Frontier of Afghanistan, dated 10 (22) July 1887 Annex to the Anglo-Russian Protocol no 15 in 1886 Describing the Afghan Frontier between the Hari Rud and Oxus, Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13

xxivAmir Abdur Rahman wanted to conquer Bashgal prior to Mortimer Durand's visit to Kabul. Mr. Durand had cautioned about this in 1885. The Afghan troops invaded the valley in 1895, occupied it, and massacred thousands of its residents. The area was then renamed as Nuristan or the land of light. Bashgal was an integral part of Chitral since long and the British officers used to visit it with the consent of Aman ul Mulk, Mehtar (ruler) of Chitral. William Watts McNair paid a visit to the valley in 1883. Colonel Lockhart went to Bashgal in 1885 with the permission of Aman ul Mulk. George Scott Robertson twice visited Bashgal,- in 1889 and 1890- 91. The last visit became possible after he gave a written undertaking that if he encountered any mishap during the trip, the Mehtar would not be responsible for that. George Scott Robertson then wrote a book (The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush), which is still considered a masterpiece about the history, geography, and culture of Bashgal for detail see, Lutfur Rehman,

xxvAgreement to Settle Indo-Afghan Frontier, Signed at Kabul on 12th November 1893 by Abdur Rahman Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13.

xxvi Agreements with Afghanistan Regarding the Afghan-Kurram Frontier Dated 21 November 1894 and Defining Boundary Line from Hindu Kush to the Neighborhood of NawaKotal, dated 9th April 1895.

xxvii Treaty with Amir Habibullah Khan regarding Continuation of the Existing Agreements, between the British Government and Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, dated 21st March 1905, Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13.

xxviiiTreaty of Peace between the British Government and Afghan Concluded at Rawalpindi on 8th August 1919, Aitcheson Collection (n.d); Anglo-Afghan Treaties, Accords, Agreements, Convention, Engagements and Protocol, (Compiled) Volume No.13.

xxixMahmud Tarzi was the son of Sardar Ghulam Muhammad Khan, a prominent leader of the Muhammadzai clan and a well-known poet, who wrote under the pen name Tarzi or stylist. Amir Abdur Rahman banished him along with his family from Afghanistan for political reasons. Mahmud Tarzi attended schools in Damascus and Constantinople, there he came into contact with the European culture and institutions; and closely watched the Ottoman nationalist-revivalist movement and Pan-Islamic views of Jamal Ud Afghani. Tarzi returned to Afghanistan in 1902. Habibullah Khan appointed him the chief of the bureau of Translation for the royal court.

xxxTreaty Between Great Britain and Afghanistan, Establishing Friendly and Commercial Relations – Kabul, 22nd November, 1921.

xxxiAnglo-Afghan Trade Convention dated 5th June 1923. Rules for the Exemption from Customs Duty of Good Imported on Behalf of the Government of Afghanistan

xxxiiNadir Shah was born atDera Dun, in India on the 9th April, 1883. His father the late Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Khan was grandson of Sardar Sultan Muhammad Khan, brother of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, the founder of the Muhammadzia dynasty and his mother was the daughter of Wazir Muhammad Akbar Khan. His mother was a princess of the Saddozai dynasty, who claimed descent from the Mughals of India as well. It was, Amir

Habibullah Khan appointed him as a commander, of a regiment and was promoted to the rank of Brigadier. In 1913 he was elevated to the rank of C-in-C of Afghanistan. On the outbreak of war with British in 1919, he was commanding Afghan forces operating on the Thall (Tal) and Waziristan front, where he succeeded in capturing many British positions in the wake of many reverses on the other fronts. He was appointed as the first war Minister of Afghanistan, but he resigned in 1923 due to the conspiracy of Royal Court intrigues.

[xxxiii]Exchange of Notes between the British Government and the Afghan Minister in London Reaffirming the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 and the Trade Convention of 1923 dated 6th May 1930.

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Emergence of Covid-19 and Viability of Remote Learning: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students of Kinnaird College

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Abstract

The world has experienced a unique phenomenon since Covid-19 emerged and was declared as global pandemic by World Health organization in March, 2020.Emergence of global pandemic has repercussions on every sphere of life and education is not an exception. Academia continued to experience massive reforms globally amidst lockdown during COVID-19 outbreak. Government of Pakistan also took containment measures in the result of which educational institutes were temporarily closed to avoid spread of virus via physical contact. Kinnaird College for Women took measures to complete 2019–2020 academic year and planned for the alternate platform (MS Teams Software) for remote learning. The challenge of Covid-19 was unexpected therefore the prospective measures were unplanned and uncertain and demanded unusual arrangements to save lives. The purpose of the study is aimed at evaluating the conversion from regular learning methodology to distance learning using digital platforms and its impact on undergraduate students of Kinnaird College. The study was conducted through an online survey of undergraduate students enrolled in various programs of Social Sciences at KCW. The research drew results from the responses on viability of remote learning during pandemic. Data was collected through online survey questionnaire and primary data collected was compiled and analyzed via quantitative method of research. The study identified academic challenges for students and the probable benefits of distance learning, the information could be utilized to enlighten practices that can be implemented during crises situation with reference to higher education.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, educational institutes, remote learning, digital platforms

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Introduction

The recent spread of the Corona virus pandemic caused increase in the gaps prevalent in education industry globally. Though, the Corona virus pandemic is new, but it has far reaching impact on humankind. COVID-19 outbreak has created not only disruptions in education systems but also global health systems came to its exhaustion. No country or race over the world is safer yet from the corona virus widespread, and the devastating effects of COVID-19 have engulfed the whole world. Spread of corona virus does not recognize any boundaries and it's swift and huge in its impact. Soon after the spread of disease, it has immensely changed the way of living across the world by restricting people's mobility and activities of everyday life. Remote learning, work from home and self-isolation started dominating the life of humans irrespective of any differences of region, religion and other sorts. Corona virus has not only caused a stop start routine in various countries, but also thousands of people lost their lives especially elderly population and patients with underlying health conditions.

Kinnaird, being the oldest and most eminent women's college of Pakistan offers diverse range of courses for its intermediate, undergraduate and post graduate students. More than 5000 students study at various faculties at different levels. A distinctive and fruitful fusion of education and values has been burgeoning for 95 years at Kinnaird, a distinct place of learning. It was significant to understand the impact of remote learning on students and examining its viability for the learning processes during pandemic especially in early lockdowns.

Apparently started from Chinese city of Wuhan, Corona virus triggered sense of fear and uncertainty around the globe. The uncertain and precarious conditions demanded unusual arrangements in every sector including health and education. In the midst of the pandemonium and the increasing human loss, healthcare administrations are experiencing loss of central control and fracture in numerous seriously influenced nations (Boccia et al. 2020)

The current COVID-19 widespread has resulted into huge damage because of declining central control and fracture of healthcare apparatus available in many countries (Armocida et al., 2020). The COVID-19 flare-up has influenced the countries more having fragile healthcare systems and non technical frameworks. This ultimately has resulted in a serious catastrophe

due to a brisk increment within the widespread flare-up from one region to another (Lai et al., 2020).

In reaction to the COVID-19 widespread, Pakistan enforced a lockdown in many areas towards last week of March, 2020. Schools were closed much early on March 13, 2020, in conjunction with tight control over borders, when it had only 21 affirmed cases. The lockdown was removed on May 9, 2020. Since June 16, 2020 smart lockdown was forced in certain regions having increased no. of cases. In June 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) positioned Pakistan among those ten nations detailing the most significant number of new COVID-19 cases (Maryam Akmal,et al., 2020)

Going to school is the most excellent open approach available to inculcate awareness and aptitude. Whereas time spent at school can be source of amusement and can enhance social abilities and social understanding, from a practical perspective the primary reason of joining school is that it enhances ability of a child. Undoubtedly a generally limited time in school performs this task; indeed a moderately brief period of discontinuity in school may cause problems to aptitude development. The shutting down of educational institutes not only revived the conventional methods of education; the closure moreover challenges a basic assessment interlude and many exams are temporarily delayed or aborted (Maryam Akmal,et al., 2020)

The COVID-19 widespread may also result in influencing the careers of the pandemic year college graduates. The last year of their studies observed many disturbances, students are encountering various intrusions in their appraisals, and finally they are likely to complete their degrees with the worldwide slowdown in economy. It is evident that tapered opportunities and poor conditions at labor market entry would increase acceptance of low paid jobs, and that this will affect careers of many in the longer run. Oreopoulos et al. (2012) suggested that graduates of many programs are likely to observe unending income losses from completing their degrees in an economic depression.

Covid-19 has impacted the education. It not only has impact on the students but also on the way of teaching. The methodology of teaching is online due to which students face a lot of hurdles to access the remote learning. So this study is planned to highlight the impact of this disease on viability of remote learning as well as to identify academic challenges of students during lockdown and prose their solutions. Pandemic and after

effects have become a 'new normal' and this new normal demands changed practices in every sphere of life.

Situation in Pakistan

Besides the obvious health emergency, the pandemic triggered an unexpected learning emergency in Pakistan, for school-going children and university going students. Initially the closure of academic institutes had complete paralyzing effect on the scheduled ongoing term studies and subsequent examination, until online or remote-learning system as an alternate medium of education was introduced. School terminations and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) implemented during the pandemic pressured school administrations to familiarize with advanced methods of learning and communication such as online classes and remote learning using Zoom classrooms, WhatsApp groups, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams**.**

A Timeline of Developments &Steps Taken by the Government

Sr#	Developments	Dates
1.	International Flights Restricted	March 13th 2020
2.	Decisions for prolonged closure of Academic Institutes till April 5th 2020	March 13th2020
3.	Declaration of Standard Operating ProceduresSoPs	March 13th2020
4.	Sindh declared closure of academic institutes	March 13th 2020
5.	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa closure of academic institutes and lockdown	March 13th 2020
6.	Gilgit Baltistan closed the educational institutes	March 13th 2020
7.	The Azad Kashmir government imposed health emergency in result of the meeting of National Security Council. It was concluded that academic institutes will be closed until April 6th 2020 and the	March 14th 2020

	secondary examination were postponed.	
8.	Closure of Academic Institutes officially implemented	March 16th 2020
9.	Punjab is declared the most-effected province from COVID-19	April 10th 2020
10.	Televised education program (Teleschool)	April 13th 2020
11.	The large number of COVID infection is locally transmitted, according to reports 58% are caused by local transmission.	April 16th 2020
12.	Ramadan being the month religious festivities is expected to increase gatherings and crowds. Doctors' association wrote to the government insisting that religious festivities should be reduced by placing restrictions on gatherings in mosques as large number of people over-60 and 70 years of age become susceptible of catching infections while participating in religious practices during Ramadan.	April 22nd 2020
13.	Cancellation of Board Examination	May 7th 2020
14.	Introduction of smart syllabus	August 2020
15.	Vaccination to be given to frontline health workers	January 10th 2021
16.	Nationwide Vaccination drive	February 2021

It was officially announced by the government on March 13th 2020 that academic institutes will close from March 16th 2020 until the reopening is announced considering the health crisis that hit nationwide. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province has large number of school going children who got affected by the situation, according to reports approximately 5 million children were affected. However, alternate sources of education were introduced, keeping in view infrastructural disparities, access to internet made it difficult to make the alternate mode of education possible across all

regions and strata. For large number of students, the course of education came to a standstill. Many dropped out adding to the already high number of Out-of-School-Children in the province (Khattak, 2020).

The spike in the cases lead to the limitation and then complete halt of international flights to most part of the country except Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports. It was largely due to high number of person-to-person transmission of the infection from the passengers landing into the country without getting them tested. The closure of international flights also paved way for problems faced by international students from Pakistan causing concern among the families and parents.

President Dr. ArifAlvi in and exclusive social media message, recommended the nation to be mindful of all the precautionary measures while taking part in mass gatherings, handshaking or physical contact in addition to reduce unnecessary errands and exposure to crowded places, furthermore, guidelines on necessary measures in case if they observe symptoms of flu or coronavirus infection were shared.

Keeping n view the worsening health crisis and meager adherence to SoPs by the larger population Education minister Shafqat Mahmood declared a postponement in the former reopening date for the educational institutes, the termination of academic institutes was stretched to April 5th 2020. Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, declared the termination of educational activities in the academic institutes in Sindh until March 30th 2020, which was further prolonged until May 30th 2020.Khyber Pakhtunkhwa administration also declared the closure of all educational activities until March 31st and extended all preplanned festivities and occasions until further notice as a precautionary strategy, as cases in KP were not confirmed yet. The Gilgit-Baltistan Government confirmed health crisis in the province as cases of coronavirus increased excessively. Academic institutes were further halted until March 31st as a precautionary measure. The most affected province due to COVID-19 virus is Punjab 2,279, followed by Sindh 1,128 (Hashim, 2021).

The Ministry of Education in consultation with the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) came to the conclusion on May 7th 2020 that all the board examination will be cancelled and students of 10th and 12th grade will be considered promoted based on their previous results in board examination, whereas students of 9th and 11th grade will be given a chance to appear in composite examination. However, the decision for composite examination was later dropped and the students of classes 9th and

11th were promoted without examination on condition that they will be assessed for their respective classes on the basis of their performance in the next examination.

The Ministry of Education and the respective examination boards announced their decision to introduce smart syllabus, which is based on reducing the curriculum for the subjects to be prepared by the students in order to attempt board examination (Abbasi, 2020). The decision came in August 2020 when Punjab board decided to introduce a more concise syllabus for the upcoming board examination keeping in view the shortage of time for preparation and the length of course contents. Furthermore, an unprecedented and commendable step was taken by the government to address the education crisis amidst the pandemic, as for the first time Teleschool was introduced on the television sets to be aired from 8am – 6pm on Pakistan Television Network to help the families and parents to homeschool their children(Abbasi, 2020). The courses and content to be broadcasted on the television would cover syllabus from classes 1st – 12th. The first televised session for Teleschool was aired on April 14th 2020.

On 10 January 2021, the government's National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) opened registrations for frontline healthcare workers, who will receive the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Staff in both public and private health facilities will be vaccinated (Gulf Today, 2020).

Research Objectives

- To highlight impact of Covid-19 on viability of remote learning
- To identify academic challenges of students during pandemic /lockdowns
- To evaluate the viability of remote learning platforms
- To examine the contributory factors towards interest of students in online class
- To propose doable solutions and policy imperatives regarding a more responsive education policy in reaching complacency
-

Research Questions

- How Covid-19 impacted the learning processes of students?

