



Universidad De Oviedo

Gender and Diversity PhD Program

*The Role of Jordanian Digital Journalism in  
Addressing Violence against Women*

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Addressing Violence against Women*

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## RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO DE TESIS DOCTORAL

<b>1.- Título de la Tesis</b>	
Español: <i>El papel del periodismo digital jordano en el abordaje de la violencia contra las mujeres</i>	Inglés: <i>The Role of Jordanian Digital Journalism in Addressing Violence against Women</i>
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### RESUMEN

Esta tesis se centra en el papel del periodismo digital en Jordania a la hora de abordar cuestiones relacionadas con la violencia contra las mujeres, en particular durante el estallido de la pandemia del COVID-19 en el año 2020. El estudio analiza tres fuentes de noticias: *Alrai*, *Alghad* y *Roya News*. La muestra consiste en 192 noticias publicadas entre enero de 2020 y diciembre de 2020, un periodo en el que aumentaron los casos de violencia contra las mujeres, en particular durante el periodo de cuarentena. Los y las periodistas de Jordania consideraron que se trataba de un asunto importante que requería la cobertura y la atención de los medios para sensibilizar a la opinión pública. Este estudio pretende detectar las posturas de los medios de comunicación sobre el tema y los tipos de violencia más comunes de los que se habla en los artículos periodísticos. Asimismo, pretende analizar la cobertura de las causas y consecuencias de la violencia contra las mujeres, así como de las soluciones para eliminar dicha violencia y promover la protección de las mujeres.

Este trabajo utilizó un método de investigación cuantitativo y empleó una herramienta de análisis de contenido para evaluar los artículos de noticias en línea que incluían el tema de la violencia contra las mujeres. Los resultados del análisis cuantitativo, que se presentan en el texto y se resumen en gráficos y tablas, después se examinan y comentan en el contexto de los derechos de las mujeres, la discriminación de género, el movimiento feminista en los medios de comunicación y la violencia contra las mujeres, aplicando teorías relevantes y actualizadas del campo de los estudios de género.

Este es uno de los primeros proyectos académicos sobre el tratamiento que da la prensa digital jordana a seis tipos de violencia contra las mujeres: la violencia física, emocional, sexual, los crímenes de honor, el matrimonio infantil y la violencia digital. Emplea las teorías del establecimiento de la agenda (*Agenda-Setting*) y del encuadre (*Framing*), y más concretamente la metodología del encuadre de Robert Entman. Al arrojar luz sobre esta importante cuestión, el estudio pretende contribuir al conjunto de investigaciones y conocimientos científicos sobre el tema, lo que, en última instancia, puede ayudar a informar las políticas de prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres y a mejorar la representación de las mujeres en los medios de comunicación.

Los resultados mostraron que el matrimonio infantil era el tipo más frecuente de violencia de género presentado en las tres plataformas, mientras que la violencia digital era la que recibía menos cobertura. Además, los tres sitios tenían posturas neutrales sobre víctimas y perpetradores, mientras que adoptaban una postura negativa respecto a los seis tipos de violencia contra las mujeres. En este sentido, los sitios web de noticias adoptan un enfoque sensible a las ideas del feminismo para cubrir las cuestiones relacionadas con la violencia contra las mujeres. Destacan las críticas a las leyes y a diversas formas de discriminación contra las mujeres presentadas desde la perspectiva de las defensoras de los derechos de las



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mujeres. La cobertura también abordó las razones que obstaculizan el movimiento feminista, como la cultura del silencio dentro de un enfoque patriarcal que refuerza la opresión y la violencia contra las mujeres.

### ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the role of digital journalism in Jordan in addressing issues related to violence against women, particularly during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The study analyzes three news outlets: Alrai, Alghad, and Roya News. The sample consists of 192 news stories published between January 2020 and December 2020, a period when cases of violence against women increased, particularly during the home quarantine period. Jordanian journalists considered this to be a significant issue that required media coverage and attention to raise public awareness. The study aims to uncover the news outlets' positions on the issue and the most common types of violence discussed in news articles. Also, it aims to analyze the coverage of the causes and consequences of violence against women, as well as the solutions to eliminate violence and promote the protection of women.

This work utilized a quantitative research method and employed a content analysis tool to evaluate online news articles that included the topic of violence against women. The results of the quantitative analysis, which are presented in the text and summarized in charts and grids, were then examined and discussed within the context of women's rights, gender discrimination, the feminist movement in the media, and violence against women, applying relevant and updated theories from the field of gender studies.

This is one of the first academic projects on the digital press in Jordan's treatment of six types of violence against women, which are physical, emotional, sexual, honor killings, child marriage, and digital violence. It employs Agenda-Setting and Framing theories, specifically Robert Entman's framing methodology. By shedding light on this important issue, the study aims to contribute to the body of scientific research and knowledge on the topic, which can ultimately help inform policies to prevent violence against women and to improve the portrayal of women in the media.

The results showed that child marriage was the most prevalent type of gender-based violence presented across all three platforms, while digital violence received the least coverage. Additionally, the three sites had neutral positions about victims and perpetrators, while they took a clearly negative stance on the six types of violence against women. In this regard, the news websites adopted an approach sensitive to feminist ideas in order to cover issues related to violence against women. They highlighted criticisms of laws and diverse forms of discrimination against women presented from the perspective of women's rights defenders and feminists. The coverage also addressed reasons hindering the feminist movement, such as the culture of silence within a patriarchal approach that reinforces oppression and violence against women..

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## INTRODUCTION

Given the importance of the demands for freedom and equality, the world has witnessed a surge in reform movements to demand the rights of individuals who continue to suffer from social injustice; a struggle that led to the demands for the right to live in dignity and equality, with access to various discrimination-free cultural and social rights (Ramzi 2001, 21). Accordingly, in 1948, the United Nations ratified the Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “The rights and freedoms outlined in this Declaration, without the distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or another status” (United Nations n.d.).

Women, as members of society, have the right to live with dignity, freedom, and security, and their concerns should be recognized as a human rights issue (UNFPA Arab State n.d.). In 1979, the United Nations issued the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which recommends the states to legislate to prohibit discrimination and achieve equality regardless of sex (OHCHR 1997). In this regard, 64 countries signed the convention in 1980 (UN Women n.d.a). Since the issues of combating violence against women are no less important than human rights and achieving gender justice, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) in 1993. The Declaration states “the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles relating to equality, security, freedom, integrity, and dignity of all human beings” (OHCHR 1993). In addition, these conventions assume the freedom of women and the respect of their rights, particularly to safeguard the vulnerable members of the society such as rural women, migrants, and refugees, who are most affected by violence and discrimination (OHCHR 1993).

Despite the importance of the declarations and international conventions of human rights, they would remain dead letters in the absence of basic conditions for the exercise of human rights, given the dominance of social and economic conditions that hinder the progress of people and the achievement of justice among groups in society, especially in the Middle East (Ramzi 2001, 25). In this respect, the role of the mass media in supporting human rights issues has become increasingly important in the modern era. With technological advancements and the proliferation of new media platforms worldwide, including radio, journalism, television, and the Internet, examining how these platforms can support human rights conventions and help marginalized individuals is essential. Moreover, it is crucial to consider the impact of the media and gatekeepers in keeping up with the coverage and framing of human rights violations, both economically and socially, at the international level (Cook et al. 2002, 17-20).

Digital technology and electronic media have been a major cause of the multiplicity of effects that have emerged in our societies and directly impacted the majority of social classes, especially women (Ahmed 2020, 90). The media plays a crucial role in modern life. Its diverse platforms offer opportunities for presenting, debating, and discussing social, political, and cultural issues. In addition, the media not only raises awareness and provides information and entertainment, but also influences opinions, decision-making, beliefs, values, and behavior. Thus, it makes a significant contribution to shaping society and has the power to affect the course of international laws that contribute to ensuring its rights and satisfying its needs in all fields (Kafiris et al. 2005, 11). Besides, if we talk about the most prominent developmental media issues that need to be highlighted, women's issues invariably come to the fore, aligning with a general political trend in most Arab countries that is paying increasing attention to women and their issues. The significance of women's issues and their privacy can be attributed to their interconnection with all

political, social, health, and educational aspects of society (Kurdi 2021, 6). However, Nahed Eltantawy, a scholar, has emphasized in her article “Why Arabic Media Coverage of Violence against Women Needs to Change” the absence of media content that addresses women’s issues in the Arab regions, especially regarding violent crimes against women. Often, the facts are camouflaged by stereotypes that portray women as guilty, and the perpetrators are justified, which prevents women and girls from receiving justice (Eltantawy 2022). Moreover, Vardhan pointed out that women’s issues and rights in public spheres can be raised by leveraging new media by providing content, tools, and facilities that emphasize women’s voices, value, and positive impact (Vardhan 2017, 117-120). It is urgent to push the media representatives to extend the usage of new media to advance the manufacturing of fruitful content to address women’s issues. Since women are recipients, influencers, and producers of media content, their issues are an important topic for the media to cover. Accordingly, it is necessary to be aware of women’s professional capabilities and their possible effects on decision-making in the media field to empower their peers to tackle challenges and boost their status in media sectors, with the ultimate aim of promoting gender equality (Kafiris et al. 2005, 11).

In addition, a lack of female representation in certain areas can affect women’s portrayal in the media (Ziadeh et al. 2018, 14). In Jordan, women are usually employed as journalists in the social development sector, and there is no trust in them to cover other fields. Moreover, women journalists could be dispensed with, as decision-makers believe that males are the real breadwinners (Aljazeera Media Institute 2019). According to a 2018 study by Sawsan Ziadeh et. al. titled *Gender Balance in the Jordanian Media*, a gender gap still exists in various aspects of life in the government and private media sectors. The study found that men are represented at 91%, while women’s appearance in the media does not exceed 9%. A sample of 22 media outlets



representing written, visual, and audio media sectors in both private and public domains was monitored during the study. Additionally, women accounted for only 27% of media professionals who appeared in the monitored media materials as preparers, presenters, and writers, while men accounted for 73%. This affected the ability of female journalists to bridge the gender gap and address the imbalance in addressing women's issues through the media (Ziadeh et al. 2018, 5-6). Thus, media officials must prepare women to reach leadership positions that contribute to raising awareness and support for women and addressing all their issues (Ziadeh et al. 2018, 114).

In various parts of the world, violence against women is considered a widespread and intractable problem (Van der Vleuten, Roggeband, and Eerdewijk 2020, 127), and the spread of violence against women in all its forms is attributed to several factors, including the control of the patriarchal system, besides economic and social issues that cause an increase in gender-based violence (Dekić 2017, 8-12). The World Health Organization considers acts of violence against women to be a very important public health issue that violates women's human rights. Moreover, it contributes to gender inequality. Based on the United Nations' definition, violence against women includes any form of violence that harms women physically, sexually, or mentally, including arbitrary deprivation of liberty (World Health Organization n.d.).

Impe (2019) suggested that it is important to communicate and report cases of violence against women through the mass media. This helps shape public policies and the society's stance towards such atrocities, aiding in preventing violence against women and breaking the silence around it. Unfortunately, this issue is often overlooked by the media and remains a private matter. In this regard, it is imperative to present a balanced portrayal of violence against women that accurately reflects reality (Impe 2019, 11), because the media can play a significant role in dispelling myths and providing precise information about the nature of the issue, leading to a better

understanding of the problem (Sutherland et al. 2, 2015). Thus, there is a great need to conduct academic studies on the effectiveness of mass communication in eliminating violence against women using all media types such as talk show programs, news, articles, cartoons, drama, media campaigns, etc.

Based on my research for this thesis, Jordan lacks studies that focus on the impact of the Jordanian media industry in presenting the most prominent violence-related cases against women and its efficaciousness in shaping the public and political agenda for eliminating this case, despite the widespread violence against women in the Jordanian society. As reported by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor in 2020, women in Jordan continue to face numerous legal challenges that impede their rights and their value and role in society, despite the principle of equality enshrined in Article 6 of the Jordanian Constitution. These challenges include economic abuse, psychological violence, and marital rape (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor 2020, 16). In addition, the Solidarity is Global Institute in Jordan (SIGI) pointed out that 26 out of every 100 women are subjected to violence, while one man in 100 is subjected to thuggery by women (Solidarity Is Global Institute in Jordan 2021a). In 2019, 6,965 women were official recognized as affected by violence, of which 810 were supported by the Ministry of Social Development through five battered women shelters according to Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor 2020, 5). At the same time, a 2020 study conducted by the UN on Jordanian Women and girls found that the COVID-19 curfew has contributed to increasing the cases of violence against women in Jordan by 69 % (Anderson 2020, 4). According to this study, the participants pointed out that they mostly faced emotional violence during the epidemic.

I chose this topic for my thesis as I personally observed through digital media that violence against women is a rising problem as seen from the high rate of domestic violence incidents in Jordan. Since I began writing this dissertation, I have tried to search extensively for specialized studies on the history of women's journalism in Jordan and when its influence began to address violence against women, but I have been unable to find any. Unfortunately, I was incapable of locating academic resources on this subject despite my visit to the Center for Women's Studies at the University of Jordan and the Center for Arab Women Journalists. Although I communicated with feminist journalists who specialize in issues of violence against women, they could not really help me because there are no fruitful studies or sources. Jordan lacks studies on the media coverage of violence against women, as I stated previously. The only information I gathered in that phase of my research was that the first Jordanian magazine focusing on women's issues was established in Jordan in 1954, and the magazine's name—*The Girl of Tomorrow* (my translation)—was mentioned in AL-Tal (2008). In addition, no information was provided about the magazine's role in addressing women's issues or the prominent topics it covered, particularly since the magazine is no longer in existence. Thus, based on my observation in the phase of diagnosis for this study, tackling gender-based violence through media platforms as a research topic has not received adequate attention at the academic level in Jordan, despite the expansion of activities to combat violence against women by human rights activists and the fact that CEDAW was ratified in Jordan in 1992 (EuroMed Rights 2018).

In compliance with the prevalence of many forms of violence, injustice, and oppression practiced against women in Jordanian society in all fields of life (Johnstone 2015, 30-33), the non-governmental organizations and human rights practitioners were encouraged to adopt strategic plans and policies to protect women and children from violence and abuse (UN Women, Women

Count, and Economic and Social Council of Jordan 2022, 41-44).<sup>1</sup> This requires conducting studies on the extent of the Jordanian media's role in how to cover and raise the issues of Jordanian women and its position towards supporting and representing them through various media channels to limit the many sensitive and thorny issues that violate their rights. Media coverage is a method that sheds light on specific topics and events to reach the public by tackling and transferring the news interestingly to attract attention to the object of coverage (Kulchina 2014, 571).

For this doctoral project, I relied on many studies conducted by media professionals, human rights organizations, and scholars to investigate the extent of the media's influence on Jordanian public opinion in developing awareness about the problem of Jordanian women and tackling their issues in more objective and impartial ways to meet the recipient's passion and needs. According to Sutherland et al. (2015), developing and sharing news reports that center on women's concerns can help boost public awareness of women's rights and tackle violence against women (Sutherland et al. 6, 2015). Eastal et al. (2021) have proposed in their publication "Teaching Journalists About Violence against Women Best Reportage Practices: An Australian Case Study" that it is advisable for media outlets to prioritize creating news that specifically focuses on violence against women and to train their journalists on how to cover women's issues effectively. Disseminating content can improve public knowledge of women's rights and combat violence against them by conveying facts, reducing myths, and blaming perpetrators instead of victims (Eastal et al. 2021, 2199-2200). To that end, violence-related crimes against women must occupy a large space in the Jordanian press due to the high prevalence of this phenomenon (Petra News Agency 2021). In addition, due to the important position media plays in combating violence (Băluță 2015, 53), it is necessary to

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to this link for more information about these plans: <https://www.esc.jo/Documents/4379c24d-09a7-42a8-ad42-33a116a35857.pdf>

investigate the role of Jordanian digital journalism in addressing violence against women to fulfill equal rights.

Digital journalism is defined as digital media, or online journalism, and is an alternative modern method of delivering editorial content through the Internet instead of through print or television. In this field, online news and features about current events are produced in various formats, including text, audio, video, and interactive media, such as news games (Richard 2022, 1-2). Digital journalism can deliver speedy, effective coverage of developing news instantly, offering a comprehensive view of the unfolding events in real time. As the event progresses, journalists can contribute information to online platforms, enabling readers to stay informed immediately. Through digital journalism, journalists and readers can communicate directly and exchange feedback, participate in public discussions, and share news content via social media and online news publications (Farid 2023, 22-25). Aladdine (2022, 110) pointed out that several changes have taken place in newsrooms and information centers as a result of the development of digital, social, and mobile media. Media institutions are modernizing their work practices to stay abreast of technological advances, especially during times of intense competition and economic instability.

This thesis will explore the role of the Jordanian digital press in addressing violence against women in all forms. It will also examine the tendency and priority of journalists while setting their agenda to tackle violence against women. To achieve this, I have articulated the following research questions:

- 1) What is the volume of media treatment of violence against women, based on the patterns and forms of violence against women?
- 2) What are the purposes of Jordanian digital journalism in tackling violence against women?

- 3) How does Jordanian digital journalism represent the offenders and the victims of violence against women?
- 4) What is the dominant position of Jordanian digital journalism when addressing the issue of violence against women?
- 5) What is the role of Jordanian digital journalism in educating the public about violence against women?

The power of mass communication can be utilized to educate and empower women who experience violence of any form. This can be done through the efforts of activists and decision-makers who raise awareness, direct people, and implement programs to address the issue (Băluță 2015, 53). This thesis aims to investigate the stance of Jordanian digital journalism on various forms of violence against women: physical, emotional, sexual, honor crimes, early marriage, and digital violence. My study will delve into the root causes of these problems and explore ways to address them on the media. By doing so, I hope to contribute to encouraging women to become aware of their legal rights and prevent them from falling victim to violence or becoming submissive. The thesis presents the findings on gender-base violence, particularly during and right after the COVID lockdown, to also, ideally, raise awareness among the Jordanian authorities and readers about the need for societal changes to prevent the escalation of violence. It also focuses on the electronic media's coverage of emotional and physical violence against women, including blackmail, humiliation, insult, beating, and torture. It explores the underlying reasons for the persistence of such violence against women in Jordan and examines whether the press, in collaboration with psychologists and social human rights activists, offers effective solutions to help women protect themselves and deal with such cases.

The following chapters examine as well the dissemination rate, causes, and consequences of sexual violence, as well as the role of websites in protecting girls from sexual crimes and increasing their safety. Unfortunately, the number of honor killings in Jordan has reached 20 annually due to social traditions that contribute to gender inequality and discrimination against women (Jordan Times 2017). These cases have gained more media attention recently. I have therefore decided to investigate the role of journalists in combating honor crimes. My study focuses on how the press can educate people to protect their daughters from any attempts on their lives by partners or family members due to the concept of honor. Additionally, I examine the negative aspects of femicide cases that are covered by the media, the motivations of offenders, and the penalties for honor crimes.

Child marriage is an equally serious issue, and it is important to understand how the Jordanian press covers the topic. By examining the role of NGOs and advocates in supporting traumatized victims of this practice, we can better understand the motivations behind the law and the consequences that come with underage marriage for girls. In addition, my thesis focuses on the role of the electronic press in Jordan in portraying electronic violence in the country and addressing its causes and negative effects on girls. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the press content in providing useful information and solutions to support vulnerable women and eliminate victimization and electronic abuse in Jordanian society. Moreover, this research aims to investigate how journalists describe the attributes of story characters and how their stance towards victims and perpetrators determine whether they hold the victims responsible or support the actions of the perpetrators.

The methodology selected for this dissertation is quantitative, which is a suitable approach for media and communication studies (Davies and Mosdell 2006, 98). This approach will be

complemented by textual interpretation of the digital press regarding handling women's issues in Jordan during 2020, due to the significant increase in violence-related cases against women during quarantine because of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the theory, I applied Agenda-Setting theory and News Framing analysis, which are the most suitable frameworks for the analysis of the sample, based on my reading and my contact with specialists. The former examines most topics of violence against women that have the attention of the media agenda in Jordan; and the latter allows me to analyze the news framing that the selected websites applied, as per Robert Eltman's method.

I have chosen the most prestigious and influential media outlets in Jordanian society that represent the electronic press to conduct my study. Thus, the most prominent digital newspapers chosen from around 250 news sites in Jordan are *Roya News*, *Alghad*, and *Alrai*. The aim is to discover the impact of these media in promoting awareness of women's issues in Jordan and to identify the methods used to kindle feelings of sympathy in public opinion and direct it towards adopting behaviors that help reduce violence against women. Another important objective is to assess the position of the news websites in relation to women's issues by analyzing the news items, in the light of gender-aware theories.

The purposive sample was selected to gauge the extent of the coverage of women's affairs and to know more about the stance adopted by these websites toward female problems. The selected sample comprises 192 items. In terms of data collection, I have used quantitative methods. To be specific, I have activated the Quantitative Content Analysis tool to analyze the press materials of the study. I have also conducted a quantitative survey to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives. The survey utilizes pre-defined categories that are then applied to analyze the content of the sample, allowing for the highest level of accuracy in generating



quantitative results. For the analysis, I have employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The survey categories are divided in accordance with the two selected theories, namely Agenda-Setting and Framing News. These two theories are used to define the basic topics related to the issue of violence against women.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the first one, “Analyzing the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Media”, I present an overview of the main theories of mass communication and their evolution, assumptions, and application on media content analysis, progressing from the oldest to the most recent. I then select two media theories that will be applied to the data collection of the thesis, and content analysis y my sample. Besides, I explain the reason for choosing these theories, and I provide a panorama of the most prominent Jordanian media platforms in terms of their history of establishment and current state. Finally, I define the thesis sample.

Chapter Two, entitled “Women’s Rights”, discusses the evolution of the feminist waves throughout history and the activists’ fight to eradicate discrimination and violence against women globally and in Jordan. It also includes a brief overview of international human rights declarations, such as CEDAW and DEVAOW, and their role in promoting women’s rights. Additionally, the chapter provides an insight into Jordanian legislation concerning women’s rights and their protection against violence.

In the third chapter, “Violence against Women”, the focus is on the definition of the issue at hand, as well as its typologies, based on the classification provided by The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). This section also provides an overview of the various studies that have been conducted on seven different types of violence against women that I explore in this thesis, namely physical, emotional, sexual, honor crimes, child marriage, digital, and human trafficking. These studies delve into the prevalence, causes, and

consequences of these types of violence against women, both within and outside the borders of Jordan.

In Chapter Four I discuss the role of the media in addressing violence against women and highlight the most notable news stories related to this issue covered by Jordanian electronic newspapers. I also emphasize the importance of awareness campaigns that contribute to building a popular movement to combat these harmful practices that violate women's rights in Jordan. As I reviewed previous studies on the role of newspapers and the media in addressing violence against women, I identified some gaps in these studies and suggested how electronic newspapers can address six types of violence against women not previously considered. Furthermore, I discuss how my research differs from previous studies conducted in Jordan by analyzing issues of violence against women through the lens of two media theories.

The fifth chapter delves into the specifics of digital journalism in Jordan in the process of addressing violence against women. It presents my methodology and my sample, alongside the results in the light of the two theories that I have selected. My quantitative methodology involves creating questionnaires to track and analyze news items related to violence in the thesis corpus. In addition to explaining the reliability and statistical treatment of news analysis using the Holsti equation, the chapter provides a description of the sample, which comprises of 192 news items from the three selected outlets. Furthermore, this part of my thesis. It also includes the results of the analysis of my data.

Chapter Six—the first one dedicated to my discussion of the data presented in the previous book—provides an analysis of the quantitative results related to the theory of Agenda-Setting. The interpretation of the results is meant to answer the research questions and is divided into two levels: Level 1 discusses how news sites address issues of violence against women in terms of the types

and forms of violence that are covered, and the journalistic forms used for news coverage. Also the purpose of news coverage, and determine the geographical locations to which newspapers prioritize covering issues of violence against women. Level 2 includes the analysis of the attributes of news coverage in terms of four categories: attributes of the perpetrators, attributes of the victims, blaming the offenders or the victims of violence against women, and position of the news coverage of violence against women. The analysis of my findings is closely tied to my theoretical exposition in the first part of the thesis in relation to women's rights, feminism, gender-based violence, and the media's responsibility in addressing gender violence as a social, cultural, and political issue.

Chapter Seven—"Discussion (II)"—dissects the findings of my quantitative analysis of news coverage on six types of violence against women as reported by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*. The data are analyzed here through the lens of Framing Theory using Robert Entman's methodology, which identified four frames of violence against women: defining the issue, diagnosing the causes of violence, negative effects of violence, and providing solutions to eliminate violence against women. Just as in the previous chapter, the interpretation of the results has been linked with gender and media theories that underpin this thesis, such as the feminist movement, women's rights, factors and theories explaining violence against women, and the media's role in promoting women's rights and combating gender discrimination.

To sum up, this extensive thesis investigates the role of Jordanian electronic newspapers in addressing six types of violence against women that have not been previously studied in Jordan. As mentioned above, there has been a significant lack of research in this area, making this study a valuable addition to the existing knowledge base. In addition to raising awareness about violence against women in Jordan, it examines how the feminist movement has been covered in the Jordanian digital media in its fight against violence against women. This aspect of the research

has not been conducted by before. My work offers valuable insights into the media's handling of this critical issue and, hopefully, it will help inform future strategies to combat violence against women in Jordan. In comparison to other studies that briefly analyze media content related to violence against women, my contribution provides an in-depth analysis of Jordanian press content available by delving deeper into each type of violence.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ANALYZING THE 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MEDIA**

This chapter revises the most relevant theories about the mass media, justifies the selection of the two frameworks utilized here, and presents a panorama of the history, evolution, and current state of the Jordanian media.

#### **1.1. Studying the Media: A Century of Theories**

Henderikus Stam describes *theory* as rationally arranged laws or relationships that seek to define a problem and describe elements of a phenomenon or provide predictive utility in a systematic way (2007, 551). A theory could be applied to a specific field to explain the relationship between variables and predict answers to specific questions (Wacker 1998, 363). Media theories, therefore, are a set of ideas used to explain or predict the nature or outcome of a communication process or activity. They help in explaining or understanding the process of communication in a particular place and its impact on the public and society (Nawbueze and Okonkwo 2018, 1). Media effect theories illustrate how mass media affects the public's attitudes and perceptions, which represent one of the essential visions of communication and media research (Borah 2016, 1). According to McQuail, media effect theories have gone through several phases in accordance with the developments in technology in the world of communication and media, and the cultural environment, viewpoints, and ideologies used by researchers in each phase (2005, 379).

The first stage began in the 1920s. Harold Lasswell introduced the Magic Bullet Theory, which asserted that the media—including newspapers, radio, and television—have a direct impact on shaping the opinion and behavior of the masses (Lasswell 1927a). The second phase began in the 1930s. This phase was marked by the increased production of media effect research (McQuail

2005, 380). However, it called into question the assumption of the direct influence of the media on individuals. Bernard Berelson, in “The State of Communication Research” (1959), suggested that some media issues have only a limited impact on some individuals. Other theories also took shape in this phase, including the Theory of Personal Influence by Katz and Lazarsfeld, which claimed that personal communication exerts greater influence upon individuals than media do (Katz and Lazarsfeld 2005).<sup>2</sup> Joseph Clapper’s Reinforcement Theory argued that mass communication only affects individuals in accordance with their preexisting beliefs and ideas (Clapper 1960). This period saw how researchers weakened the impact of media effects as previously imagined, questioning the direct link between media message motivation and audience response. This approach became known as the Media Limited Effects Model (Borah 2016, 2).

The third phase of media influence theory emerged after the advent of television in the 1950s and 1960s (Borah 2016, 2), when experts developed new theories about the cumulative influence of the media. It expressed the researchers’ reluctance to accept the Limited Effects Model. Theories in this phase believed that the influence of the media did not depend on imposing direct effect, but rather on long periods of exposure and media follow-up (McQuail 2005, 382). In 1970, George Gerbner put forth his Cultivation Theory, which argued that intense television viewing did influence people’s perceptions, attitudes, and values. This period was also marked by political scholar Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann’s essay “Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media” (1973), which reaffirmed the idea of the powerful influence of mass media on the public. Likewise, it saw the introduction of the Spiral of Silence Theory—also by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann—in 1974, founded on the premise that mass media present the opinion of the majority and exclude the opinion of minorities and of opposition groups. The theory suggests that people

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<sup>2</sup> The book was originally published in 1955.

retreat from opinions that they think are unpopular, for fear of becoming isolated, leading to a spiral of silence (Neumann 1974).