- What are the challenges faced by the students during pandemic?
- How viable are remote learning platforms in retention of interest of the students?
- How do the independent factors shape the interest of students in an online class?
- What recommendations could be given to improve the situation?
-

Literature Review

Model
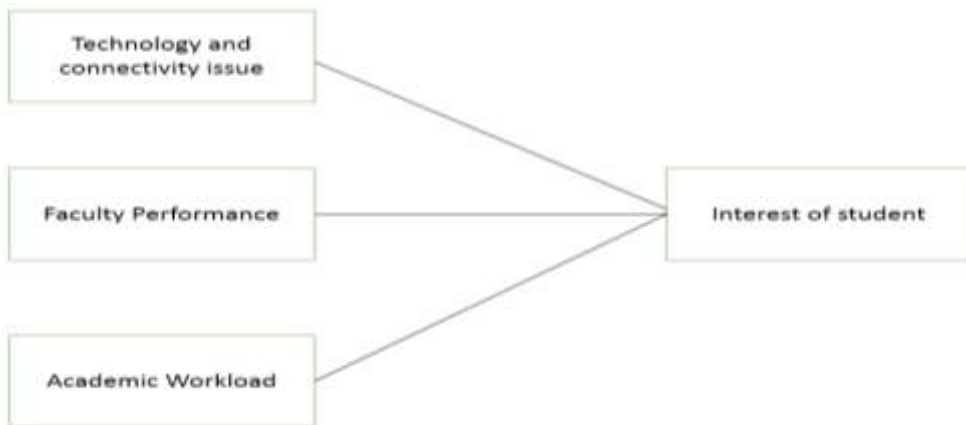
This model is presenting the seeking issue of this research. The model shows that students' interest is a dependent variable, and technology, faculty performance, and academic workload are independent variables. This model analyzes the relationship between the external and external factors, as shown in the above figure. In the online teaching system, the analysis of this practice during the pandemic highlights the role of factors in shaping the interest of students regarding the study. The further discussion draws the conclusion through quantification. The explanatory type of variables provides the cause and effect relationship through the quantification approach.

Osman (2020) argues that remote learning mechanism has been initiated as a result of a global emergency in order to secure and safeguard the lives of community, however, this new learning mechanism is likely to change the education landscape completely in over few years, in the context

of secondary and higher education institutions. The researcher further evaluates in 'Global impact of COVID-19 on education systems: The emergency remote teaching at Sultan Qaboos University' the successes and loopholes in the new remote learning mechanism by assessing variables like accessibility, reliability, efficiency quality control with reference to both student and faculty performances. The researcher concluded that assessment of students' performance in online environments remains to be a challenge to both instructors and students, particularly the assessment of practical skills, technical competencies and teaching practicum. The use of technology is a practical skill; in the online class, the efficiency in the utilization of technological gadgets has been mandatory for the students of developed and underdeveloped countries, in developing countries, the interest of students lacking in class due to the technology (Harris et al., 2015). The educational structure has been transformed after the outbreak of pandemics in the world—the traditional method of teaching increases the opportunity to influence student performance. The teacher influence is positively correlated with students' interest, the students learning efficiency also increase (Weber, 2004). In the perspective of online class the analysis of variation between the variables is seeking point of this research.

United Nations (2020) laments in its special report 'Education during COVID-19 and beyond' on the challenges that are being faced and are likely to be faced by students and academia during the pandemic emergency and measures taken in its result. The major few challenges highlighted in the report discuss the income and education disparity that naturally divides the perception, success-rate, efficiency and reliability of learning alternatives in the pandemic situation. People from underprivileged classes or those from rural residencies, disabled students, female students, and refugees in specific are likely to become vulnerable in the new educational alternatives. . Learning losses also threaten to extend beyond this generation and erase decades of progress, not least in support of girls and young women's educational access and retention. Some 23.8 million additional children and youth (from pre-primary to tertiary) may drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic's economic impact alone. Similarly, the education disruption has had, and will continue to have, substantial effects beyond education. The report also signifies the importance of effective and efficient policy making during this time period, especially on the part of governments and politicians and parliamentarians.

Tadesseand Muluye (2020) in 'the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education system in developing countries: A review' discussed the challenges faced by students and families in the developing countries in the wake Covid19 and the subsequent alternate measures. Alternate measures for continuing education for students, includes distance learning as the foremost priority which requires, internet connectivity, resources, computers, infrastructure. A significant challenge highlighted by the researchers is the ones faced by under-educated families, rural societies, and poor families, as it is likely that students from such environments have digitally illiterate parents and families. In many low income societies children work and support their families, during closure of academic institutes' leaves children from such classes vulnerable for exploitation. Covid19 pandemic has marred employment and economic stability in many parts of the world that may result in forced labor, sexual abuse or even early marriage as an alternative. The pandemic also increased the problems for teachers. The teachers were also affected by the same trauma in recent times. The student's failure, to some extent, depends on the teacher's performance. In Pakistan, the lack of knowledge regarding the utilization of technology exists, but pandemics increased the need for technology, and job challenges increased. The teacher performance impact on the student is positively correlated, and empirical study has proved that teachers' effective performance can be evaluated through the student ratings (Aslam, 2013). In the contemporary era, faculty performance is the most important aspect of online classes. The online and distance problem arise in the education (Gilbert, 2019). The analysis of this aspect in the context of developing countries can highlight the deficit and highlight how faculty performance is impacting the interest of students. Alongside internet and web learning strategies, governments should also focus on initiating television, radio and other alternative means of learning in order to make education accessible to multi array of societies and communities. The countries should design a strategy to scale educational technology, establish zero-rating educational resources on the internet, prepare digital teaching and learning resources, utilizing free online learning resources, use mobile learning, teaching, and grow-up infrastructures.

Sahu (2020) in 'Closure of universities due to corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19): Impact on education and mental health of students and academic staff' has placed considerable emphasis on insuring mental health concerns of students and staff during this time of difficulty and unusual circumstances. The workload of staff increased at rapid pace during this

pandemic. The existing literature highlights that the workload affects the job performance. The analysis of this aspect in teacher's job is very important through positivist approach for the better understanding about the cause and effect in the context of online teaching. Keeping in view the restrictive policies midst COVID-19 lockdown barring regular activities in local system and in global, the lives of academics and students are highly affected, in these circumstances; the academic institutes must adhere to the challenges of the students, especially those acquiring education away from their home countries. The lodgings, living expenses, financial support is a huge difficulty in the way of regular continuation of educational activities, therefore, academic institutes should facilitate the needs of students during this difficult time, by temporarily suspending their student debts and loans. Furthermore in order to fully assimilate with the alternative ways of education in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the changes in admission roadmap should be shared on the websites, and similarly the changed mode of teaching should be visible in modified course material shared with the student body. Counseling facilities for students and training facilities for the staff should be arranged accordingly to make the transition smooth and productive.

Evans (2020) in 'Socio-economic impacts of novel corona virus: The policy solutions' focuses on highlighting the team work and need for coordination among the stakeholders in each realm in order to overcome the challenges emerging out of the pandemic situation. Highlighting the need for cooperation between, governments, multi-national corporations, health and media professional, emphasized that a global call for action is the only way forward as secluded efforts would only survive for limited period of time in these times of global communication and interconnectedness. Several policy solutions have been suggested by the author to fight the challenges during the unprecedented global crisis. Some factors highlighted in the previous discussion that impacts the interest of the student. In the present times, the importance and relationship between independent and dependent variables in online education in Pakistan will provide a brief analysis of this phenomenon for the policymakers.

Butnaru (2021) in The Effectiveness of Online Education during Covid-19 Pandemic—A Comparative Analysis between the Perceptions of Academic Students and High School Students from Romania asserts that the abrupt and involuntary switch from traditional education to online education in the COVID-19 pandemic context has had a negative impact on college

students' and high school students' preparation. These effects are brought on by issues with access to technology and internet networks as well as the lower quality of instruction.

Hypothesis:

H_0: The technology and connectivity issue do not decrease the interest of students.
H_1: The technology and connectivity issue decrease the interest of students.
H_0: The faculty performance is not correlated with interest of students.
H_2: The faculty performance is correlated with interest of students.
H_0: The academic workload is not correlated with interest of students.
H_3: The academic workload is correlated with interest of students.

Research Methodology

The data has been collected through primary sources based on online survey. Collected data is arranged into different figures and analyzed through SPSS. Qualitative data was manually extracted from the SPSS database and themes were established using a thematic framework.

In this research paper quantitative method and explanatory approach of research have been employed. Explanatory approach analyzes the cause and effect relationship. This study is conducted for the analysis of the relationship between the explanatory type variables. 124 undergrad students participated in this study and the participants were from Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore. Data has been collected through Survey questionnaire consisting upon 20 multiple choice, closed and open-ended,Likert Scale questions (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), while they focused on five controlled, dependent and independent variables— demographics, IT issues and connectivity, interest of students , faculty performance and academic workload. The Liner Regression analysis is used for the interpretation of the data. Directive was given to participants to fill the online survey.

Reliability

The reliability of instrument is also tested by using the SPSS software. The Cronbach alpha values explains the strongness of instrument.

The instrument weakness can become the cause of misleading results. The reliability of instrument is very important because it decreases the internal threats to the research.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.644	**14**

This table is showing the Cronbach alpha value of questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha value of this study instrument is .644. There are no concrete evidences available regarding the value of Cronbach alpha. High value is considered more reliable but in this study only 14 numbers of items exist. The increased in number of items could have increased the Cronbach alpha value.

Analysis

Demographic Analysis

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Female**	**124**	**100**	**99.2**	**99.2**
	Total	**124**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

In this study 124 participants were female because this study is conducted in Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore.

Academic Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Undergraduate**	**119**	**96.0**	**96.0**	**96.0**
	Graduate	**3**	**2.4**	**2.4**	**98.4**
	Post-Graduate	**2**	**1.6**	**1.6**	**100.0**
	Total	**124**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The above table shows the educational level of the participants. The 119 participants were from the undergraduate level. 3 participants were from the graduate and 2 from the post-graduate level.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.421ª	.177	.156	.86808	.177	8.602	3	120	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academicworkload, Technologyandconnectivity, FacultyPerformance

There is 17.7 percent variation in this model dependent variable "interest of student" by the independent variables. The more variables can be added in this model and it will increase the R square value. The R square value explains the difference between R value which is 42.1 and R square value. The above table also shows that there is slight difference between R Square and Adjusted R square value.

ANOVAª

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.447	3	6.482	8.602	.000ᵇ
	Residual	90.427	120	.754		
	Total	109.873	123			

a. Dependent Variable: Interest of Students
b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Workload, Technology and Connectivity Issue, Faculty performance

Since our p-value .000 is less than alpha value 0.05 it shows that the model of this study is significant.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 **(Constant)**	**2.495**	**.351**		**7.106**	**.000**
Technologyand connectivity issue	**-.205**	**.093**	**-.185**	**-2.195**	**.030**
Facultyperformance	**.223**	**.070**	**.270**	**3.177**	**.002**
Academicworkload	**.221**	**.068**	**.271**	**3.231**	**.002**

a. Dependent Variable: Interest of Students

One unit increase in technology and connectivity issue is likely to decrease .205 units in interest of students.

One unit increase in faculty performance is likely to increase .223 units in interest of students.

One unit increase in academic workload is likely to increase .221 units in interest of students.

Discussion and results

In the coefficient table two values are important for the interpretation of data sig value and unstandardized B value. Technology and connectivity sig value is .030 and B value -.205. Since our p-value .030 is less than alpha value 0.05 so we reject H_0 and accept H_1. Faculty performance sig value is .002 and B value .223. Since our p-value is less than alpha value 0.05 so we accept H_2 against H_0. Academic workload sig value is .002 and B value is .221. Since our p-value .002 is less than alpha value 0.05 so we accept H_3 against H_0.

There is strong relationship between independent and dependent variables. The technology and connectivity is the reason of lack interest of students. In the coefficient table the B value is showing negative sign which shows the declining of interest. Faculty performance increases the interest of

students and academic workload also increases the interest of student. The model is also fit and r square and adjusted r square values are less because these factors cannot explain all the aspects of interest of students. These factors are explaining the interest of students regarding the online classes and it shows that the technology and connectivity is the challenge for the teachers because it is a constraint in maintaining the interest of student. Almost the large numbers of participants use internet connections. All participants take the online classes by using different technologies in which (Laptop, Ipad/ Tablet, Desktop and smart phones) are available but all these communication ways are creating lack of interest in students. The atmosphere around the students also contributes in the interest, the gap between teacher and students create some barriers between teacher and students. The results show the significant relationship which is important for the maintaining the interest of students in education. The workload can be easy in the presence of effective faculty performance but in online class both roles are the seeking point of this research and the discussion shows that both are positively correlated with the interest of students. The results also highlight effect of independent variables on dependent, in which technology and connection is becoming the reason of decline in interest.

Final reflections

Technological advancement provides ease in daily routine matters. The pandemic also increased the importance of technology in the present circumstances. This trend is increasing the challenge for the developing countries where the use of technology is still the developing phenomena. The current practices show that in the academic institution, distance learning by using technology is harmful to students' interests. The inverse relationship has been observed in light of the results. Technological issues are declining the interest of students in the study. The previous efforts for the improvement of student motivation will be failed due to this challenge. The faculty is maintaining the interest of students by giving the workload. Due to workload, the students take an interest in fulfilling the tasks, but the connectivity issues create a barrier between the interest of students and study. The government could not develop an effective mechanism to overcome this challenge. In Pakistan, the faculty performance maintains the student interest, but amidst of technological and connectivity issues, this effort can be weaker. There is a need to focus on such issues by the

policymakers for the sustainability of Pakistan's educational practices. Faculty alone would not be able to meet this challenge in the present circumstances. The improvement in technology is mandatory under the pandemic situation. This situation highlights that this trend will create other challenges as well in different aspects of life. Certain recommendations could be suggested in this regard.

Training for Teachers & Students

A transition from regular classroom learning environment to virtual learning is an unpredictable one, during the pandemic. This leads to lack of understanding on the part of both teachers and students in performing their roles. Technological inefficiency and computer illiteracy should be seen as a serious matter especially with regards to professional development for embracing the transition in the mode of learning. The teachers are required to have a new and advanced skill-set in order to deliver at the best of their abilities. The same could be said about students especially those who come from a relatively under-privileged social fabric. Another important and significant measure that should be taken is with regards to accessibility of technology, not just the internet but the overall equipment like computer and headphones.

Prioritize continuation of Education and Learning

The priority shall be given to the process of learning above and beyond all other concerns. Especially with school-going children and those who are starting college, it the right time and age that develops the good learning habits, if it is wasted on the pretext of challenges, it is likely to hamper the overall educational growth and foundations required for future. Continuation of education and learning process is thus very important regardless of the medium used. It could be one-on-one parent-child learning process or remote learning.

Quality of Education

Keeping in view the changed mode of education as an alternative to the regular learning system, it is important to develop educational and learning toolkit which is appropriate for this medium of instruction. The type

of assessments may be changed depending upon the quality of learning attached to each type in this new mode of learning environment.

Health and Technology

As evident from the results of the study, the workload on teachers and students could hamper the interest of students and quality of learning. It is imperative to emphasize on the health hazards of the alternative medium of learning in shape of remote learning through internet devices and gadgets as excessive usage of technological devices are likely to cause health problems related to sight, obesity and others.

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Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Security Challenges

Warisha Rashid[1]

Abstract

This paper examines Pakistan's complex foreign policy, discussing its historical development, key security issues, and its careful balancing in a changing global context. The main focus of this study is on the long-standing territorial conflict between Pakistan and India, especially over Kashmir, which had a profound impact on the concept. The impact of Afghanistan's security situation on Pakistan's stability and active involvement in the country and internationally between counterterrorism policies has been highlighted in this paper. Pakistan's security concerns are further complicated by the availability of nuclear capability, which requires careful balancing to ensure regional stability. The paper highlights the opportunities for Pakistan in the face of challenges, stressing the importance of a pragmatic and scholarly approach. In the final section, the paper is based on several strategies that combine security concerns with globalization, economic cooperation, and diplomatic efforts Pakistan can manage its complex foreign policy effectively implement and implement such an approach in support of global non-proliferation policies, counter-terrorism efforts, and regional stability

Keywords: Partition, regional conflict, counterterrorism, nuclear security, regional stability

Introduction

A complex historical background and a wide range of security concerns have molded Pakistan's foreign policy, which has affected its approach to local and international events. Pakistan's foreign policy has been impacted by a complex historical backdrop and a wide range of security issues, which have shaped its approach to local and international affairs. Pakistan has struggled with territorial disputes since its founding in 1947,

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following the division of British India, particularly over the disputed territory of Kashmir. At the same time, Pakistan has had to negotiate the nuanced nature of its ties with India. In addition, Pakistan has had to deal with serious security issues brought on by its closeness to Afghanistan as well as the spread of terrorism and extremism in the region. Pakistan's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons in reaction to India's nuclear tests further complicated its foreign policy and emphasized the fine line it must walk to preserve regional security (Fani & Ishaque, 2005). Pakistan actively participates in counterterrorism initiatives, places an emphasis on nuclear security, and works to address such security challenges. This paper lays the groundwork for examining Pakistan's foreign policy's historical backdrop, major security concerns, possibilities, and difficulties while underlining the complex factors that underpin the country's regional and international relations.

Pakistan's foreign policy is at a pivotal point in the constantly changing context of international relations, necessitating a thorough and nuanced strategy to solve the issues and embrace the possibilities that lie ahead. Pakistan's strategic vision and goals are shaped by the historical context of its post-partition foreign policy. In particular, the Kashmir dispute, which has long been a major security issue, follows its impact on regional stability and foreign policy decisions of Pakistan. Moreover, the security situation in neighboring Afghanistan greatly influences Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan faced major security challenges due to decades of conflict, Soviet aggression, and subsequent acts of terrorism. Pakistan has been actively engaged in counterterrorism programs based on local and international partnerships to promote peace and fight terrorism in the region (Khan, 2018).

The fact that Pakistan has nuclear weapons also adds another layer of complexity to foreign policy analysis. Due to a perceived conventional military disparity with India, the quest for a credible minimum deterrence posture has highlighted the need for nuclear security and non-proliferation. While Pakistan has supported regional disarmament and shown its dedication to global non-proliferation efforts, there is still a need to address international concerns and ensure openness in nuclear-related operations. Pakistan's foreign policy also encounters possibilities as well as difficulties. Regional stability depends on maintaining a healthy relationship with India, resolving territorial disputes amicably, and fostering communication. Significant and needing a careful balancing act by Pakistan is required

regarding its concerns over Indian influence, and the necessity for a secure Afghanistan (Mukherjee & Malone, 2011). Opportunities for regional and international collaboration can be found by utilizing economic negotiations, for instance, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and by diversifying economic alliances. The key to managing these intricacies is to take a thorough and academic approach. Pakistan can effectively build its foreign policy objectives by assessing the changing security environment, tackling the sources of extremism, bolstering governance and the rule of law, and implementing multifaceted solutions. Its attempts to fight against transnational terrorist networks bolstered by continued interaction with foreign partners, the sharing of best practices, and active involvement in anti-terrorism conferences. Pakistan's foreign policy ultimately aims to protect its national security objectives while promoting stability in the region and world peace (Bell, 2013). A proactive and adaptable strategy that combines security issues with diplomatic efforts, economic collaboration, and global engagement will be vital in determining Pakistan's position on the world stage as the country meets the problems of the present and makes preparations for the future (Pande, 2014).

Historical Context of Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The partition of British India in 1947, which resulted in the formation of India and Pakistan forms the historical backdrop of Pakistan's foreign policy. Due to the partition, ties between the two nations became complicated and unstable, and disagreements over land, resources, and Kashmir's status continue to this day. Pakistan's foreign policy in the early years after partition was largely concerned with forming alliances and looking for assurances of safety to combat the perceived danger from India. In the 1950s, the nation joined the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), putting it in line with the Western bloc during the Cold War. The foreign policy of Pakistan has changed multiple times throughout the years in response to shifting regional circumstances. China became Pakistan's most important strategic partner in the region after the Sino-Indian border confrontation in 1962 and the resulting rapprochement between the two countries. Pakistan's foreign policy was further altered by the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and Bangladesh's subsequent independence as the nation tried to reestablish its regional

influence and deepen its ties with Islamic nations (Mahesar & Hameed, 2013).

Methodology

A thorough examination of scholarly works, policy papers, and professional assessments on Pakistan's foreign policy, security issues, and regional dynamics comprises the methodology that is employed to arrive at the conclusions in this analysis. The data comes from a range of reliable sources, such as books, scholarly articles, and reports from research institutes and international organizations.

Key Security Concerns Shaping Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Numerous security issues both regionally and globally have profoundly influenced Pakistan's foreign policy. These issues can be roughly divided into three categories. First, a major security issue has continued to be the country's long-standing territorial conflict with India in particular over the tensed area of Kashmir. Apart from provoking several armed conflicts between the two countries, the instability in Kashmir has exacerbated the long-standing crisis. Similarly, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and subsequent rise in terrorist activities and atrocities in the region created serious security issues for Pakistan's stability due to shared borders with Afghanistan (Khan et al., 2021). The delicate strategic balance in South Asia and the concern of nuclear proliferation complicate Pakistan's security concerns. The two nuclear-armed neighbors now live in a situation of mutually assured annihilation as a result of India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998, which forced Pakistan to acquire its nuclear arsenal. Due to its assumption of a traditional military imbalance with India, Pakistan pursued nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence became a vital part of its security strategy. However, due to earlier tensions and sporadic military resistance, this nuclear arms race raised regional security concerns and potentially greater danger Pakistan's foreign policy seeks to consume global and regional resources overcome by complexity due to all these safety concerns. A comprehensive and nuanced strategy is needed to effectively address these security issues and promote the development of a stable regional environment (Khan, 2015).

Pakistan approaches its foreign policy from the perspective of defending its interests in national security. Numerous security issues have been encountered by the nation, such as disputed territories with India, Afghanistan's instability, and South Asian nuclear proliferation. Pakistan is striving to find an equilibrium between its security objectives and international attempts to combat terrorism, but it is aware that its backing for terrorist groups has exacerbated security issues. Pakistan has been dealing with the effects of terrorism and an influx of migrants and is mindful that the instability in Afghanistan directly affects its security. Despite playing a crucial role in fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, Pakistan's involvement unintentionally helped to elevate terrorist groups that ultimately turned in opposition to the Pakistani state. (Ahmar, 1986) Pakistan is attempting to promote the Afghan peace process because it thinks that a stable Afghanistan is in its greatest interest. Finally, Pakistan regards its nuclear weapons program as an essential deterrent against India and regards nuclear deterrence as a critical element of its security strategy. Pakistan is aware, though, that the nuclear arms race between the two nations has sparked worries about regional security and the possibility of a disastrous war. In general, Pakistan's foreign policy aims to traverse a complicated web of regional and global factors, balancing its national security interests with global demands for peace and stability (Hilali, 2002).

Opportunities and Challenges

Pakistan's foreign policy is now heavily influenced by counter-terrorism initiatives, which call for domestic as well as global collaboration. The number of terrorist events has decreased as a result of Pakistan's domestic implementation of numerous measures, notably military operations, information sharing, and de-radicalization programs. However , obstacles still exist, and enduring efforts are needed to combat terrorism's dynamic nature. To jointly combat the threat, Pakistan has actively participated in counterterrorism forums and worked with nations including the US, China, and Russia. Although these partnerships have been crucial, Pakistan must keep promoting international cooperation and properly handle issues relating to funding for terrorism and extremist beliefs. The fact that Pakistan has nuclear weapons also has an impact on its foreign policy, which emphasizes nuclear security and nonproliferation. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine emphasizes upholding a credible minimum deterrence for regional strategic stability

while promoting a South Asian region free of nuclear weapons and backing international initiatives like the FMCT (Tellis, 2008). However, maintaining effective non-proliferation and dealing with international concerns are still essential. Although Pakistan has shown its commitment through its strict export controls, improved nuclear site security, and involvement in programs such as the Nuclear Security Summit process, more work is still needed to keep the world's confidence. Pakistan's dedication to upholding strategic stability and promoting regional disarmament in the area of nuclear security and nonproliferation is praiseworthy. To allay worries about the potential leaking of nuclear materials or technology, it is crucial to practice openness regarding nuclear-related activities and tighten export regulations even more. To maintain effective nuclear non-proliferation, Pakistan should continue to participate actively in global initiatives and strive towards developing strong structures (Ahmed, 2019).

In terms of counterterrorism, Pakistan's foreign policy demonstrates both areas that need improvement and regions where progress has been made. Although military actions and deradicalization programs have significantly reduced domestic terrorist occurrences, ongoing efforts are required to address the sources of extremism and to improve governance and the rule of law. To keep up with changing terrorist threats, the efficiency of intelligence-sharing methods needs to be continuously assessed and improved. Pakistan has made progress on the global level by working with many nations and participating in anti-terrorism forums. To address issues with terrorism financing, which calls for stronger laws and improved financial monitoring systems, a comprehensive and coordinated approach is necessary. To effectively battle transnational terrorist networks, Pakistan should maintain its engagement with global partners, exchange best practices, and strengthen intelligence collaboration (Jones, 2012).

Foreign policy in Pakistan faces several opportunities and problems in the future. Relationship management with India necessitates a complex strategy that blends valid security concerns with initiatives to foster conversation and trust-building. Using peaceful and constructive discussion, the Kashmir dispute can be resolved, which can help reduce tensions and open the door for regional collaboration. Similar to this, Pakistan's position in the peace process in Afghanistan is crucial as it balances its objectives in a stable Afghanistan with worries about Indian influence and a possible resurgence of terrorism. Utilizing programs like CPEC, broadening economic alliances, and looking into new possibilities for regional and

international cooperation will all be essential components of leveraging economic diplomacy. A thorough and academic approach is additionally required to handle these issues, taking into account the complex dynamics and changing security environment. Pakistan can successfully direct its foreign policy, protect its national security interests, and contribute to the stability of the region and international efforts over acts of terrorism and nuclear proliferation by adopting a multifaceted strategy and being alert to emerging opportunities (Khattak et al., 2018).

Pakistan's Response to National Security Challenges

Pakistan gave top priority to counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations. Large-scale military operations by Zarb-e-Ajab (2014–2017) and its offshoots aimed at eliminating terrorist bases in tribal areas Pakistan also continued with its credible minimum prevention policy stressed the importance of its nuclear weapons to national security. In particular, given India's military might, the policies were formulated keeping in mind the preservation of the regional balance of power. Similarly, initiatives have been taken to strengthen regional stability through diplomacy, such as initiatives to strengthen ties with India and support the peace process in Afghanistan. The goal of the national security program was to build goodwill among neighbors. Moreover, there was a greater focus on internal security, with an emphasis on strengthening governance structures to reduce the causes of domestic dissatisfaction, as well as solving social and economic problems role Administrative reforms were seen as necessary to increase the level of national resilience (Amin & Naseer, 2019).

Influence on Foreign Policy

Diplomatic effectiveness was influenced by national security policies that prioritized the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. Security objectives such as closer ties with India and active participation in the peace process in Afghanistan are aligned with transnational efforts as are national security policies with strategic regional and global objectives influenced military cohesion. It also cooperated with the United States, China, and other allies to improve military capabilities and address common security issues. Moreover, greater cooperation with foreign allies in the fight against terrorism led to national security policies emphasizing counter-terrorism, this

cooperation affected Pakistan's foreign relations, including shared and coordinated activities (Asgher & Gull, 2021).

Post-COVID Biosecurity Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of biosecurity as a national security priority. The global nature of the health crisis has highlighted the need for a comprehensive strategy that integrates health protection into the larger national security strategy. Similarly, recognizing the rise in biosecurity issues globally, Pakistan is seeking to enhance its health communications. Collaboration is now essential to effectively address health emergencies. By actively engaging with international partners, participating in global health programs, and providing joint research support Pakistan aims to increase its biosecurity capacity and share the solution of new diseases. Pakistan's current participation in health talks is a sign of its dedication to global health, security, and emergency cooperation. Pakistan also realizes the significance of international cooperation for biosecurity problems. Participation takes an active role in strengthening Pakistan's biosecurity capacity and helping resolve health emergencies through cooperation (Abdalla et al., 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, historical context, security issues, and regional developments all affect Pakistan's foreign policy, which is a dynamic and diverse effort Pakistan's response to international relations is greatly influenced by its unresolved regional conflicts with India, threats to its security through Afghanistan and nuclear instability balance in South Asia. Active participation by the country, emphasizing the benefits of domestic and global cooperation Pakistan has made significant progress against terrorism by implementing comprehensive policies, for an advanced and aggressive intelligence-sharing mechanism to address the underlying root causes but more needs to be done to sustain progress and effectively deal with emerging threats. The fact that Pakistan has nuclear weapons presents both opportunities and challenges. Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment to nuclear security and non-proliferation by supporting regional disarmament and participating in international initiatives while maintaining a minimum posture of prevent the credibility of the mouth. Pakistan must

remain open in nuclear-related activities, strengthen export controls and engage actively in constructive dialogue with the rest of the world for international confidence has grown. Pakistan's foreign policy must also address multiple constraints while understanding the possibilities. Similarly, balanced relations with India, peaceful settlement of regional conflicts, and regional integration should thus promote stability. Also, in terms of Pakistan's cooperation with the process for peace and stability in Afghanistan is important enough that balances must be struck between maintaining its security interests while pursuing two other aims. The first aim would be to achieve a comprehensive political solution as soon as possible by taking into account all aspects influencing these issues regionally so that regional problems can turn from being obstacles for regional integration and diversified economic agreements such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Through these channels, Pakistan can find new opportunity points to expand its economy by improving the level of local development. Therefore, Pakistan must keep on developing and adjusting its foreign policy to the changing international environment. The comprehensive policy that puts an emphasis on security, counter-terrorism operations, and nuclear security could help Pakistan establish itself as a source of stability in the region when it comes to matters such as prosperity and peace.

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Exploration of Academic Stress among Undergraduates of Sukkur IBA University Through the Lens of Gender Differences

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Abstract

Personal and institutional expectations fall onerous on students resulting in stress. During academic life, students attempt to manage stressors stemming from social, personal, academic, and environmental fronts. Almost every day, students experience academic stress in their university life. This scenario necessitates for this study to explore undergrads academic stress, compare and analyze the differences of academic stress among males and females, in a public sector university. The positivist paradigm applied as the worldview, and quantitative research as a method of inquiry. The sample comprised of 99 (70 males and 29 female) undergrads selected on voluntary-participation criterion, who were enrolled across eight semesters. The student academic stress scale is a standardized and reliable instrument used for data collection. The results indicated students' susceptibility to academic stress was more in females than males. Moreover, different academic stress levels were reported for across various departments. The students need regular interval of checks of academic stress diagnosis and specialized on-campus counseling services to normalize effects of undergrads' academic stress. The implications for future study require to focus on considering qualitative and quantitative methods to glean authentic data with a large sample size to make findings fit for generalizability.

Keywords: Academic stress, undergraduates, gender, scales assessing academic scale

Introduction

The impact of stress people experience passes over to their close ones such as friends, family, and co-workers. The sensitivity to experience stress holds a different influence for different people, and to varying degrees. Stress is feeling of trouble or threat in life that everybody experiences, however, low-level stress is not a problem (WHO, 2020, pp12-13).In other words, stress is known to interfere with interpersonal relationships as well as cultural and educational activities, earning it the moniker "sickness of the century." Stress is an emotional state in which a person feels uneasy and dissatisfied with the circumstances they face, wherein body reacts through modifications or responses on a physical, psychological or emotional level (Gajalakshmi et al., 2012). Further, stress can result from emotions such as frustration, rage, nervousness or anxiety (Kausar, 2010).