The fourth phase of the media effects study began in the late 1970s and saw an approach to media influences that could best be called social constructivism, which argues that the media have the most significant impact on the audience by interpreting the meaning of the message. The media provide insights into social reality and include both the information presented and the appropriate way of interpreting it. The audience, then, decides whether to adopt the views presented by the media or not to. Thus, though there is no automatic or direct transfer of meaning, there is a negotiation between what is given and what the recipient chooses to accept. This emerging model has two main orientations. First, media construct social formations by framing images of the social reality through news in predictable and choreographed ways. Second, the population construct for themselves their own view of the social reality and their place in it by interacting with the symbolic constructs provided by the media. This approach allows for both the power of the media and the people to interact meaningfully. Theories associated with this approach include the Framing Theory (McQuail 2005, 382–383) and the Agenda-Setting Theory (Al-Mashhadani 2020, 90).

Media theories were employed in this research as an essential reference to obtain the most accurate and reliable results and interpretations. A brief overview of the most relevant of these essential theories is provided below. A synthetic explanation of how to apply some of these theories in analyzing the content of the thesis is also included.



### ***1.1.1. The Magic Bullet Theory***

The American sociologist Harold Lasswell introduced the Magic Bullet Theory<sup>3</sup> in his book *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927a). He analyzed the symbols of media propaganda campaigns conducted by American, British, and German belligerents in World War I in an attempt at maintaining friendly relations with neutrals and allies, or disintegrating enemy morale, debating that the absolute power of the media greatly influences the behavior and patterns of the masses by sharply launching certain propaganda on people's minds like (magic) bullets, by using the symbols embodied with meanings and connotations in stories, rumors, news, words, pictures, colors, etc., and they are effective to the extent that the receiver(s) starts to believe in the propagandist's ideas without a barrier between them. Lasswell's methodology of formulating content analysis of political symbols is an approach still used today (Ascher and Ascher 2005, 17). He described political propaganda campaigns (whether in print, audio, or video) as stimulus-response, which is concerned with triggering the stimuli of the public toward biologically determined internal motivations, emotions, and other processes beyond rational control and provoking their desired reactions for policymakers to control and direct their attitudes and beliefs (Lasswell 1927b, 627–630).

The Magic Bullet was one of the most popular media effect theories during the period between the two World Wars. It also confronts the influence on people's behaviors by the media, in which the communication messages are released like bullets that immediately target the minds of the recipients directly and affect their attitudes and emotions (Esser 2016, 4863). These ideas were applied, for instance, by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis before and during World War II to implement their plans to control the public. For this purpose, Hitler used media propaganda as a

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<sup>3</sup> Also called the Hypodermic Needle Theory. Both metaphors make reference to the same phenomena, explained in this section.

tool to influence human attitudes, thoughts, and behavior. The master of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, produced movies about the Nazi party's achievements in order to promote support for Nazi ideologies and fan anti-Semitic sentiments that subsequently influenced many more Germans (Obe, Aluma, and Ofulue 2008, 45). Moreover, among the most remarkable events that illustrated the Magic Bullet Theory and the media's ability to influence public opinion and behavior is the public panic caused by the American radio episode broadcasted by Columbia Broadcasting Corporation (CBS) on October 30, 1938, called "The War of the Worlds". This radio adaptation of H. G. Wells' story, narrated by Orson Welles, was interspersed with news-bulletin-style announcements updating the listeners on the attack on Grover's Mill, an American city, by Martians by using an on-the-spot technique, which has been developed by the broadcast industry to facilitate the dissemination of the news (Lowery and DeFleur 1995, 48–50). About six million citizens listened to the program, and of those, one million were in panic (Lowery and DeFleur 1995, 65). This prompted Professor Hadley Cantril to conduct a study titled *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* in 1940, to discover the psychological stimulations and conditions that drove people to believe that the broadcasted news was real and to figure out the way some listeners were frightened and the others were not. The scholar interviewed 135 people in the state of New Jersey to examine the various reactions to and reasons for their listening to the program. Of those, 107 listeners who had been frightened by the news were selected, while 28 listeners who were not affected by the broadcast were selected to compare between them according to their answers (Cantril 1940). He found that one of the most important reasons that led people to believe in the invasion was their belief that the radio was a major source of news at that time, as it was used to make important announcements, which had a magical effect on the public. Moreover, the professionalism of the news presentation greatly impacted the public in terms of the

development of technology in reporting the immediate response and conducting interviews with experts. Emotional insecurity, genetic tendency to panic, and some people's lack of confidence were one of the main reasons for believing the news. Besides this, the timing of the program's broadcasting played a major role in causing people to panic, as it aired at a time when Americans were suffering from economic insecurity and expecting the threat of another war (Cantril 1940, 189–200).

According to Shearon Lowery and Melvin DeFleur, the Magic Bullet Theory suggests that people in a mass society lead socially isolated lives, and they are not connected to a unifying set of norms, values, and beliefs. Besides, they are also born with a unified set of instincts that guide their response to the world around them. Accordingly, receiving the message is an individual and not a collective experience, meaning that the media reaches all members of society equally, and all individuals interact with the transmitted message in the same way due to their inherited human nature and their isolated social condition (Lowery and DeFleur 1995, 14). Additionally, this theory assumes that the recipients will always respond forcefully to the message received (McQuail 2005, 373–339). Here, the receivers are a passive element in the communication process; they are the target while the sender is the dominant element (Baran and Dennis 2012, 94). However, these ideas have been criticized because people's responses and actions do differ, challenging the assumption of audience passivity, and because they are only looking for information that support their view (Azlanudin 2008, 4). A study conducted at the University of Colombia by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeldin in 1957 looked into the impact of media propaganda on the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt by evaluating voting decisions. Their research revealed that personal communication sources had a greater impact on convincing the public than media messages do. This limited the supposed influence of mass communication. Accordingly, researchers developed a two-step flow

model, wherein the media message should first reach influential opinion leaders who must understand and interpret the message before it is released to the general public. This model suggests the incredible influence that opinion leaders enjoy over the direction of public opinion (Katz and Lazarsfeld 2005).

The emergence of other theories throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the rebuttal of the Magic Bullet framework. Such is the case of the Reinforcement Theory. In 1960, Joseph Klapper of Columbia University asserted in his book *The Effects of Mass Communication* that mass media reinforces our preexisting attitudes and beliefs created by peer groups, societal influence, and family structure. However, he believed that people are selective about the types of programs they accept or reject. The public is an active character and could assess specific aspects of the media content that they are exposed to (Klapper 1960). In contrast, Elihu Katz, Jay Blumberg, and Michael Gueverich proposed the Uses and Gratifications Theory in 1973. It stated that the audience is active and tends to search only those issues in media platforms that suit their needs and gratifications. The credibility of these media platforms is constructed according to several factors—i.e., the individual's terms, values, attitude, and curiosity (Katz, Blumberg, and Gueverich 1973, 511–513)—in contrast to the Magic Bullet Theory, which posits that the recipient is volatile, unstable, rootless, alienated, and inherently susceptible to be provoked by the propaganda message (Esser 2016, 4837). Additionally, Frank Esser also noted that Hadley Cantril's study in *The Invasion from Mars* proved that the effects of stimulus and response to a media message are not uniform. Instead, the researchers realized early on the individual differences in reactions to media stimuli according to several variables, which refutes the assumptions of the Magic Bullet Theory that every individual receives it in the same way, meaning there are no differences between individuals in their interaction with the media means (Esser 2008, 4838).

On the other hand, the researchers Chinenye Nwabueze and Ebere Okonkwo noted in their academic study of 2018, titled “Rethinking the Magic Bullet Theory in the Digital Age” that the use of social media by users in the digital age has restored the validity of the assumption of the Magic Bullet Theory, which is that the mass media strongly and directly impacts the public through the speed of circulation of news via the Internet, citing the incident of the spread of fake news among Nigerians on October 11, 2017. The news made headlines across social media, such as “Free Medical Outreach: Army Wanted to Depopulate Southeast Region with Monkey Pox – Residents Insist”, “Parents Withdraw Children from Ondo State Schools Over False Rumors of Deadly Vaccines”, and “Don’t Allow Soldiers to Immunise Your Children – Ezeife tells Ndigbo”. The news claimed that soldiers vaccinated children due to the spread of Monkeypox in Nigeria, which caused the deaths of 50 children after these vaccinations, prompting parents to withdraw their children from schools to protect them without verifying the authenticity of the alleged deaths, especially since these news reports were circulated through the WhatsApp application, which unleashed a state of mass panic and fear among the general public in. Researchers also cited that the masses were affected by the spread of false information through social networking sites, especially WhatsApp, during the Ebola outbreak in Nigeria in 2014, that bathing with salt water prevents a person from contracting the virus. This caused some Nigerian families to be hospitalized after ingesting an excessive amount of salt and bitter kola due to their belief in the rumor. Based on these facts, the researchers indicated that the spread of fake news via the Internet played a role in reducing the effect of opinion leaders, who were no longer influential in persuading people of their opinion about the circulating news, as people interact with social media independently and directly and no longer need a mediator to receive their information and check its credibility.

Besides this, digital platforms have also empowered citizens to assume the role of news breakers, such that the news is now identified and broadcasted by them as *citizen journalists* without the need for an editor to filter and pass it on. This disproves the two-step flow model, which suggests that influential opinion leaders must understand and interpret the media message before it is disseminated to the general public. Chinenye Nwabueze and Ebere Okonkwo emphasized the validity of the Theory of Uses and Gratifications, according to which the users actively select news that is beneficial to them due to the satisfaction they receive from obtaining verified information via search and investigation features, as well as their choice to be exposed to specific social media platforms and content. However, the passiveness of users may result in them being affected by the spread of false news and rumors on social media, as it happened to Nigerians who were affected by news about monkeypox on social networks and were unsure about its authenticity, in addition to believing that bathing in salt and water can prevent the transmission of the Ebola virus. Thus, users of social networking sites in the technological age might paradoxically be *actively passive*, which validates the assumption of the magic bullet theory that audiences are passive and easily influenced by media messages in the digital age (Nwabueze and Okonkwo, 2018, 6).

Despite its historical relevance, the Magic Bullet Theory will not be used in analyzing the content of the thesis because it sees the media as having a direct, immediate, and substantial impact on its audience and that its effect is entirely accepted by the recipients because they are considered a predominantly passive element (Nwabueze and Okonkwo 2018). This framework was built to measure the power of the message on the receiving audience, which is completely different from the objective of my thesis, i.e., the role of news sites in Jordan in addressing issues of violence against women for a set period of time (without measuring the direct impact of the news content

on the audience). There are other theories that focus on strategies in building media content or determining the priorities of journalists in broadcasting, such as the Gatekeeper and the Agenda-Setting theories, both of which are included in the explanation below.

### ***1.1.2. Cultivation Theory***

This proposal deals with the ability of the media to influence the individuals' knowledge and awareness of the factors surrounding them, especially in people who watch a lot of television. It examines the intense exposure of people to TV viewing and the associated acquisition of meanings, beliefs, ideas, and symbolic images that are often divorced from reality. Moreover, television reinforces stereotypes implanted in the viewer's mind for long periods of time through news and drama works. Although the impact of TV programs on the audience is not direct, the effect tends to be long-term as it goes through several stages, starting from learning and building views to forming an interactive process between the sender and the receiver (Gerbner 1969). Thus, Cultivation Theory suggests that long, continued exposure to television instills and develops in the viewer a belief that the world they see in the small screen sincerely mirrors the real world in which s/he lives. This, in turn, affects their perspective and behavior (Nabi and Riddle 2008, 335). Shanahan and Morgan point out that the theory of cultural implantation does not examine the extent to which people are affected by the content of the programs. It does not claim that children or adults become more aggressive when they are exposed to repeated images of violence on television programs. The theory is instead concerned with the extent to which people exposed to thousands of violent images on screen over time are influenced in their perception of the possibility of facing violence in the world. Such people start to believe that the violence transmitted on television exists in reality (Shanahan and Morgan 2004, 6).

Cultivation Theory dates back to George Gerbner, who asserted that TV is a dominant force for shaping the opinions of modern society. He made this affirmation after his examination of the impact of television on Americans when the wave of unrest, violence, crimes, and assassinations swept the country at the end of the 1960s. At the time, the public associated the high rate of crime and violence with watching violent programs. Therefore, The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence funded research on cultural indicators of violence within prime-time television programs in the 1967-68 season, under the supervision of George Gerbner at the Annenberg School of Communication. Gerbner linked the intensity of viewing, in terms of the length of watching and its continuity, with the behavior of the viewers (Shanahan and Morgan 2004, 6–7). He developed a set of indicators to ascertain the establishment of this relationship by studying three main elements: 1) the basic processes behind the production of media content, 2) the stereotypes portrayed by the media, and 3) the relationship between exposure to television messages and the belief patterns and behavior of audience about social reality (Shanahan and Morgan 2004 6–7). The first element looks at how media messages are selected, produced, and distributed. The second one analyzes the media message by identifying and tracking patterns of demography, work structures, relationships, aspects of life, and recurring stereotypes in media content regarding depiction of violence, minorities, gender roles, occupations, etc. Finally, the third element examines the cultivation process, which investigates how exposure to television programs contributes to viewers' construction of their perception of the real world (Shanahan and Morgan 2004, 7–8).

In 1980, scholars of Cultivation Theory such as Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli provided two explanations, namely *mainstream* and *resonance*, for how cultivation occurs. The concept of *mainstream cultivation* concerns the dynamics of instilling general concepts of social



reality into TV viewers. It is a set of ideas, values, and mental images that are implanted in the audience through intense and repeated exposure to media. This explanation affirms that heavy watchers are indeed affected by the intense exposure and possess views of reality opposed to those of the few who are subjected to other indicators. They see reality differently. Mainstream cultivation is formed through three steps called *the three Bs*: blurring, blending, and bending. *Blurring* refers to the intense exposure to television the evaporation of traditional boundary between one's view of the reality and mental images. *Blending* concerns the merging, harmony, and compatibility of the images of reality and reality as shown by TV. *Bending* refers to transforming, shaping, and directing the media content and its different meanings in order to express the policies of those in control and of the media institutions.

In turn, *resonance cultivation* examines how the effects of television images on viewers interact with their own life experiences. Watching TV programs can reaffirm these experiences by the programs that individuals become exposed to at a higher intensity. The more the events that individuals go through in their lives are repeated in the media, the more influential these cultivation effects become. Accordingly, the more the individuals are exposed to a specific reality through the media that matches the reality they live in, the more effective the cultivation of media becomes (Gerbner et al. 1980, 362–372).

George Gerbner emphasizes six considerations of the cultivation theory through his analysis of implantation as a method of study and research (Gerbner 1990, 253– 262):

- 1) Television is a unique medium that requires a special treatment to study. It is the only means to enter American homes for seven hours and provide children with the environmental symbols of their social upbringing, such as literacy, mobility, and tendency for learning of tastes and values, whereas the rest of the media play their role after the child has already acquired

potentially permanent values, habits, and interest from home and school. The child is exposed to television content day in and day out, earlier and more frequently than to other modes of media such as radio. Gerbner described such exposure as non-selective because the child spends continuous hours in front of the television due to its ease of access.

2) Television messages express the prevailing trend in culture. This means that cultural implantation is related to a coherent framework of general information and concepts represented in responses to specific relevant questions, as opposed to isolated truths or beliefs. The inculcation of these concepts takes place through total exposure to the world depicted by television rather than showing specific or selected programs. The exposure of large societies over long periods to a coherent structure of concepts presented on television about life and the world such as success and failure, victimization and violence, and safety and insecurity is due to the coherence and stability of commercial and socio-political constraints of the creation of television content and governing of the programming industry. Gerbner stressed that the exposure of viewers to repeated programs of the prevailing system that controls the media industry, more than any other specific programs or special scenes in line with people's tastes, is the main means of cultural implantation, which can be measured by monitoring the total amount of exposure to these coherent programs more than their exposure to favorite programs they select.

3) The analysis of television messages provides clues of the process of cultivation. Since Cultivation Theory falls under cumulative influence theories, researchers analyze the content of television programs to reveal the impact of cultural implantation theory on people. Gerbner believed that the survey questions used in the analysis of cultivation must reflect the cumulative media content that is embedded in television message systems and presented to large groups of viewers over long periods of time, even from childhood, to reveal the television trends that it forms

in various fields and images that he aims to cultivate in the minds of viewers; moreover, the formulated questions should be concerned with the total viewership size.

4) Cultivation analysis focuses on the contribution of television over time. Cultural implant theory is based on measuring the gradual and cumulative effect of television content on the audience rather than the sudden impact or short-term immediate response. Thus, studies of implantation theory are based on the public's exposure to a recurring and constant system of media messages and measurement of their impact for long periods.

5) Technological innovations are helping the increase of the capacity of TV messaging. Modern digital media help facilitate the cultural implantation process by reaching the largest category of public opinion till date, thanks largely to the ease, accessibility, and diversity of their use.

6) Cultivation analysis focuses on pervasive stabilizing and homogenizing consequences. Television contributes to the dissemination of fixed concepts, culture, and behaviors through popular TV programs for long periods of exposure, which enhances homogeneity among all types of viewing groups, such as heavy viewers who watch television for four or more hours per day and light viewers who do it for two or less hours per day at most. This group of viewers are exposed to the prevailing trend in television programs, which contributes to the increasing homogeneity of ideas, concepts, and beliefs and to the decrease in differences among them.

Like other models before and after, Cultivation Theory has invited criticism. Newcomb argued that violence is not presented uniformly on television as the theory supposes. This means that violence has many meanings in US history and culture, and not all viewers actually interpret acts of violence in the same way. Therefore, television cannot be held responsible for instilling the same understanding of reality to all viewers equally, because the viewers' perceptions of and

interactions with the facts are different depending on the differences of individual character and personal experience (Newcomb 1978, 280).

Pearce and Rubin also confirmed that the theory of cultural implantation ignored the variable of motives. George Gerbner did not differentiate between those who watch television in a routine, passive manner and those who do it in a selective, active manner, who are more likely to be motivated by TV. Here, implantation becomes dependent on the variable of motivation and not on the variable of exposure to television. Active viewers crystallize what they see and are not resigned to its influence. The interaction of the viewer and TV content is different from one person to another, and therefore, the viewer interaction variable is an important variable in media uses and effects (Perse and Rubin 1987, 75–79).

Another debate claims that the apparent relationship between television and violence may be misleading if we entertain the possibility of other factors that could be ultimately responsible for any rise in crime more than television programs are. For example, where people live plays a large role in determining their perception of violence and crime. People from crime-infested areas may be more fearful of crime and thus stay indoors to avoid possible harm, which would lead to more time spent watching television. In contrast, people who live in low-crime areas may not fear the possibility of crime as much and so go out more frequently, which would lead to lower television consumption (Griffin 2012, 375).

This thesis sees the importance of Cultivation Theory in its application in much-specialized media research on the impact of television programs, including dramas, films, and entertainment programs, on public opinion of those who are exposed to TV for a long time, especially in the Arab world. Yet, it will not serve the aims of this study, which deals with the role of news websites in addressing issues of violence against women by analyzing the content of news specialized in

handling this type of issue. This is entirely different from the concentration of the theory of cultural cultivation on how television programs contribute to the construction of the stereotypes of social reality in viewers' minds. Such viewers would likely recognize the social facts as they are presented by the TV programs they watch, not digital journalism.

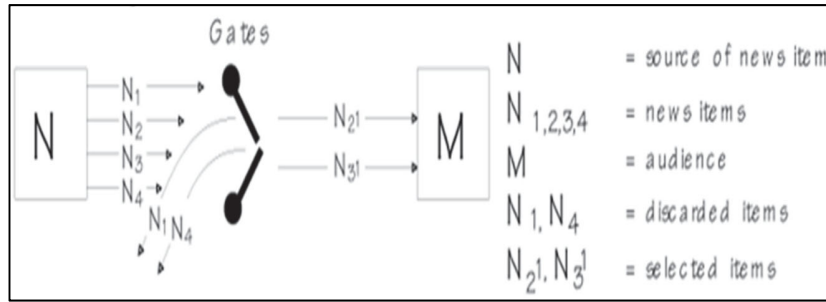
### ***1.1.3. The Gatekeeper Theory***

The Gatekeeper Theory involves preparing and editing media materials that pass through many stages. During each stage, a gatekeeper guides and filters the information in the newsrooms until it reaches the audience. These are people who control the flow of news materials through communication channels: journalists, TV anchors, reporters, editors, and editors-in-chief (Shabir et al. 2015, 591). They influence the community by organizing the news according to their ideas, decisions, rules, and values as they are the ones who identify the issues raised by the media. Therefore, being a gatekeeper means controlling a strategic place in the communication chain, because they have the power to make decisions about what type of news goes through their portal according to their experience, ethics, and standards (Shoemaker and Vos 2009, 3).

The Austrian psychologist Kurt Lewin was the first scientist to come up with the concept of gatekeeping in the 1940s. He suggested that a gatekeeper is someone who makes decisions for others, for example, mothers are the ones who decide what type of food her children need. He conducted a study in 1943 to define strategies to persuade people during the Second World War to make decisions about food choices and consumption in the face of severe shortages. From this research, Lewin drew conclusions confirming that homemakers had a particularly influential role in purchasing staple foods. Accordingly, he suggested that homemakers can be viewed as gatekeepers for the food consumption decisions and habits of families. He described how the

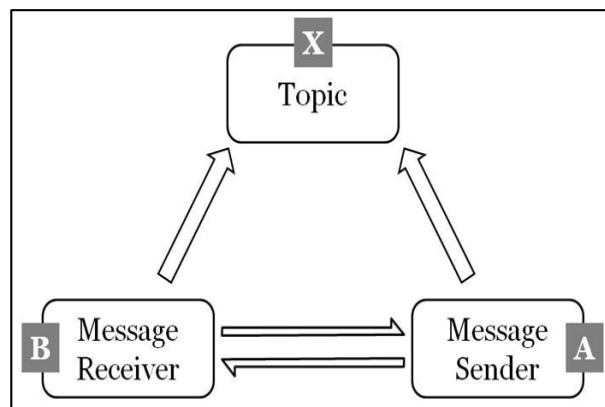
process of selection passes through several channels or stages, moving from the store or the garden to the dining table, and he confirmed that housewives manage the decision-making processes because they are the ones who usually buy and prepare food, and so, they control these channels (Lewin 1943, 98–99). Moreover, he assured that the Gatekeeper Theory could be applied to the mass media sector. He affirmed that the stages of the passage of the news are handled through different portals and that there is a guardian at each of these gates who passes or not pass the information with credibility (Lewin 1951, 187). Each gatekeeper has the power to remove or transform the media messages according to the standards of the media institution (Shoemaker and Vos 2009, 40).

In 1950, communication researcher David White was the first to apply Gatekeeper Theory to the case study of a daily newspaper. He examined how the news story is transmitted from one gatekeeper to another in a communication chain, from the reporters to the rewriting officer to the editor who is in charge of selecting or removing news materials (White 1950, 384). He looked into the factors an editor considers when deciding which stories to publish and which not to. He contacted Mr. Gates, an editor with 25 years of experience in a morning newspaper with a circulation of 30,000 in a Midwestern city of 100,000 people. White found that this figure is in charge of news production, such as selecting, rejecting, copying, and editing national and international news stories. He described the editor as a very subjective character in the news production process, because he refused two-thirds of the delivered news according to his personal view if there was not enough space for all of them or if all those news types were already in circulation (White 1950, 384–386). David White duly presented the first model of the Gatekeeping Theory in media:



**Figure 1: David White's vision of gatekeeping in media**  
**Source: Shabir et al. 2015, 591**

In the 1950s, Theodore Newcomb had designed the triangle of interpersonal communication model, which assumes that interpersonal contact serves the primary function of enabling two persons to maintain a simultaneous orientation toward each other as contacts (Newcomb 1953, 393). This model is based on three elements: sender of the message (A), receiver (B), and the topic (X); consequently, it is known as the ABX Model (Newcomb 1953, 393). For example, if the receiver (B) is in harmony with the sender (A) (or at least does not dislike them), the receiver's acceptance of the subject (X) will be similar to that of the sender (A). Otherwise, the sender and the receiver will have social problems with each other. They have to solve problems to convince each other or change the subject to one that suits them (Newcomb 1953, 395–401).



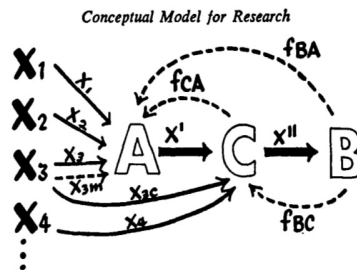
**Figure 2: Newcomb's model**  
**Source: Newcomb 1953, 394**

In 1957, Bruce Westley and Malcolm MacLean improved upon a model of the communication process provided by Newcomb. They developed upon the Newcomb model by introducing the element of mass communication (C) that mediate between sender (A) and receiver (B). The variable (C) is here regarded as the channel or media containing gates that are controlled by the gatekeepers. This element plays an important role in facilitating the communication process between (A) and (B) when they are separated from each other and unable to communicate directly (Westley and Maclean 1957, 33–35). Thus, these authors made small but significant changes that tackled the interactivity process of transferring the news between the sender and the responder or the audience, which made their new model an evolution of the Gatekeeper Theory in the dissemination of news stories through mass media (Shabir et al. 2015, 590). This approach, according to Westley and Maclean, is suited for any communication system that goes beyond situations of direct communication, and it is especially pertinent in the field of mass communication. Their model has been regarded as the most prevalent paradigm in mass communication research (Shabir et al. 2015, 590).

Figure 3 below shows how events, individual experiences, news, or messages (X1, X2, X3, or X4) underwent many stages. Firstly, the communicator or the source of the message (A), such as the journalists or public relations agencies, receive the information or the news. The communicator encodes and decodes the message (X1) according to his tendency before sending it to the gatekeepers of the channels (C), who will then choose and release the appropriate messages (X11) according to receivers' requirement (B) with some edits and modification based on their point of view and values. The receiver or the audience (B) will receive the message, interpret it, and send their feedback (FBC) to the gatekeepers and the source of news (FBA). The communicators, such as public relations agencies or advertisers, usually measure the feedback of



the public toward their messages by conducting survey polls or market research to define their effectiveness (Westley and Maclean 1957, 35).



**Figure 3: Westley and Maclean’s Model of Gatekeeping**  
**Source: Westley and Maclean 1957, 35**

The gatekeepers’ decisions to create and select the news are affected by five levels (Rusdi and Rusdi 2020, 542). As Shoemaker and Vos pointed out, the first level—*individual factor*—refers to the characteristics and features of journalists such as age, experience, and education, and plays a critical role in how decisions are made and how the news content is processed. The second level—*routine of media constitution*—includes media policy and the way journalists and editors-in-chief deal with news, such as focusing on specific issues and neglecting others in line with the vision of the owners or of their media institution. Level three—*organizational level*—refers to creating the news that is also influenced by specific conditions related to the internal structure policies, such as owners’ objectives, values, and views. Level four—*social institutional level*—can be attributed to the influence of external factors such as competitors, commercial advertisements, marketing, and profits. The fifth level—*social system level*—affects the gatekeepers while creating the news process due to social and culture matters, political and pressure clusters, and ethnicity influence (Shoemaker and Vos 2009, 30–31).

Farid Rushdi and Zayd Rushdi pointed out that the audience affects the gatekeepers by how well-accepted their news materials were. The gatekeepers would gauge the feedback of the public

opinion toward their content, which will enable them to promote the news reporting process that justifies the public's desire. In addition, the audience can be a primary source for the journalists in providing the latest events. For example, the journalist could benefit from social media platforms by monitoring the latest trends to prepare massive content that might generate increased followers and user interactivity, which, in turn, will help them ascertain the reader's needs. The gatekeepers would measure the feedback of the public opinion toward their content, which will enable them to promote the news reporting process that justifies the public's desire. In addition, the audience can be a primary source for the journalists in providing the latest events. For example, the journalist could benefit from social media platforms by monitoring the latest trends to prepare massive content that might generate increased followers and user interactivity, which, in turn, will help them ascertain the reader's needs (Rushdi and Rushdi 2019, 349).