Excessive academic burdens can result in apprehensive and worried feelings, which if last for an extended time, can lead to stress; similarly, exams, co-curriculum, lifestyle, and the merit system in the academic contexts, nature of tasks and managing time cause most

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student stress (Wahat et al., 2012). More specifically, projects, seminars, lectures, quizzes or assessments, questions, essays, and practicum are the academic responsibilities that students, particularly those enrolled in universities, must undergo for graduation (Yusoff et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Trigueros et al. (2020) defined academic stress as the constant interpersonal and societal pressures that form a psychological state which affects a person's energies. Gajalakshmi et al. (2012) explains thatduring students' academic careers, 10 to 30 percent of students are thought to endure some level of academic stress. Compared to the general community, mental health issues among students have increased in frequency and importance. Moreover, the year of study indicates the stress level of university students, and the incidence of stress escalates as students move from the first year to the fourth year of study (Yusoff et al., 2010). Kausar (2010) found that academic workload and students' perceptions of stress positively correlate among university students in Pakistan. Gajalakshmi et al. (2012) highlighted the results on the causes of stress among students that when compared to psychological issues, exam anxiety accounted for the highest percent (63) of stress. The consequences of untapped academic stress are horrifying, for example, academic pressures are found to have a positive correlation with suicidal thoughts among university students (Yusoff et al., 2010).

A brief literature scan informed that the top ten sources of stress in the workload associated with academics were tests and exams. Moreover, students exhibit excessive exam-related stress that remains throughout the exam period, busy and demanding schedules cause greater stress, which is beneficial for learning because it challenges them to performance, and keep them on-task (Gajalakshmi et al., 2012). Misra and McKean (2000) examined university students' relationships with tension, timekeeping, and heavy workloads, and happiness with their leisure activities. Academic pressures that cause stress in a semester system include grade competitiveness, shortage of time, and problems with time management or work delegation (McKean, 2000) to which students are required to adjust to brand-new demands of the learning environments. Finally, the effects of academic stress lead to psychological stress and vice versa (Kristensen et al., 2023).

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The psychological assessment is the person's emotional explanation of a situation that causes a particular functional response in the immediate environment. A variety of hypotheses about stress, psychological health, adaptation, and sentimental, include mental examination as a component. The psychological evaluation method is used by Lazarus' Transactional Model (LTM) of stress to identify responses to upsetting situations (Lazarus, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This approach incorporates a psychological appraisal defined as the way a person responds to and analyses the sources of stress in daily life. The theory outlines two distinct psychological evaluations, referred to as 'initial diagnosis' and 'final diagnosis', which must take place for a person to get stressed in response to an event (Lazarus, 1984). A condition is classified as hazardous to the person or hazardous to their objectives during initial diagnosis. Similar to this, the person realises through final diagnosis that their potential approach to deal with the challenging situation is insufficient; and when the inadequate circumstance occurs, the occasion results in stress as a reaction (Lazarus, 1984). This model defines about psychological situation of a person and it completely relates with this study as it discusses the gender differences in academic stress which totally relies on psychological issues of both the gender.

The Component Process Model of Scherer (2009) makes use of psychological assessment to explain a person's mental and physical response to events. This paradigm about transactions improves LTM of how many evaluations take place. As opposed to Lazarus's suggestion that there are just two levels of evaluation in response to an event (initial and final), Scherer's model suggests that four specific evaluations occur: a) the immediate effects or importance that an individual thinks a situation to be b) the short and long-term results a circumstance has for people and their goals c) a person's awareness of their potential to adjust to the results of a situation d) how the outcomes of the circumstance are perceived in light of a person's principles and consciousness. According to additional research by Scherer (2009), mental responses as well as many physical responses that are suggested by how a person evaluates conditions deserve special consideration.

Finally, Roseman's Evaluation Theory of Emotions, in contrast to LTM, used the concept of psychological evaluation to put together an illustrated theory that encompasses a wider range of emotions. Roseman (1996) found that pleasant sentiments are triggered by situations that people perceive as trustworthy in terms of their mental processes, while negative feelings are triggered by situations that people perceive as at odds with their objectives. The notion that the occasion was caused by oneself, others, or an unavoidable circumstance will determine whether or not more explicit sensations are felt.

The theoretical framework discussed that whether males or females in general people, perceived stress depends on their cognitive ability which triggers specific circumstances, and their psychological response consists of wide range of emotions. The Lazarus' model discussed that a person's psychological responses depends on the situation. The Scherer's model used Lazarus' model to explain a person's mental and physical response to any condition.. However, Roseman's theory describes the emotional range of a person. The above three theories worked on different concepts but all those concepts derived from the psychological evaluation of a person.

Stress Defined

Stress is the outcome of stressors caused by a person, experience, situation, relation that develops overt or covert uneasiness within individuals with varying levels of intensity (Nair, 2023). The surrounding environment provides sources of stress components that a person perceives as dangerous to their well-being. Some people mistakenly believe that having no stress will lead to good health and happiness. When stress is well managed, it increases motivation and productivity (Levine et al., 2018). Stress, if improperly managed, can be harmful and even fatal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Melvin (2014), stress has two categories: internal and external; the internal determinants include dietary status, level of anticipation and imagination, general health, emotional well-being, and the amount of sleep one gets; on the other hand, the external stress impacts on someone's capacity to socialize in family relationships as well as their physical environment, financial situation, and other relevant facets (p.193). According to American National Institute for Mental Health [NIMH] (2014) intellectual, psychological, physiological, and behavioral warning indicators all fall under one of four categories of stress. According to Sutton (2011), intellectual symptoms include difficulty focusing, memory issues, pessimism, bad judgment, and persistent concern. The psychological symptoms of stress include irritability, melancholy, feeling overwhelmed, and moodiness(Sutton, 2011). Examples of behavioural symptoms include wanting to eat very little, resting less than usual, doing too much of certain activities like exercise or spending, forming worried behaviours like wandering or panic, and abusing drugs to deal with stress (Sutton, 2011). The physical signs include migraine, bowel problems, heart palpitations, and drowsiness (Sutton, 2011).

Academic Stress

Academic stress represents a form of mental suffering induced by the frustration of academic failure or the fear of such failure, or even the knowledge that such failure may occur (Khan, 2013). According to Berg and Keinan (1986), the high expectations students set for themselves are a significant stressor that contribute to academic stress. Moreover, subjecting students to ongoing exams and coursework tasks also lead to academic stress (Bean & Hammer, 2006). Similarly, Kahlon (1993) discovered that exam anxiety, living up to parental expectations, the lecturer's demeanour, a friendly exam system, and lack of parental assistance contribute to stress. According to Gadzella (1994), academic stress is comprised of four components: stress, adjustments, pressure, and demands placed on oneself; for instance, when the tuition is due and a task or assignment is due, the student will feel stressed. When multiple assignments, presentations, and exams are due concurrently, it turns out as coursework overload (Bowyer, 2012. Gadzella (1994) highlighted that poor interpersonal ties between students and their friends and family might have an impact on their mental health. According to Bean and Hammer (2006) 42.5 percent of students indicated moderate level of tension, while 27 percent reported unmanageable level of stress, and 55 percent must overlook one topic to prepare for the other subject. Jayakumar and Sulthan (2013) determined typical causes of academic stress as: poor instruction, lack of material to be learned, competition for grades, regular examinations, extensive study sessions, poor communication, a lot of labour, insufficient resources, irregular attendance, uncertainty about the discipline to pursue, and a lack of library resources. Khan and Ayyub (2013) found that the major causes of academic stress attribute to excessively difficult coursework, worry about failing coursework, lack of preparation, apprehension about presentations and exams, lengthy lecture schedule, and worries about academic aptitude. However, academic stress indeed has a significant impact on student's mental health and academic performance.

Understanding the sources of stress in a student's life is crucial, especially when academic pressure is usually miscomprehended. The student needs to enrol in a fully loaded challenging class to graduate. According to Bowyer (2012), numerous academicians have looked into the connections between workload and health utilizing diverse study designs and methodological stances. Bowyer (2012) suggested that the amount of time required for interaction and independent study, the types and timing of examinations, the quantity and degree of work, institutional elements like instruction, resources, and characteristics of students like persistence and enthusiasm turn into study burden. According to Kausar (2010), the academic burden is the average weekly amount of time spent on things like attending lectures, studying for exams, working on homework at home, visiting the library, and researching information. According to Ong and Cheong (2009), academic stresses were most common, accounting for 63 percent of all reported stressors. Overall, workload, an excessive number of tests, aggregate grade point average, challenging courses, and instructor qualities were the top five identified stressors; each course has a set number of credits, which also represents the workload for the student. So, the environment sets ground for stress to germinate and for students to dare to face, defend or give up.

Academic Stress and Gender

Several studies showcased significant variations of differences between the stress experiences of males and females, making the study of stress concerning gender fascinating. Compared to men, women are more prone to seek out social assistance; Brougham et al. (2009) informed that a stress receptor in the brain controls how differently men and women metabolic reactions to stressful situations; as opposed to men, who are more inclined to

associate with the male sex role, women who are more likely to sympathize with the feminine type function, the stress related to gender role recognition differs for each person. According to Anbumalar et al. (2017), women showed higher levels of positivity and felt less stress than men. Similarly, Almedia and Kessler (1998) found that when measuring stressful events, the persistence of some role-related stressors and other chronic and everyday stressors were considered, women experienced more academic stress than men. Students are prone to experiencing stress in a high-tech educational setting like a university (Niethammer et al., 2000) where the pressure on students, depends on the time constraint, and hard to set out in examinations. However, the literature is replete with evidences for both genders, but in international context only.

Academic Stress in Local Context

Academic stress has diverse purposes and results in the context of Pakistan. For example, Saeed et al. (2022) reported that nearly all undergraduates (96.25%) felt academic stress; and the most significant factor of academic stress was lack of time management. In same vein, Shakeel et al. (2022) found considerable portion of academic stress noticeably due to examinations and pressures from parents. In another study, Sarwar (2021) found attributors of academic stress among medical students such as lack of technological support, career anxiety, and financial constraints. Similarly, Bilal and Riaz (2020) conducted a study on candidates repeating entry test for medical and dental college's admission test. The finding informed somewhat similarity in levels of academic stress between male and female MDCAT candidates. Contrarily, Akhtar and Iqbal (2021) study informed no significant relationship between academic stress and university student performance. However, Khan et al. (2019) found more academic stress among female than male university students; the study further reported that academic stress predicts test anxiety among students. The quantitative study of Saleem and Akram (2018) reported that the academic stress decreases when college students improve their psychological health, which ultimately creates a positive impact on academic performance. However, exclusive studies on academic stress and gender still need attention in various national contexts of Pakistan.

Research has proven that university students have academic stress anywhere from mild to severe levels. The literature highlights negative effects of academic stress on undergrads, however, the impact is observed differently for males and females because of their psycho-social and physiological orientations. Since, the scope of academic stress is vast, therefore, a borderline need to be drawn. Considering the fact that some studies conducted on academic stress at national level, still there is dearth of research in the local context of the study, Sukkur IBA University, which alludes to a knowledge gap, which this study attempted to address by inquiring academic stress in undergrads across departments, and among male and female genders. The outcome would suggest implications for teachers, parents, and social support circle of students to improve academic stress within their respective social and professional positions. Hence, the knowledge gap necessitates the formulation of research questions to guide the course of inquiry: what is the academic stress level of undergrads in a public sector university; and what are the gender related differences of stress level between males and females?

Methodology

The answers to research questions were sought through the quantitative research design that allows to collect and analyze cross-sectional data from large sample size for running descriptive and inferential tests to find out frequency, mean, standard deviation and

many more (Bhandari, 2022). This empirical study employed a deductive approach to collect and analyze data (Streefkerk, 2023) for finding the difference in the effect of academic stress of undergrads. The justification to opt for survey strategy was that most undergrads prefer in-person survey over other types, and reaching out large sample is less economical (McCombes, 2022). The data were collected from Sukkur, located in the Southeastern Sindh. Sukkur is the third largest city in Sindh with own district and administrative township. The institution selected for research is Sukkur IBA University with over 4000 students, whose history dates back to 1994. The data collection initiated in the natural setting of the university where students were approached during break time to seek their formal consent for volunteer participation in the study. Participants consented for participation were later consulted and briefed about the purpose of the study then the survey were distributed. The unit of analysis was undergrads who willingly participated in the survey. The reason for undergrads was due to the fact that academic stress directly links with the student-life and only these students can provide pertinent information related to study.

Instrumentation

A survey strategy was used to conduct the non-experimental study. The forty-item survey was adapted to measure academic stress. The instrument had two sections—first section included demographics of participants; second section contained Academic Stress Scale (AcSS) by Kim (1970). There are five categories of the scale—personal inadequacy items 1 to 8, fear of failure items 9 to 18, interpersonal difficulties with teachers from items 19 to 24, and teacher-student relationship/teaching methodology items 25 to 32. The survey employed five-level rating scale: 1=no stress, 2=slight stress, 3=moderate stress, 4=high stress and 5=extreme stress to measure predictors of academic stress. The AcSS is a reliable, validated, and tested instrument (Alam & Halder, 2018; Gill, 2017) to detect stress in students. The data were analyzed on SPSS version 23. The internal consistency test yielded 85.5 on Cronbach's alpha which indicates that the score was good and the instrument was reliable. The sample items of the instrument are given in table:

Table 1

Academic Stress Scale

S. No.	Statement	NS	SS	MS	HS	ES
1	Teachers make too many extra demands on students					
2	Poor interest in some subjects					
3	Progress report to parents					

Note. Adopted from Kim (1970).

Data Collection

The data collection began with the formal consent form dissemination, later, survey forms were distributed to participants on mutually agreed date and time; the responses were collected, checked for missing forms, coded, inserted on software, data were cleaned for missing values and typos, and analyzed according to statistical tests in line with the research questions, and write up results (McCombes, 2022).

Data Analysis

The data were entered on SPSS V. 23 for analysis. First, the internal consistency of the survey was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. Second, the demographics involved information pertaining to gender, age, department and semester of the participants. Third, the interpretation of mean score was determined to make categories of students on the levels of academic stress. Fourth, a standard was adopted to compute effect mean values to draw meaningful information. Fifth, the frequency, was measured to find differences in male and female undergrads. Finally, the mean and standard deviation were computed for all survey items to highlight the differences between male and female students.

Sample

The target population was all exiting students from semester one to eight of Sukkur IBA University. The accessible population comprised undergrads who gave consent for participation in the study. The volunteer sampling of non-probability sampling technique was used for the inclusion of participants. A total of 120 students consented for participation in survey; however, 99 participants returned duly filled survey forms. A small sample size might be due to lack of seriousness among students, and absence of research culture among other reasons.

Results

The survey questionnaire administered to find out the level of academic stress in undergrads and to examine the gender differences in relation to academic stress of university students. In this part, data are presented systematically as per the format of the adapted survey. The data were collected from the respondents who volunteered to respond to survey form. The findings were related to the research questions that guided the study. This part includes results and interpretation of data.

The internal consistency of survey questionnaire was tested through reliability test on SPSS. Table 2 represents the reliability coefficient for five aspects of academic stress: personal inadequacy .785, fear of failure .791, interpersonal difficulties with teachers .704, teacher-student relations or teaching methodology .879, and inadequate lab or library facilities .826. The result of Cronbach's Alpha near to 1.00 indicates good internal consistency among scale items (Cronk, 2019).