21st-century media analysis observes that the Internet is weakening the gatekeepers' effect in controlling the content, as seen in a study conducted by Jane Singer on the role of gatekeepers in her paper "Online Newspaper Editors and the Co-Production of Content in Campaign 2004" (2006). This study found that the gatekeeper role of controlling the information and news has decreased because of the activation of the interactive feature that enabled the public to communicate with the gatekeepers directly through the sites and express their opinions and comment on the events since they are no longer a passive recipient. Some online news provide sections where journalists can offer essential information that users can control, information that is compatible with the readers' demands and interests, such as interactive maps, Electoral College scenarios, and ZIP-based electoral ballot building tools (Singer 2006, 12). In 2000, editors were bragging about how quickly they could publish results on election night. By 2004, this was no longer the case. It had become standard practice. Instead, their stated goal for the 2008 election

cycle was to allow the public to direct the coverage (Singer 2006,14–16). Moreover, the spread of social media made it possible to facilitate the process of transmitting news and information from anyone, which reduced the monopoly of news by certain business groups such as press institutions. But recently, this free spread of information has become overwhelming and confusing. Information still needs to be verified. Rumors or hoaxes abound. Moreover, the news produced by Internet users do not meet accepted journalistic standards or principles (Rushdi and Rushdi 2019, 542).

The Gatekeeper Theory plays a critical role in creating and controlling media content and shaping public opinion. However, I see that the use of this theory is not appropriate in this thesis, as it is outdated. More recent, updated theories are more appropriate in their application of the quantitative approach of the thesis, which examines the extent to which the Jordanian press is interested in issues of violence against women and its objectives, attribute, and position toward such issues. Examples include Agenda-Setting theory and Framing Theory, among others. Meanwhile, the Gatekeeper Theory focuses more on how the journalist controls the mechanism as well as the process of news production, which does not fulfill the aims of my project.

#### ***1.1.4. Agenda-Setting Theory***

The foundation of the Agenda-Setting Theory can be traced back to Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion*. He believed that the media helps build the mental images of the masses (Lippmann 1922). Mass communication formed the public opinion trends through present issues of interest to the community. Bernard Cohen revived Lippmann's ideas by pointing out that the media does not always tell audiences how to think, but they always succeed in telling them what they should think about—thus, they set the agenda (Cohen 1963, 13).

Max McCombs and Donald Shaw conducted the first test of Agenda-Setting. In 1968, during the presidential election in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, they hypothesized that there was a positive correlation between identifying the salience of the news agenda and the priorities of the public. They supposed that when the media focuses on a particular event, they drive the public to look at this event as an important issue. Accordingly, the media informs the public of the political affairs, and this affects public understanding of the relative importance of these political issues. McCombs and Shaw applied the content analysis method to learn how newspapers, magazines, and television contain political news about candidates and electoral issues during a specific period. The study was published in a 1972 edition of *Public Opinion Quarterly*.

In 1976, Benton and Frasier divided the Agenda-Setting Theory into levels in their study “The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media at Three Levels”. The first level is to create and release the salient news related to public issues, including information about common issues such as economics, political system, government inefficiency, and overpopulation (Benton and Frazier 1976, 263). Using the term *salience* displays the importance of knowing the most critical problems facing society (Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller 1980, 17). Meanwhile, the second level deals with individual issues that are more specialized than the first level, consisting of sub-topics including problems, causes, and proposed solutions of high food prices, inflation, causes of unemployment, oil prices, and bad weather conditions, besides proposed solutions to issues of tax deduction and gas rationing. The third level focuses heavily on specific information of the sub-issues identified by the second level, including reasons for and against the suggested solutions such as suggesting that the oil tax will be inflationary or that people are unlikely to spend the rebate on consumer goods (Benton and Frazier 1976, 263). The researchers found that newspapers present all three levels to their readers, while television presents only the first level. McCombs and Shaw’s 1972

study also indicated that press provide the function of setting priorities for their readers, while other mass media methods do not offer this function for the audience or direct their attitude (MaCombc and Show 1972, 177).

The second level concentrates more on the attribute salience of news than the issue salience (Wanta, Golan, and Cheolhan 2004, 367). Where the first level of the theory focuses on the volume of issues covered, indicating that the media decide what issues the audience will be concerned about, the second level is concerned with the quality of news to influence the assessments of public opinion (Wu and Coleman 2009, 766). These attributes of the second level of Agenda-Setting are formulated based on a study conducted on the media coverage of a political candidates' experience in Navarre (Spain) in 1995. The work focused on the second level of the Agenda-Setting Theory by determining the attributes of candidates' characteristics through which voters would form their own opinions about them and how they thought about the politics. The attributes have been hypothesized to analyze the images of the candidates presented in mass media methods such as TV and newspapers in terms of both a substantive and an affective dimension. In terms of substantive attributes, the researcher defined descriptions of their personality, qualifications, ideology, and issue positions. Meanwhile, the affective dimension of candidates was described as positive, negative, and neutral. The result showed that there was evidence of second-level Agenda-Setting effects on the substantive and affective dimensions of voters' candidate descriptions. There were also more effects on the affective dimension than on the substantive dimension. In addition, the impact of the second-level Agenda-Setting of newspapers was greater than the influence of television on the voters. This study formed the substantive and affective attributes that facilitated opportunities for research on the second level of the Agenda-Setting Theory that could parallel what was already achieved at the first level (McCombs et al. 1997, 703–716).

Agenda-Setting as the process of arranging the public's priorities through the media is affected by several factors and variables, such as personal communication, importance of the issues, the need for orientation, and the time frame. The *personal communication* variable affects the Agenda-Setting Theory because it might increase or decrease the impact of prioritizing issues that receive extensive media coverage. The studies of the effects of personal communication on the media agenda began in the early 1940s. Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet from the Columbia Research Office conducted a study entitled *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* in Erie County, Ohio. They found that people who were least interested in the issue of political campaigns and had not yet made a decision frequently relied more on personal discussions and political debates to obtain information and decide to vote than on gaining information from the media. The study also discovered the two-step flow of communication theory. The ideas flow from radio and print press to opinion leaders and then to less active and influential people. The research revealed that opinion leaders are very likely to act as gatekeepers, influencing or altering information as it is transmitted (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1949).

The *need for orientation* is another important factor that affects Agenda-Setting. Weaver introduced it as a psychological concept that explains the Agenda-Setting process, stressing that people's increasing need for direction leads to increased use of the media, which in turn direct to an increase in the influence of the media on Agenda-Setting. The audience's need for guidance is determined by two factors: first, the link between information and the media, and second, the extent of people's uncertainty about the topic of the message. This individual-level perspective explains how and to what extent public members respond to the media agenda (Weaver 1980, 363–365).

The *importance of the issue* to the public is one more of the variables that affect the process of Agenda-Setting. Mark Miller and Jan Quarles assumed through their study on dramatic television and Agenda-Setting (1984) that there is a positive correlation between the degree of public interest in the issue and their increased access to the issue through media, meaning that whenever the issue presented by the media is of interest to the public, the issue falls more within their priorities. From this viewpoint, the results of this study indicated an increase in public interest in the issues that directly threatened the public, such as frightening stories about inflation, unemployment, US military involvement in other countries, and crime, in contrast to issues that did not pose a direct threat, such as fear of nuclear (Miller and Quarles 1984, 9–12). Additionally, the importance of the topic and its connection with the public leads to an increase in the influence of the media, which causes a re-arrangement of the public's priorities (public agenda) according to the priorities of the media (media agenda). This is tangible in the political aspects announced on television news, where the public's interest is directly related to the political news that is specifically announced (McCombs, López, and Llamas 2000, 89–90).

The final critical factor that affects Agenda-Setting is the *time frame*, which is the extent to which the media achieves the maximum cumulative influence on policy agenda (Pralle 2006, 3). In addition, time frame influence is mainly due to repeated exposure to the media agenda, enhancing the visibility of all issues and attributes to the public (Iyengar and Kinder 1987, 16–21). At the beginning of their handling of communication theories, experts pointed out that the effects of the message do not happen forcibly or compulsorily, nor do they occur effectively and quickly. The results of several studies indicated that the effects occur gradually and over a period of some time. It can take anywhere from two to six months (Stone and McCombs 1981, 35–54) for the

media agenda to be transferred to the public agenda. However, the nature of the issue raised may dictate whether it will take a short or long time to influence the audience.

The Agenda-Setting Theory has been subjected to the following debates: according to McQuail, the first level of the theory lacks interest in influencing the audience, which makes it simple and not confirmed (2005, 427). However, after conducting several studies (Benton and Frasier 1976; McCombs 1997; Wu and Coleman 2009) on the second level of the theory's impact on the public, and paying attention to the traits and attitudes of the raised topics, it was proved otherwise. Additionally, there is proof that the theory is not applicable at the same level for all types of issues. The media channels cannot cover all the matters raised due to diversity of the public opinions, with the tendency to be interested in certain issues and ignore others, for example, the political issues receive the most attention. Furthermore, the theory needs strict methodological requirements to conduct analytical and field studies at successive time intervals, which increases the difficulty of running them. The effects of the media agenda on public opinion trends and attitudes toward the issues vary according to several variables: the authority, legitimacy, and credibility of the source, the type of medium used, the importance and attractiveness of the issues presented, the audience's need for orientation, the motivations for relying on the media, the audience's direct experience with the topics and their unity with their current beliefs, and personal communication. All these elements restrict the media's influence on the public (McQuail 2005 426–430).

In this thesis, I rely on online journalism due to its impact on defining the public's agenda more than any other media such as television. This factor drove me to choose the electronic press in Jordan as a research corpus, to investigate its role in addressing violence against women issues and set its priorities in a way that affects the public's concern to aware of women's issues in



agreement with the gatekeeper's vision. Accordingly, I will use the first and second levels of the theory to find out how the gatekeepers determine their priorities in addressing violence against women by conducting a quantitative analysis of the study sample to reach the results that answer the research questions based on the treatment of online news websites and including them at each level separately. In terms of the Level 1, I will track the volume of salience of news that the journalists focus on based on the selected categories of the thesis, which helps to find out the priority of choosing the most important topics and neglect other issues through the news websites' vision. These categories include type of violence, its forms, forms of journalistic treatment, the purpose of news coverage, and geographical coverage. With regards to Level 2 of Agenda-Setting, since this level determine the attribute of the news toward issues, I will identify the attributes of the journalist' tendency toward covering women's issues to figure out how these issues were represented through online news, whether it is negative, or neutral. This level also will examine the journalists' objectivity toward blaming the perpetrator or the victim or finding justifications for the offender. This level also will also examine the attributes of the perpetrators and victims as represented by the news websites. The other process of analyzing will be explained in detail in Chapter 5. Accordingly, this process will enable me to answer the research questions in terms of determining the volume and trends of digital journalism in Jordan regarding covering violence against women.

#### ***1.1.5. Framing Theory***

Scholars have considered the Framing Theory to be part of the Agenda-Setting theory, in which it functions as the second level of Agenda-Setting (Scheufele 2009, 309). In 1974, Erving Goffman first set forth the theory in his book *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*.

He made it clear that people interpret worldwide events through their basic framework, according to their perceptions and experiences (Goffman 1974, 24).

In 1993, Robert Entman applied the framing analysis of media message through his published paper “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”, and he defined framing analysis by “[t]he presence or absence of specific keywords, extra phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing collections of realities or judgments” (52). He also pointed out how the framing analysis paradigm suits four main purposes in the context of media research—to identify problems or issues and the reasons behind them, diagnose the causes and identify the active forces in the issue or event, and make value judgments of the issue or event and evaluate the causative factors and their effects, to the issue and try to treat it or predict its possible effects (Entman 1993, 52). Accordingly, his analysis becomes an essential methodology for media scholars to figure out how the mass media frame and present the news of several issues (Linström and Marais 2012, 21). McCombs confirmed that framing functions as the second level of Agenda-Setting through selecting a limited number of attributes of specific topics that are determined and discussed by the media agenda (1997, 37).

*Framing* the news refers to how journalists create news stories based on specific attributes, judgments, and decisions according to their own certain technique and style to affect public opinion (Lecheler and de Vreese 2019, 8). This process helps the audience think about the media issues and interpret them according to their life experiences, cognitive frameworks, or knowledge to understand the message (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007,11–12). Framing the news has more influence on public opinion when raising issues that reinforce their preexisting belief, which carries facts and meanings in their content that are closely related to the valuable beliefs of the public, such as religious, social, and partisan political beliefs, which raises strong feelings toward

the issue (Nisbet 2010, 47). People are attracted to news sources that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs (Nisbet 2010, 51). In addition, Gamson and Modigliani identified framing as “a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, i.e., the essence of the issue” (1987, 143).

Baran and Davis pointed out that the importance of building media frames highlights that it is used by organizations, social institutions, and elites to express their views on relevant international issues or events through the media. This leads them to control the social world by agreeing with journalists in providing objective news coverage, presenting news stories in which events are framed effectively and sympathetically, serving their interests to unravel the ambiguities and circumstances of particular issues that will bring about significant change in society and promote social acceptance as more people begin to see the social world the way members of institutions deal with. Media frames become a reflection of their image in the media (Baran and Davis 2012, 336–338). In addition to this, Andreas Schuck and Aliana Feinholdt (2015, 2), remarked that the quality of building news frameworks via the media is affected by several factors, which are either within the media institution, such as the editorial policies governing the way journalists frame media coverage, or external factors, including events, political agendas, trends of public opinion, authorities, and political elites. Thus, journalists, media institutions, politicians, and the audience play a key role in shaping news frames.

According to David Weaver, the similarity between the second level of Agenda-Setting and news framing is that both focus on the attributes of the object—how the gatekeeper frames or portrays the issues in a negative or positive light—rather than the salience of the issue. Besides this, both the framing and the second level of the Agenda-Setting theory address the idea of

directing the public on how to think about the issues. Moreover, the first level concentrates on making the media issues more or less critical (salience). The second level of Agenda-Setting takes into account how to address the attributes and the traits of the news coverage of the issues; the framing theory focuses more on affecting public opinion by treating the issues by issuing judgments and providing solutions to problems that affect the public (Weaver 2007, 143–146).

Furthermore, Ghanem emphasized that Framing and Level 2 of Agenda-Setting are fundamentally and logically connected, since the second level tackles the attributes of news that are set of views or frames that the journalist and the public employ to think about this news (Ghanem 1997, 5). Also the main difference between studies on the framing theory and the second level of the Agenda-Setting Theory lies in the fact that studies of the second level seek to discover how news framing of some issues affects the audience and how these frames can affect how the public perceives these issues (Ghanem 1997, 6–7). Meanwhile, the frame monitors the steps to achieve this effect (Illera 2018, 1).

David Weaver emphasized that the Agenda-Setting Theory is different from framing in terms of the impact of the media message on the audience. The impact of Agenda-Setting is shown through the ease with which the audience can retrieve their memory about the recent issues that have been covered frequently by the media. Several issues can become more accessible in the memory of the audience through the recurrence of coverage of these issues through the media. While framing is related to the matching of media messages to the ideas that people have in their knowledge store (Weaver 2007, 145).

Zhongdang Pan and Gerald Kosicki suggested four categories for frames of creating news discourse:

First, *syntactical structures*, which deal with the formulation and arrangement of words and phrases to form an informative discourse more distinctly. The grammatical structure of the news discourse is designed per the structure of the inverted pyramid, which lists the most and least important information sequentially, where the news leads the topic in an interesting style to create suspense for the reader, starting with writing the title and then the main issue, episodes, background, and finally closing. The element of objectivity and impartiality is also applied when reporting the news by citing more than one source of experts, eyewitnesses, and official sources to confirm the validity of the facts in the news (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59).

Second, *script structures*: news reports are usually formulated as dramatic stories by narrating texts that describe real events that affect the recipient to direct them towards societal environments that differ from their experiences and concrete sensory facts. Writing a piece of news is very similar to producing stories or fiction in terms of drama, movement, characters, and human emotions. The basic elements of news storytelling consist of a 5 Ws and one H of news writing: *who, what, when, where, why, and how*, which the journalist looks at as a story writer (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 60). Ghanem ensured that the narrative of the news story tends to create more significant psychological arousal, which connects the reader to the story (Ghanem 1997, 12).

Third, *thematic structures*: unlike some news cases, which are concerned with telling the story by focusing on coverage of a specific event, the category of thematic structures is concerned with making a news story through addressing a specific issue by describing events, providing relevant data, citing several sources related to the events, and providing journalists' observations and solutions around the case as a logical support for the press establishment's perspective on the case (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 60).

Fourth, *rhetorical structures*: during the construction of the news story, journalists use the method of intended effects by identifying certain attributes of the news to influence public opinion and convince them of the press institution's point of view. This is addressed through the use of several metaphors, models, images, visual graphics, and rhetorical formulas, which contribute to focusing on the salience of specific points and providing clarity to the content of the news and also contribute to strengthening the policy of scoop while producing the news. This category also includes the journalists' use of the method of promoting facts to increase effectiveness by emphasizing the presentation of their views, observations, and interpretations as realistic and unbiased facts to establish in the mind of the recipient the credibility of the information provided (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61–62).

In this thesis, Framing Theory is applied to the quantitative analysis of news articles addressing violence. As mentioned above, framing is an extension of Agenda-Setting at the second level. Specifically, the concept focuses on framing news stories to influence the public opinion and track the public's reaction to published content. In addition, the main object of this thesis was to explore how electronic newspapers in Jordan contribute to tackling violence against women by identifying the problem, its causes and consequences, the position of newspapers regarding this issue, as well as suggestions for solutions to combat such problems. Hence, applying Robert Entman's approach to analyzing media frameworks was the most effective strategy for achieving the thesis objective.

## **1.2. The Jordanian Media: History and Current State**

The Jordanian government's decision not to support the basic right of the freedom of speech affects modern Jordanian media platforms. According to a report from Reporters without Borders (RSF

in its French acronym) in 2016, Jordan ranked 135 when it came to freedom of speech (Fanack n.d.). Meanwhile, Article 15 in the Jordanian Constitution in 1952 states that “every Jordanian citizen has freedom of speaking, writing, or photographing or any shape of expression unless violating the law” (Constitute n.d.). Moreover, a report published by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jordan pointed that RSF, Freedom House (FH), and FH’s Freedom on the Net showed Jordan’s decline in freedom of expression, with a consistent negative trend observed for the past nine years. Between 2010 and 2019, the Jordan ranking fell from 120 to 130 on the RSF Index, and it is rated “Not Free” by the FH Index and “Partially Free” by FH’s Freedom on the Net Index. A few main elements are responsible for Jordan’s low rank (United States Agency for International Development 2020, 5).

Restraints and violations strategy methods against journalists and the media take many forms, including the use of pressure against journalists who cover protests against government; arrests under Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law; using security courts; and gag orders issued to limit press coverage of specific issues. Professional journalists have to protect themselves by applying self-censorship due to the consequences of these kinds of violations. From the political improvements of 2011–12, the journalists’ position was upgraded, but the rate of reserved journalists remained constant at 90 percent (United States Agency for International Development 2020, 6). Meanwhile, television in Jordan is still an essential medium which provides the audience with facts and information that fulfils their needs. Regarding the popularity of TV channels in Jordan, the JRTV, Roya television, and Al-Mamlaka television are the favorite channels among Jordanian families (Al-Jalabneh 2019, 42).

In the initial stages of the new medium, the Jordanian monarchy’s endeavor was to give the Jordanian people new ways of life equal to the neighboring countries. In 1964, the idea of

establishing a television radio station in Amman came into being and resulted in its adoption as a training center for the station's staff (Orkat 2009, 11–12). On April 27, 1968, the late King Hussein bin Talal inaugurated the Jordanian TV station in the Umm Al-Hiran area. Television started with coverage for all regions in Jordan to broadcast program by establishing transmission stations that operate within the space. It reached seven stations and 52 relay stations in various regions of the Kingdom equipped with equipment and engineering devices to serve two programs (JRTV n.d.). In 1972, a second channel was established to broadcast in English. In 1978, French language programs were also included (Fanack, n.d.). As of today, Jordan TV includes four channels: Channel One (Main Channel), Channel Two (Sports), and Channel Three (movies), and the Jordan Satellite Channel, which broadcasts most of the main channel programs, in addition to special programs and news bulletins (Orkat 2009, 11–12).

The main objectives of this media institution emerged from the general policy of the state, which is one of the main pillars of the former Ministry of Information and which include: 1) reflecting the general policies and not representing a political party, organization, or propaganda that might affect the interests of the citizen; 2) educating the citizens about their rights and duties and developing their national and humanitarian sense; 3) respecting the rights and dignity of the Jordanian citizens and not violating their private life; and 4) maintaining the freedom to transmit and circulate news and facts that do not affect the security of the homeland and its supreme interest (Almousa 2003, 284–285).

In addition to this public structure, Roya TV is a private Jordanian satellite platform and is one of the largest channels in the country. Despite being launched only in 2011, it has been able to make a difference in the Jordanian society due to the quality of the media programs that it broadcasts daily in all areas. The channel is noted for its brilliance in the world of digital journalism



and has launched an official website that published all news programs and topics. Roya TV is the most viewed television among Jordanians due to its ability to share high-quality content through the Internet. It has 25 employees in the digital department (out of 200), their age ranges between eighteen and 30 years old, and they drive the audience to share these programs via social networks. It has also released a news website (Roya News) specialized in covering local and international news in political and economic affairs. It offers strong digital content with high quality that fits the audience's satisfaction. It is one of the few website news that has led the digital revolution by using digital platforms to spread trending content with digital features like video, audio, and photos. It has massive followers via its official pages on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Roya TV has established a training academy specializing in media presenting and digital journalism (Roya TV n.d.). I chose the Roya news website as a source of news items in my study to investigate about its role in tackling violence against women by analyzing the news stories related to this topic.

One of Jordan's most recent television stations is Al-Mamlaka TV, established under a special regulation on July 10, 2015 as a nucleus for an independent public media organization through public service. As the kingdom adheres to the principles of public media service, it seeks to present a new Jordanian model in the media platform under the following basic principles: 1) independence in the dissemination of information and news; 2) striving to protect the public's right to know and to increase its levels of public affairs issues; 3) freedom of public debate to allocate an arena that guarantees the diversity of opinions according to the criteria of pluralism and involvement, as well as to create an area that reinforces the roles of citizens in political, economic, and cultural participation; 4) oversight and representation of public opinion; 5) measuring the performance of public institutions; 6) and law implementation in the service of the public interest

education; 7) entertainment; and 8) building of a communal sentiment and expressing its culture (Almamlaka TV n.d.).

Radio stations play an important role in social, cultural, and educational development. Besides, they are the first media that address all segments of society, regardless of their educational and cultural level. The importance is evinced in the fact that most of the Jordanian Kingdom's population at the beginning of the establishment of the radio was illiterate and could not read the newspapers that were reading by the elite. The Jordanian radio is considered one of the most important means of mass communication, ranking first among the media before the spread of television, which pushed it to second place in terms of importance. After the emergence of the Internet, the status of Jordanian radio fell to third place, but it is still a very critical and widespread platform, as its primary goal is to address public opinion is characterized by great diversity in its culture, educational levels, and interests (Roais 2019, 30–32). Moreover, the radio stations in Jordan remained very important after the establishment of the Jordanian TV in the late 1960s and the increasing numbers of newspapers, due to the advantage that it does not require effort to listen to the programs, since many can be located on the Internet (Salaytah 2017, 30–31). The radio establishment in Jordan goes back to the British mandate period termination over Palestine in April 1948 (Salaytah 2017, 27–28). In 1950, the Jordanian Radio moved from Jerusalem to Ramallah after the unification of the two banks (the East Bank and the West Bank) continued to broadcast in Arabic for thirteen hours and it then came to be known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Radio (Roais 2010, 30–32).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jordanian government worked towards ending the control of audiovisual media with the promulgation of a law on radio and television media. The Audiovisual Media Commission was established, which specializes in granting licenses and

organizing the broadcast and television centers (Almoussa 2003, 286–287). These radio stations implement a programmatic policy based on the accuracy of presentation and objective information, to spread a mass culture broadly in all areas of life because radio is the fastest and most comprehensive mass communication medium (Alomyan 2019, 17–18). Radio stations are able to reach out to all people wherever they are, to provide them with analysis and information in politics, economics, sports, culture, and science. They address people of different cultures to develop ideas positively, in order keep at pace with the times and fill the intellectual void of the listeners. Jordanian radio stations have diversified in presenting their programs that specialize in providing media content to educate the public about issues that concern citizens' affairs. Besides, they have allocated time for children programs and for spreading religious and spiritual values (Alomyan 2019, 17–18). I have selected the most famous radio stations in Jordan to present a short overview of them, as follows:

Firstly, the Jordanian Radio station plays an important role in social, cultural, and educational development. Moreover, it is the first media that address all segments of society, regardless of their educational and cultural level. It is the official radio station for the state and the first in the Kingdom established before the instituted of private radio stations. In 2000, the first Jordanian Arab radio station on the Internet was launched called Amman Net; in 2005, it turned into a radio broadcasting over the air (Alomyan 2019, 17–30).

Secondly, Rotana Radio is a private station, launched in 2005 and has grown in popularity in Jordan, becoming one of the most popular stations in Jordan. It is characterized by broadcasting several new songs exclusively and before any other station, in addition to the diverse program that serves all segments of society, (Alomyan 2019, 17–18). In connection with the Jordanian press,

Bader indicates that this has gone through several stages, starting from the era of the emirate to the era of democracy and electronic journalism in the current time (2009 26–27).

In 1921, the first Jordanian weekly newspaper was established in Ma'an City during the era of the emirate. It tackled the political issues, wars, and movements of the supreme authority until the establishment of several press institutions that were loyal to the government (Alattal 2015, 28–29). At the end of the 1980s, the Jordanian newspapers started to expand to cover social issues and democracy in responding to the aspirations of the Jordanians. During the 1990s, the Jordanian press witnessed a democratic opening that appeared tangible and clear by establishing weekly and daily independent and partisan newspapers to speak about the politics and aspirations of the parties. It also began to exercise its work as the fourth authority on freedom of expression by shedding light on events and defects, educating and stirring up public opinion, and defending public interests. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Jordanian press kept pace with the digital revolution by establishing online news sites and creating the first electronic newspaper, *Ammon*. The process of establishing independent news sites that approached community issues continued, with the creation of nearly 200 news sites (Bader 2009, 27–29).

Presently, seven daily newspapers are printed in the Arabic language, along with one in English called *The Jordan Times*, while other prints are released on a weekly basis. *Alrai* is rated as the most read newspaper and generates the highest advertising expenditure (Royal Hashemite Documentation Center n.d.). I have chosen the electronic version of the *Alrai* newspaper as corpus of my study according to several considerations: firstly, it is one of the oldest Jordanian newspapers. It was established in 1971 and is considered one of the most popular news outlets in Jordan. *Al-Rai* is distributed to all governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the newspaper headquarters are in the capital city, Amman. In the years that followed the 1967 war,

Israel occupied the West Bank, and there was a need to establish a press institution that elevated its discourse to the modernity level, as Jordan did not have a newspaper with the exception of *Addustour* (Alattal 2015, 28). This newspaper produces thousands of news and articles from leading journalists who have long experiences. It also keeps pace with the readers' satisfaction and meets their passion by covering the latest local and international issues specialized in economic, political, social and affairs to lead the process of reform and enlightenment while supporting the development process. To complete its message, *Alrai* created *The Jordan Times* in 1975 as the first English-speaking Jordanian newspaper. It also keeps abreast of the latest developments related to digital press affairs. It has established an official news website on the Internet to reach a global audience. It also has official pages via social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It has 784,913 followers on Facebook, 107,000 on Twitter, and 9,000 on YouTube. As a whole, it is structured into nine sections: Local issues, Arabic and international, economy, articles, death, culture and arts, sports, caricature, and talk of the city (Alattal 2015, 28).

To select the sample for my thesis, I surveyed several news websites in Jordan. I discovered that these institutions did not adequately cover violence against women in 2020. Some websites published only two stories on this topic once a year, while others addressed women's issues only during certain periods by publishing articles that reflected the journalists' views. However, I found that the *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* websites provided sufficient coverage of violence against women. This news coverage would be suitable for applying Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory to understand how journalists shape their framing and agenda while reporting the news. Between January 1 and December 31, 2020, I found 36 news content in *Alrai* newspaper, 56 in *Roya News*, and 100 pieces of material in *Alghad* that addressed violence-related women's issues. This demonstrates how differently these three websites cover violence-related women's issues

compared to others in Jordan. Furthermore, I compared the thesis corpus to gain a better understanding of their role in addressing violence against women. This enabled me to identify similarities and differences between these websites based on my findings.



## **CHAPTER TWO WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

The first chapter provided an overview of the media theories regarding content analysis and mass communication techniques for addressing violence against women, along with a historical overview of Jordan's most prominent media platforms and the research groups selected for analyzing their content within and under this thesis' objectives. At this stage, it is essential to discuss the issue of women's rights, their role in claiming their freedom and place in society, and their struggle to end the discrimination and violations they have suffer over time.

The women of the world are the main pillars of society upon which states build the future of humankind. The international community also pays attention to the rights of women. Human rights and women's rights have been the subject of numerous international declarations, agreements, and standards until the most significant step was establishing the Declaration of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This is considered the first comprehensive document guaranteeing women's rights and protecting them from derogation, assault, or violence. Jordanian women have made great strides toward achieving equality with men and adopting their rights. Moreover, the Jordanian legislation has contributed significantly to ending discrimination and violence against women through social and legal reform (Alhja 2020, 1–2).

This chapter revises the history of the different feminist waves as reflections of the continued struggle for women's rights. Below there is also a brief description of the role played by international human rights declarations and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAOW). Finally, this chapter also provides an overview of Jordanian legislation concerning women's rights and its role in protecting women from violence.



## **2.1. Women's Rights, a Historical and Global Struggle**

Achieving gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are among the fundamental human rights and values of the United Nations (UN). The UN has an inveterate role to play in addressing women's rights, and in recent decades, significant progress has been made in securing women's rights globally and combating discrimination against women. However, women worldwide still regularly suffer violations of their human rights, and women's rights have not always been a priority. Some women face additional forms of discrimination based on age, race, sexuality, religion, health status, marital status, education, disability, and socioeconomic status (United Nations Human rights 2014a, 1). Additionally, millions of women suffer from violence, which denies them equality, dignity, independence, and even life. Due to the structural and systemic discrimination against women, the pattern of violence against women and girls has become deeply ingrained in society and continues to prevail. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to observe that several feminist reform movements have been developed for long times. These movements are led by women and girls, who are increasingly raising their voices to call for equality (OHCHR, n.d.a). The broad definition of *feminism* refers to some political movements, ideologies, and social movements aimed at delineating, establishing, and achieving political, economic, personal, and social justice and equality between men and women in every area of life. For equality between men and women to exist, it is necessary to ensure that women have access to the same resources as men (Raina 2017, 3372).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first wave of the feminist movement began with American women's demand for the right in suffrage and political representation rights for women at the Seneca Falls convention in New York in 1848. Feminists also stressed equal rights within the

family (the termination of authority from fathers and husbands over women), and claimed equal pay and access to higher education (Molyneux et al. 2021, 6).

Before World War II, international law adopted a patriarchal approach in which women were considered an extension of men and owned by them. As a result, stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women as wives and mothers were emphasized, which diminished their chances of independence and impacted their ability to obtain professional employment. As a result, the woman was protected under the law as a member of the male-centered family. Additionally, international labor conventions prohibited women from working in certain occupations, such as mining or night work, to avoid interrupting their domestic duties (Otto 2010, 348–349).

The women's suffrage movement developed in an attempt to extend the category of personhood to include women beyond men (Parry 2019, 3). Female activists in the USA disseminated their campaigns and posters through newspapers, flyers, and articles and translated them into different languages to expand and develop their movement. In addition, an effort was made to recruit women to participate in the campaign by cooperating with international associations. For example, the Pan-American Women's Movement held its first meeting in Baltimore in 1922. Women representing more than 30 countries attended the dialogue to discuss their rights and demands (Molyneux et al. 2021, 6).

A major part of the beginnings of the women's movement in Arab countries was formed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when feminist pioneers founded charities to support Arab women's renaissance (Tazi and Oumlil 2020, 47). During the British and French Mandate, Arab feminists focused on equality between men and women in education, work, voting, and participation in public life (Al-Tal 2008, 29–31). Moreover, after World War II, when colonialism was directly

confronted, these movements developed, and oriented associations emerged, forming alliances with other members of society to oppose the occupation and restore national sovereignty. Among these activities included participation in international and regional conferences, the presentation of notes, the delivery of speeches, and participation in demonstrations (ESCWA 2005, 29).

In 1881 a group of graduates of American and British schools founded the first women's demand association in Syria, called Bakura Syria. This association promoted women's achievements in science, literature, and culture. During the following years, charities for women's advancement and orphan care were established until 1921. In the same year, the Women's Union was founded in Syria and Lebanon under Labibeh Thabet's guidance (Al-Tal 2008, 29–30). Besides this, Labeeba Jahshan founded the Zahrat Al-Ihsan Association. As early as 1933, the Syrian Women's Union was established as part of the Cairo Conference preparations for 1944. This conference aimed to discuss Zionist ambitions in Palestine. And it led to the formation of the General Arab Women's Union, headed by Adila Al-Jazaery, who headed the Syrian delegation of 30 women (ESCWA 2005, 33).

In 1919, Egyptian women were involved in the revolution against British occupation in Egypt, marking the beginning of the Egyptian feminist movement. As a result, the Central Wafd Women's Committee was formed in December of the same year. The initiative contributed to women's empowerment and provided them with a space for political action within a strong party that demanded their rights, such as the right to education, which was rejected by British authorities. Among the activities of the Egyptian women's movement were the publication of newspapers and magazines, the establishment of charitable organizations, and the holding of cultural salons to enhance women's mechanisms and administrative and organizational skills in political work and negotiation. As a result of these activities, women could also establish networks for acquaintance

and rapprochement with other women who hold similar views and attitudes. In 1921, the pioneering feminist Huda Shaarawy founded the Egyptian Women's Union. In this union, Egyptian feminists expressed their concerns regarding citizenship, society, education, electoral processes, and marriage laws (Kamal 2016, 11–13).

A major achievement of the Egyptian feminist movement in its first wave was the government's response to feminist demands to allow women and girls to attend primary and university education in the early 20th century. As a result, the first batch of female Cairo University graduates was initiated in 1928. Moreover, a feminist organization named Egyptian Women's Party was founded in 1942 under the leadership of Fatima Nemat Rashed. The organization called for gender equality in political and social rights and women's workplace and union rights. Further, the Party called for amendments to laws regarding marriage, polygamy, divorce, child custody, and alimony (Kamal 2016, 11–13).

The beginning of the feminist movement to demand the freedom and empowerment of women during and after the British Mandate in Jordan can be traced back to the lawyer and women's rights activist Emily Bisharat. She played an important role in collaborating with the leaders of international and Arab women's movements, including Elizabeth Brown and Huda Shaarawy, in establishing local and international women's organizations geared toward advancing women and their freedom (Al-Tal 2008, 33). It was in 1944 that the first women's organization in Jordan was formed, known as the Women's Solidarity Society, to help the needy and support them economically. Following the footsteps of women in Egypt, the Women's Union Association was established in 1945, headed by Princess Zain Al-Sharaf. It was also in 1954 that the Arab Women's Federation (AWF) was formed, which aimed to eradicate illiteracy, raise the social status of women, and make them aware of their political rights. About 800 women attended the founding

meeting in Amman, where Emily Bisharat was elected chairwoman. In cooperation with the Arab Women's Fund, the AWF sought equality between women and men in political, representative, and municipal rights by amending the election law to allow women to run for office and vote in municipal and military elections (Al-Atiyat 2003, 55–57).

American journalist and activist Betty Friedan published her book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. In it, she reflected women's frustration at being restricted to limited roles as wives and mothers. Despite what the media portrayed, she believed that women could occupy any profession or work. Additionally, she stressed the importance of ensuring that women had equal opportunities in all sectors of work, enabling both men and women to become more liberated. A million copies of this book were sold within three years (Coontz 2011, 145–149), which was the catalyst for the second wave of the feminist movement in the United States of America (Narayanan 2022, 202). Between the early 1960s and 1970s, the second wave was influenced by the civil rights movement and demonstrations against the Vietnam War (Molyneux et al. 2021, 7). The feminists demanded a reassessment of traditional gender roles in society, an end to all forms of discrimination and sexism, and the achievement of equality in the social, political, and economic spheres (Tazi and Oumlil 2020, 47).

Parallel to liberal and radical feminism, which were also developing in the United States, the United Kingdom experienced the Marxist feminist movement in the late 1960s. They fought for the protection of working-class rights and demanded equal pay for women and men (Gamble 2001, 27). They also advocated for the suppression of gender oppression and for the abolition of capitalism and the class-based structure of society (Motta 2011, 5). In 1970, the National Women's Liberation Movement held its conference at Ruskin College in Oxford, which more than 500 women attended. It concluded with four demands: equal wages, equal education and opportunities,

the establishment of daycare centers open 24 hours a day, and the right to utilize contraceptives and abortions whenever necessary (Gamble 2001, 27). Second-wave feminism has been criticized for championing the cause of white, educated, middle-class women and ignoring the claims of minorities, such as women of color (Bobel and Lorber 2010, 11), women of diverse ages, ethnic identities, race, and sexual tendencies (Parry 2019, 3). This led to the establishment of the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) in 1973 in New York by several black women (Mankiller et al. 1998, 203). The purpose of this organization was to bring awareness to the injustices faced by African-American women due to racism, sexism, and classism (McCauley 2004, 16).

During this second wave, Arab women were excluded from political participation and representation rights, especially in the post-independence period. Due to the predominance of stereotypical roles of housewife and mother in that era. Accordingly, several Arab and Muslim feminists in the region struggled to claim their legal rights through the establishment of several feminist organizations. They also took the initiative toward gender discrimination reforms and called for equality. In addition, they denounced their political exclusion in Arab countries (Taza and Oumlil 2020, 47). However, women's organizations became less independent, and their management was taken over by the ruling party and the military elite. Yet, Arab countries have implemented radical reforms for women to empower them, create real developmental opportunities for them, and grant them economic, social, educational, and cultural rights, including those about health, education, and transportation, along with amendments to personal status laws and achieving gender equality in the workplace (ESCWA 2005, 49).

Regarding the second wave of the feminist movement in Egypt, the writer Laura Bier argues through her book *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* that the Nasserite regime moved from ignoring and suppressing independent

women's initiatives to utilizing them for its political purposes (2011, 55). In the fifties and sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, President Gamal Abdel Nasser dissolved all parties, including the Egyptian Women's Party and the Egyptian Women's Union, because the government wanted to deal exclusively with issues concerning women. The state system in that period guaranteed women's rights in the education sector and the provision of job opportunities for all citizens. Nevertheless, the work sector in the political, diplomatic, and judicial corps was excluded from women and confined to men for a long time. Furthermore, there was a reservation regarding feminist demands for amendments to the Family and Personal Status Law, including the demand to change the law concerning the forceful placement of wives in houses of obedience in the event of disobedience to their husbands and the sole right of the men to divorce their wives (Kamal 2016, 16–17).

As soon as the Arab Socialist Baath Party took power in Syria in 1963, it began implementing numerous economic and social reforms (agrarian reform, nationalization, industrialization, etc.). These changes benefited a wide range of segments of society, including all categories of women, who gained access to the policies of spreading education at all levels and specializations. In addition to education and health, women entered various industries and services due to skills acquired from joining the workforce. Also, they have benefited from government services such as housing, free health care, and financial empowerment due to the state's approval of social laws that guarantee equal wages and legal protection (ESCWA 2005, 53). In the same period, the Syrian General Women's Union was formed to oversee women's activities (Al-Tal 2008, 30–31). Also, it influenced other women's associations' policies and operations. However, the union remained affiliated with the Syrian state's ruling regime (ESCWA 2005, 53). In addition, the Syrian government allowed women to run for office in the Syrian Parliament as representatives of the Baath Party. Women participated in parliamentary elections less than men. Approximately

5 out of 186 Parliament members were women in 1973, less than 3%. A total of 6 women were among the 195 in 1977, representing a percentage of 3% (Al-Haliq, Al-Helou, and Magnni 2022, 14).

Due to the Kingdom of Jordan's preoccupation with the Palestinian issue and the Israeli occupation, the emergence of women's movements was delayed there. This was reinforced by the defeat in The Six-Day War. As the state defined the policies in determining the most urgent issues and what are not, and thereby what can wait, women's issues were the least of their concerns at the time (Al-Atiyat 2003, 57–58). Nevertheless, the role of the Jordanian government in implementing and following up on the trends of the women's movement following the setback needs to be acknowledged. Over the years, these trends gradually began to take shape in Jordan in terms of granting women rights and equal protection under the law. In addition, the officials promoted their increased participation in political and public life and economic empowerment. In 1974, the Royal Jordanian administration issued a decree granting women the right to run for parliamentary elections and the right to vote (Al-Tal 2008, 65). During the same year, the Society of the Women's Federation in Jordan was established as an official federation under the direction of Emily Bisharat with 3,000 members. The Federation was devoted to unifying and organizing women's activities and efforts as a Jordan representative on the Arab and international stages. It also aimed to promote women's rights as citizens, workers, and parents by raising their educational and social levels and empowering them economically. A number of training centers, childcare services, and nurseries were also established. In 1979, the evolution of the women's movement in Jordan was again marked with the appointment of the first female cabinet minister, In'am al-Mufti, as Minister of Social Development. Accordingly, efforts were made by the minister to consolidate



women's activities under a single organization that operated under the control of her Ministry (Al-Atiyat 2003, 60–61).

In 1989, the American black feminist scholar Kimberle Crenshaw established the theory of intersectionality with her paper “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics”. In her examination of the discrimination experienced by African-American women in the US, she highlighted issues of both race and gender. The term *intersectionality* refers to the multiple oppressions that non-white and poor women, in particular, experience (Zack 2005, 7). This article examines three legal cases involving black women who filed lawsuits against discrimination at their work. They faced discrimination based on their gender on the one hand and their race on the other. As a result, the court failed to address intersectional discrimination and provide justice to the plaintiffs in this case. Accordingly, Crenshaw intended to combat sexism that differentiates privileged women based on race and class while marginalizing or excluding black women from discourses on feminism and anti-racism. She discussed how, as a result of gender, race, and class oppression, black women were often exposed to racial discrimination in the employment sectors in the 70s (1989,140).

Moreover, Crenshaw produced another seminal paper in 1991, entitled “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”. In it, she examined the racial and gender discrimination and class control faced by battered black women in the United States of America. There is a significant difference between the experience of women of color with violence, rape, and the quality of therapeutic reform, when racial and gender discrimination factors are considered. As a result of race and social class, abused women of color receive limited assistance from rehabilitation centers when they are subjected to domestic violence

compared with white women. This exposes abused women to injustices and difficulties (Crenshaw 1991, 242–243).

The intersectional theory then evolved to include other interlocking forms of domination and oppression. For example, systems of oppression and discrimination based on race, sex, and social class intersect with the status of members of minorities who face discrimination related to their sexual identity, language, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, intersex, transgender, educational level, immigration status, socioeconomic status, caste, descent, health, etc (United Nations Declaration on Minority Rights 2022, 3). As reported by United Nations' Declaration on Minority Rights, certain segments of racial, ethnic, national, linguistic, religious, and Afro-descendant are subjected to compounded and intersecting discrimination based on intersecting grounds such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and social class. For instance, the women and girls of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and national minorities, people of African descent, and communities based on caste or lineage may suffer discrimination, social exclusion, marginalization, and poverty, and they might have difficulty accessing education, health care, and employment due to these factors. In addition, migrants, forcibly displaced persons, and refugees belonging to ethnic and religious minorities are also subject to disproportionate searches, stops, harassment, exclusion, and even violence by security forces and officials. Moreover, they are exposed to employment discrimination, inability to access the most basic services, and unequal access to justice. In addition, stateless individuals belonging to racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or national minorities face systematic discrimination and complex obstacles when it comes to obtaining a nationality (United Nations Declaration on Minority Rights 2022, 21).

According to a 2015 study by Jacqueline Moodley and Lauren Graham, in South Africa, economic poverty outcomes are influenced by a number of factors including gender, race, and

class. A cluster sample of 16,898 citizens in South Africa was selected for the study. This research demonstrated how the intersection of gender, disability, and race leads to adverse outcomes for people with disabilities in education, employment, and income. Moreover, disabled people earn significantly less than their non-disabled peers if they are employed. Moreover, the study highlighted that women with disabilities, especially black women, suffer from a lack of access to education, employment, and social assistance compared to men in South Africa. The study also found that girls with disabilities receive less attention to their health and earn the lowest average incomes. At the same time, they are considered the most vulnerable to labor market exclusion due to their disabilities. Accordingly, most of them are economically inactive and earn the lowest incomes (Moodley and Graham 2015, 26). The work revealed that 30% percent of disabled women did not learn, compared to 27% of disabled men. The intersection of race also complicates the relationship between disability and gender. This research by Moodley and Graham emphasizes that black men without disabilities have more difficulty obtaining an education and finding work than white women with disabilities. It was found that white women with disabilities had 8.10 job opportunities compared to men without disabilities, who had 3.8. Furthermore, the research revealed that disability and gender intersect to produce adverse work outcomes, particularly for women of color with disabilities. Besides this, most people with disabilities are likely to be able to work but may encounter difficulties due to the work environment and circumstances. Thus, the number of unemployed men with disabilities is 11.8 and the number of unemployed women with disabilities is 13.1. In addition, the percent of employed men with disabilities was 31.7, while the percent of employed women with disabilities was 23.8% (Moodley and Graham 2015, 28).

In line with and incorporating intersectional thought, the third wave of feminism emerged after Rebecca Walker, in 1992, wrote the article “Becoming the Third Wave” in *Ms.* magazine. In

this text, she criticized the nomination of Clarence Thomas, a Supreme Court candidate accused of sexual harassment by attorney Anita Hill. In her essay, Walker discussed sexual harassment and the intersectionality of race and gender during court proceedings. Hill was an African-American woman who testified against Clarence Thomas, also African-American and considered an influential candidate given the need for African American representation on the Supreme Court. When Thomas was supported and promoted by the court committee, Anita Hill's credibility was questioned. Rebecca Walker confirmed that the court's ruling provided an advantage for men over women. Moreover, she expressed her anger at men's privileges due to their masculinity. This privilege was intended to restrict women's voices and demands for social justice and full recognition of their rights. It is pertinent to note that, although this case represents a public opinion case, the Judiciary Committee's biased judgment toward Thomas demonstrates the extent of discrimination women face when applying for justice in the courts. In conclusion, Rebecca Walker called on feminists to continue to defend women, to achieve equality in society, and to ensure fairness for women by expressing their anger at men's unfairness toward women. She urged women to take a stand against the discrimination committed against them due to a male-dominated society. Additionally, she insisted that women should not share details of their daily lives with men or support them until they are recognized as capable, independent, and in control of their lives (Walker 1992, 39–41).

A large portion of the third-wave trend stresses the importance of cultural and media production, with particular attention paid to female pop icons, hip-hop music, and the beauty industry. As part of a third-wave feminist movement, women were encouraged to express their sexual orientation and adopt a traditionally feminine style of dress, behavior, beauty, and appearance (Snyder 2008, 178–179). In addition, in the 1990s and 2000s, many bands (including

Riot Grrrls, Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Heavens to Betsy) turned their feminist slogans into pop music, tackling such issues as sexism, patriarchy, violence against women, racism, misogyny, and rape throughout their albums (Keenan 2015). Moreover, the third-wave feminists used television programs as part of their campaign to spread their vision of justice and equality to millions of people throughout the world. They sought to fuel their struggle by creating content that reflected sexuality, pleasure, anger, class, race, and gender issues as subjects to represent their vision (Johnson 2007, 12). Several of these programs include series like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* (Thornham 2007, 16).

During the early 1980s and 90s, the Arab women's movement witnessed an evolution of the establishment of a number of women's associations and organizations, as well as the involvement of a group of women in civil society organizations. Feminism in that period was strengthened and encouraged to engage in the political sector, promote women's rights issues, engage in gender equality initiatives, amend family laws, nationality and citizenship legislation, and fight gender-based violence. As a result of the activists' efforts, the CEDAW has been ratified by eighteen Arab states, despite reservations about specific articles which are in conflict with Islamic religious beliefs and the state's constitution. It has been considered an intellectual reference for women's movements with regard to defining their agenda and priorities regarding women's issues, improving their status, and promoting their role in society. In addition, following the alliance and interest of international organizations such as the UN Women's Committee and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), scientific research on women's issues has been revitalized, as participation in international conferences and activities prepared by these organizations was required for conducting research and writing reports. As a starting point

for evaluating the accomplishments of Arab women, it should be noted that there were no statistics on the status of women in the Arab world until the 1970s (ESCWA 2005, 70–71).

In Egypt, a major focus of the third wave of the feminist movement, beginning in the 1980s, was on the Egyptian state's ratification of CEDAW in 1981. Additionally, the state also provided feminists with the opportunity to establish feminist organizations that dealt with women's issues, including the Center for New Women's Studies and the Arab Women's League. In 2005, the Center for Egyptian Women and the Nazra Center for Feminist Studies were established as legal support centers for women. Several of these organizations focus their efforts on gender and physical issues and rights for women, such as preventing female genital mutilation, domestic violence, honor killings, virginity tests, physical abuse, and harassment of women (Kamal 2016, 19–20).

Jordan experienced significant developments in women's rights during the 1980s and 1990s. In this period, demands were made to improve the level of gender equality. Women's non-governmental organizations were activated to empower women on economic, citizenship, and social issues. This includes issues such as domestic violence, abortion, and the change of nationality law to benefit women. A number of measures have been taken in Jordan to fulfill the recommendations emphasized in the CEDAW since it was signed in 1980 and ratified in 1992. As part of the agreement, the signatory countries are required to submit a report showing what has been done to improve women's status at the state and civil society levels. Therefore, Princess Basma bint Talal was appointed to lead the national delegation to the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 to represent Jordan's participation in this event. Moreover, The National Commission of Women's Issues in Jordan was established as part of the preparations for Jordan's involvement. This commission's work was the subject of the official report presented at the conference. In addition, the media also covered women's activities to

educate the public regarding women's rights, whether they were headed by the Princess or sponsored by a major women's organization (Al-Atiyat 2003, 62–63).

In 2012, according to Cochrane (2013), fourth-wave feminism emerged, with a very strong relationship with technology: activists using social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube, blogging to demand the promotion of gender equality, equal pay, reproductive rights, etc., and to combat misogyny. There has been significant progress in raising awareness about sexual violence during this wave (Parry 2019, 5). Many campaigns have emerged during the fourth wave. One of the most famous is the Everyday Sexism Project, a campaign launched in 2012 by British writer Laura Bates via the Internet.<sup>4</sup> It targeted women worldwide to write and express cases of harassment they were exposed to in their daily lives and workplaces, which resulted in writing 6,000 stories related to sexual harassment issues. Of these, 2,000 cases were used to train the British police to stop and combat cases of harassment. This initiative, which is still active, has also helped raise the awareness of women about the need to report cases of harassment, and cases of reporting sexual harassment in transportation in the city of London have increased significantly (Cochrane 2013, 45). Then a number of campaigns that address violence and sexual harassment appeared through social media platforms, such as #MeToo, (Jackson, Bailey, and Welles 2020, 24) and #YesAllWomen (Parry 2019, 152).

In 2006, Tarana Burke, a social activist and member of community organizations, launched a movement called Me Too to aid women of color from disadvantaged communities who had been raped or sexually assaulted. The founder created this campaign after discovering a young girl had been raped by her mother's lover. Accordingly, she launched it to raise awareness about sexual harassment and assault as well as combat rape culture. Soon, actress Alyssa Milano took to Twitter

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<sup>1</sup> <https://everydaysexism.com/>

(now called X) in October 2017 and posted a tweet asking women who have been harassed or sexually assaulted to write #MeToo. As a result of the sexual harassment and assault case against Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein, which dozens of women brought against him in 2017, the hashtag #MeToo spread rapidly and widely on social media around the world (Tahan 2021, 4–5). This movement enables victims of sexual violence to speak freely on social media platforms about the violence they suffered from the abuser. Moreover, as part of the campaign, it also aims to fight for women’s empowerment and condemn the justice system for allowing too often impunity for sexual violence and pervasive sexual harassment (Corsi, Thissen, and Zacchia 2019, 39).

#YesAllWomen is a hashtag used on Twitter to share examples and stories about misogyny and violence against women. Initially, it was used in online conversations after a string of killings occurred in Isla Vista, California, which left six dead and fourteen wounded. As a factor in his crimes, the killer was described as misogynistic. Following the killings, some Twitter users claimed that #NotAllMen commit crimes like these. In response to this hashtag, #YesAllWomen gained traction as women shared millions of tweets regarding their personal stories of harassment and discrimination against women. Accordingly, the campaign is to increase awareness of gender discrimination against women, misogyny, sexual violence, rape, over-the-top sexual entitlement, and revenge (Morikawa 2019, 5–7).

In the Arab world, the fourth wave of the feminist movement is evident in the era of the digital revolution. Feminists use technology, websites, and social media to express opinions and form their content on social justice, discrimination and equal opportunities and to combat repression, especially before and after the Arab Spring revolution, which helps them bring more attention and support to their cases. Among these movements and activities are #Women2Drive in



Saudi Arabia and hashtag and petition #RIPamina in Morocco, launched after the suicide of a young girl who was forced to marry her rapist, contributing to the abolition of the unjust law in the country (Tazi and Oumlil 2020, 44).

In Jordan, activists for women's rights have launched several initiatives denouncing violence against women. Among the most significant initiatives is the launch of the campaign Rape and Marry for Free on social media and online news, intended to protest the Penal Code 308, which exempts the perpetrator of the crime from executing the penalty if he decides to marry the victim (Garaanews, n.d.). Besides this, in another significant fourth-wave campaign, feminist protesters carried inspirational visual and verbal posters during a demonstration to show solidarity towards the denial of the terrible violence endured by a Jordanian woman in Jerash called Fatima in 2019, which caused injuries to her eyes. There was extensive event coverage on news websites and social media platforms. Furthermore, it profoundly impacted Twitter users, who launched hashtags such as #Enough and #Jerash\_Crime. As a result, awareness posters condemning the situation were distributed (Altamimi 2022, 46).<sup>5</sup>

## **2.2. Legislation on Women's Rights in Jordan**

Several countries practice gender discrimination and inequality by creating laws and constitutional provisions, such as laws prohibiting women from driving, owning property, and inheriting it (United Nations Human Rights 2014a, 31). For example, gender discrimination in Jordan is manifested in nationality law, which allows Jordanian men to grant nationality to their children. In contrast, Jordanian women are prohibited from granting nationality to children whose fathers are foreigners (Essaid, Sajdi, and Abu Taleb 2019, 1–2). Therefore, to eliminate

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<sup>5</sup> Find out more about the case and an in-depth analysis of the protest posters by visiting <https://grdspublishing.org/index.php/people/article/view/1971/1959>

discrimination cases, it is necessary to establish laws that guarantee formal equality by repealing discriminatory laws (United Nations Human Rights 2014a, 31).

In 1946, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established to track the status of women and promote their rights. For over thirty years, it has strived to foresee all fields and issues preventing women from enjoying their rights like the men do. These efforts to advance women led to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (OHCHR 1979). The UN General Assembly adopted CEDAW on December 18, 1979, and it became an international treaty on September 3, 1981, after twenty countries ratified it. In 1989, approximately one hundred countries agreed to join CEDAW and comply with its provisions.

CEDAW calls for reducing discrimination against women in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields. It also claims that women have legal rights equal to men's, as they have the right to enjoy civil and political rights such as voting rights, participation in public life, freedom of movement, obtaining, changing, or retaining nationality, and equality before the law. Moreover, they also have the right to enjoy economic, social, and cultural rights, such as education, work, health, economic empowerment, and financial security. The convention also allocates important issues and phenomena that are globally widespread, such as human trafficking. In addition, it pays special attention to the rights of rural women, especially issues related to human rights, such as marriage and the family (United Nations Human rights 2014, 5). It also aims toward eradicating traditional gender roles and stereotypes to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls and achieve equal opportunities (UN Women, n.d.b). These claims fall within terms and obligations made up of 33 articles related to eliminating discrimination and achieving gender equality. In 1989, around a hundred countries agreed to join it and comply with its provisions according to the treaty of CEDAW (OHCHR 1979). In 2016, 189 countries ratified the declaration

(UN Women, n.d.b). This means all state parties are obligated to take all articles of the agreement to ensure that women and girls enjoy their rights on an equal basis with men and boys as following (OHCHR 1979).