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

Aspects	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Personal inadequacy	8	.785
Fear of Failure	10	.791
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	6	.704
Teacher-Student Relations/Teaching Methodology	8	.879
Inadequate lab/library facilities	8	.826

The characteristics of respondents in first column represent gender, age classification, departments and semester. The first row informs item, category, results, and per cent, and mean scores of respondents. Table 3 shows male (70) representation constituted 70.7 percent while female (29) with 29.3 percent. The age range of respondents indicated that 53

respondents with 53.5 percent were of 22 to 25 years, and 45 respondents with 45.5 percent were of 18 to 21 years, and only 1 respondent with 1 percent was in the other category of age. The department wise participation of respondents indicated 32 from mathematics with 32.32 percent; 29 from business with 29.29 percent; 25 from accounting and finance with 25.25 percent; from education 13 with 13.13 percent. Semester wise the participation of respondents remained 67 from semester seven with 67.67 percent, and 32 from foundation semester.

Table 3

Demographics of Sample

Item	Category	Results	Percent	Mean
Gender	Male	70	70.70	35
	Female	29	29.29	24.5
Age	18-21	45	45.5	22.5
	22-25	53	53.5	26.5
	Others	1	1	0.5
Departments	Mathematics	32	32.32	8
	Business	29	29.29	7.25
	Accounting and Finance	25	25.25	6.25
	Education	13	13.13	3.25
Semesters	Foundation(prep)	32	32.32	18
	Seven	67	67.67	33.5

The measurement of academic stress required a stress scale to categories gathered responses according to five range limits to make data meaningful for analysis and interpretation. Cohen's (1983) perceived stress scale holds five ranges and respective categories (Table 4). The range from zero to 40 indicates no stress category; range 41 to 80 shows slight stress category; range 81 to 120 signal moderate stress category; range 121 to 160 denote high stress category; and range 161 to 200 reflect extreme stress category.

Table 4

The Interpretation of Stress Scores

Range	Category	Respondents
0-40	No Stress	None
41-80	Slight Stress	1
81-120	Moderate Stress	22
121-160	High Stress	68
161-200	Extreme Stress	8

Note. Adapted from Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen et al. (1983)

The results showed that no stress category indicates no numbers, which suggests that all students suffer some kind of stress. Only one student shows slight stress with 41-80. Almost a quarter (22%) indicated moderate stress with range of 81 to 120. Alarmingly, more than half (68.6%) undergrads exhibited high level stress with stress values ranging between 121 and 160. Approximately one out of ten suffers from extreme stress with range score 161 to 200.

The mere mean score informs little, however, utilizing mean effect for the interpretation of mean values, yields interesting information. To do so, table 5 presents the mean result interpretation to determine the effect of mean values, and categorizes data analysis to achieve meaning on gathered data on a five-point mean range.

Table 5

The Mean Effect Interpretation

Mean Range	Interpretation
1-1.8	Very Low
1.81-2.6	Low
2.61-3.2	Moderate
3.21-4.2	High
4.21-5	Very High

Note. Adopted from Moidunny (2009)

The stress level comparison of data analysis between male and female undergrads comprises mean and standard deviation (Table 6). The results for determining the stress levels indicate that male mean score n = 70 is 3.4 and the standard deviation 0.465 whereas female mean score n = 29 is 3.51 and the standard deviation 0.431. The mean score for male and female on mean effect interpretation table (table 4) indicates high academic stress level. This signifies that both male and female undergrads suffer from high stress, which may attribute to lower performance in university. Moreover, the computed average 3.46 of male and female mean value together does indicate high effect of academic stress suggesting immediate remedial operations for the well-being of undergrads.

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Differences between Male and Female Undergrads

Category	n	Mean	SD
Male	70	3.40	0.465
Female	29	3.51	0.431
Total	99	3.46	

However, the mean difference (0.11) marginally supports the notion that academic stress is higher in female than in male undergrads.

The breakdown of instrument response on academic stress indicators for male and female show highest mean score in male 4.99 which indicates that teachers do not listen to male students, whereas the vale is 3.55 in female, here, the academic stress is significant in males than females, the mean effect also indicates very high academic stress in male compared to high academic stress in female (Table 7). Moreover, the mean scores for male 4.37 and female 4.21 indicate students' lack of concentration during study hours causing very high stress in male and female students. Similarly, the mean score in male 4.15 and female 4.15 on academic stress indicator suggest that lack of space for study put them in high academic stress.

Table 7

Mean Comparison between Male and Female Undergrads

		Male			Female			Total		
		Mean	n	SD	Mean	n	SD	Mean	N	SD
1	Extra Demands	3.57	70	1.2	3.59	29	1.02	3.58	99	1.14
2	Poor Interest	3.44	70	1.13	3.41	29	0.95	3.43	99	1.07
3	Progress Reports	2.61	70	1.32	2.90	29	2.90	2.70	99	1.26
4	No humour	3.66	70	1.19	4.03	29	0.82	3.77	99	1.11
5	Lack concentration	4.37	70	0.87	4.21	29	0.86	4.32	99	0.87
6	Trying to recall	3.76	70	0.96	3.90	29	0.90	3.80	99	0.94
7	Exams tension	2.97	70	1.22	2.90	29	0.86	2.95	99	1.12
8	Lack self-confidence	3.23	70	1.36	3.17	29	1.20	3.21	99	1.31
9	Teacher don't listen	4.99	70	0.12	3.55	29	0.83	4.57	99	0.80
10	Conflict with friend	3.39	70	1.45	3.38	29	1.29	3.38	99	1.40
11	More punishment	3.29	70	1.37	3.28	29	1.39	3.28	99	1.37
12	Result tension	3.43	70	1.27	3.48	29	1.02	3.44	99	1.20
13	Hesitate to question	3.57	70	1.20	3.48	29	1.06	3.55	99	1.15
14	Biased attitude	3.94	70	1.09	3.97	29	0.91	3.95	99	1.03
15	Lack of space for study	4.16	70	0.91	4.14	29	0.95	4.15	99	0.92
16	Unaware of exam	3.77	70	1.30	4.17	29	0.85	3.89	99	1.19
17	Lack confidence	3.17	70	1.32	2.90	29	0.98	3.09	99	1.23
18	Lack opportunity	3.06	70	1.18	3.45	29	1.02	3.17	99	1.14
19	Socio-economic status	3.26	70	1.32	2.83	29	1.49	3.13	99	1.38
20	Slow getting curriculum	3.44	70	1.26	3.66	29	1.20	3.51	99	1.24
21	Level of exams	3.76	70	1.15	4.10	29	0.77	3.86	99	1.06
22	Unable to complete assignments	3.44	70	1.29	3.86	29	1.13	3.57	99	1.26
23	Lack communication	3.47	70	1.26	3.97	29	0.91	3.62	99	1.18
24	Monotonous style	2.81	70	1.30	3.21	29	1.21	2.93	99	1.28
25	No discussion	2.74	70	1.24	2.90	29	1.08	2.79	99	1.19
26	Lack of cooperation	2.94	70	1.44	3.31	29	1.14	3.05	99	1.37
27	Not being fluent	3.24	70	1.29	3.55	29	1.06	3.33	99	1.23
28	Difficulty in speaking	3.01	70	1.44	3.59	29	0.98	3.18	99	1.34
29	Teacher is fast	3.23	70	1.16	3.62	29	0.82	3.34	99	1.08
30	Teacher lack interest	3.60	70	1.18	4.00	29	0.82	3.72	99	1.10
31	Exam syllabus is heavy	3.23	70	1.21	3.17	29	0.97	3.21	99	3.21
32	Inferiority complex	3.69	70	1.16	3.59	29	1.30	3.66	99	1.20
33	Discussion with parents	3.77	70	1.24	3.83	29	1.23	3.79	99	1.23
34	Grasp subject matter	3.14	70	1.27	3.62	29	0.94	3.28	99	1.20
35	Incomplete material	3.69	70	1.12	3.86	29	1.03	3.74	99	1.09
36	Eleventh hour prep	3.27	70	1.24	3.62	29	0.90	3.37	99	1.16
37	Important subject matter	2.73	70	1.33	3.03	29	1.12	2.82	99	1.27
38	Getting along with opposite gender	3.13	70	1.34	2.72	29	1.16	3.01	99	1.30
39	Deficient subject knowledge	2.79	70	1.52	3.34	29	1.37	2.95	99	1.49
40	Deficient lab facility	3.29	70	1.46	3.07	29	1.41	3.22	99	1.44

Note: Adapted from Kim's (1970) Scales Assessing Academic Stress

The lowest mean score in male was 2.61, which represents low academic stress on mean effect table for progress reports, while the mean score for the same in female remains at 2.90, which shows more academic stress in female than male. Interestingly, the second

highest mean score 4.17 suggested that females are unaware of exams, while the mean score for male came out 3.77, which show high academic stress on mean effect table.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine academic stress differences between male and female in a public sector university. The sample comprised of 99 respondents wherein almost all students (98 percent) reported feelings of academic stress from moderate to extreme levels. The literature also confirmed that 61 percent of Thai medical college reported moderate stress (Awadh et al., 2013). This result is consistent with those of earlier studies that identified academic workload and trouble in understanding lectures as some of the pressures that students experience (Al-Sowygh, 2013).

The second finding surfaced as females had higher total means than males despite the gender differences in mean scores being negligible. According to the gender disparities in response to stressors, women are more likely than men to experience academic stress. This is understandable given that studies (Calvarese, 2015; Khan et al., 2019) showed that more females than males experienced higher levels of academic stress. This is widely known because research from institutions in the UK, India, Malaysia, and Thailand also corroborated that students see exams and the volume of material they had to learn throughout the academic year as stressful (Albusalih et al., 2017).

This study indicated that university students undergo much stress. But the levels of perceived stress and managing it differ in males and females. In previous studies, the results indicate that male students experience more academic stress than females (Kumari, 2017). However, in this study, the results are the opposite. However, some stress indicators such as examinations, course load, inadequate space, and teacher's concentration on students are the main stressors that cause stress among students on the same level. These findings situate in line with that of Shakeel and Fazal (2022), which identified academic workload and failure to earn satisfactory grades as major sources of stress.

Implications

The roles of teachers, parents and social circle are crucial for leading a stress-free academic life. Teachers' professional and personal characteristics during interaction with students can lift-up students' spirits. Similarly, parenting style matters the most; the closer the communication gap between parents and their grown-ups, the more frank and open students be. Social circle has its influence on students' life, hence; it helps in diffusing academic stress if positivity and encouraging attitudes of friends is offered frequently and at the right time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of the study centered on finding the academic stress level of university students at the first place, and examining the differences of academic stress between male and female undergraduates. The study findings reported that the public university students experienced considerable levels of academic stress; and urge university administration to reevaluate and prioritize list of curricular and academic activities, number of interactive sessions to deliver, and judicious analysis and justifies rationale for student assignment completion like presentations, and evaluations while still being able to meet the requirements. Theses strives contribute in the exiting body of knowledge at the local level.

The study has probable limitations. The power of generalizability of results poses a limitation as the study sample was too small to suggestion implications at broader level,

which restricts is replicability in other similar contexts. Moreover, the data were based on a self-reporting survey which engenders subjectivity and biasness which that cannot be verified independently because the responses reflected respondents' thoughts and feelings in closed-ended survey, which limits the freedom of respondents' expression, however, exploring views and opinions is possible through interviews where participants openly share their academic stress experiences. In a way, an exploratory sequential design of mixed methods would do justice whereby results of phase one leads and guides the course of inquiry at the second phase. The results indicated that female students experience greater academic stress than male students. But, the scope of this study covered only the identification of academic stress among male and female university students, and defocused exploring and suggesting ways to reduce academic stress, and provision of assistance to deal with stressors. The results suggested that decrease in academic disappointments, educational conflicts, heavy workloads, and anxiety can minimize academic stress. Moreover, a negative correlation exists between students' mental health and academic stress. There are crucial ramifications for teachers, consultants, researchers, and students. As a result, the onus of responsibility falls on teachers and parents for creating a stress-free and welcoming environment at school and home for the academic development and well-being. A self-less cooperation among teachers, parents, and students can go a long way to reduce academic stress, and achieve life goals. Future studies on different grade-level students will provide useful insights if coupled with coping and defensive strategies against academic stress. More future studies may employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to dig deep and uncover useful insights about socio-psychological or other factors contributing to academic stress in undergrads.

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Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst: Phenomenological Exploration of Cancer Patients' Lived Experiences

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Abstract

Cancer stands as one of the most devastating and leading causes of mortality globally. Cancer is still a major public health concern in Pakistan, as it significantly raises death rates throughout the entire country. The occurrence of many cancer types has been increasing, resulting in an immense burden on the healthcare structure. This research aimed to explore how cancer patients maneuver their daily lives while battling the illness. Utilizing a phenomenological research methodology, in-depth interviews were conducted to gain insights into the perspectives of cancer patients. The data was collected from a sample of 15 hospitalized patients at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine, Oncology, and Radiotherapy (INOR) Hospital in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Thematic analysis (TA) was employed to examine the interview transcripts, revealing several key themes. These themes encompassed the patients' experiences with cancer diagnosis, the impacts of cancer therapy, psychological effects, social support, and the significance of spirituality in their healing journey. The study's findings underscored that patient faced specific challenges upon receiving their cancer diagnosis, along with psychological stressors such as uncertainty, social isolation, and the side effects of treatments. Notably, patients discovered that spirituality and religious practices served as effective coping mechanisms to alleviate the unpleasant effects of cancer. Based on the study's outcomes, it is recommended that healthcare professionals take into account the patient's experiences and consider the role of spirituality and spiritual practices in enhancing the well-being of cancer patients. By understanding and acknowledging these aspects, medical practitioners can potentially improve the overall care and support provided to cancer patients during their arduous journey of battling the illness.

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Introduction

Cancer stands as one of the most lethal diseases globally. According to the World Health Organization in 2020, there were approximately 10 million cancer-related deaths and 19.3 million new cancer cases worldwide (World Health Organization, 2021). In the United States, the risk of receiving a cancer diagnosis is significant, with one in four individuals facing a lifetime risk of cancer (Ben-Ayre, Steinmetz & Ezzo, 2007). In Europe, cancer accounted for 1.7 million deaths (Versano, 2011), and projections indicated that this number might double by 2020 (Eaton, 2003). The burden of cancer in Asia was also substantial, with 2 million fatalities and 3 million new cases reported in the same year (Mackay et al., 2006). In Pakistan, the situation was no less alarming, with a total of 178,388 new cases reported in 2020, and cancer-related mortality rates on the rise (International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2018). The prevalence of cancer is on the rise, but there is still limited knowledge about the lived experiences of patients and the complex circumstances that surround their condition. Patients' experiences are shaped by various factors, including sociocultural, psychological, religious, financial, demographic, and physical effects of the disease, as well as their knowledge and perception of cancer. Exploring these experiences can offer valuable insights into the unique healthcare requirements of cancer patients and aid medical professionals in delivering competent and supportive care. This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Muslim cancer patients diagnosed with cancer at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine, Oncology, and Radiotherapy (INOR) in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. By exploring their perspectives and challenges, the research aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of cancer care and support tailored to the needs of these patients.