On February 23, 1993, the UN General Assembly issued the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW). This declaration was made because the institution acknowledges the need for a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women and an explicit statement on the rights designated to ensure the elimination of all forms of this violence. Moreover, the international community needed to commit to being responsible for seeking to eliminate violence against women, because it constitutes a manifestation of unequal relationships, resulting from men's control over women, especially those who belong to vulnerable groups such as minorities, refugees, immigrants, suburban, war victims, inmates of correctional institutions or prisons, disabled, and the elderly. Additionally, the UN General Assembly welcomes and supports the role of women's movements in raising awareness about the difficult nature of the problem of violence against women, which is a phenomenon growing across history (OHCHR 1993). Accordingly, the DEVAW convention declared the provisions for the States Parties to aid them eliminate violence against women (OHCHR 1993).

Article 6 of the rights and duties of Jordanian citizen states that "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. They shall not be discriminated against concerning their rights and duties based on race, language, or religion" (Ministry of Justice Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan n.d.). This preserves the status and dignity of women in society through the enactment of legislation, and provisions derived from Islamic law guarantee protection and basic rights related to issues of marriage, divorce, custody, education, work, political participation, and protection against violence (Arab Women Organization and MOSAWA 2013, 7). In 1949, Jordan signed the Declaration of

Human Rights, which considers the equality of all human family members for the enjoyment of their human rights and obligates States Parties to implement the treaties of the Convention within its national laws. Two years later, Jordan became the first Arabic country to issue the Jordanian Law of Family Rights; then, in 1976, the government decided to pass a temporary law called the Jordanian Personal Status Law (PSL) instead of family law because of the suspension of the Jordanian Parliament which lasted from 1974 to 1984. Accordingly, the official amendments to the Personal Status Law were presented to the Jordanian Parliament in 2001 for acceptance and adoption (West Asia-North Africa Institute, The Jordanian National Commission for Women, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2016, 25) as Law No. 82 for 2001 on Personal Status (Harris, 2015, 1). The Jordanian Personal Status Law includes legislation derived from Islamic jurisprudence that meets the needs of Jordanian society, such as legislation governing marriage, divorce, alimony, disputes, reconciliations, equality between spouses, children custody, and inheritance (Welchman 1988, 373–378).

In 1992, Jordan ratified CEDAW. Under the leadership of Her Highness Princess Basma bint Talal and according to a cabinet decision, the Jordanian National Committee for Women Affairs was established as a national mechanism for the advancement of the status of Jordanian women in 1992. It was aimed at strengthening Jordan's commitment to advancing women's status and enhancing its participation in achieving sustainable development and affirming the implementation of its national, Arab, and international commitments. The Council of Ministers considered the committee the primary reference in everything related to women's activities and affairs (West Asia-North Africa Institute, The Jordanian National Commission for Women, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2016, 19).

Regarding Personal Status Laws related to women's rights and the criminalization of violence against them, the following is worthy of commentary in the context of this dissertation:

1) Inheritance law: The Jordanian legislation of inheritance was formed by Islam which, in turn, is derived from the verses of the *Holy Quran* (Alazzeah 2017, 1). The *Quran* states that women and men have equal rights of inheritance, as explained in this verse: "For men there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave, and for women there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave—whether it is little or much. These are obligatory shares" (Quran n.d.). In contrast to the prevailing situation before the Islam religion, the verse confirms that women have the right to obtain their portion of inheritance, the same as men. However, Arabs used to allocate their wealth to their sons, denying their daughters the same. Based on the provisions of Islamic law, Article 285 of the Jordanian Personal Status Law Number 36 for 2010 states that the inheritance share is distributed among the heirs whether from mother, father, husband, children, or other members of the family in special circumstances. Article 310 states that the son takes double of the daughter's share according to specific conditions (Alazzeah 2017, 2–6). Additionally, scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have explained the preference conferred to males over females regarding inheritance. They gave economic reasons such as the obligation on the man (not the woman) to afford and secure the expenditure of living for the family (Alazzeah 2017, 10). Although the Jordanian law guarantees the rights of women to inheritance, women are still pressured to give up their portions of the inheritance for male family members, especially in suburban areas. In 2011, rules have been introduced by the court to protect women from pressures by male family members to waive their inheritance rights. These restrict exit transactions—voluntary waiver of inheritance shares—after the death of the owner, and states that a property should be registered in the name of the female heir for three months before she can relinquish it. It is prohibited, by court instructions

submitted in 2011, to write any public or private exit transaction within three months after death (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 19).

2) Rights of citizenship: Although Jordan has ratified the CEDAW treaty, as stated above, some Jordanian provisions are still unable to fulfil justice and gender equality as pertaining to nationality. For instance, the Jordanian-amended Article 3 prohibits the granting of Jordanian nationality to children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians, but allows the children have Jordanian citizenship while following the nationality of their Jordanian father. This prevents them from enjoying the right to exercise their civil and political life, like other Jordanians. Meanwhile, the Jordanian government has refused to amend the law to prevent the politicization of this case, instead linking it to the preservation of Palestinian identity and the right of return (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 20). However, Jordanian women can grant nationality to their children in specific cases, such as when the father's nationality is unknown or if he is stateless. Meanwhile, as long as they have resided in Jordan for at least three years, Jordanian men can offer nationality to their children even if they get married to non-Jordanian.

Human rights activist and blogger Nemah Habashneh launched the campaign My Mother is Jordanian, and Her Nationality Is My Right in 2007 to demand that the children of Jordanian mothers who are married to non-Jordanians be granted Jordanian nationality (Mubasher 2016). In addition, the attempts of non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers to lift the reservation to Article 9 of the CEDAW convention, which recommends achieving social justice by activating women's right to transfer nationality to their children and husbands to enjoy civil rights as Jordanian citizens, have not been successful. In 2013, the Arab

Women Organization (AWO) and the campaign My Mother is Jordanian and Her Nationality Is My Right protested in front of the parliament building in the capital city of Jordan, Amman, under the slogans “All of us are full citizens” and “We are demanding our constitutional rights”, in order to initiate an amendment of Article 3 of the Jordanian legislation and achieve social equality (Arab Women Organization and MOSAWA 2013, 1–2). In 2014, the Jordanian government responded to this campaign by establishing an advantages and services program called Masaya to grant some rights and chances to non-Jordanians. To enjoy the benefits of Masaya, such as an identity (ID) card for their children following the Prime Minister’s approval, Jordanian women are required to reside in Jordan for five years. The ID card affords the children free access to education, health care, jobs, driving licenses, residence, and investment. However, the Masaya privilege is yet to be activated, as revealed by the complaints of the affected children. Moreover, these children have no right to obtain an ID card unless they provide the government with some documents which are hard to obtain (Arab Women Organization and MOSAWA 2013, 1–4).

3) Labor law: The Jordanian legislation guarantees women the right to economic participation in work and production under Labor Law, Article 2 No. 8 of 1996, which states that: “Everyone, regardless of gender, performs work for a wage and is under the command of the employer, and this includes juveniles and those who were under probation or rehabilitation” (Bureau of Legislation and Opinion 1996 ). This law is intended to ensure equality between men and women in the right to work and confers all the accompanying benefits, regardless of sex. Therefore, it mentioned rights and equality, which came to represent the constitutional principles of international charter, to which Jordan was a part. These work-related issues include wages, paid weekly and annual leave, sick leave, working hours, and rest times. Pertaining to working-class women, the law prohibits their dismissal during maternity leave or from the sixth month of

pregnancy. The law gives women special rights, including the right to sabbatical leaves to raise children, and maternity and breastfeeding leave. It also requires that adequate custody be provided for the children of working women under certain conditions in the workplace (National Council for Family Affairs 2009, 8).

Additionally, the Labor Law in Article 69 gives the Minister of Labor the authority to determine the industries and times in which it is not permissible to employ women. These include metal smelting, the explosive materials industry, metal welding, processes involving lead, the asphalt industry, and the rubber industry, among others. The aforementioned decision also prohibits the employment of pregnant women in certain fields, such as fields involving the use of radioactive materials or chemicals that could cause fetal deformation. This bans women from holding jobs that require them to work between 8am and 6pm, except work at hotels, restaurants, airports, and hospitals. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has signed many treaties and agreements in this regard, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, wherein Article 11 relates to guaranteeing the rights of women to choose a profession and equality with men in employment opportunities, wages, social security, and health protection and calls for the prohibition of separation of women from work due to pregnancy and maternity leave, mandating the establishment of facilities for the care of their children (National Council for Family Affairs 2009, 9).

4) Marriage Legislation: According to the Jordanian civil law, the legal age of marriage is eighteen. If a girl wants to get married for the first time, she must obtain approval from a male custodian, such as a father, brother, etc. However, if it is not her first marriage, it is not necessary to gain this approval. The woman has the right to stipulate her desires and needs when implementing the term of her marriage contract, such as not preventing her from working. While



the husband can prevent his wife from working if her job affects the unity and stability of the family, she, in turn, can complain and object if she had previously stipulated in the marriage contract that she was not to be prevented from exercising her right to work. The law states that the husband is supposed to take care of his family and the expenses and provisions of marital life. The husband also has the right to stop spending on his wife if she insists on working without his consent (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 17).

With respect to child marriage, although the legal marriage age is eighteen, as stated above, there are some exceptional cases where a judge grants the marriage at the age of fifteen if the general interest of the marriage is duly established in his view. Granting marriage approval to a child under eighteen years of age only occurs after a strict committee evaluates the marital benefits for both parties, which limits the judge's authority. If a girl between the ages of fifteen and eighteen gets married, she has the same rights as an adult when it comes to bringing a court case, receiving maintenance, and other marital guarantees. Members of the Jordanian parliament and the National Committee of Women's Affairs claim to have amended the legal age of marriage by increasing the cut-off age from fifteen to sixteen years, since a sixteen-year-old citizen has the right to obtain civil capacity according to the civil affairs law (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 18).

Regarding divorce, three reasons are contemplated in Jordan: divorce based on abuse or another reason, divorce with no reason upon the husband's request (Arbitrary Divorce), and divorce with no justification upon the wife's request subject to redemption (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 17). Although beating and being attacked by the husband are reasonable motives for filing a divorce,

the battered woman must prove the assaults by providing two male witnesses before a legislative court in Jordan, which makes it very difficult for her to seek a legal separation. Another acceptable reason for divorce is if a man has been constantly absent from his wife and children for more than one year. Husbands and wives have the right to ask for a divorce if there are conflicts that cause harm and make their cohabitation impossible. First, a judge will attempt to settle them, and if he does not succeed, the case will be transferred to arbitrators to represent both partners. If arbitrators decided that the wife is wrong, she could have the divorce and pay compensation to the husband, and the same condition applies to the man; if both of them are wrong, they can get divorced by dividing the dowry equally between them (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 19).

In connection with child custody, the mother is allowed to have custody of her child until he/she is fifteen years old, following which the children will decide where they would like to live. The judge might extend the mother's custody duration until the child turns eighteen upon the child's interest. Meanwhile, the mother will lose custody of her child if she gets married again. Accordingly, this system that restricts the mother from getting married again is not in the child's interest (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 19).

5) Political Participation: Women in Jordan demanded the right to vote and run for parliamentary councils in the early 1950s. As a result, the Women's Vigilance League was established in 1952. In 1954, the Arab Women's Union was established in Jordan, which played a crucial role in educating women politically. The Kingdom of Jordan responded to Jordanian women's desire to become active partners in development. It was in 1955 that the Council of Ministers granted educated women the right to elect, but not to run. While illiterate men were

allowed to vote, illiterate women were denied this right. Since 1974, women have been allowed to run for political office under Jordanian law. As a result, women were first represented in the Senate in 1989. Besides this, Mrs. Tujan Al-Faisal was the first woman to win Circassian and Chechen quotas in the House of Representatives. Parliamentary elections in 1997 were not won by a woman (Al-Kawhalde 2014, 4).

Parliamentary Election Law No. 34 of 2001 was amended in 2003 to allocate a quota for women in the fourteenth parliamentary election held in 2003. Out of 110 seats, women candidates received six seats, a percentage of 5.5%, and 54 women ran for office then. As a result of 6.6% of the total number of candidates (819) at the time, no female candidate was successful. According to the 2016 Parliament Election Law, 15 seats were allocated to the women's quota, representing 11.5% of the total seats. At that point, 1,252 candidates applied, including 257 female candidates, and five women could win the competition in addition to the 15 seats (Petra News Agency 2020).

6) Legislation on Violence against Women: violence against women in Jordan, which includes honor killings, marital rape, torture, and beatings, is tackled as a private matter as it is believed to be directly linked to the reputation of the woman and her family. Women tend to be ignored because of the stigma that follows her label as rebellious and because of the prevailing traditional mentality which affirms that rebellious a woman does not care about her husband and children. This puts her physical and psychological health at risk (Arab Women Organization and MOSAWA 2013, 1–2). Nevertheless, in 2008, Protection from Domestic Violence Law Number 6 was passed in Jordan,<sup>6</sup> which was replaced by Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 15 in April 2017. The latter defined violence against women as a crime committed by a member of a

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<sup>6</sup> According to the English version of the report *Jordan Gender Justice & the Law* domestic violence was used as legal terminology (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 14).

family against any member of that family, including a spouse, a parent, a child, or a relative (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 14).

The Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 15 has established strict procedures for reporting domestic violence cases under Article 4, which stipulates that public and private health, educational, or social service providers must report any case of domestic violence occurring against an incapacitated person but are not allowed to report cases involving mature victims unless they obtain their approval. Moreover, the perpetrator's identity must remain hidden unless the judicial procedure require it. The law also imposes that all parties must transfer all complaints or notifications of domestic violence received to the Family Protection Department so that necessary measures can be taken. The Family Protection Department must receive all the notifications of domestic violence to perform its essential duties (Jordanian Law n.d.).

To substitute penal code No. 16 of 1960, a new penal code law was issued in 2017. This code abolished Article 308 of the previous Jordanian Penal Code, which allowed impunity policy for the criminal in rape cases statements once he decided to marry the victim, following which the prosecution would drop. The new code states that criminals should be prosecuted for their crimes against women, especially women with disabilities, underage, or special needs (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 15). In addition, it criminalizes any type of violence against women, such as sexual, physical, or emotional violence, including harassment, blackmailing, beating, and insulting. The penal code of sexual crimes against women is vary based on the victim's age. Moreover, the type of relationship between a victim and a perpetrator, for example, whether he was a family member, custodian, or a stranger, also matters in the penalty code of sexual crimes against women. However, the Jordanian

code does not consider marital rape a crime, and the mentality of Jordanian society prevents any reporting of this type of crime (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 17).

Regarding the types of penal offenses against women, the Jordanian legislation has enacted several penalty codes throughout recent history. Number 16 of 1960 still enforced and condemning the offences against women, which are explained as follows (Istanbuli and Bostrus 2017, 13): regarding rape, according to Article 292, the penalty code for raping a woman (not one's wife) under threat, force, or trapping, is imprisonment of the criminal for at least five years with hard labor. If the criminal rapes a girl aged less than fifteen years, he will be given the death penalty. However, if a man rapes a girl aged above fifteen years but less than eighteen years, he will be imprisoned for twenty years with hard labor (United Nations Development Progra, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 17).

With respect to abortion by rape survivors, penal code Articles 321-325 in Jordan criminalize abortion even if it is outside marriage. Moreover, anyone who participates in the abortion process will be arrested for a duration of one to three years. Additionally, women who undergo an abortion will be jailed for three to six months. According to Article 324, certain conditions might decrease the penalty for women who undergo abortion with someone else's assistance, for example, for the purpose of protecting themselves from honor crimes. If the abortion leads to the death of the woman, the person who performs the procedure will be punished with hard labor for a period not less than five years under Article 322. Meanwhile, the person who performs an abortion on a woman without her permission will be imprisoned for a period not exceeding ten years, and if she dies due to the abortion, he/she shall be sentenced to imprisonment

for no less than ten years, according to Article 323 (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 17).

In connection with honor crimes, the penal code of honor crime Article 98 justifies the perpetrator's crimes against women such as killing or attacking because of her dishonorable acts, by reducing their punishment. In 2017, the article was amended to stop the justification of criminal acts under honor crimes. Paragraph two was included in the article and states that the criminal will not benefit from the mitigating excuse presented in paragraph 1 if the crime is committed against a woman outside the terms of Article 340 (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 16). Article 340 states that the murderer benefits from a mitigating excuse if he found his wife or one of his ascendants or sisters involved in the crime of adultery or in an unlawful bed and kills her in the act, or kills the one who commits adultery with her, or kills both of them, or assaults one or both of them—an assault that leads to injury, abuse, permanent disability, or death (Istanbuli and Bostrus 2017, 119). As a result of honor killings, there is a system of administrative detention in Jordan for women and girls whose lives are deemed to be threatened by a family member for reasons related to family honor and who may be forcibly detained for their protection. Women may be released if the guardian provides an undertaking that he will not harm her. However, if the woman's life remains in danger, the governor may refuse to release her. (United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women, and ESCWA 2018, 16).

Regarding human trafficking, the Jordanian Women's Union began researching it, specifically for women. Moreover, human trafficking is considered a form of violence against women, including kidnapping, fraud, deception, sexual exploitation, and slavery. In response to battered women's needs, the association began receiving victims and offering legal, psychological,

shelter, and social counseling services. Aside from providing legal, psychological, and health services, the organization helps identify and prosecute criminals (Jordanian Women's Union 2020, 16–18).

Article 8 of human trafficking law Number 9 of 2009 imposes fines of 3,000 dinars to 10,000 dinars on anyone selling or buying a human being or promising to do so. Furthermore, as stated in Article 9 of the human trafficking law, the offender shall be punished with temporary labor for no less than seven years and fined at least 5,000 dinars up to 20,000 dinars if he sells or purchases a person under the age of 18, also if he commits any of the crimes related to human trafficking, including prostitution, sexual exploitation, organ removal through threats of death, serious harm, physical or psychological torture. Also establishing an organized criminal group, joining or participating in it (Istanbuli and Bostrus 2017, 150).

There was also an amendment to Prevention of Human Trafficking Law No. 9 of 2009 by Law No. 10 of 2021. In addition to providing more protection for victims, the enacted law introduces harsher penalties for those who commit human trafficking crimes, including organized begging. Moreover, it guarantees victims and affected persons more security and care by establishing a special fund to assist and compensate them for damages incurred. As well as providing legal assistance and accommodations until the trial is over. Besides this, the possibility of not prosecuting victims for crimes committed because they are victims of human trafficking (Human Trafficking National Committee 2021).

As per cybercrimes and protecting the privacy of individuals in the face of attacks in the online environment, Article 9 of the Jordanian Cybercrimes Law No. 27 for 2015 (Irtaimah 2020, 68) is devoted to crimes against male and female persons, in particular those who are aged less than eighteen years, and it states: it is prohibited to intentionally send or publish (via an information

system or digital network) any audio, read, or visual material that consists of immoral acts or is directly related to the sexual exploitation of a person under the age of eighteen. If this is committed, the criminal will be sentenced to imprisonment for a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year, in addition to a minimum fine of three hundred dinars, up to a maximum of five thousand dinars. Despite the legal protection provided by the Electronic Crimes Law from 2015, the lack of awareness about it and its failure to protect some aspects of electronic violence against women or girls, as well as the need for additional qualified and technically capable people in the field of information systems, makes it difficult to ensure privacy on the Internet and prevent women from being subjected to harassment, sexual harassment, extortion, and other forms of electronic violence. Safe access to information and freedom of expression for women and girls require more efforts to raise societal awareness and build technological skills, especially among women and girls (Solidarity Is Global Institute n.d.).

Finally, as I explained earlier, the feminist movement has played a significant role in achieving women's freedom and status in society. This includes combating gender stereotypes and ensuring equal educational, professional, and personal outcomes for women. History has witnessed the first wave of feminism entering New York and continuing to spread worldwide since the nineteenth century. Under the CEDAW, discrimination against women has been eliminated effectively. The convention guarantees women the right to vote, work, hold significant positions, receive equal wages, own property, attend school, participate in contracts, etc. Moreover, the DEVAW declaration calls for equality, security, freedom, safety, dignity, and protection from all forms of violence for women. Additionally, the declaration supports women's movements in raising awareness about violence against women.



The Jordanian Constitution guarantees human rights, freedom, and women's dignity from violence, abuse, and assault. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has ratified many international agreements protecting women's rights. Along with these steps, the Jordanian government amended its laws to align with international treaties and set up care homes for battered victims. As a result, women received better legal protection, and the gaps that hindered their rights were also reduced (Alhja 2020, 2). Accordingly, international treaties recognize that violence against women and girls violates human rights. It needs to be eliminated and reduced in all member states due to its prevalence daily and again. A woman or girl who suffers from it might experience serious short- and long-term physical, economic, and psychological consequences (UN Women Arab States n.d.). It is, then, essential to identify the types, causes, and effects of violence against women, which will be explained in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The United Nations considers violence against women and girls as a violation of human rights. It is estimated that one out of every three women is subjected to physical or sexual violence, often by their partners. This negatively impacts women, their families, and society, and it prevents them from participating fully in society. As a result, women and girls are likely to suffer devastating physical, sexual, and mental consequences, including death. There are substantial costs associated with violence against women, ranging from increased demands on the health care system to legal fees and loss of productivity (UN Women, n.d.c). Since this phenomenon has a long-term negative impact on society, it is necessary to comprehensively investigate the prevalence, causes, and consequences of violence against women. This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of this topic.

### **3.1. Conceptualization and Forms of Violence against Women**

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) defined violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including threats of such violence, pressure, or deprivation of freedom, whether occurring in public or private life. The acts of violence against women encompass a variety of forms, among which are: physical, sexual, and psychological violence that occurs within the family or community or that is caused by the state wherever it occurs, which includes beating and sexual abuse of female children of the family, dowry violence and exploitation, rape, female circumcision, non-spousal violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, trafficking in women intimidation, and threats at the workplace, in educational institutions, and elsewhere (OHCHR

1993). The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in turn, defined violence against women and girls as any crime that causes physical, mental, or sexual harm to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether committed in public or in private within the home, community, or by the government. In addition, UN Women classifies the types of violence against women as follows: domestic violence, honor killings, child marriage, digital or online violence, and human trafficking. Domestic violence within the family is a harmful behavior common in marital relationships, and often, the victim is the woman. It takes many forms, namely physical, emotional, sexual, economic violence (UN Women, n.d.d).

UN Women (n.d.d) described physical violence as any act that harms the partner, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, biting, denial of medical care or forcing the partner to use drugs and alcohol, and property damage. Herrick et al. (2019, 2) classified acts of physical violence as either minor, such as slapping, pushing, and exposure to shells, or major, such as assault, shooting, wounding, and violence against property. However, Sawsan Abuhammad mentioned that one of the tools used by some perpetrators is threats or attempts to kill or harm women who, after being repeatedly beaten, try to leave their relationships; they do not allow battered women to leave relationships (2020, 5).

UN Women (n.d.d) defined emotional violence as type of violence against women that involves reducing a person's sense of self-worth and belittling them and their abilities through insults, constant criticism, or verbal abuse; destroying the relationship between one's partner and their children; restricting their freedom and preventing them from seeing their friends and family. Additionally, emotional abuse is defined as using verbal communication and body language by an intimate partner to harm or control his victims (Godfrey et.al. 2020, 4). Furthermore, Mary Miller

(1996) defined emotional abuse as non-physical abuse, including behavior and actions that undermine the victim's self-esteem and sense of worthlessness, such as criticism, insulting, put-downs, name-calling, stalking, and public humiliation.

Regarding sexual violence, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as the attempt by any person to engage in sexual activity with another person under duress, regardless of the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim (World Health Organization 2021). The UN Security Council pointed out that sexual violence takes many forms, such as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage, trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment, (which is defined as sexual behavior, whether verbal or physical, with the aim of infringing on the freedoms of others and violating them) (Shotar et al. 2015, 539) and any other form of sexual violence committed against women, men, girls, or boys (UN Security Council 2022).

Regarding honor killings, Human Rights Watch (HRW) defines honor killing as an act of vengeance involving death committed by male relatives on a female relative who is thought to have brought dishonor to the family (Human Rights Watch 2001). According to Tripathi and Yadav, honor killings committed against women in the name of honor and is a form of violence against women. This is defined as an ancient practice in which a man kills a girl who is a member of his family in the name of "family honor" because she engaged in extramarital sexual activity, even if the girl is a victim of rape (Tripathi and Yadav 2004, 64).

In connection with economic violence, UN Women defined it as an attempt to subjugate a specific person financially by controlling financial resources. This is done by denying them access to financial assistance and/or prohibiting them from attending school or working (UN Women, n.d.c). According to Olhan, the most common forms of economic violence reported by women

include loss of financial decision-making power, no right to input, ignoring women's financial needs, and denying women essentials (Olhan 2021, 2). Meanwhile, the UK charity Surviving Economic Abuse conceptualizes economic abuse as the control of someone's economic resources or freedoms. Thus, it refers to the restriction or denial of access to money, the misuse of another person's money, the denial of access to basic resources like food, clothing, and transportation, and the denial of tools needed to succeed like work, school, or training (Surviving Economic Abuse, n.d).

According to UN Women, individuals who are married under eighteen are victims of *child marriage*. All marriages must be freely consented to by both parties under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Regarding Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), every person under the age of eighteen is considered a child (United Nations 1989). Accordingly, the most common form of violence against girls is becoming child brides, which causes them to drop out of school (UN Women, n.d.d).

As part of the discussion of digital violence, several sources use a variety of terms regarding the acts committed against women via the Internet. For example, UN women defines digital violence or online violence as an act of violence against women committed, assisted, or aggravated by information and communication technology (mobile phones, the Internet, social media, computer games, text messaging, email, etc.) (UN Women, n.d.d). Moreover, the Solidarity is Global Institute in Jordan (SIGI) noted on its official website that cybercrime, also known as electronic violence against women, includes stalking, extortion, electronic harassment, surveillance, computer spying, and the illegal use of technology and the Internet to threaten and harass others and practice human trafficking, impersonation, and deception of women and underage girls, especially in chat rooms police (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2019a). Meanwhile,

Dorokhova (2021, 8) used the term *cyber violence against women*, defined as the use of a computer device by an unidentified person through Internet services and information and communication technology to carry out harmful acts such as violence and threats against individuals (women and men), blackmail them, and take advantage of their circumstances and weaknesses, as well as silence them and suppress their opinions, causing physical, psychological, and economic harm. For their part, Hinduja and Patchin (2021, 1) understand electronic dating violence as physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence between romantic partners perpetuated via text messages, social media, and online platforms and as a form of Internet-based bullying that includes threatening or posting something online to embarrass them, forcing them into sexual acts, surveillance, control, and spreading obscenity that causes harm to a romantic partner.

UN Women defined Human Trafficking as an act of violence that involves using force, fraud, or coercion to obtain services from people, usually in the form of sexual exploitation. Women and girls are the most frequent victims globally (UN Women, n.d.d). Meanwhile, the UN and Human Rights Office defined human trafficking as actions and operations aimed at exploiting women, children, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and persons with disabilities to achieve economic gains and profits, and it occurs on a scale in most countries of the world, within borders, or inside the country of the victims. Based on this, human trafficking means “[t]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception” (United Nations Human Rights 2010, 33). In addition, Human trafficking is a form of violence against women and a violation of human rights, and it has recently become an international industry (Wijers and Chew 1999, 38).

As seen below, this PhD thesis discusses six types of violence against women in the news content analysis because they are the most common forms tackled within the corpus during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. These include physical, emotional, and sexual violence, honor killings, child marriage, and digital violence.

### **3.2. Violence against Women Worldwide**

A study conducted by Nieves Rico in 1997 indicated that battered women are often forced to tolerate and stand violence due to several factors, including the desire to maintain family cohesion as well as the impression of an ideal family. Additionally, the victims may fear retaliation from their spouse, and may hold the belief that the police and legal system will not assist them. Furthermore, Rico asserted that most victims do not seek legal assistance because they fear being blamed for their families' disintegration. Cultural norms inform them that they are responsible for preserving the family group as a whole, since any failure or transgression of the family cohesion may lead them to punishment. In this regard, victims need to make substantial sacrifices and avoid divorce (Rico 1997, 27). The economic dependence of women on men, as well as poverty, unemployment, and their inability to find suitable work are among the reasons behind women's fear of reporting abuse to the authorities for protection. With the recent spread of institutions supporting women's rights and combating violence, women have begun to report cases of abuse to obtain legal assistance. However, reported cases are still relatively small compared to the actual number of cases of abuse (Rico 1997, 27).

According to the WHO, globally most cases of violence against women are cases of intimate partner violence. Approximately 27% of women aged between fifteen and forty-nine have been exposed to intimate partner physical or sexual violence. Intimate partner violence is defined

by WHO as harmful acts by an intimate partner such as physical, sexual, or psychological hurt; physical attack; sexual pressure; psychological abuse; and control. The index of intimate partner violence against women reaches 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in Europe, 25% in the region of the Americas, 33% in the African region, 31% in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in South-East Asia (World Health Organization 2021).

A number of studies have been conducted on the prevalence of violence against women in all forms, including the following:

1) Physical violence: According to Haddad et al, the statistics indicate that there are more than 1.6 million deaths globally, mostly of women aged fifteen to forty-four, due to physical violence, and 90% of them occur in low- and middle-income countries (2011, 79). The WHO stated through its official website that 30% of women are exposed to physical violence (World Health Organization 2021). Moreover, Wenzel et al. indicated through their study “Physical Violence against Impoverished Women: A Longitudinal Analysis of Risk and Protective Factors” that homeless and poor women who spend their time in the streets and in the most dangerous areas where crime rates are high are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence because of the dangerous living conditions. Additionally, many homeless women resort to means of making money to support themselves such as begging and sex trade, which puts them at risk of sexual and physical exploitation. Moreover, mental health problems could be a risk factor for physical violence in women because they can cause a reduction in vigilance and awareness, making them appear weak and vulnerable to hurt by perpetrators (Wenzel et al. 2004, 145).

A study entitled “Sexual and Physical Abuse of Chronically Ill Psychiatric Outpatients Compared with a Matched Sample of Medical Outpatients” was conducted by Coverdale and Turbott on a sample of 158 patients with mental health issues, including schizophrenia and bipolar



disorder, and it was found that 28.5% of the patients were subjected to sexual abuse and 27.3% were subjected to physical abuse during adulthood (Coverdale and Turbott 2000, 440).

Another study conducted by Moreno and her team for the WHO, and entitled *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses* (2005), showed that the percentage of women who were physically abused by their partners ranged from 19% in Ethiopia to 55% in Peru. In Brazil, Samoa, Serbia, Montenegro, Thailand, Tanzania, and Namibia, the report indicated that 20% of injured women were injured several times by their partner in their eyes and ears, while 15-year-old girls were exposed to physical violence by family members such as their fathers (62% in Samoa); less than 10% of women in Ethiopia, Japan, Serbia, and Thailand were exposed to physical violence by a non-partner. Also, about 8% to 43% of women reported an increase in physical violence during pregnancy. About 13% of pregnant women in Ethiopia were subjected to physical violence, such as beatings and kicks, by their partners, and 50% of the respondents in Serbia, Brazil, and Montenegro had the same experience. It has also been proven that sexual and physical violence is more prevalent in the rural areas of Bangladesh, Thailand, and United Tanzania (Moreno et al. 2005, 4). The study also revealed that women who were subjected to intimate partner violence on a daily basis for a long period of time experienced accumulated health and emotional effects, including memory loss, dizziness, lethargy, inability to perform daily activities, and suicidal thoughts (Moreno et al. 2005, 5). The research, citing agencies, authorities that protect women from violence, and women and non-governmental organizations, confirmed that 55% to 95% of women who were subjected to physical abuse remained silent and rejected help such as health services, legal advice, and shelter, due to the limited availability of official

services in some countries and other obstacles that prevent women from reporting such as fear, stigma, and the threat of losing their children (Moreno et al. 2005, 6).

According to a study by the Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the FEMM Committee (2016), 31% of women in the European Union have been physically assaulted, grabbed, or pulled by hair by a partner or non-partner. Additionally, the study discovered that poverty and unemployment are widely perceived as contributing factors to domestic violence. It has been observed that unemployed men become violent, especially when the woman provides for the family. This is because her economic independence and social life may be considered a threat. Women's financial independence is protected in some circumstances. However, additional risks are involved when she is the only working spouse (Bonewit and De Santis 2016, 18-22).

2) Emotional violence: According to Godfrey et. al, nearly 43 million women and 38 million men are exposed to emotional violence worldwide. This type of violence is associated with various physical and mental health problems, including digestive problems, chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (2020, 4). As stated by Moglia, emotional violence may have long-term adverse effects, such as difficulty maintaining relationships as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder. Besides this, it is commonly associated with physical problems, including headaches, backaches, leg cramps, and stomach pains (Moglia 2015, 650). In addition, psychological or emotional abuse can also adversely affect a person's health, self-confidence, and ability to work and produce, leading to diminished productivity and income and reduced social participation and isolation (Alsawalqa 2021a, 2).

In 1998, a study was conducted on a small representative sample (8,000 women and 80,000 men) in the United States were asked to describe their experiences with rape, physical assault, and

stalking called *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence against Women Survey*. The types of stalking in the US and the motives of the perpetrators, and the responses of the victims towards this type of violence were investigated. Furthermore, this study investigated the types of emotionally abusive or controlling behaviors that ex-husbands who stalked their ex-wives practiced and reported that the victims stated that the perpetrators were either jealous or possessive, trying to instigate a fight, trying to end her relations with family and friends, demanding to find out where she was continuously, making her feel insufficient, screaming or swearing at her, terrifying her, preventing her from knowing about or accessing family income, preventing her from finding a job, and insisting on changing residences even when she did not need or want to. Moreover, the document highlighted the following as the factors that motivated the perpetrator to stalk the victims: controlling the victim (21%), keeping the victim in the relationship (20%), scaring the victim (17%), mental illness or drug or alcohol use (7%), and attention seeking (5%) (Tjaden and Thoennes 1998, 8–9).

According to Kilmartin and Allison, in their book *Men's Violence against Women: Theory, Research, and Activism*, emotional manipulation is a method of discrediting and isolating the female victim by controlling her actions, words, and movements, who she sees, who she befriends, what she reads, and where she lives, as well as his use of jealousy to justify his abuse—moreover, silencing the victim to make her feel inferior, guilty or crazy (Kilmartin, and Allison 2007, 16–18). As outlined in the German study *Health, Well-Being and Personal Safety of Women in Germany: A Representative Study of Violence Against Women in Germany*, victims of psychological violence describe psychological blackmailing as a form of brainwashing perpetrated by the aggressor to make them feel insane, incapacitated, and unable to recognize themselves (Müller et al. 2004, 30). The offender uses various techniques to control and harm his victims,

including insulting, verbally assaulting, isolating them from other people, restricting their work, ignoring their needs, or even threatening to take the children's custody to put pressure on the victims and prevent them from leaving. Also, practicing aggressive acts can be threatened, such as damaging the victim's property. In addition, perpetrators usually target helpless, weak victims, who lack self-confidence, use drugs, are co-dependent, depressed, and do not have weapons to protect themselves from emotional abuse, making it easier for them to control them. It is also likely that the offender practices emotional abuse as a reaction to their feelings of shame, anger, oppression, and helplessness because they were victims of psychological and emotional manipulation. In addition, they had personality disorders such as intense jealousy over the partner, fear of abandonment, and drug abuse, in addition to the social and economic differences and the level of education and profession between partners or spouses that drive the blackmailer to follow methods that abuse the partner emotionally (Moglia 2015, 647–650).

Based on an online study by the OAK Foundation and Safe Life charity conducted on the experiences of female victims of violence against women in the United Kingdom, 6,5000 victims were in a dangerous situation regarding psychological violence. The results showed that 47% of survivors reported their tendency to commit suicide due to exposure to psychological violence. This includes screaming, intimidation, blaming, ridicule, imitating the victim and discouraging any independent activity, depriving the victim of work, threatening to leave, taking children, and killing loved ones. At the same time, 49% of survivors reported being threatened with death by their partner if they tried to end the relationship. Furthermore, 61% confirmed that their partners used technology to abuse, harass, stalk, or spy on them during their relationship, and 47% felt isolated and lonely. Moreover, 65% felt depressed, and 90% felt low self-esteem (OAK Foundation and Safe Life Research n.d.).

3) Sexual violence: This is a global problem that puts the health of people of all age groups at risk (Glover et al. 2010, 152). According to the WHO, about 6% of women in Japan and Serbia and 59% of women in Ethiopia between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine years have experienced sexual violence by their partners. In addition, it is indicated that the prevalence of sexual abuse among children and adolescents under the age of 15 is estimated to be between 1% in Bangladesh and 21% in Namibia (Moreno et al. 2005, 5–6). Regarding the motives and causes of sexual violence, alcohol and drug use, hostility towards women, and history of sexual abuse are factors associated with men committing rape (Krug et al. 2002, 154). Thus, according to Tjaden and Thoennes, there is a strong relationship between stalking and other types of violence in intimate relationships, which means approximately 31% of women who have ever been married or lived with a man in the US have been sexually abused by a current or former spouse or partner, and 31% of women who have been stalked by a current or ex-husband or residing partner were sexually assaulted by the same partner (1998, 8). Moreover, sexual violence acts have several consequences, including deaths related to suicides, HIV infection, mental illness, depression, stomach complains, unsafe abortions, homicides disguised as honor killings, mental social ostracization (Krug et al. 2002, 161–165). In addition, being sexually abused as a man causes feelings of guilt, anger, anxiety, depression, impotence, sleep disturbances, withdrawal from relationships, and attempted suicide as well as drug use, violent behavior, and theft (Krug et al. 2002, 154).

According to the National Crime Victims Survey administered by the United States, sexual violence crimes in the US, including rape and sexual assault of individuals aged twelve years and above, increased from 22.6 sexual acts per 1,000 people in 2011 to 26.1 sexual acts per 1,000 people in 2012. This means that the number of the sexual violent increased from 5.8 million in 2011 to 6.8 million in 2012. However, from 2011 to 2012, there was no statistically significant

change in the proportion of sexual violence, including rape and assault, reported to police; it was 49% and 48% in 2011 and 2012, respectively (Truman, Langton, and Planty 2013, 1–6). According to a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the United States on sexual abuse incidents among prison inmates and staff, 2,886 persons were sexually abused as prisoners between 2016 and 2018, as well as 2,496 persons as staff and inmates in adult correctional facilities. It is estimated that approximately 25% of the victims of non-consensual sexual acts among inmates and 43% of the victims of abusive sexual contact are female. Approximately 61% of non-consensual sexual acts between prisoners and 36% of abusive sexual contacts were subjected to medical examinations (Buehler 2023, 1). During 2017 to 2019, the rate of violent victimization such as rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault varied across the most populous states. The national rate of victimization per 1,000 persons over the age of 12 was 7.7% (Kena and Morgan 2023, 6).

In the Arab world, sexual harassment is also prevalent according to the results of the Arab Barometer survey conducted in 2018-19. Arab countries differ greatly in their percentage of women who are subjected to sexual harassment in public places. A total of 39% of surveyed women (compared to 22% of men) said they had been sexually harassed in public places in all countries participating in the survey. In most countries, women experience more sexual harassment than men, except in Iraq and Tunisia. Moreover, 62% of the women interviewed have experienced sexual harassment. In addition, the survey indicated that sexual harassment was more common in Egypt (44%), Sudan (38%), Libya (20%), and Tunisia (15%). Besides this, it was found that young women aged seventeen to twenty-eight in Arab countries face higher levels of sexual harassment than their older counterparts (Bouhlila 2019, 4). According to the report, sexual harassment affects Iraqi men more than women; 42% of men reported experiencing sexual harassment, compared to 35% of women. In Tunisia, around 16 percent of women surveyed said they had been sexually

harassed in public places, while the same percentage of men reported being harassed (Bouhlila 2019, 8).

Statistics Canada conducted a Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equality in 2020 titled *Workers' Experiences of Inappropriateness Sexualized Behaviour, Sexual Assault and Gender-based Discrimination in the Canadian Provinces, 2020* and found that workers in several provinces were subjected to several types of inappropriate sexual or discriminatory behavior in a work environment. Their results suggested that 25% of women were subjected to sexual harassment, 31% stated that the perpetrator was a customer or patient, while 28% stated that the harasser was in a position of authority. The survey also found that 47% of women working in crafts, transportation, and equipment operation had been exposed to sexual behavior before the COVID-19 pandemic and that 53% of women working in sales and services were subjected to sexual harassment by customers; 23% of workers reportedly suffered from being exposed to abusive sexual materials via the Internet and their phones during interactions with their male and female co-workers (Burczycka 2021, 5–6).

4) Honor killings: Despite the spread of this phenomenon in Muslim and tribal Asian societies such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan, Islamic Sharia does not enact honor killings. On the contrary, Islam gives women their full rights, and although societies hinder Islamic laws that protect women (Tripathi and Yadav 2004, 64–65), honor killings are by no means an Islamic concept (Hussain 2006, 6). In addition, Islam prohibits Muslims from rushing to question the morals of Muslim women and accusing them of adultery without testimony or evidence. Despite this, this custom is deeply rooted in the Arab world, where the customs and traditions related to honor killing are stronger than religious legislation (Nanes 2003, 117). According to the European Parliament, around 5,000 girls and women are killed every year by male family members

in the name of honor; this number is approximately 25 to 40 women in Jordan and 1,000 women in Pakistan (Hailé 2007, 3).

The practice of honor killing predates all written religion (Vitoshka 2010, 9) and is a social problem that has been rooted for thousands of years to this day in patriarchal societies especially in countries in Balkans, southern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia (Hailé 2007, 9). It also occurs among non-Muslim tribal groups in countries in the Middle East such as Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey (Eisner and Ghuneim 2013, 408). These crimes take several forms, including forced marriage and female circumcision; emotional, physical, and financial abuse; kidnapping; mutilation with acid burns; threats of violence; direct killing (Human Rights Council 2012, 12); and forced suicide in order to sabotage laws against honor crimes (Leonard 2020, 5). Furthermore, when murder occurs in conservative patriarchal societies, it is presented as suicide and thus is not recorded or brought to justice (Hailé 2007, 11–12). Moreover, honor killing in India include brutal violence such as assault, confinement, imprisonment, interference with a choice in marriage to adjust the victim's inappropriate attitude by her father and brother, declaring the victim a minor and insane, and brutally murdering her (Vishwanath and Palakonda 2011, 389). Additionally, it is a manifestation of the practice of killing, violence against women, exercising power over women, and controlling women's behavior. Furthermore, despite the efforts of international organizations (like the WHO) and UN bodies such as the CEDAW Convention to eliminate the problem of killing in the name of honor, it is still widespread and increasing in prevalence (Heydari, Teymoori, and Trappes 2021, 87).

In 2020, Recep Doğan, through a study he conducted in Turkey, entitled “Can Honor Killings Be Explained with the Concept of Social Death? Reinterpreting Social Psychological Evidence”, highlighted the justifications and motives behind a man killing women out of honor,



especially in Muslim societies, where there is immense pressure and severe coercion on the man to kill to get rid of the stigma and restore the honor of the family. The man is threatened with death if he fails to perform this task. This is called *social death*, meaning that he will be subjected to ostracism, neglect, and withdrawal of support. He is considered to be dead because he has lost his honor and is of no value until he restores his honor by violence and murder (Doğan 2020, 128–130).

Honor killings are usually retaliatory or punitive and involve men taking revenge on girls for dishonoring the family to restore honor and social status since dishonorable acts bring shame or embarrassment and harm an individual's standing or moral value in the society. The honor of the female child in conservative societies is considered to be very important, and girls are required to monitor their behavior and protect themselves from sexual practices by following the norms and values rooted in society, including chastity, modesty, and purity (Heydari, Teymoori, and Trappes 2021, 89). Therefore, if a girl violates any of these values, she will reap severe consequences, including murder by her brother or father who believes that he is doing the right thing, restoring honor, and getting rid of the stigma and that otherwise, he will be subjected to social rejection as tradition dictates and be forced to leave society forever (Heydari, Teymoori, and Trappes 2021, 90).

5) Economic violence: It is regarded as a type of intimate partner violence and non-physical abuse associated with emotional or psychological abuse (Stylianou 2018, 2). The forms that the perpetrator uses to control his victim economically are preventing her from working or controlling or taking her money, such as forcing her to hand over her salary. The financial abuser tries to make the victim ask for money, force her to leave job, not letting her know about or have access to family income (Kilmartin and Allison 2007,18–19), as well as discrimination in the

payment of salaries and a gap and job promotions, or prevent women from acquiring income or make their own money (Adams et al. 2008, 581). In addition, women can be exploited economically by preventing them from using resources they already possess, such as controlling their cars and shared transportation. Abusive men frequently steal, damage, and destroy their female partners' possessions and household items (Ptacek 1997, 104–123). Economic violence also includes depriving women of food and clothing, excluding them from financial decisions, attempting to harm their property, stealing or draining their money and drowning them in debt, or discriminating in matters related to inheritance and property rights (Fawole 2008,169).

Economic abuse is a major factor in excluding women from economic participation and education, and it may worsen poverty and limit development. It is also a consequence of poverty that women are forced to do menial work, such as marketing their bodies, to relieve financial pressures and provide for their families (Fawole 2008, 170–172), resulting in women being exploited and trafficked, in addition to contracting serious diseases such as AIDS (Alsawalqa 2021a, 2.) Furthermore, due to economic abuse, the woman might depend on her husband to provide her with basic necessities such as food and clothing (Fawole 2008, 169). Moreover, she may be exposed to a humiliating situation should her relationship end and she remains homeless. It is also possible that she may have to stay with the abusive man for a longer period as a result of her financial need, thus placing her at an increased risk (Eriksson and Ulmestig 2021, 1641). Additionally, mothers facing financial abuse find it more difficult to end a marriage because of their financial needs to pay for their children (Sanders 2015, 23).

According to United Nations Development Program, education plays a significant factor in reducing the economic violence of married women. As a result of education, women become more aware and knowledgeable of their rights in all aspects of their lives. Consequently, they are

in a position to defend and protect themselves from economic violence. Also, an educated woman will understand how to manage her life, property, and resources as opposed to an uneducated woman. This is because by obtaining an education, women can gain self-confidence and increase their social life (United Nations Development Program 2013, 5–6). The research conducted by Sang and Sang (2014) in Kenya showed that most women have limited educational attainment and that those without property or their businesses are denied decision-making, resulting in economic exploitation (Sang and Sang 2014,142). As stated by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics of Egypt (2016), the violence experienced by wives in Egypt would decrease if they improved their educational level (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics 2016, 21). Another factor that could protect women from financial abuse is a long-term marriage. The longer the marriage, the less likely women will be financially abused. Typically, spouses can better understand one another and their respective personalities, strengthening their mutual understanding of one another's needs. In addition, they can overcome their differences by using the diverse experiences and challenges they have encountered throughout their lives (Alsawalqa 2020, 9).

According to most estimates, economic abuse is prevalent in high-income countries (Kanougiya et al. 2021, 2). For example, in the United Kingdom, economic abuse is prevalent at 21%, according to a national survey in 2015 (Sharp-Jeffs 2015, 19). Also, an Australian study conducted in 2017 showed that 15% of financial abuse victims were women, and 7 %were men (Kutin, Russell, and Reid 2017, 269). According to a study elaborated by Shelly Jackson, the prevalence of financial exploitation in the United States ranges from 1% to more than 16%. In addition, the research found that the most common form of abuse experienced by older individuals is financial exploitation (Jackson 2018, 1156). Meanwhile, Statistics Canada reported that nearly

one in five Canadians between the ages of 15 and 64 had been victims of emotional or financial abuse by an intimate partner between 2010 and 2020 (Statistics Canada 2022, 3).

6) Child marriage: This phenomenon has been deeply rooted in poor countries and rural areas for centuries, due to poverty, customs, and traditions aimed at family reunification, where underage girls are married off on the recommendation of their families and do not have the right to choose or decide their future. Also, the families believe that marriage is an opportunity to provide security and protection for girls and that to protect their honor from being tarnished, they must be married off at an early age. In addition to the pressures of society and the norms that move families to encourage early marriage, fathers also push their girls to marry early in order to get rid of poverty and the economic burden placed on them so that they can reduce the expenses of supporting, feeding, clothing, and educating their children (Ahmed 2015, 9–10).

Child marriage remains a common practice in the developing countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Ahmed 2015, 8). UNICEF pointed out that the global incidence of child marriage was more than half a billion nowadays and that 15 million girls are married before their eighteenth birthday each year, resulting in approximately 41,000 child brides per day (Hamilton 2020, 7). Before the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF had stated that more than 100 million girls were expected to marry before their eighteenth birthday in the next decade. However, now, due to the pandemic, up to ten million more girls are expected to become child brides (UNICEF n.d.).

Child marriage exerts negative effects on the girls, their children, and their society and country (Malhotra and Elnakib 2021, 48). Child marriage is a violation of the human right which states that marriage must only take place with the free and full approval of the intending spouses (UN Women n.d.). Child marriage has dire consequences on the health and rights of underage

girls. A girl who marries at an age less than eighteen is deprived of continuing her education and exposed to intimate partner violence (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2021), especially when the age difference between the bride and groom is large (Ahmed 2015, 8). As a domestic violence victim, she is also further exposed to serious mental health problems. Furthermore, married girls with a lower level of education are more likely to be social isolated than their more educated counterparts (Boujarian et al. 2016, 90). Additionally, married minors are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and developing complications of pregnancy and childbirth (including maternal and child mortality) (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2021, 11). Being pregnant at such an early age is very difficult on their body and mind, and thus, they are vulnerable and at risk of developing depression. They lose their chance to exercise the right to choose a partner as well as the opportunity to develop necessary life skills (Ahmed 2015, 8–9). They do not have the adequate skills for the role of motherhood and are exposed to high levels of stress due to early pregnancy.

The consequences of the child marriage also include child sexual abuse and marital rape due to a lack of preparation (both physically and mentally) for sexual life (Boujarian et al. 2016, 90). Malhotra and Elnakib stated that girls who get married at an early age in East Asian countries do not have enough experience or independence to make decisions regarding childbearing due to the pressures they are exposed to by their mothers about the necessity of having children within a year after marriage. Similarly, in India and Ethiopia, girls cannot negotiate the use of birth control pills for fear of violence from their husbands or the occurrence of a divorce which is shameful (Malhotra and Elnakib 2021, 53).

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the highest rate of child marriage, with 34% and 28% of children getting married, respectively, whereas East Asia and the Pacific have 13% of their

children getting married before the age of eighteen years. Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean have 9% of their children marrying early, while the Middle East and North Africa have 4% (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2021, 11). A study titled "A Simple Approach to Measuring the Share of Early Childbirths Likely Due to Child Marriage in Developing Countries", conducted by Wodon, Malé, and Onagoruwa in 2020 indicated that the proportion of girls getting married before the age of eighteen years was 59.4% in Bangladesh, 40% in India, 18.7% in Pakistan, 17% in Indonesia, 16.5% in Egypt, and 42% in Nigeria (Wodon, Malé, and Onagoruwa 2020, 178). Meanwhile, child marriage remains a widespread issue in the US, with statistics showing that more than 78,000 people aged between fifteen and seventeen years had married, separated, or divorced between 2010 and 2014. Moreover, 87% of girls and 13% of boys were married in the US between 2000 and 2015, according to a study analyzing marriage license data from 41 states (Hamilton 2020, 7).

7) Digital violence: In 2013, a study titled "Association of Maltreatment with High-risk Internet Behaviors and Offline Encounters" stated that the exposure of adolescents to domestic abuse causes behavioral problems which manifest via the Internet, especially their use of social networking sites, making them vulnerable to sexual blackmail; they receive sexual temptations and requests through these sites, which precede the occurrence of sexual meetings between the victim and the perpetrator outside the Internet (Noll et al. 2013, 516).

According to Tandon and Prichard, the perpetrators of cyber violence against women and girls are rarely held accountable, in part due to the relatively low capacity to prosecute perpetrators, especially for girls and women living in poverty, and in part due to societal barriers such as fear of shame, scandal, and victim-blaming that hinder many women from accessing justice. All these

factors contribute to the already low rate of reporting and the escalation of a vicious cycle (Tandon and Pritchard 2015, 2).

Regarding this kind of violence in the Arab world, in Morocco 54 out of 13,000 women were subjected to all types of violence in 2018, while 13% of them were subjected to abuse and violence via the Internet (Al-Nasrawi 2021, 495). Meanwhile, in Egypt, according to findings of a study conducted in 2020 titled “Cyber Violence Pattern and Related Factors: An Online Survey of Females in Egypt”, 41.6% of 356 female participants had been subjected to cyber violence during 2019 and types of violence included receiving that 41.6% of the 356 female participants had been exposed to cyber violence in 2019, and the types of violence included e-mails of messages or symbols with sexual content, abusive comments, and degrading, inappropriate, or violent images meant to humiliate them. The offenders were not known to 92.6% of the victims. Furthermore, as the study indicated, most of the victims developed psychological disorders such as fear, anger, anxiety, withdrawal from the Internet, social isolation, and suicidal thoughts, and none of the cases were reported to police station because the victims were afraid of the shame or blame that may arise against them as well as their family and friends following their report (Hassan et al. 2020, 2–6).

The European Parliament report issued in 2021 indicated that up to half of women in the European Union have been subjected to electronic harassment, while between 1% and 3% have been subjected to online harassment. Further, cyber violence is an increasing phenomenon with the proliferation of Internet usage, particularly among adolescents (Lomba, Navarra, and Fernandes 2021, 1). The report also indicated that the phenomenon of cyber violence has bad consequences for the victims, including mental health disorders, depression, and panic attacks due to exposure to stalking and harassment. It also has a negative social and economic impact on

society. Regarding social influences, members of ethnic minorities and those belonging to different religions are exposed to hate speech and discrimination. Economically, the victims bear the financial burden of obtaining legal aid and health care; in addition, cyber violence affects the labor market– it causes poor attendance at work, low productivity, and poor quality of life, leading to job loss. The total loss resulting from electronic violence and online harassment amounted to about 49-89 billion euros (Lomba, Navarra, and Fernandes 2021, 2).

Women and girls are exposed to digital violence against women more frequently than men, and it takes several forms such as: threats to ruin their personal reputation, threats of physical attack (Posetti et al. 2020, 6), hacking, identity theft (Al-Nasrawi 2021, 494), psychological abuse, gender discrimination, sexual harassment (such as sexting and revenge porn), image-based abuse, tracking, and stalking. Social media platforms have contributed to the spread of electronic violence and are most commonly used by human traffickers to abuse the victims and threaten them sexually. Women and girls make up the majority of victims of the sex trade, with over 70% of them being underage (Dorokhova 2021, 9–10). In addition, Dorokhova confirmed that electronic harassment, including extortion and violent acts such as sexual exploitation and abuse of children via the Internet, also causes suicides in many children and adolescent girls. Electronic violence causes emotional, and psychological harm on women, leading to stress, hopelessness, humiliation, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and the feeling that one's life is controlled by the perpetrators, especially if they are intimate partners (Dorokhova 2021, 8).

8) Human trafficking: The motives behind the practice of all forms of human trafficking and exploitation include poverty, gender discrimination and inequality within countries, restrictive immigration policy, and the demand for cheap and unqualified labor. Human trafficking takes several forms and practices prohibited under the International Human Rights Law, including



slavery, sexual exploitation of women and children, forced and servile marriage, child marriage (United Nations Human Rights 2014b, 5), prostitution, violence, deprivation and torture (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008, 9), and removal of organs (United Nations Human Rights 2010, 34). Human trafficking also includes debt bondage, which is prohibited by the Human Rights Law. It is the pledge to provide personal services as security for debt, because traffickers usually exploit people who are indebted to them. Children and persons with disabilities are also trafficked for purposes related to their age, such as sexual exploitation and begging. Women and girls are also trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation such as prostitution, sex tourism, and forced labor in domestic and service industries, predisposing them to rape, forced marriage, unwanted or forced pregnancy, forced abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. In addition, the victims of human trafficking suffering from insecurity, attacks, feelings of vulnerability, and physical injuries in addition to physical and emotional trauma (United Nations Human Rights 2014, 7).

According to Article 1 of the Supplementary Slavery Convention, practices of servile forms of marriage include promising to marry a woman without the right of refusal in exchange for payment of consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family, or any other person; a husband or his clan having the right to share his wife with another person in return for obtaining a value or material benefit or otherwise; and inheritance of a woman by another person upon the death of her husband (United Nations Human Rights 2010, 35). Moreover, according to Article 2 of the Convention Concerning Forced and Compulsory Labor, 1930, forced labor is defined as: “All work or service which is extracted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily” (United Nations Human Rights 2010, 35).