However, a significant amount of study has been done on a variety of topics relating to cancer patients' experiences. Scientists argue that patients experience a greater degree of distress and grief due to the endless nature of cancer growth than from other illnesses (Meyerowitz, 1980). Additionally, it consists of fear of dying, social humiliation, sadness, low self-esteem, and anxiety (Harmer, 2006). It simultaneously brings feelings of isolation, ambiguity, the possibility of a cancer return, and financial difficulties. In the

end, it results in despondency and a reduced standard of living (Heidarzadeh et al., 2014). In a qualitative study using phenomenological approaches, Smith and Johnson (2018) dissected the complex layers of the subjective experiences of cancer patients. Their findings highlighted the transforming character of the cancer experience by revealing the tremendous influence of the illness on people's sense of time, self-identity, and relationships. Moreover, in an investigation by Anderson and Clark (2022), existential difficulties encountered by cancer patients were explored using phenomenological approaches, with a focus on the altering influence of the disease on the patients' sense of self and identity.

According to an interview with American breast cancer patients, women expressed concerns about their bodies, hair damage, feeling unbalanced in their attire, and the absence of prosthetics that matched their skin tone (Henderson et al., 2003). Another discussion with 20 black and South Asian ladies voiced concerns about cultural stigma and restrictions surrounding cancer. Breast cancer also harmed their femininity, physical appearance, and sexuality, and they expressed concerns about their skin and hair (McGarvey, 2001). Additionally, the effects of demographic variables on cancer patients vary. According to Tercyak, Davis and Loffredo (2007), stage 4 breast cancer in younger patients was associated with increased anxiousness and despair. Children and single breast cancer patients have also been linked to higher levels of melancholy and despair (Friedman et al., 2006). In terms of the physical effects of cancer, patients who have undergone surgery or chemotherapy may have physical weariness and impairment (Brandberg et al., 2003), which may interfere with their ability to go about their daily lives and perform their jobs (Moradian, Aledavood& Tabatabaee, 2011). Additionally, breast cancer's horrific physical side effects include extreme weight loss, body weight, and general exhaustion (Helms, O'Hea& Corso, 2008). Additionally, a course of treatment like chemotherapy can cause patients to experience another cycle of emotions like anger, denial, guilt, and despair in addition to affecting other psychosocial functioning domains (Holland &Zitton, 1991). In addition, surgical therapy for breast cancer has negatively impacted females' physical allure as well as components of romantic connection. Females who were single at the time of surgery were concerned that the condition would make them less physically attractive and prevent them from engaging in romantic relationships. Females who were already in a relationship or who were married, however, expressed concern that their loving partner would no

longer find them physically appealing and desirable due to surgery (Oxlad et al., 2008). This results in a loss of self-assurance and life goals, which impacts not only the physical body but also the battling spirit and soul. Owing to expending so much energy on dealing with diagnosis and treatment, they frequently reach the point where they feel hopeless and extremely frightened. In this case, the patient is going through unusual and difficult circumstances (Villagomeza, 2005).

Methodology

This study uses a phenomenological research methodology to describe cancer patients' experiences. The rationale behind the use of phenomenology as a research method for this study is that it is particularly suitable for exploring people's subjective experiences. Phenomenology turns out to be a perfect fit for this study since it allows for a detailed examination of cancer patients' lived experiences, probing their thoughts, feelings, and ways of giving meaning to their events. Focusing on the first-hand experience, phenomenology allows for a thorough understanding of the complex and varied ways that people negotiate and make sense of their experiences with cancer. This methodology is in perfect harmony with the research objective of encapsulating the rich facets of participants' experiences, providing insightful information about the psychological, emotional and others elements of dealing with cancer.

Due to the nature of the phenomenon, an in-depth interview was decided to be the best method for gathering data. Recruitment of cancer patients who are currently getting treatment, have been diagnosed with the disease, and are physically able to engage in an interview was done using a purposive sampling technique. The principles of data saturation were used to guide the data collection. After the fifteenth interview, no emerging themes were discovered. The final sample size was composed of 15 Muslimparticipants, 10 of whom were men and five of whom were women. Members were free to choose the terminology and open up about their personal histories. While some of the participants preferred to voice their opinions in Pashto, most of the participants preferred to be interviewed in Urdu. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. The confidentiality of their responses was ensured by the researcher. Braun & Clarke's (2006) inductive thematic analysis was used to examine the data. Each text (interview) was carefully read numerous times while notes were being taken.

The first step of the theme analysis approach was to fully immerse oneself in the facts in order to gain a thorough comprehension. The author then created preliminary scripts to emphasize important concepts and aspects in the dataset. After then, these codes were grouped into prospective topics and subjected to an ongoing process of improvement and scrutiny. After that, the author named and defined the themes that had been found, making sure that they accurately reflected the context and substance of the material. The last step involved crafting a story that made sense, in which the writer analyzed the themes and provided a sophisticated interpretation that matched the goals of the study. Consequently, five key themes emerged from the analysis of the participant narratives, including experiences with a cancer diagnosis, the effects of treatment, the psychological effects, social support, and the importance of spirituality in healing. Each concept is succinctly explained and supported with illustrative quotes.

Table 01: Participant Demographic Information (n =15)

Gender	Age	Marital Status	Cancer Type	Cancer Stage	Treatment	Time Since Diagnosis (In Months)
Male	60	Married	Colon	Stage 0	Radiotherapy	26
Female	45	Married	Breast	Stage 1	Mastectomy	18
Female	33	Single	Breast	Stage III	Chemo/Tamoxifen	16
Male	65	Single	Lung	Stage II	Chemotherapy	11
Male	61	Married	Lung	Stage II	Radiotherapy	19
Female	38	Married	Lymphoma	Stage II	Radiotherapy	22
Female	27	Married	Colon	Stage 0	Palliative Chemo	9
Male	29	Single	Liver	Stage IV	Chemotherapy	12
Male	41	Single	Liver	Stage I	Radiotherapy	26
Male	33	Single	Colon	Stage II	Radiotherapy	4
Male	51	Married	Gastric	Stage II	Mastectomy/Ra	14

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Male	24	Single	Prostate	Stage 0	Chemotherapy	4
Male	29	Married	Lung	Stage II	Radiotherapy/ Chemo	10
Male	36	Single	Throat	Stage IV	Chemotherapy	28
Female	47	Widow	Cervical	Stage 0	Mastectomy/ Chemo	17

Study Findings and Discussion

1. Cancer Diagnosed Experiences

Cancer growth is the most widely recognized type of lethal illness; particularly in the Western world highest cancer ratio was recorded (Radice &Redaell, 2003). Cancer is usually perceived as a crisis and chronic situation for a patient. When diagnosed with cancer, the patient passes through various circumstances that alter the patient's perception toward disease and health care. Furthermore, it also dramatically disturbed everyday life and specifically more unexpectedness of a cancer diagnosis; the strength of cancer and the terror of premature death all add threats for a patient. This theme outlines the views of patients.

Interviewer: How did you encounter your disease at the time of diagnosis?

> *For the past eight months, I have had a lung cancer diagnosis. I've been smoking for the past ten years with joy and enthusiasm, enjoying every puff of every cigarette. After a moment of brief ecstasy, I fall victim to a protracted infection that lasts forever, and lung sickness causes all of my joy to be snuffed out. At the very first chance, I felt ordinary temperature, coughed, and became weak, feeling pain and vomiting. When I visit a doctor for a checkup they conduct some medical tests and diagnose me as a cancer patient. From that time, I detest myself, my way, and my life, since I am suspicious of life and death.*

Diagnosed with cancer, patients face a traumatic condition that brings long-term changes in patients' overt and covert aspects of their health and lifestyle. It alters questions about life and ultimately a substantial shakeup occurs in one's life, interactions, and objectives, as well as the renovation of a novel self-identity. One other participant said:

> *I was given a throat cancer diagnosis. My friends told me that there was nothing more that could be done for me in terms of surgery or treatment. You just have three to four months left to live. You will lose all of your money and get nothing in return, but I still have courage and confidence. I shall begin treatment. I observe that cancer carries changes in a patient's life, in my status and role. In that context, a patient has working incapacity, household and personal stress, isolation, humiliation, and loss of self-identity in public. Because all illnesses are the same for the patient, there is no difference between chronic and transient illnesses. Currently, I am generally looking for ways to improve my health and am willing to travel far and wide if there is a solution, but I have never experienced such light. I now have complete control over my disease and agony.*

Another respondent shared their early experiences as a beginner about the disease.

> *At the first visit, the doctor diagnosed me as a cancer patient. The disease alters and influences a patient's profile (physical, mental, and functional), which then contributes to the growth of cancer. Alas… . !!!!! Every day isn't any less of a gift because it harms and interferes with every element of the patient's life. I monitor my infection every second and in a split second. The first and most noteworthy thing I have found in my disease from the beginning, I feel fear and apprehension about this unsafe disease.*

Cancer and such chronic diseases are stressful for all patients. At the time of diagnosis, patients have some psychological issues such as irritability, rejection, fear of disease, and disheartening from their existing

situation. But on the other side, they don't become sitting restless, they practice some measures for the disease to cure and improve their quality of life.

2. Effects of Treatment

For many patients, the treatment has negative side effects which further influence their quality of life. During or after treatment, the patient is enclosed with feelings of despair, irritation, and frustration, which further increase and generate many other physical, psychological, and social effects.

> *When I got treatment (chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery) I felt pain, and losing the sense of taste and hair was evident. I was unable to perform household duties. I plan some methods to avoid hair loss by wearing a cap but can't do so. It's Okey. After treatment, I feel somewhat good and cheerful, however since that day I heard that an individual was diagnosed as a breast cancer patient. My heartbeat turns out to be high because of the more terrible name and due to my awful encounters. I utilized some house-made medications with such expectation that they may mend my tumor. However, that treatment has not demonstrated accommodating for me. After treatment, the half-life of a patient is gone. Physically patient becomes fragile, and feels hate and shame. Sometimes, I was thinking of death, because death is better than this life.*

The study of Gates, Lackey and Brown (2001) shows that breast cancer patients have impacts on their bodies and feel that they have lost a significant part of their body. Women felt that wearing breast prostheses helped them to defeat their self-perception concerns and recover their body shape. But they no longer felt stable and whole human which caused less feeling of femininity. One of our respondents shared that:

> *I've had breast cancer for a year now after receiving my diagnosis. After that, it extends to the lungs. There was first a bulge, which grew in size. My sister disclosed to me that cancer has no cure. As the tumor got greater another hyper*

assault and surrounding me was a breathing issue. At that phase, I gave more inclination to clinical preliminaries, for example, X-rays, chemotherapy, radiation, and medical procedures, and afterward in conclusion cut my left breast.

Another participant used some traditional and domestic methods of treatment. They expressed their views.

I practiced household tips, however futile. Some people say, to use fig and Kalwanji you will recoup soon. It is the best medication for all diseases apart from death. I utilized it, yet, at that point, I didn't have faith in it and felt that individuals are alive till to their victuals are completed. Then proceeds to die from this awful and depleted life. I do not pay attention to this infection, even though I have pain. I believe that humans are born in pain and for illnesses. The various diseases created for humans and that is normal. Each human has one or other kind of sickness in their life.

A few patients likewise communicated the sentiment of body consciousness, particularly when going out in public thus, it restricted their social movements. Such sentiments were increasingly conspicuous during the time females used their medicines. However, after some time patients acknowledged their modified appearance sentiments turned out to be less. The level and nature of appearance were dependent on the category of social support and treatments that patients get.

3. Psychological Effects

The psychological effects highlighted by many researchers, they had acknowledged that often the psychological issues have been more severe than the physical impacts (Neil & Barrell, 1998; Sen, Ross & Rogers, 2001). In those issues, patients feel depressed, nervous, and uncertain, and have difficulty with the fear of the recurrence of the disease. As pointed out by the participant:

After diagnosis, my life was occupied by fear, threats, and the cancer itself pandemic disease. The lethal title makes a

patient more susceptible to the survival of life. If I take this illness seriously, all I can do is get more anxious and put myself under more stress, which compromises my life and health.

Enoch and Price (2004) reported that, for the majority of patients, it was generally not a disease that affected them but the psychosocial concerns related to it drastically influenced their quality of life. Another respondent talked about their condition:

This situation is multiple of my anxiety and devastation, [weeping and crying…….]. I am desperate because a single cough is equivalent and a sign of disease. And then cancer………….. relatives and other society members hate from a cancer patient. Along with this if a patient is not whole (means cut a part of their body, e.g. breast, leg, or others) people consider it a disability. Due to this, a patient considers themselves lower-class humans and can't participate in any social gathering. If go to some social activity people go far away and hate them. But I am still in terror that this will rash again and send me to the bed of the hospital.

The study of Zabora et al. (2001) found that patients experience physiological issues and their impacts are more severe than others. Because it gives birth to feelings of uncertainty about the future, and psychological and emotional distress, which affects the physical, social, and spiritual aspects of a patient's quality of life. Additionally, the study concluded that it also affects patient perception toward treatment and affects all sorts of healing and treatment mechanisms.

4. Social Support

Both interpersonal and intrapersonal means are vital for coping with disability and illness (McColl & Skinner, 1995). It becomes obvious that support, predominantly from household members' friends was very significant in facilitating a patient's diagnosis and treatment. One of the participants declares that:

I became glad… … more joyful… … from myself, my household, and even the healthcare specialist to give me the finest level of medical treatment and emotional livelihood. Believe it, presently I feel better and proceed with my day-by-day life routine as previously. I don't take it seriously. Because my family members highly support me in all respects during my illness. I relish my life in both conditions and it is the best prescription for all illnesses.

Family members were labeled as providers for everyday support such as taking hospital arrangements, facilitating domestic tasks, and supporting other daily activities such as bathing or brushing hair and many other tasks. The study by Henderson et al. (2003) found that patients relied on family, church members, and friends for help in coping with a diagnosis of cancer.

From that time, I was so dismal, stressed, and sobbing and didn't eat for two days at all. I feel become weak physically. My husband, child, and little girl empowered and revealed to me that it isn't a lot more concerning issue, all will be Okay but it will require some time.

Other participants highlighted intrapersonal resources. They depicted that confidence in God was a significant source of help and taking part in religious activities, such as praying and holy readings can help them. As the respondent mentioned:

Disease as being God's will, I accept that God would invigorate me. My spiritual and religious practices are also helping me. But I also make use of treatment.

For a cancer patient, intrapersonal resources include having faith, and spirituality, as well as activities such as meditation and yoga are supportive factors (Trinkaus et al., 2011).

5. Role of Spirituality in Healing

One of the main and distinct themes that seem from all cases in this study was the significance of spirituality and its role in coping. This helps a

participant cope with tricky emotions, such as fear, sadness, and hopelessness. Participants identified the role as:

> *Of course, spirituality is the centerpiece of a patient's recuperation. I more watch out for spirituality than clinical medication. If I say that I am pleased with my disease it's not off-base. I am imagining that God makes me capable of this disease and through this, I go to paradise. Humans are a lot materialistic and put stock in the material and see marvels, yet spirituality and religion are beyond this clarification.*

Another participant also highlights the significance of spirituality which offered comfort and eased his disease:

> *For those who seek their healthiness in spirituality or spiritual practices, God heals them. Although God hasn't sent a sickness until a fixed cure if an individual cannot get healed it doesn't mean that spirituality misses the mark no……. no, everything is fixed, and when the hour of mending happens a patient gets recovered. Sspirituality is the need of humans and nothing without it. I am not baffled by myself. These all (healthiness and disease) are in my fortune.*

Spiritual beliefs and practices strengthen a patient during and after treatment. Patients who have dominant spiritual beliefs and practices can easily heal.