As per a report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, more than 130 countries are affected by human trafficking, and the act of trafficking poses a great threat to the lives of the victims, most of whom are women and children, and exert long-term effects (especially on immature children and those with little experience in life) such as anxiety, depression, and isolation; confusion and the inability to reveal or express oneself; the feeling of shame and disgrace that haunts them for long periods; and exposure of children to abusive behavior causing physical injuries, disabilities, dwarfism, and death (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008, 11).

Several factors are responsible for human trafficking, including racial discrimination against ethnic minorities. In addition to the factors related to demand, other factors include government corruption, political instability, the spread of criminal networks that practice the crime of human trafficking, and administrative and official corruption in some countries where the crime of human trafficking is widespread. Other causes include the exploitation of children for labor under conditions of coercion and slavery, the spread of sex tourism in some countries of the world (which has increased the demand for sex trade with foreign girls and women), and the increasing global demand for illegal labor (Al Shibly 2013, 45).

As explained in a study conducted by the International Labor Organization, there were around 40.3 million victims of slavery and human trafficking in 2016. Of these, 24.9 million were victims of sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and forced labor, through the private sector or imposed by the state, whereas 15 million females were victims of forced marriage. Data shows that about 44% of girls were forced into forced marriage before the age of fifteen years, and while it is noted that statistics are scarce on the prevalence of forced marriage in Arab countries, the data indicates that the prevalence rate of forced marriage is highest in African countries with a rate of 4.8 per 1,000, followed by Asia and the Pacific with 2.0 victims per 1,000. It was estimated that

around 3.8 million people were victims of sexual exploitation and that 1.0 million children were victims of commercial sexual exploitation in 2016; 99% of the victims were women and girls. Seven out of every ten victims in the Asia-Pacific region were victims of sexual exploitation. In Europe and Central Asia, the rate of sexual trafficking is reportedly 14%; it is 8% in Africa, 4% in North and South America, and 1% in Arab countries at a rate of (International Labor Organization and Walk Free Foundation 2017, 5–11).

A project titled *Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in a Southern Ontario Region: Police File Review Exploring Victim Characteristics, Trafficking Experiences, and the Intersection with Child Welfare* revealed that child welfare workers were a conduit for sex trafficking, and a number of traffickers used gifts, money, and attention to encourage workers to become involved in the sex and drug trades, as well as child trafficking (Baird, McDonald, and Connolly 2019, 8). In addition, another study conducted on the sex trafficking of women and girls in Canada found that unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, homelessness of women and of children from care homes, and separation from family and society are among the factors that make women and girls more vulnerable to exploitation by sex traffickers who provide them with a sense of belonging, security, and care (Hodgins et al. 2022, 10).

The most frequent types of violence against women have been discussed above, including physical, psychological, electronic, sexual and economic violence, honor killings, child marriage, and human trafficking. I also offered an overview of the prevalence of violence in a number of countries throughout the world as well as in the Arab region. There was, in addition, an explanation of the factors responsible for the spread of these types of violence, as well as the emotional and mental consequences that result from these violent practices, such as beatings, killing, humiliation, forced marriage, trading of organs, etc. Below, I move into a discussion of the most prevalent types

of violence against women in Jordan, their causes, and the effects of violence against Jordanian women.

### **3.3. Violence against Women in Jordan**

If, following the structure above, we start this section by looking into the issue of physical violence, it is relevant to recall that, in a study conducted by Haj-Yahia titled “Can People’s Patriarchal Ideology Predict their Beliefs about Wife Abuse?”, in which 349 Jordanian men filled the questionnaire, stated that majority of Jordanian men justify the beating of wives in certain circumstances for the purpose of her reformation because they blame her for causing the violence and beatings meted by the husband. The study also showed that this patriarchal ideology is commoner amongst older men who are unemployed or less educated and those who live in rural areas and refugee camps. Furthermore, this research proved that very few Jordanian men believe that husbands should bear the consequences of their violent behavior towards their wives (Haj-Yahia, 2005, 545). In addition, another piece of research, entitled “Attitudes of Jordanian Society Toward Wife Abuse” and involving 260 male and female participants in Jordan, showed the justifications the society gave for physical violence against women and for blaming them. These included the wife’s failure to perform her duties as a wife and mother; her disobedience; her failure to care for her husband, children, and the home; her lack of respect for husband; and speaking loudly to him or revealing his secrets. These responses reflect the view of patriarchal societies that men have the right to control and enjoy greater power over women and that they have the right to punish them for their misconduct. This study reveals that some societies in Jordan perceive physical violence to be a personal and familial problem and not a legal or social issue. They believe that the victimized wife should adjust her behavior and take responsibility for changing her

husband in cases of light verbal and physical abuse. Meanwhile, the study showed that a smaller number of participants ascribed the reasons for wife abuse to the husband, which include mental illness, not following Islamic law, and drug and alcohol abuse, in addition to family and societal conditions such as poverty, orphanhood, inheritances, and conservative traditions. These views reflect the transitional nature of Jordanian society, which proves that the abused wife is not the cause of the physical violence, that it is a social problem, and that the husband and society must be viewed as part of the problem as well as the solution to it (Btoush, and Haj-Yahia 2008, 1548).

In a study conducted by Haddad et al, it was confirmed that violence against women is viewed as a private and sensitive family matter, meaning battered women in Jordan could also be pressured by their family members to drop their reports against male partners (2011, 81). The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor reported that victims of intimate partner violence often resisted reporting the violence to the police for fear of social unacceptability or reaction of the oppressor. Due to the social reality in Jordan, battered women are forced to stay silent, believing that reporting will not help or that their fate as far as protection and rights are concerned will remain unknown. Moreover, their lack of legal knowledge and the required procedures further exacerbate their situation. Consequently, they may be exposed to greater risks due to such fear and reluctance (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor 2020, 6).

A research project conducted by Al-Hawari and El-Banna in 2017 and called “A Medicolegal Study of Domestic Violence in South Region of Jordan” found that, in the southern region of Jordan, about 128 girls aged twelve to eighteen were more likely than other age groups to report abuse to the authorities and ask for medical attention. They cited sexual abuse as the most common form (41.1%), which was followed by physical abuse (31%) and psychological abuse (24.20%). The research also showed that forms of physical abuse such as burning and injury with

sharp objects caused 78.5% of victims to have skin scars and bruises and that 80.6% of victims of psychological abuse left their homes because they felt insecure, depressed, anxious, and hopeless. It further highlighted that the most common causative factors of domestic violence were financial problems (71.1%), family disintegration (15.5%), while the factors related to the victims were studying problems (6.3%), mental problems (5.5%), and servitude (1.6%) (Al-Hawari, and El-Banna 2017, 3–5).

Moving onto emotional violence as it unravels in Jordan, in 2012 the results of the study conducted by Alunaiti and Assaf concluded that emotional violence was the most commonly experienced type of violence by wives in the Jordan Valley area. 44% of the 212 wives included in the study sample stated that they had experienced emotional abuse. 84% of wives were forced to obey the husband's words, 57% were insulted by the husband, and 47% lost their self-confidence due to this violence. It is a known fact that 42% of wives believe that their husbands do not like them, and they often repeat that they regret marrying them. 38% of them believe that their husbands treat them like servants and do not respect them in front of their children and that they regret marrying them. Moreover, 32% of women claim that their husbands prevent them from attending social events, and 28% claim that they are prevented from visiting their families. The research showed that the different levels of violence decrease with the increase in the educational level of the spouses and that the level of emotional violence increases with the increase in the age of the respondent and the size of his family. Perhaps the reason is that the educated are mostly young people and have greater knowledge of the wife's rights and ways of democratically dealing with her. It was also found that the different levels of violence practiced against women decreased with the increase in the average family income. In addition, emotional violence against wives working outside the home was less than among housewives. Unemployed and self-employed couples also

have a higher incidence of violence than employed spouses. It was found that husbands who suffer from mental illnesses are more violent with their wives compared to those who aren't suffering from an incurable disease (Alhunity and Assaf 2012).

In 2017, Noha Al-Shdayfat published “Emotional Abuse among Syrian Refugee Women in Jordan”. As per this work, 186 Syrian refugees between the ages of 19 and 55 years were interviewed. It was found that 70% of the participants reported living with more than five family members. Out of the total, 88% belonged to low-income families with an average income of \$142 per month. Approximately 49.7% of the female participants reported that their husbands were unemployed. The results showed that the prevalence rate of emotional abuse among refugee women reached 51% before and after their asylum, and 44% of the participants were exposed to emotional abuse. About 21.4% of married women were exposed to emotional abuse by their husbands, and 12% of unmarried girls were subjected to violence by male members of their family, whether fathers or brothers. The emotional abuse to which the participants were subjected varied, including attempts to suppress, insult and humiliate them, force them to limit their contact with others, or completely control their actions. The results showed that women who lived in large families with more than five family members were more likely to be emotionally abused than women who lived in smaller families. Also, women with less education and those living in urban areas were more likely to experience emotional abuse. Household income was not associated with emotional abuse. The results also showed a correlation between exposure to emotional violence and insomnia, depression, and anxiety (Al-Shdayfat 2017, 240–243).

The website of Solidarity Is Global Institute (SIGI) indicated that the results of the Population and Family Health Survey issued by the Department of Statistics in 2017-18 showed that 25.6% of wives who are older than their husbands have been subjected to emotional violence.

Moreover, 42.7% of widows, divorcees, and separated women who are between 15 and 49 years old reported that they had previously been subjected to this type of violence, compared to married women who currently live with their husbands. Meanwhile, one out of every four married women has experienced emotional violence. Examples of emotional violence that married women were subjected to, according to the survey, include the husband speaking or acting to humiliate his wife before others, the husband threatening to harm his wife or anyone close to her, the husband insulting his wife or hurting her feelings, among others (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2019b).

In connection with sexual violence, Shotar et al. stated that the Jordanian society has a conservative culture and is governed by conservative social norms regarding issues of violence, specifically sexual violence crimes, especially in northern Jordan where citizens live in close quarters. The Jordanian authorities, when investigating cases of sexual crimes, seek to take precautions to prevent the identification of victims of this type of crime in order to preserve their reputation and for fear of the dangerous social consequences (from stigma to scandal and shame) that may accompany families exposed to this type of violence. A Jordanian woman would prefer not to reveal the sexual crime that she experienced due to fear of being shamed and blamed for this crime (Shotar et al. 2015, 549).

Another study developed in Jordan in 2015, “Sexual Offenses among Children in the North of Jordan”, revealed that Jordanian child victims who were subjected to sexual violence such as rape and indecent assault in northern Jordan between 2007 and 2008 sustained serious injuries to their genitals including bruises, scrapes, cuts, and bleeding, with 2.7% to 3.8% of them being females and 6.7% of them being males. This study also found that the average age of the victims was three to eighteen years, that about 53% of the cases were males, and that the ratio of males to



females was 1.3: 1. It was also found that according to 94.2% of the victims, they did not know the perpetrator, while 5.8% reported that they knew the perpetrators (Shotar et al. 2015, 544–555).

Moreover, the study by the Jordan Communication Advocacy and Policy Activity *Family Planning Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan* stated that Syrian girls have been subjected to sexual violence and rape since the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011. Moreover, since their asylum in Jordan, the girls have also been subjected to various types of sexual violence, such as sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and sexual exploitation (Jordan Communication Advocacy and Policy Activity 2016, 22). According to Al-Hawari and El-Banna's research on domestic violence in Jordan, the consequences of sexual assault on 128 victims in the southern region of Jordan were as follows: 20% of the young females left their homes, 30% of the victims had unplanned pregnancies, 41.5% had a cracked hymen, and 81% of them developed a speech disorder. It was also found that among the reasons for the prevalence of sexual violence is the absence of parental control and family disintegration (Al-Hawari, and El-Banna 2017, 8–11). Also, the study "Understanding Attitudes and Norms Related to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Among Youth in Jordan: An Egocentric Social Network Study Protocol" reported that sexual violence had health-related consequences such as physical wounds, gynecological disorders, mental health problems due to trauma, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, and high Infant and child mortality rate (Gausman et al. 2021, 1).

Sexual violence in Jordan is regarded as a violation of human rights (Gausman et al. 2021, 1), as the statistics of the Jordan Population and Family Health Survey (2017-2018 JPFHS) in Jordan indicate that majority of victims of sexual violence are women and girls and that about 26% of women have been exposed to all forms of sexual and physical violence for the past fifteen years at the hands of their fathers, intimate partners, or male members of the society (Department of

Statistic 2019, 14). In 2021, Gausman et al. indicated that the reasons for the prevalence of this type of violence among the youth in Jordan include the difficult economic conditions and poverty, gender discrimination, and the lack of institutions and systems that protect girls (Gausman et al. 2021, 1). In addition, another study conducted by a representative of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Dominique Hyde, and titled *Shattered Lives: Challenges and Priorities for Syrian Children and Women in Jordan* stated that the massive influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan has put great pressure on many communities, causing a high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, abuse, and neglect since their arrival and settlement in Jordan. Many Syrian boys and girls are exposed to sexual harassment in the Al-Zatari Camp because of unsafe spaces and the lack of privacy in showers and latrines especially at night because of insufficient lighting and broken locks (Hyde 2013, 10). Meanwhile, the Department of Statistic in Jordan reported that about 1.5 million Syrians live in Jordan, and 16% of the refugees live in the camps. However, the incidence of sexual violence outside the refugee camps in Jordan is small compared to that within the camps, as refugee girls between the ages of 12 and 18 are more vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence (Gausman et al. 2021, 2).

Regarding honor killings, Jordan is a society dominated by tribes and families and governed by social values and norms, including honor. Additionally, families that live in urban areas consider the issue of honor to be related to the family, while in Bedouin and the rural areas, the concept of honor is related to the family, clan, and society. The tribal law in Jordan states that honor is linked to society, and accordingly, some provisions and measures are applied to preserve the honor of the girl and boy. In this society, the perpetrator who rapes a girl is killed, and his money and property are seized in revenge for violating her honor. However, if it is understood that the girl's honor is violated by her own will, she is killed by her clan and the offender by his tribe.

Thus, the penalty imposed on consensual sex is equal for males and females according to tribal custom (Faqr 2001, 76).

According to a study by Nasser, Belbeisi, and Atiyat in 1999, *Violence against Women in Jordan: Demographic Characteristics of Victims and Perpetrators*, 72% of the perpetrators of violence against women in Jordan are aged between nineteen and thirty years and most of them are brothers or other blood relatives. Additionally, they reported that honor killings by husbands are rare, and around 32% of the perpetrators are illiterate or have obtained basic primary education, while 46% live in highly congested and poor areas (Nasser, Belbeisi, and Atiyat 1999, 16–19). During the eighties, political activism against honor killings in Jordan was credited to some female lawyers who began to speak about this issue in conferences in order to raise awareness about the general consequences of this type of crime. In the early 1990s, the activity of women's groups represented by the Jordanian Women's Union, including awareness campaigns to address the problem of domestic violence, led to an increase in interest in women's issues, and a hotline for domestic violence was established in 1994 to protect women and save them from violence (Nanes 2003, 118).

Jordanian men commit the crime of honor killing in the event of any suspected moral deviation by a girl e.g., having a relationship with someone else outside of marriage. Therefore, the motive for the killing is to clean the honor, especially when rumors begin to spread in the country about a girl's abnormal behavior in the eyes of society, bringing embarrassment to her family; societal pressure is put on the family to eliminate the girl that is believed to be the source of the embarrassment and disgrace (Nanes 2003, 117). Jordan is a country where honor killings occur in large proportions. In 1998, the prosecution files for recorded cases of honor killings were 89; approximately 20 to 25 cases of honor killings were reported annually in *The Jordan Times*

between 1988 and 1999 (Eisner and Ghuneim 2013, 406). Fifty cases of honor crimes were reported between 2000 and 2010 (Gusman et al. 2021, 2). A study conducted by Eisner and Ghuneim titled “Honor Killing Attitudes Amongst Adolescents in Amman, Jordan” found among 856 adolescents across Jordan that 40% of boys and 20% of girls aged between fourteen and sixteen years with lower educational background believe that killing a daughter, sister, or wife to insult her family is justified (Eisner and Ghuneim 2013, 412–314).

The *Roya News* website reveals that, according to the criminal statistical report, the total number of murders recorded in Jordan in 2020 was 99, 22 of whom were women. The most prominent motives for murder were personal disputes (47.8%; n=43 crimes), family disputes (31.1%; n=28 crimes), and quarrels (7.8%; n=7 crimes), and three crimes in total were committed under the pretext of defending “honor” and one crime under the pretext of moral decadence; drug-related murder, riots, and revenge accounted for 1.1% of the murders (one crime each). The report also stated that premeditated homicides decreased by 18.2% in 2020 (during the pandemic) compared to 2019 (Roya News 2021a).

About economic violence, the Solidarity Is Global Institute (SIGI) in Jordan conducted a report entitled “Economic Violence against Women”, which revolves around the financial abuse practiced by the husband against his wife in Jordan with the aim of extortion and depriving her of her financial resources. The report has proven that some men seek to be the only source of support and afford the family to control their expenses. Some try to forbid their partners from their accessing their inheritance or obtaining job opportunities, and they deprive them of economic and social participation. Besides, some offenders try to exploit their wives financially, withdraw their salary, and tamper with credit cards, forcing them to secure loans to buy cars and property that are their partners. In addition, some men take the opposite position by refusing to afford family

expenses, pushing women to bear the burdens of living and stand sexual exploitation to make money and protect themselves from poverty (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2019c).

The researcher Rula Alsawlaqa (2020, 1) refers to violence, economic abuse, and violence against women as obstacles to achieving gender equality as men attempt to subjugate their wives financially, deprive them of their freedom to manage their money, and restrict the acquisition of economic resources. These practices are based on prevailing cultures and customs in patriarchal societies that believe that men consider women part of their property due to a gender-based dependency. Therefore, it undermines women's development, empowerment, and economic independence, a form of gender-based discrimination. Alsawlaqa proved this through the study "Women's Abuse Experiences in Jordan: A Comparative Study Using Rural and Urban Classifications," which investigated the economic violence practiced against married women in Jordan residing in urban and rural areas in addition to exposing them to psychological and physical abuse. The results indicated that 40% of rural women and 55% of urban women were in situations where their partners tried to control their economic resources, exploited them, and interfered in their money management. Additionally, these women experienced attempts by their partners to practice emotional and psychological blackmail to pressure their wives and control them financially. Physical abuse also included hitting their partners or throwing things at them. Besides, women are harassed by their partners, who call them repeatedly at their place of work and disturb their peace of mind (Alsawalqa 2021 a,11).

Regarding child marriage, a study by UNICEF elaborated in 2014 showed that community norms strongly influence beliefs and behaviors. It concluded that one of the many reasons individuals gave for marrying their daughters off at an early age was social pressures and the believe that child marriage preserves the family's honor in the eyes of society; they believe they

are respected by society regardless of the child's age (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2014). In Jordan, the legal age for marriage is eighteen. Nevertheless, early marriage is allowed for those aged more than fifteen years according to conditions determined by a judge (Mrayan and Obeisat 2021, 2). However, the amended Civil Status Law raised the age of marriage in Jordan from fifteen to sixteen years (Shaheen et al. 2022, 58). According to *The Jordan Times*, in 2017, child marriage in Jordan resulted in a divorce rate of 65% among high-income families, while poor families had the lowest divorce cases (Jordan Times 2021).

The Higher Population Council, in their report in 2015, pointed out that the number of Jordanians, Syrians, and other nationalities under the age of eighteen who got married in Jordan reached 414,358 (Arefah et al. 2017, 25), and a total of 5,650 divorce cases resulted from early marriage between 2010 and 2015 (Arefah et al. 2017, 45). Moreover, the Solidarity Is Global Institute reported a rise in child marriage contracts in 2020 for children aged between fifteen and eighteen, where 7,964 contracts were drawn for underage girls and 194 for underage boys (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2021b).

A study conducted at the University of Edinburgh titled *A Qualitative Study on the Underlying Social Norms and Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriage in Jordan* found that Jordanian and Syrian families believe that girls' education is unnecessary because they cannot afford to take care of their families. Meanwhile, working hard and caring for the family affording is believed to be the core mission of men. However, this is considered as discrimination against women because they will be prevented to gain education and job evolution on this ground. Moreover, tribal and cultural beliefs about marriage as a system of protection for girls in the Arabic "Sutra", as well as customs and living in rural areas are the major factors strengthening the practice of child marriage (Fry et al. 2019, 12). Meanwhile, *Alrai* website, quoting the same study that

conducted by Fry et al. 2019, reported that poverty, customs, traditions, and kinship marriage, in addition to family disintegration, lack of awareness and ignorance are the main reasons for child marriage in Jordan (Alrai 2019). According to Demographic and Health Survey trend analysis in Jordan for 2007, 2009, 2012, and 2017, those who married before the age of eighteen years were more likely to be exposed to physical intimate partner violence (29.9%) compared to those who got married after eighteen years of age (20%) (Fry et al. 2019, 9).

A project elaborated by El Arab and Sagbakkenb on the prevalence of child marriage among Syrian refugee women in Jordan and Lebanon indicated that poverty, the need for protection and security, and difficult economic conditions were among the reasons Syrian families married off their girls at an early age (El Arab and Sagbakkenb 2019, 6). In addition, families worry about their daughters being raped or sexually harassed; therefore, they consider marriage the safest solution to maintaining their honor; often, this type of marriage leads to divorce, as the girls are physically, psychologically, socially, and emotionally immature and too young to fulfil the responsibilities of marriage. According to Syrian female refugees and Jordanian citizens, early marriage prevents them from continuing their education (Shaheen et al. 2022, 60–61).

As for digital violence, the SIGI also emphasized that electronic harassment poses a threat to nearly 2.7 million female Internet users in Jordan, including one million underage girls. This phenomenon includes various kinds of sexual crimes against women and girls, such as making repeated cell phone calls and sending embarrassing messages or sexual images, exploiting personal images for blackmail, posting sexual statements in comments on online posts, and hacking emails and electronic accounts. Accordingly, cybercrime units have been set up in Jordan to enable women report online harassment directly to the police (Solidarity Is Global Institute Jordan 2019a).

A report conducted by Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon under the title *Spaces of Violence and Resistance: Women's Rights in the Digital World* showed that nearly 44% of Jordanian women were subjected to cyber violence on social media sites and that 80% of them were sexually harassed. Despite the existence of cybercrime units, no reports of these acts were submitted to the authorities by the victims, and blocking the aggressors via the Internet was sufficient. Moreover, the online parliamentary election campaigns in Jordan have contributed to the high rate of electronic violence, with 32% of the female candidates being subjected to cyberattacks such as insults and bullying. Undoubtedly, women's traditional social roles, which require them to stay at home, also contributed. Taking care of the family's needs, in addition to the pandemic conditions, hindered many women from accessing polling stations and partaking in the elections (Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon 2021, 35–38).

Article No. 27 of the electronic crimes makes specific provisions for attacks on privacy by electronic means, such as the crime of hacking or corrupting a program to attack an information system or website, change its location, cancel, destroy, or change its content, or impersonate its owner and wiretapping electronic communications via the information network (Irtaimah 2020, 70). In addition, the article has provisions for hacking of information related to credit cards or data used in the implementation of financial or banking transactions, dissemination of pornographic acts related to sexual exploitation, promotion of pornographic activities or acts to influence those under the age of eighteen years, and slander, humiliation, or contempt to anyone via the electronic information network (Jordan laws n.d.).

In 2021, the study by Rula Alsawalqa “Evaluating Female Experiences of Electronic Dating Violence in Jordan: Motivations, Consequences, and Coping Strategies” confirmed that the increased incidence of cyber violence due to electronic dating, where romantic relationships are



forged via social networks, led to a number of girls developing serious negative psychological disorders because of psychological and verbal intimate partner violence. They found it difficult to fight electronic blackmail and violence by informing the authorities and escaping from them. Alsawalqa also reported that some of the female participants of the study who were aged between eighteen and twenty years responded differently to violence, and their response depended of the type of the abuse through social media platform such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Some of the girls hired an information technology expert to help them solve the problem or pay the abuser financially in exchange for staying away from them, while others resorted to seeking help from university professors and secretly from the police. The study also stated that the abusers resorted to harassing girls via the Internet to consolidate the gender stereotype of the woman being subordinate and the man having the right to control and dominate. In some cases, the aggressor resorted to cyber violence to exert revenge on the girl because she rejected or abandoned him. In addition, girls who grew up in a dysfunctional family environment and those who were subjected to abuse were more likely to be violent. Furthermore, girls who left their accounts open on other people's devices or shared passwords increased their likelihood of experiencing online dating violence (Alsawalqa 2021b, 1). The researcher also found that online dating abuse negatively affects a person's physical and mental health and self-esteem (Alsawalqa 2021b, 2) and concluded that some patriarchal societies in Jordan impose strict roles on men and encourage aggression, adoption of controlling behaviors, and reinforcement of stereotype-based gender discrimination, while women are taught to accept and submit to men. Such an ideology exposes women to exploitation and abuse in real and virtual life, causing negative outcomes such as shame, low self-esteem, eating disorders, tachycardia, and suicide attempts. It has also been reported that perpetrators of online dating violence suffer from mood disorders, depression, suicidal ideation,

alcohol, and drug abuse, eating disorders, binge behavior, and early maturity (Alsawalqa 2021 b, 11).

With respect to human trafficking, several individuals and specialists interviewed by the Jordan News Agency (Petra) agreed that human trafficking is a global crime committed by individuals or organizations with the intent of selling people and exploiting them for profit, and Jordan has been able to be an early leader in the fight against this crime (Petra News Agency n.d.). Meanwhile, the official website of the US Embassy in Jordan displayed that the practice of human trafficking is widespread in Jordan among children and refugee women from several countries such as Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Syria, and other countries. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan hosts 753,282 refugees from more than 55 countries. Of these, 664,414 are Syrian refugees and 66,765 are Iraqi refugees. Human trafficking practices in Jordan include the employment of refugee children and obliging them to forced labor and begging. In addition to forced marriage, Syrian refugee girls, also suffer from rape and withdrawal from schools because they are forced to help their families with domestic services, exposing them to sex trafficking practices. Some human traffickers also exploit immigrant women from Lebanon, eastern Europe, and North Africa to work in nightclubs and engage in sex trafficking (US Embassy in Jordan n.d.).

Regarding the reasons for human trafficking, a study was conducted in 2016 by Ahmed Majali, titled “Mutah University Staff Attitudes towards the Crime of Human”, which aimed to identify the attitudes of 212 Mutah University employees in Jordan toward the crime of human trafficking. The study concluded that the general average of the attitudes of Mutah University employees toward the crime of human trafficking according to economic and social factors came at a high level, with a total arithmetic mean of 4.11. This can be explained by the fact that the poor

economic and social conditions in many countries have led to trafficking people from their place of origin to other countries in order to exploit them illegally. In addition, poverty is one of the main reasons for human trafficking. One of the most important reasons behind human trafficking is the large financial profit it generates. Unemployment is also a major reason for the spread of human trafficking. With regard to social factors, the results showed that the victims fell prey to trafficking in humans due to family disintegration and weak relationships as well as social bonds. The study also showed that the most common areas in which human trafficking crimes spread are the urban population areas, and not in the rural areas and villages (Majali 2016, 73–74). The high crime rates in the city center are caused by social disintegration resulting from urbanization, population increase, differences in customs, ethnic diversity, lack of shared experiences, and social mobility. Meanwhile, good social relations between individuals work to prevent crime and delinquency, which is proven by the theory of social disintegration.<sup>7</sup>

The results of a study issued by the Jordanian Women's Union, *Human Trafficking Cases in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Years 2009-2019*, showed that the number of cases dealt with by the police in its various units during the period between 2009 and 2019 amounted to 224 cases, according to official data and statistics. The research revealed that the cases of forced labor in the domestic sector came first with a rate of 55.8%, followed by cases of selling human organs (16.1%), cases of sexual exploitation (6.3%), prostitution (5.8%), and cases of forced labor in the agricultural sector (5.4%) (Jordanian Women's Union, 2019, 28–30). According to a news release issued by *Alghad's* website, the Tamkeen Association in Jordan, during 2021 and the first half of 2022, received 62 complaints containing suspicions of human trafficking, whereby the information was sent to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit. The complaints of male and female workers

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<sup>7</sup> Please review Shaw and McKay 1942 and Sampson and Groves 1989.

generally ranged from deprivation of liberty, confiscation of passports, non-payment of wages, deprivation of food, prevention of workers from communicating with their families, exposure to beatings and insults, and denial of health care, in addition to not allocating a place to sleep, long working hours, deprivation of vacations, being asked to work in more than one place, and other violations that may amount to exploitation and trafficking in persons (Alghad 2022).