> *We enter this world with inherent vulnerabilities. Life and death are under God's control, following a predetermined timeline. When my prayers seemingly go unanswered, I experience discomfort; prayers act as a form of medicine. Additionally, I also utilize physician-prescribed medications. Though these medicines are man-made, it is God who grants humans the ability to create remedies for healing. During periods of good health, I must admit that I sometimes neglected my spirituality compared to my current circumstances. As I approach the end of my life, a common human response is to turn toward spirituality and seek solace*

in faith when faced with the fragility of life and its uncertainties. It is natural for individuals to reevaluate their spiritual connection and draw nearer to God when confronted with such sobering realities. In these moments, they often find themselves on a path of self-discovery and spiritual awakening. [Laughter follows as an expression of this profound realization...]

Spirituality has numerous benefits and is key for cancer patients coping to mend their quality of life through various spiritual practices (Matthews et al., 2012). Spiritual activities including prayer and attending church are a protective factor against cancer patients' illness (Janiszewska et al., 2008). Consequently, they were praying more and reciting the holy book and felt it was an instrument for facilitating them to treat and deal with cancer. As a respondent shared:

I engage in daily prayers, perform a special rosary, recite sacred verses, and drink holy water (Zam Zam) to seek healing for my illness while maintaining unwavering faith in God. These spiritual practices play a significant role in my life, providing emotional gratification and an overall sense of improvement. When I miss my prayers or devotions, I sense that something is amiss. I also seek relief through medical treatment, which is considered a [Sunnah] in our faith. In some instances, patients find healing through the expertise of medical professionals, and I believe that God has endowed physicians with the power to cure. Therefore, I place my trust in both faith-based practices and medical interventions, recognizing the complementarity of these approaches in pursuit of better health.

Spiritual practices are a source of coping for cancer patients. They focused on it to find meaning, and get satisfaction and healing through these practices. A prior study by Gibson & Hendricks (2006) described that beliefs and prayers have given the power to overwhelm terror and other challenges in their lives. As mentioned by a patient:

Each morning, I engage in prayer and recite the Holy Quran to seek relief from my illness. I earnestly beseech God for support and healing, fervently requesting to be freed from this ailment. I maintain hope that I will ultimately succeed in overcoming this challenge. If it is God's will, I believe that recovery will come soon.

Various spiritual practices influenced patient experiences and facilitated them to understand their illness and treatment through it. Spiritual applications prove helpful and powerful mechanisms in the prevention of an illness and decrease negative outcomes. Cancer patients reported that spiritual practices as a coping strategy for them to overcome the fear of disease, death, and psychological issues (Ashing-Giwa & Ganz, 1997).

Conclusion

This study highlights the unique and profound impact that living with cancer has on patients, fundamentally altering their perspective on life. Understanding this phenomenon becomes crucial for both patients and healthcare professionals. The findings reveal that upon receiving their cancer diagnosis, patients faced overwhelming emotions and unexpected challenges, leading to transformative changes in various aspects of their lives. These changes encompassed shifts in body image, self-esteem, and social relationships. The patients' experiences were marked by numerous uncertainties, including anxiety and fear of death throughout their illness journey. Furthermore, the treatment process left them feeling vulnerable, contributing to physical and socio-psychological issues. Despite the adversities they encountered, the study found that patients exhibited optimism and drew strength from their spiritual beliefs, practices, and social connections. These factors served as vital sources of support and positive coping mechanisms in dealing with their illness. The research underscores the significant role of spiritual care and spirituality in the healing process. Consequently, the study's results could provide valuable preliminary evidence, offering guidance to healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, and counselors in delivering effective care and managing cancer more effectively. By understanding the unique experiences of cancer patients and recognizing the importance of spiritual and social support, healthcare

providers can enhance the quality of care and support provided to individuals facing this challenging journey of living with cancer.

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Social Media: A Threat to Quality Journalism? A Comparative Analysis of the Content from Social Media and Mainstream Media

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Abstract

The study inquisitively talks about the impact of social media on quality journalism in Pakistan, which poses a threat to objectivity, accuracy, balance and ethical considerations being considered an integral component of any news item. Based on the framing and dependency theories of mass communication, the research qualitatively dealt with the data collected from social media and mainstream media. The researcher selected eight stories from social media, and the same were chosen from the mainstream media. After collecting the data, some news values were taken as a parameter and operationalized in the context of Pakistani media content; that is how issues are framed. These values were investigated after examining the content, and it was found that social media compromised those values and exploited the audience's dependency on it. Social media tried to influence public perception about the selected issues. In contrast, the mainstream media, on the other hand, has tried its best to consider these values while covering the same issues.

Keywords: Social Media, News Values, Threat, Quality Journalism, Ethical Standards, Professional Principles

Introduction

We live in an era of modernization, socialization and contemporary techniques, where social media plays a crucial role. Because through social media, information spreads quickly from down to top and top to down, which we call "information war." In this era/war, almost everybody has become independent in sharing and updating anything from anywhere with a different context. Here the question arises, do social media users, bloggers, content creators and mainstream media impact the quality of journalism? The answer is obviously YES, because the ascent of the internet and versatile mobile applications, as famed passages of information utilization, has significantly changed what comprises journalism (Archer, 2018).

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The intelligent elements of virtual entertainment have changed news coverage into a gathering whose essential capability is trading perspectives. Online journals, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and different stages have become progressively key to news spread. 'Quick' and 'short' being the predominant rationale of the web stages, amount instead of value definitely stands out enough to be noticed. The gigantic inflow of data through informal channels makes news coverage, to a greater degree, a work area work, allowing for hands-on work and examination. With specialized devices close by, columnists produce more and quicker. Accentuation has moved from examination and content to creation and structure. Crowd strengthening has re-imagined its origin to the degree that today columnists and crowds go about as accomplices in news making (Statista, 2022).

According to Greg Burns (2022), research findings reveal that 90.7 percent of respondents said that the job web-based entertainment organizations play in conveying the news results is a more regrettable blend of information. In an examination, 86.5 percent said online entertainment organizations have excess command over the blend of information individuals see. Some 79.3 percent said online entertainment, for the most part, adversely affected the reporting business. A mind-boggling 94.3 percent of respondents faulted web-based entertainment for eliminating the bogus word. More than nine of every ten overview respondents said web-based entertainment organizations convey a "more terrible blend of information" to their clients, as per the web-based review of columnists by Northwestern College's Medill School of Reporting, Media, Coordinated Promoting Correspondences. The review likewise found that almost eight of 10 people expressed provocation of columnists via online entertainment as an "exceptionally large" or "respectably enormous" issue. The current study undertakes the same phenomenon of social media content with special reference to some basic and universally agreed ethics for quality journalism and how these standards are compromised. It also discusses that the content producer for different social media forums intentionally angles the story in a way that can bring more views and likes to them. The study analyzes certain news stories of the Pakistani mainstream media compared to the approach adopted by social media users while covering the same story.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of 24/7 television channels has brought revolution and transformation in information dissemination, which has also significantly boosted in the recent two decades in this part of the world. The internet services based on information technology, live streaming and the introduction of the electronic version of the newspapers have proliferated the dynamics of journalism, especially in this part of the world where Pakistan is no exception, which has increased people's dependency on print and electronic media. The consumers of print and electronic media while being attracted by the mechanism of social media have started scanning the media content here, instead of reading the hard copy of the newspaper and watching television. This has switched their priorities of getting their information needs gratified to the online content, which was shorter in length and restricted in content as per the social media requirement.

The introduction of social media websites and applications has accelerated information dissemination on the one hand. However, on the other, the content producers started compromising ethical and professional standards, already set for quality and constructive reporting, as a key ingredient for quality journalism. The audience's dependency has switched from mainstream television and newspaper to social media platforms, and individuals with more followers or subscribers have started penetrating society. They have mainly targeted the youth and people with access to the internet with electronic gadgets while considering them a passive audience. Lack of primary education in media studies on the part of the content producers, sensitization of the moral standards required for quality journalism, training in professional ethics and a run for gaining more public watch hours along with subscribers have supplemented unprofessionalism in the discipline, thus making social media a threat to the quality journalism in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Kurt Wagner (2017) says in his examination that in the last five years, web-based media, or social media has turned into a prevailing and developing wellspring of information and data for a huge number of individuals all over the planet. Web-based entertainment is sans quick and consistently with you in your pocket, politeness of your cell phone and different devices. This study also claimed that the use of social media is increasing day by day. Because

social media is considered a valuable source of information, and the material or information, it contains has worth; on the other hand, the research in this regard finds that it is emerging as a threat to quality journalism in Pakistan, where certain core professional standards are compromised. This is the reason behind undertaking this study, as usually it has been observed that those producing content for the social media forums in this part of the world, mainly in Pakistan, are least bothered to follow the standards of quality journalism such as objectivity, balance and accuracy.

Kuyucu (2020) explores that social media platforms and the internet are currently barraged with news, and there is a lot of data. It is practically close to difficult to separate phony news from genuine one. In some cases, even phony news by a resident columnist is taken up by an expert and genuine writer and formed into a story that might hamper the writer and his office's endeavours at laying out and keeping up with believability and dependability with the consumers. It also happens that when refuted or contradicted by the concerned quarters, it disappears with no explanation and justification for removal, thus leaving the audience in a dilemma. This study identified that social media harms journalism; it has not just changed how we consume news. It has also changed the way we create news. This study looks into these factors in the context of standardized journalism practices in Pakistan in the global context.

Michel (2020) believes that another issue online entertainment has raised is that there is much information. The crowd cannot necessarily decide the veracity of the news they see via online entertainment. Which news association would it be a good idea for them to trust? Individuals will keep believing the huge news organizations they have consistently trusted; however, what might be said about the future? They will never trust any news associations and could be lost among the phony news. The 2014 Irish Social News-casting Study distributed the insights that 64% of Irish columnists said that data via online entertainment could not be relied upon. The current study is also based on the information, misinformation and disinformation on different social media platforms, which create confusion about trustworthy information or credible journalism. Accordingly, today, journalists face difficulties brought about by new media innovations. Journalism is encountering extensive changes connected to social, social, prudent, and innovative changes. Considering these factors as an integral part of the situation that is getting worst with the expansion of social media, the current study examines how social media forums are victimizing quality journalism

that is mainly based on trends, views, subscribers and the number of comments made by the like-minded audience, but not by active consumers of the content.

The Rationale of the Study

This issue of social media being a threat to mainstream media or having the potential to compromise professional standards has usually been debated in academic and journalistic circles. It needs empirical research with a pragmatic approach to reach a conclusion, which can add to the available knowledge on the subject. This is why the researcher planned this study to examine which ethical and professional standards of quality journalism have been challenged by the social media forums in the name of journalism.

- What is Social media?

Social media is a platform usually considered for freedom of expression, sharing content and connecting with people, and it is comprised of various websites and applications like Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and Instagram. The one who creates or generates the content is considered the person with power, which is usually because of the number of followers and subscribers. Social media users are also known as influencers by virtue of their penetration into society through the content liked, followed, trusted and re-shared by their followers.

- What is Quality Journalism?

Quality in journalism is measured both by how much a work engages its audience and enlightens it, along with its impact and contribution in bringing positive changes both in the mind of people as well as the policymakers for the overall uplift of humanity and society. This means journalists must continuously ask what information has the most value to citizens or audiences and in what form people are most likely to assimilate with it. Quality journalism has certain goals and missions, contrary to the practices carried out by most social media users with the sole goal of earning money, getting views and finding subscribers with no substantial benefit for the inhabitants of their locale.

- What is the problem?

According to a recent survey, the problem is that social media platforms have affected the mainstream media industry by contributing to inaccurate and one-sided news accounts by exerting too much control over the mix of news that people see (UNESCO, 2022). Compared to social media, decent journalism always tries to make sense of the chaotic world around us. It interprets, analyses, and strives to give meaning to all the babbling that's going on. In short: in the end, people become confused about trustworthy information and remain indecisive about the authenticity of the content that reaches them.

- How is it a problem?

Journalists can report in a flash by simply utilizing their cell phones, and that is an immense effect which virtual entertainment has on news-casting. Since news is so natural to share and nearly anybody can call themselves as a web-based writer or a resident columnist so far as that is concerned, and at times it tends to be hard to track down genuine news with trustworthy sources and attribution of the equivalent.

- How bigger is the problem?

The problem is big because the internet is overflowed with "false news," and online entertainment stages are the discussions where clients are bound to track down articles like that.
Despite the fact that it is remarkably difficult to stay away from counterfeit news via web-based entertainment stages like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as the content producers, active consumers can check it through alternative sources before they conclude. However, the problem is that the content is glamourized and presented in a way that leaves no room for users to verify it before relying on it.

Research Question

Main Research Question

Is Social Media a threat to Quality Journalism in Pakistan?

- How does social media compromise ethical and professional standards?

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate how social media is a threat to quality journalism.
- To analyze the contents of selected issues that have compromised professional standards.
- To find out which standards of quality journalism have been compromised and how it has been replaced.

Theoretical Framework

This study analyzes the impact of social media on quality journalism after defining certain tools that determine the standard of journalism across the globe, with reference to journalism practices in Pakistan. The researcher has used the "framing" theory of mass communication by Gregory Bateson (1972). As a theory of mass communication, framing alludes to how the media bundles and presents data to general society with an aim. As per the hypothesis, the media features a few occasions and puts them inside a specific setting to support or put specific translations down. Along these lines, the media practices a specific impact on how individuals view reality or the truth is displayed to them. The theory is highly relevant to understanding social media's influences on journalism and how they frame their context regarding any news, events or incidents. Besides, for analyzing the audience's perspective regarding quality journalism and investigating why people prefer to go for social media platforms, the dependency theory of mass communication has also been taken into account.

The dependency theory by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976) argues that the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfill his/her needs, the media will become more important to that individual. The media will have much influence and power over that individual, and this is how the researcher found it during preliminary research while finding a rationale for this study. This dependency on social media by its users have contributed negatively to the issue of authenticity, balance, objectivity, attribution and, above all, human interest. This practice has left the audience nowhere to differentiate between fake and real news.

Research Methodology

The researcher has used the qualitative methodology to analyze the eight randomly selected case studies/stories from the Pakistani mainstream media and social media channels like youtube, Facebook, Twitter and vlogs. Since qualitative research is the study of a phenomenon to investigate why something has been observed or not observed in certain cases. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects non-numerical data that needs interpretation, drawing meaning from the chosen words or phrases that help people understand the contextual meaning of a phenomenon being discussed in the content. Professional standards of quality journalism like honesty, integrity, independence, accuracy, contextual truth, transparency, ethical considerations, objectivity, risks, respect and fairness for people/audiences have been taken as conceptual tools. After selecting the eight selected stories from both social media and mainstream media, the researcher, while using the conceptual tools of defined standards to define quality journalism in the world, these packages have thoroughly been scrutinized how social media has challenged quality journalism. The stories were checked against these standards, and the researcher also tried to find whether the citizen journalist or influencers had taken care of these standards or not. However, there were certain limitations regarding the selection of news stories, as the researcher wanted to specifically talk about issues that affected the quality of journalism instead of going for the generalized approach in the selection of links.

Analysis

This study has investigated the ethical standard of quality journalism by analyzing eight case studies of different issues and incidents from the Pakistani mainstream media and multiple forums of social media in order to find how quality journalism has been threatened by the approach adopted by those who are not formally trained in doing meaningful journalism in Pakistan. Using the qualitative approach, the study is conducted to compare similar issues in different mediums, with the help of news values, conceptually selected to determine the standard of quality journalism that aims to not only give authentically verified information but serve humanity at large. According to Porlezza, C. (2019), 'Accuracy' assumes an especially significant part in the factuality of the editorial talk, as it powers columnists not exclusively to

ground their covering realities but to check regardless of whether introduced realities are valid or not. Thus maintaining the standard of journalism. Getali Tilak (2020) believes that 'Media Ethics' is concerned with how a person should behave morally and work within the morally defined values of the given society.

Experts believe that the ethics for media are the values like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, objectivity, balance, truth and self-restraint to be practiced by practitioners attached to the media. Phillips, A. (2010) argues that mentioning relevant and credible sources is a significant piece of composing an uplifting news story. These sources assist writers with acquiring information about occasions, individuals, places and patterns. Sourcing information also helps journalists build trust with the public by gratifying their information needs in a professional manner.

Stamenković, G. (2018) believes that 'Objectivity' in journalism in the broadest sense means real, true, legitimate, and independent of the subject and their opinions. Therefore, the objective is to provide people with a real, true, factual and unbiased account of information that connects them with the event with neutrality. Mukherjee, A. (2022) observes that 'Balance' and 'Fairness' are classic buzzwords of ethics for quality journalism: In objective journalism, stories must be balanced to attempt to present all sides of the story. Moran, R. E. (2021) finds that 'Trust' and 'Authenticity' exist as complicated theoretical constructs which retain the potential to both strengthen and undermine journalism's ability to fulfill its democratic role to spread truthful information and contribute to quality journalism.

Operational definition:

Looking into the issue of quality journalism vis-à-vis the practice usually being observed by social media, these values can be operationally defined as;

Objectivity:

Objectivity is one of the core elements of any news story. Objectivity refers to facts, figures, measurements and numerical or non-numerical data of any incident or event. It is considered one of the key filters while working for mainstream media in Pakistan.

Accuracy:

Discussing journalism in the Pakistani context, it is believed that every news story should be accurate because accuracy enhances the quality of news properly. By accuracy, the researcher means disseminating correct information in a story, which gives the news item more worth and raises its overall standard.

Authenticity:

The journalist or content producer should ensure that information is correct and real because it is a very imperative factor required for any kind of news report. The quality of being real or truthful matters a lot in any kind of news report, whether it is presented on mainstream media or a social media forum that is meant for public awareness, information and education.

Source:

The source plays an important role in every news story. The source could be a person, document, publication, knowledge or audio/video that gives timely information. The source must be related to that particular incident.

Ethics:

The event covered by media in Pakistan, both Mainstream and social media, must be reported in a way that is ethically appropriate as per the moral values of Pakistani society. The reporter or content producer consciously tries not to use any vulgar, violent or offensive terms, words and phrases in language, as well as in visuals or photographs.

Balance:

It is crucial that story should be balanced. The balance in news content means minimizing personal biases as well as biased angles by the the ones quoted and mentioned as actuality in the report. It is important to note that there are often two or more sides to any news story that help control our biases when accommodated or covered equally and appropriately.

Table 1.
Case study of the death of cricketer Usman Shinwari

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
Sheryar Khan posted the news regarding the death of International Pakistani Cricketer Usman Khan Shinwari, on his Facebook timeline with a photograph on 25th September 2022.	ARY News reported on 25th September, 2022 that Usman Shinwari lost his life due to a heart attack during the Pakistan Corporate League in Lahore (with a picture of the local player Usman Shinwari)	Accuracy Authenticity Source

The Facebook story says that Usman Shinwari, the international Pakistani cricketer who belongs to Landi Kotal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, died during a cricket match. The social media post also showed a picture of the left-arm fast bowler who represented Pakistan in several international matches. When the news got viral on social media, Usman Shinwari tweeted that he was alive and in good condition, adding that the news about his death was fake. In his tweet, he also requested that content producers for social media to avoid spreading rumours and confirm any news before it gets published.

ARY News, one of the leading Pakistani Television News Channel, reported the same news with the photograph of 46-year-old Usman Shinwari, a local cricketer who died from a heart attack during a cricket match at Chobli Town Cricket Ground Lahore. It also clarified the previously circulated news, thus ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of the news and mentioning the credible source. The data confirms that three basic values of new, authenticity, accuracy and credibility of source have been compromised by social media.

Table 2.

Case study of Flood Incident in Kohistan

Social Media	Mainstream	News values Challenged
In a Facebook post of August 27, 2022, Kot Chutta says that "five brothers waited for five hours in the flood water, but the helicopter did not come, and the five were flooded.	Bol News reported the same news on August 27, 2022, that "five friends got swept away by flood water in lower Kohistan," the northern part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	Source Ethics Accuracy

According to social media (Facebook), five brothers died after waiting five hours in the Sanagai area of Lower Kohistan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the area's residents, the five victims climbed on a rock to save themselves after being surrounded by heavy flooding. They waited for help; however, no rescue team arrived to save them, and eventually, they were swept away by the high-pressure flood water. The locals of the area said that a helicopter could have been reached from Peshawar or Gilgit in an hour if the administration wanted to. The locals tried to save them by pulling with the help of a rope but could not succeed, as only the helicopter could do that.

On the other hand, in the mainstream media, the Bol news channel, four out of five friends lost their lives while one survived after they got stuck in the floods in the Sanagai area of Lower Kohistan district in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The locals of the area said they tried saving them by pulling with the help of a rope; however, they could only save one out of five.

In response to the social media posts, the district administration has issued an official statement deeming the allegations "patently false," as if they have not made any effort to save the victim. The statement clarified that the rescue in those circumstances was "extremely difficult."

Social media have compromised the professional ethics of balance and impartiality by not contacting the concerned authorities after being blamed by locals for not trying to rescue the five persons. Similarly, four persons died,

not five; they were not brothers but friends. Mentioning them as brothers has a different social and psychological impact compared to stating them as friends.

Table 3.
Case study of Ex-Army Chief Pervez Musharraf's Death

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
Imran TV channel account on YouTube reported on June 10, 2022, that "Parvez Musharraf has died, pray for his forgiveness. He was not feeling well since morning, and finally, he died."	Capital News reported on the same day (June, 10 2022) that "The news regarding the death of former President Parvez Musharraf has been declared as a fake."	Objectivity Accuracy Ethics Authenticity

This case is related to the news item about the death of former Pakistani Martial Law Administrator and President Parvez Musharraf. Social Media reported him as dead, and the news came out from the YouTube Chanel titled Imran TV. However, even the family of Pervez Musharraf termed it fake through a Twitter post. Later on, Capital news, after confirming it from the family sources, clarified that the news about the death of Pervez Musharaf is fake, adding that he was admitted to the hospital due to illness but is alive.

Social media has compromised the authenticity, accuracy, objectivity and professional ethics required for standardized journalism.

Table 4.

Case study of Minar-i-Pakistan Assault Case

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
YouTube, August 20, 2022. Malick Kamran reported that four hundred boys harassed Miss Ayesha Akram through flying kisses at Minar e Pakistan, Lahore.	Dawn News (TV) reported the same issue on August 19, 2022: "A female tiktoker Ayesha Akram was assaulted by men during independence day celebrations at Minar e Pakistan, Lahore. The incident has shaken the image of Pakistani youth.	Accuracy Ethics Balance

This is the story of a woman, Ayesha Akram, who, according to a youtube report, was assaulted by 400 men at Minar e Pakistan, Lahore, and it was her dress that compelled the youngsters to do so, through flying kisses and getting physical. The Twitter video shows that a lady was groped, harassed and assaulted by men by making her rounds. The perpetrators, while assaulting the girl without any shame, were also making videos of the ongoing violent incident and every man in the mob who had access to any social media platform made sure to upload the videos of the act without censoring or blurring any undesirable part of the body which would affect the girl's position even more in the society. To top it all, a YouTube channel, 'Amazing Hub,' came out with videos which put the entire blame on the girl, saying that she was the one harassing the 400 men by blowing them kisses, and the men then, in return, contested her honour.

Dawn News, the mainstream television channel, reported that the incident took place on Independence Day of Pakistan, and the videos of the assault of a female tiktoker by a crowd consisting mainly of men, have shaken the country's image. Furthermore, the videos of this incident were not reported by most of the news channels, and those who aired it made sure that it was blurred and censored to keep the dignity of the victim intact.

The social media broke the principles of ethics but showed some body parts of the lady, which could have easily been blurred. Similarly, they blamed the lady for her dress and appearance and ensured the video would bring them maximum subscribers and watch hours. Social media compromised the accuracy, balance and ethical aspect of quality journalism.

Table 5.

Kidnappers' gang is termed scaremongering.

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
A YouTube Channel 'Hatmi TV Channel' reported on September 27, 2022, that so far, about 1400 children have been kidnapped from different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces of Pakistan.	ARY News (a television channel), on October 9, 2022, interviewed the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in Lahore, Athar Ismail, and he strongly rejected the rumours that children are being kidnaped. He clarified that some miscreants spread these rumours for personal gain and terrorize people.	Objectivity Source Authenticity

This is the case study of an event that has been differently reported by the social media and mainstream media of Pakistan. The social media, YouTube, spread rumours that gangsters are kidnapping children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, which created unrest in the society. Likewise, many other social media forums posted videos of such incidents, which were later termed as either old from India or fake. A YouTube video explained how 1400 were kidnapped to date.

Later on, the ARY News Channel reported that after thoroughly investigating this piece of news, the DIG Investigation rejected these reports

and termed them false, misleading, and part of a misinformation campaign for terrorizing the people. He stated that individuals had propagated such information to serve their interests, and these claims have no base. According to Punjab Police, the purpose of sharing such news is to spread fear among people and parents. The police urged the citizens to respond responsibly and asked them not to spread such false news without verification.

The social media forums did not verify the news from the police or any relevant body, thus posing a threat to quality journalism by not following the principles of objectivity, authenticity, verification and attribution.

Table 6.

Case study of Shehbaz Gill's Treatment after Arrest

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
Amna Chaudhry posted on her Facebook on August 18, 2022, that the private body of parts of Mr. Shahbaz Gill had severely been attacked during custody.	GEO TV reported on August 19, 2022, that Shahbaz Gill is making excuses in order to halt the ongoing investigation process. The allegations regarding attacking his private body parts are false.	Authenticity Source objectivity

The case study is about the reports of torture on Shahbaz Gill, the leader of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf, during police custody. The Facebook post of Amna Chaudhry said that the private body parts of Shahbaz Gill were attacked by police, which is inhumane treatment by the government. It further said that he had been admitted to the hospital for treatment of the injuries, and he was in critical condition.

Geo TV reported that the news regarding attacking Shahbaz Gill on private body parts is untrue, and he is making excuses to avoid the investigation process. The TV channel also quoted police and hospital sources,

clarifying that he has been admitted to the hospital for an asthmatic problem and his condition is stable.

The social media posts compromised the authenticity of the news by adding personal feelings for the arrested political workers, besides exaggerating the incident. On the other hand, the mainstream media quoted the concerned officials regarding the health of a person and said that the news being spread on social media is false.

Table 7.

Case study of the News regarding Maryam Nawaz, Importing Machinery from India

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
A Twitter handle @nigarbaloch5 tweeted on September 27, 2022, that "Maryam Nawaz is a corrupt and criminal lady by importing machinery for her son-in-law from India, do not call her a daughter of the nation, as this is an insult to our daughters.	GEO TV reported on September 26, 2022, that the news regarding importing machinery from India by Maryam Nawaz is not true. It added that 60 percent of the power plan had already been imported before 2020.	Objectivity Accuracy

This case study deals with the news regarding Maryam Nawaz, a politician and daughter of former prime minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. It spread on social media after a leaked audio of a conversation between Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the sitting prime minister and a government official. The audio revealed that Maryam Nawaz asked the government to facilitate her son-in-law in importing machinery from India. The social media posts called her a shameless woman and asked people that since she is involved in corrupt practices, she should not call her "daughter of the nation" as it would be an insult to other daughters.

The mainstream media reported that this machinery was imported from India in 2020 when the political party of Maryam Nawaz was not in government. 40 percent of the import was not completed when the government banned all types of imports from India. The television channel also quoted government officials to authenticate its news item.

The social media posts were found to be politically engineered, which challenged the core news values like objectivity and accuracy, while the mainstream media took care of all these while reporting the event.

Table 8.
Case study of Ishaq Dar as Finance Minister

Social Media	Mainstream	News values challenged
Musarrat Jameshad Cheema wrote on her Facebook on September 26, 2022, "Ishaq Dar returns home from fugitive to desirable. Will the economy handle or sink?	Dawn News reported on September 28, 2022, "Senator Ishaq Dar took the oath of senator last day and will take oath as federal minister today."	Authenticity Source Ethics

This is the analysis of a news item related to Ishaq Dar, who was sworn in as Finance Minister just a day after he was sworn in as a member of the Senate, the upper house of the Pakistani Parliament. A Chartered Accountant by profession, Ishaq Dar was given the position after his predecessor, Miftah Ismail, resigned from the office. However, the opposition has attacked the government over Dar's appointment.

The Social Media presented the news of Ishaq Dar's return to Pakistan, to Parliament and as a Finance Minister in a negative way. His return was portrayed as if the recent downfall of Pakistan's economy was solely due to Dar's mismanagement, and as he has assumed the role of the caretaker of the State's economy, Pakistan would be going through another financial black hole. In the news circulating the social media platform, he was titled '*Tarzan*

of Corruption' by another, stating, 'This is the Aristotle whose ministry was included in the country's gray list.'

The Mainstream Media, on the other hand, reported it as routine news by informing the audience of Ishaq Dar's return to the country after five years and showed a live scene of President Arif Alvi taking oath from Ishaq Dar, as a Federal Minister of Finance, just a day after he took oath as a senator. The social media posts clearly showed a bias against the basic essence of objective journalism, thus proving that social media poses a threat to quality journalism in Pakistan.

Discussion and Conclusion

The social media posts were gauged in light of some key values, considered a pre-request for any objective report, in contrast to the mainstream media that tries up to some extent to follow these and incorporate them in news stories. Answering the main research question, the analysis justifies the argument that, Yes, social media is a threat to quality journalism in Pakistan. The research concluded that basic news values like objectivity, accuracy, balance, ethical consideration and attribution of the sources were not considered while reporting for social media. Similarly, the research also revealed that the quality of journalism is compromised since no editorial filter is involved in posting content on social media forums, like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Social media has greatly exploited people's dependency on social media, where they have to rely on the content with no option for verification. The research talked about the findings in the light of the dependency theory of mass communication, thus linking it in a way that the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfill his/her needs, the media will become more important to that individual. The media will have much influence and power over that individual, and this is how the researcher found it during preliminary research while finding a rationale for this study. This dependency on social media by its users have contributed negatively to the issue of authenticity, balance, objectivity, attribution and human interest. This practice has left the audience nowhere to differentiate between fake and real news. The research recommends that authorities like the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), in consultation with the Journalists' Unions, Press Clubs and other relevant bodies, should come up with a mechanism where news content can be filtered, or the producer is made morally bound to

take care of basic principles of journalism. However, it should not be applied to sharing personal observations, opinions or content related to self-projection.

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