### **3.4. Violence against Women during COVID-19**

The WHO and UN Women indicated that cases of violence against women increased during lockdown period of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Preventive measures such as quarantining, social distancing, and social isolation contributed to increased social and material pressures, impeded access to services, curfew, and imprisonment of women inside their homes, costing them their financial independence and causing exposure of the women to domestic violence by violent partners attempting to exercise control over them on one hand and exposure of domestic and health care workers to violence on the other hand (World Health Organization and UN Women 2020, 1).

Through a report titled *Violence against Women during COVID-19*, UN Women indicated that the prevalence of violence against women increased during the pandemic, based on a survey conducted by the organization in thirteen countries (Kenya, Thailand, Ukraine, Cameroon, Albania, Bangladesh, Colombia, Paraguay, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco, Jordan, and Kyrgyzstan). The study involved 16,000 women who answered the survey questions. The results stated that the percentage of women exposed to violence during the pandemic was 80% in Kenya, 69% in Morocco, 49% in Jordan, 48% in Nigeria, 45% in Poland, 41% in Colombia, 37% in Cameroon, 34% in Ukraine, 31% in Kyrgyzstan, 29% in Albania, 29% in Cote d'Ivoire, 27% in Thailand, and 25% in Paraguay. The report pointed out that 48% of women aged between eighteen

and 49, 42 % of women aged between fifty and fifty-nine, and 34% of women aged above sixty were exposed to threats such as sexual, physical, and emotional violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, 56% of women said they felt insecure during the pandemic, seven out of every ten women confirmed that domestic violence (physical and emotional) increased during the pandemic, and two out of every three women said they had experienced violence at some point in their lives. In addition, the document mentioned that the most prevalent types of violence were verbal abuse (50%), sexual harassment (40%), physical abuse (36%), denial of basic needs (35%), and denial of means of communication (30%).

Women's exposure to physical violence during the pandemic caused negative emotions in them, making them tense and afraid for their physical safety and worried about their inability to carry out their necessary tasks. In the UN Women document mentioned above it was reported that four out of every five women had experienced one type of violence from their partners due to economic pressures and the inability to earn during the pandemic. Still in the same report, and regarding sexual harassment, 44% of women living in rural areas reported that they felt more at risk while walking alone, compared to women living in urban areas 39%, and 30% of Jordanian women reported feeling unsafe at night. Meanwhile, 62% of women living in rural areas believe that sexual harassment in public spaces has increased since the pandemic, compared to 55% of women who live in urban area. Moreover, 16% of the respondents reported that they had been exposed to sexual harassment; 15% had been exposed to physical abuse, and 23% had been exposed to oral abuse which was the most prevalent (UN Women 2021 a, 5-13). The conclusions of the study also stated that women's exposure to domestic violence and sexual harassment during the epidemic had negative implications on their mental and psychological health, causing depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, and insecurity in staying at home.

Additionally, 46% of women working in health care, 38% of women in other sectors, 45% of unemployed women, and 39% of female students confirmed that their mental health was negatively affected due to their exposure to psychological and emotional stress as well as food insecurity (UN Women 2021a,18).

According to Kristin Anderson's study, conducted on 400 informants regarding the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence,<sup>8</sup> sexual and reproductive health, and rights among adolescent girls in Jordan, 69% of the participants—including mentors and victimized women and girls within the governorates of Jordan and the Syrian refugee camps—affirmed that the COVID-19 lockdown contributed to increasing this type of violence in Jordan (Anderson 2020, 3). Female participants of the study also pointed out that emotional (73%) and physical (54%) violence were the most common types of violence they faced during the epidemic. Meanwhile, cyber bullying reached 18% and was followed by sexual harassment at 17%, sexual violence at 14%, and rape at 8% (Anderson 2020, 38). The conclusions indicated that the factors that hindered the victims from seeking help included fearing of friends' reaction, economic dependency, the control of husbands on their behavior, lack of privacy, lack of trust in the hotline, fear of the consequences, presence of children, and lack of phone or credit (Anderson 2020, 44).

The incidence of violence increased in the Arab world during the COVID-19 pandemic because the lockdown, quarantine, and self-isolation increased people's use of the Internet especially for work, school, and social activity. Furthermore, Arab women experienced cyber violence the most (Al-Nasrawi 2021, 496). the Directorate of Family Protection in Jordan announced that the rate of domestic violence increased by 33% during the first month of lockdown (Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon 2021, 10). A 2020 study by Sawsan Abuhammad revealed that

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<sup>8</sup> Anderson's term.

the incidence of violence against unemployed and married women in Jordan was 40%. In Tunisia, from the beginning of the lockdown until May 2020, around 6,693 cases of verbal, moral, physical, and sexual violence were reported via the Internet. In Morocco, non-governmental organizations reported increased technology-facilitated violence among adolescents and university students (Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon 2021, 10).

Violence against women increased in general during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it did so especially against vulnerable women in Jordan, due to the economic situation and food insecurity. A study conducted by Melissa Testouri on 847 participants in the Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps indicated that 62% of the refugees felt at risk of physical and emotional violence due to food insecurity, and 54% of them reported that they resorted to borrowing food and money from neighbors and families to mitigate the severity of the violence they were being subjected to by their partners. Moreover, the research revealed that women living in rural areas in Jordan, refugees, and domestic workers became more vulnerable to exploitation and sexual violence during the COVID-19 pandemic which pushed men to practice sexual violence against their wives. Also, divorced women and housemaids were reportedly subjected to exploitation and sexual violence by their landlords due to their inability to pay the rent (Testouri 2020, 4).

According to the Family Protection Centre in Jordan, there was a 33% increase in the rate of violence during the pandemic compared to the previous year, with 1,534 cases of domestic violence being recorded within the first few months of the lockdown. Compared to six cases in 2019, domestic murder cases involving women and girls reached nine at the beginning of 2020 and five at the beginning of the lockdown. Although crime rates decreased by 50% during the pandemic, electronic crime rates increased through social media, with 300 electronic crimes recorded during the pandemic in Jordan (Economic and Social Council 2020, 15). The Economic

and Social Council conducted a study on 1,300 male and female participants to measure the impact of the pandemic on health, domestic violence, and the economy in Jordan based on gender. It showed that 28% of the respondents were more stressed because of the quarantine, and 52% reported that their relationship with their families were negatively affected by the measures related to the quarantine. This was because the quarantine prevented people from going out or going to work or school. There was also the fear of contracting the disease from leaving one's house or failure to take precautions (sterilization and cleaning) in addition to limited resources, and families' unwillingness to quarantine, especially because of their need for laptops which were unavailable (28% of the respondents stated that they needed devices that they did not own, which worsened their family problems and conflicts). Furthermore, 23% of the study sample reported that during the lockdown, there was at least one type of domestic violence incident in their home, most of which was verbal, while 29% of them confirmed an increase in cases of domestic violence in the homes of their neighbors, friends, and relatives (Economic and Social Council 2020, 15).

A study issued by the Ministry of Social Responsibility in Jordan published on *Khaberni* website in 2021, titled "Analysis of Social Service Offices' Data", indicated an increase in the number of domestic violence cases in the year 2020 with 1,160 cases recorded in August and only 319 cases recorded in April. According to the study, most cases of physical and psychological violence were committed by the husband, accounting for 64.4% of all physical violence and 45% of all psychological violence. In addition, in a recent study, there were a total of 10,375 cases of domestic violence recorded and addressed by social service offices in 2020. The study also revealed that the number of cases varied across different months. For instance, in January, there were 905 cases recorded, while in February, there were 968 cases. March recorded 678 cases, April had 319 cases, May had 638 cases, June had 1,032 cases, and July had 1,144 cases. August saw



1,160 cases, September had 1,144 cases, October had 803 cases, November had 773 cases, and December had 811 cases. According to the data, 5,646 cases (54.4%) were subjected to physical violence. Most of these cases were females over 18 years of age, with 4,060 women being victims of this type of abuse in 2020. Neglect was the second most reported form of violence, with 2,731 cases, followed by psychological violence with 1,214 cases. The number of reported cases for sexual violence was the lowest, with only 7.6% of the total number of cases, or approximately 784 incidents (Khaberni 2021).

In conclusion, this chapter provides an overview of violence against women and its types globally and in Jordan. A representative number studies have been revised that examine the causes of violence against women in all its forms. They indicated its causes and consequences, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic. Most of those studies reached similar results: violence leads to psychological, physical, and emotional damage to women, as well as family disintegration. Although charitable organizations and civil society play a substantial role in promoting awareness of violence harms, this issue remains a critical matter. However, this does not negate the need to expand aid and assistance to victims who do not know about their rights or how to reach out for help. By collaborating with other means, it will be possible to reach as many victims as possible to ensure their safety. The mass media is one of the most effective means of raising awareness about violence and reducing violence against women (UNICEF and UN Women 2022, 7). Chapter Four will explain in detail the role of the Jordanian media in addressing violence against women.

## **CHAPTER FOUR THE ROLE OF THE DIGITAL MEDIA IN TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Journalism plays a crucial role in amplifying the voices of women and girls, as well as combating a variety of forms of gender-based violence. This role becomes even more significant during humanitarian crises (UNFPA Arab State 2018). The media can be instrumental in challenging social norms and behaviors that encourage violence against women, even though many girls face digital violence and sexual extortion through digital networks and social media platforms. According to The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women UN Women, various media outlets and media professionals contribute significantly to addressing violence against women, exposing perpetrators and raising awareness regarding gender equality (UN Women, n.d.e). This chapter presents the media treatment of issues of violence against women in Jordan, and it reviews the most influential previous research conducted within and outside Jordan regarding the coverage of violence against women by newspapers based on the Agenda-Setting and Framing theories that I will be applying in my analysis below.

### **4.1. Violence against Women in the Jordanian Digital Press**

According to the website of the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Rai*, journalist Majid Asfour stated during the Arab Regional Conference for Family Protection that the media plays a more significant role when a number of learners are able to read, understand, and follow the awareness campaigns of the media, and the role diminishes in societies in which illiteracy is still prevalent among the members of society. Meanwhile, journalist Rana Al-Sabbagh demonstrated how imperative it is to address violence against women and how media outlets can break the silence and raise such issues.

Due to inherited causes or the mentality of Jordanians, these issues were previously impossible to address in the media arena (Alrai 2005).

While there have been no academic studies, references, or research on the progress made by Jordanian media in tackling violence against women, Rana Hussein, a feminist journalist interviewed on the DAWN website, claimed to be the first journalist to raise awareness about issue of honor killing cases since 1994. She recounted an incident involving a 16-year-old girl who was raped and murdered by her brother to preserve the family's honor, as she had been accused of attempting to seduce him. This incident inspired Hussein to cover the issue in the Jordanian press. She emphasized that she wrote reports on each of these women's cases and acted as their voice, aiming to make Jordanian society aware of the problem that required resolution. At the time, this subject was considered taboo, sensitive, and a private matter, with limited press coverage. Hussein stated in this regard: "Many people were unaware of this problem, and it was not recognised as a problem until much later, after 2000" (DAWN n.d.).

Various media outlets, including newspapers, radio, television, and social networking sites contribute to raising public awareness of violence against women. Their objective is to shed light on the causes, mitigate violence, and provide basic information to victims, survivors, and those interested in helping (UNICEF and UN Women 2022, 7). By publishing real-life stories about violence against women and children and its consequences, as well as the losses suffered by all parties, the mass media can influence public perception by promoting sympathy for the victims and making the role of the government in these situations clear (Akarika, Ikon, and Kierian 2019, 42).

Marcel Al-Jwainat says that the new media has become the backbone of modern life, with its effects visible on all issues. Besides this, new media has created a society rich in information

in which citizens can easily access diverse materials from various sources. Electronic journalism is a stage of new media development linked to the Internet. It provides news and information to the recipient and addresses issues of concern to the local community. Consequently, it has spread widely and is easy to use. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of electronic journalism on the formation of the perceptual and cognitive structure of the individual or society increased, due to the widespread closures lasting for weeks during the year 2020, which increased the followers of electronic newspapers in Jordan, and the impact of its content on the increase in cases of violence against women due to home confinement, economic conditions, depressive feelings, and fear of the future (Al-Jwainat 2022, 351).

In 2022, a report conducted by United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) and UN women, titled *Evidence Review Mapping the Nexus between Media Reporting of Violence against Girls*, pointed out that the news coverage of domestic violence, which was having a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls during the COVID-19 lockdown, was increasing. The report also suggests the necessity of determining whether incidents of violence against women were related to the epidemic or whether they have existed for a long time. It is also imperative that critical information is disseminated to allow women and children to access supportive services. Furthermore, news coverage is often associated with increased victim/survivor reporting rates. In this regard, news reports can negatively affect victims when they neglect to provide information about where they can access services for women and children, leading to the victims undoing their reporting so they are more vulnerable to violent acts (UNICEF and UN Women 2022, 7).

In their book *A Guide to Journalistic Investigations for Human Rights* (2020), the Jordanian authors Al-Shawabkeh, Aghbari, and Jibril state that journalists face numerous challenges in

covering women's issues, especially when the political system is oppressive and authoritarian and when societies are socially or religiously closed. Additionally, if the subject matter is sensitive, such as sexual crimes occurring in the family, at work, at school, or in the name of religion, journalistic investigations must reflect the violations of girls' rights and be objective and accurate. Maintaining a high level of professionalism is also important, as a bad press article can undermine a well-intentioned message. According to the authors, journalists should have specialized skills in interviewing victims and survivors or those suffering from trauma problems. The media talking to victims of sexual assault immediately after the crime is not uncommon, so a special protocol must be followed to ensure that they are not injured. Whenever possible, journalists should avoid opening the wounds of the victims, prevent harming them unintentionally, and do everything in their power to reach the truth. Journalists should also diversify the sources they use in their story and carefully examine documents and papers to ensure their truthfulness and the absence of forgery, manipulation, or fabrication defects (Al-Shawabkeh, Aghbari, and Jibril 2020,72). According to a report by Bucqueroux and Seymour, journalistic errors that justify the criminal's behavior and theories blaming sexual violence on the victim's actions, such as walking alone at night or being drunk, must be strictly avoided (2009, 13).

As reported on the *Addustour* news website (2022), the Jordanian journalist Dama Al-Kurdi stated at a training workshop attended by thirty journalists on the media coverage of domestic violence that the media plays an influential role in transforming violence issues into public opinion and in directing institutions to address them and seek solutions for the victims. Dama Al-Kurdi's statement can be associated with the theory of setting the agenda, which asserts that giving priority to a particular issue by the media becomes a priority for the public (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020a, 491). According to McCombs and Valenzuela, the first level of the Agenda-

Setting pertains to the volume of news coverage and the classification and arrangement of events according to the media's perspective to affect the public. The second level focuses on the attribute of newspapers' coverage of these issues and their attitude toward them, which plays an important role in how people perceive these issues (McCombs and Valenzuela 2007). As suggested by Chinedu Ekweonu, mass media could affect the cognitive structures of their audience by providing them with a visual representation of what is happening around them, and by drawing their attention to the events they prefer, so that they may read and comprehend what is being reported. The more frequently domestic violence cases are reported in the news media, the greater the attention that will be paid to domestic violence cases by the media audience. As a result, news reports can influence public behavior and force it to use restraints against domestic violence. It is due to this fact that the media exposes the public to a wide range of dangers that threaten the individual victims, their families, and society at large (Ekweonu 2020, 6).

In my role as a researcher, I observed the media agenda of covering several news stories address violence against women on Jordanian and Arabic news websites. I concluded that electronic newspapers directed public opinion toward many issues about women who were subjected to violence from their partners and families. They also convinced the audience of the importance of these issues, and made them his priority due to the intensification of media coverage of some news stories pertaining to the exposure of girls and women to physical and sexual violence as well as to killings in the name of honor that have spread in Jordan. Consequently, by observing the public's interactivity on their social media accounts, I monitored that they became more aware of the necessity of limiting the practice of this violence in Jordan. Also, several protests and demands have been organized to stop the violence and change some laws penalizing violence against women according to the news articles I read.

Although my thesis examines the role of electronic newspapers in addressing issues of violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the following pages provide an overview of the most significant cases of violence against women and of awareness campaigns covered by Jordanian digital newspapers during and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly during the period 2017-20, for several reasons: due to the extensive coverage of some stories of violence against women in the media, which made them a priority on the digital newspaper agenda, they were able to attract the attention of readers in Jordan and led to a substantial increase in human rights defenders in Jordanian society. These stories also turned into a public opinion issue and became a priority for the public's attention. As a result of these media reports, some laws pertaining to the protection of women from domestic violence have been abolished in order to ensure their safety, such as abolishing Article 308. In light of the prevalence of such issues, presenting this scope of coverage is consistent with the argument of my thesis that the media plays an essential role in educating the public about violence against women, and that negative consequences are likely to occur for women as a result. Also, this proves the correctness of my choice of the Agenda-Setting Theory to measure the extent of the news coverage of a number of forms of violence against women, its traits to this kind of issue as well as how the news coverage of these issues influences public perception.

In 2017, a major media campaign known as Rape and Marry for Free made headlines on news websites, influenced public opinion, and changed Jordanian law to protect women from violence. Human rights practitioners organized this campaign to condemn sexual violence and demand the repeal of Law 308 of the Penal Code, which exempts the perpetrator of such crimes from punishment upon signing a valid marriage contract with the victim. Accordingly,

by annulling Article 308, impunity is eliminated, and minor girls are protected from sexual violence. Meanwhile, the *Garaa News* website reported that many citizens, particularly

women, expressed their anger and opposition through the Jordanian media regarding Article 308, which rewarded the rapist instead of punishing him. On their social media pages, they posted the sarcastic Slogan “Rape and Marry for Free”. (Garaa News, n.d.)

The official website of the SIGI reported that the organization was striving to abolish Article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code in its entirety. The criminal needs to be punished to put an end to the crime, because the victim suffers longer and more severely if the perpetrator marries her. Furthermore, a large number of victims of Article 308 were minors who were sexually exploited and physically, morally, and financially abused throughout their lives. Most marriages provided impunity for perpetrators, but they did not provide stability for victims. In most cases, the marriage ended after a short period, at the request of the victim, who was unable to tolerate living with the perpetrator regardless of whether he mistreated her (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2017).

The Ammon news site referenced the SIGI study on Article 308, which found that many of the victims of Article 308 were minors who were sexually exploited and physically, psychologically, and financially abused at the time of the crime and following their marriage (Ammon 2015). Besides this, the *Ammon* news site published another news article indicating that female rape victims were subjected to terrifying pressure from their families and relatives to submit to the *fait accompli* imposed by the perpetrator. So they accepted compulsively and were unhappy with the marriage. Accordingly, the victim’s dissatisfaction with the marriage called into question the validity of the marriage contract, which included the consent of both parties (Ammon 2017).

While *Roya News* published a report stating that several human rights organizations and women’s voices had urged the abolition of Article 308, commonly known as “Rape-related Marriage”, in 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the abolition of Article 308 of the controversial law. The article was canceled as part of the Royal Commission’s recommendations



for developing the judicial system and strengthening the rule of law. This enhances criminal justice for women and girls and eliminates discriminatory provisions in the legislation, particularly the Jordanian Penal Code, which affect them. Despite the article remaining canceled for several years, no alternative was proposed to save the families of victims of sexual crime. Besides this, *Roya News* quoted the opinion of former Criminal Court judge Louay Obeidat, who opposed the Rape and Marry for Free campaign. He stated that the abolition of Article 308 was impromptu and based on conclusions and studies that had no bearing on reality. Furthermore, he stressed that the abolition of this article deprived a segment of girls of the benefits they used to receive due to settling these issues through marriage: “The victims might be exposed to the dangerous risk of honor killing due to social concepts governing the practice, because in our society, honor killing is widely accepted”, Louay Obeidat stated to *Roya News* (Roya News 2021b).

Regarding physical violence, the Arab Women’s Association has organized a women’s stand in Amman under the name Enough, in response to the heinous crime committed against a Jordanian woman named Fatima in the Jerash Governorate (Alaraby 2019). The victim lost her sight at the hands of her husband because he practiced all forms of violence against her, including beatings and humiliation, until he gouged out her eyes before her children (Alaraby 2019). According to the director of programs at the Arab Women’s Association, Laila Naffa, the protest was against the weak nature of laws relating to battered women as a result of the absence of official voices regarding such cases: “It is necessary for those responsible to break their silence to denounce what occurred, as well as clarify the procedure that will be followed in this case, to ensure the public is aware of what has transpired”, Laila Naffa said (Roya News 2019). As part of the protest march attended by Fatima’s family, the participants demanded the implementation of a comprehensive protection system for women against violence. Visual banners and posters were

raised, opposing violence against women, calling for fairness and protection for battered women, and breaking the silence concerning domestic violence crimes (Roya News 2019). Furthermore, these posters have been widely distributed through Twitter, with users commenting empathically on the images and using hashtags such as #Jerash\_Crime, #For Fatima’s Eyes, and #Enough. As I have explained elsewhere, it is evident from these hashtags that these posters are effective in highlighting women’s rights as well as in demanding security and protection against violence (Altamimi 2022, 46).

Rawan Aljaiousy, a feminist journalist, attended the protest organized by a non-profit organization in solidarity with the victim, wearing a black ribbon around her eyes. In her remarks to the *Al-Monitor* news website, she expressed solidarity with Fatima, whose pain she was familiar with, and with all silently suffering women. Furthermore, she argued that women’s rights and gender equality must be addressed seriously and strategically based on their beliefs at a legislative, legal, and social level: “The voices of women must be heard. Women must learn, work, and be protected from harassment, violence, and discrimination”, Rawan told *Al-Monitor* (Al-Monitor 2019).



**Fig. 1. Picture of the protest in solidarity with Fatima**  
**Source: *Al-Monitor* 2019**

The *Ammon* news website also explained the reasons for the victim's silence about her abusive husband, referring to poverty and the lack of funds that prevented her from filing a divorce suit against her husband and covering the lawsuit fees. Despite her husband's abuse and his burden of bank loans, she stayed with him until the decisive moment in their relationship when she preferred that he kill her rather than leaving her children. He did not kill her, but he blinded her (Ammon 2019). In a statement published on the *Alghad* news website, the Grand Criminal Court sentenced Fatima's husband to life imprisonment in connection with his actions in gouging out his wife's eyes as one of the most heinous violent crimes in history. According to the site, the victim had been subjected to years of violence before the crime occurred. In response to the violence, the victim stated: "I tolerated all the pain to stay with my children" (Alghad 2021).

Among the most critical issues of violence, the horrific murder in Jordan in 2020 known in the media as Ahlam's Screams was highlighted. The *Roya News* website reports that the screams of the forty-year-old woman killed by her father echoed across Jordan, topping headlines in Arab newspapers and news websites. It is estimated that tens of thousands of Arab activists participated in this protest. Jordanians also used the hashtag #AhlamsScreams on Twitter in response to a report about a young woman subjected to the most severe violence in one of the kingdom's regions. Ahlam, a Jordanian woman in her forties, was killed by her father in the Safout area of Al-Balqa Governorate, west of Amman. Amer Al-Sartawb, the media spokesman for the Public Security Directorate, informed the media that the Balqa Governorate Police Directorate received a report from the operations room that a father had assaulted his 40-year-old daughter. According to him, they immediately rushed to the location, where it was determined that her father had hit her in the head with a sharp tool, causing her immediate death. The perpetrator was arrested and referred to the judicial system after completing the investigation (Roya News 2020a).

According to *BBC News*, after the Ahlam's Scream case a group of Jordanian women staged a protest outside the Jordanian parliament to demand that violence against women cease and that laws they believe are directly responsible for many deaths of daughters and wives be amended or canceled. In addition to the demand for a law deterring violence against women, the activists who observed the vigil stated that its purpose was to prevent the erasure of the personal rights of women during the occurrence of violence and to amend a legal article relating to anger and honor crimes. Several human rights associations expressed concern about the father's behavior, especially after information spread that he sat drinking tea next to his daughter's corpse, ignoring his crime and accepting praise from his family members (BBC 2020a). The *Arabic Post* website reported: "A Heinous Crime Shakes Jordan. A Father kills his forty-year-old Daughter on the Streets. Activists Say, 'He killed Her and Sat Down to Have Tea'". According to eyewitnesses, Ahlam's neighbors heard her screaming as she ran down the street with blood spurting from her neck, and the father murdered his daughter with a brick on her head after arguing with her, referring to the incident as an honor killing, as the Jordanian authorities or the victim's family have made no official statements regarding the details or causes of the incident (Arabic Post 2020).

Additionally, *Alaraby* website wrote about the incident above in a post entitled "A Jordanian Kills His Daughter Based on Honor". According to this news site, honor killings in Jordan are the result of outdated social customs and traditions based on the principle of taking suspicion, being frightened of others' words, and being eager to maintain a good reputation (Alaraby 2020). According to *Al-Jazeera*, the father's murder of his daughter to defend his honor shocked Jordanians. When he first assaulted her inside the house with a sharp tool, she did not die. She attempted to flee with her bloodied body outside the house. Then he hit her on the head in the street, washing out his daughter's shame, as he explained to those around him. Besides this, based

on the information provided by sociologists, eliminating the culture of silence among abused women and girls, which is discernible in the failure to notify authorities when women or girls are subjected to violence, is directly associated with changing society's dominant culture. This culture implicitly condemns the victim (Aljazeera 2020).

On the subject of economic violence, the Petra News Agency's website indicated that the Jordanian National Committee for Women's Affairs launched a campaign entitled Hand in Hand to Confront Economic Violence, which is part of the annual international campaign against gender-based violence entitled 16 Days (Petra News Agency 2019). A 16-day campaign, known as 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, is observed annually from 25 November to 10 December, coinciding with International Human Rights Day. In conjunction with civil society, the United Nations supports this campaign through the Secretary General's UNITE by 2030 activity to end violence against women (UN Women 2022).

The Petra News Agency reports that the Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Committee for Women's Affairs Salma Al-Nims said the campaign on economic violence aims to raise awareness of economic violence experienced by women, particularly women married young and living in rural and village areas. She stated that the ongoing campaign intends to raise awareness of the importance of financial culture in protecting against economic violence. Additionally, it aims to develop a road map for those programs that can be most effectively implemented by civil society organizations to combat economic violence. Salma Al-Nims pointed out that economic violence against women marginalizes women and lowers their level of financial participation. As an example of economic violence within a family, women may be denied inheritance, have to work on family projects without pay, be forced to take loans for others, be

insufficiently spending the breadwinner's resources on the family, be deprived of the opportunity to work, or be forced to work at a specific occupation (Petra News Agency 2019).

The SIGI Foundation announced several initiatives on the media section of its official website to celebrate the 16-day campaign to end violence against women. As part of its efforts to combat violence against women and girls in Jordan, the foundation launched a campaign in 2020 under the slogan "Partners on the sweet and the bitter. Violence is unacceptable". In addition to the foundation's efforts, it launched Fatama, a Jordanian civil network that prevents violence against women during emergencies and crises. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, civil society institutions, especially women, must plan, prepare, and build capacities to respond to emergencies and crises, unite efforts, coordinate and collaborate with various parties to deal with violence issues, and mobilize funding to effectively respond to relief and services (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2020). In 2022, the foundation announced its activities during the 16-day campaign to combat violence against women under the slogan "UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls", and invited everyone to play their part in ending violence against women and girls, to support and stand in solidarity with women's rights activists, and to resist their rollback.

SIGI also engages in a variety of activities aimed at reducing and eliminating violence in all forms, including monetary, social, cultural, physical, psychological, and familial. Moreover, as part of SIGI's efforts to eradicate domestic murders of women and girls, the slogan "Stop killing women" has also been adopted (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2022). Additionally, the organization launched a campaign titled Towards a Decent and Supportive Work Environment for Women, which aims to provide women with a friendly and supportive work environment at work. While

the economic participation rate of women in Jordan has not exceeded 14% over the years, this campaign contributes to raising their economic participation (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2022).

Female journalists also played a major role in educating the Jordanian society about the harms and consequences of honor crimes by publishing press reports of this type of crime in the Jordan Times newspaper. As I mentioned above, Rana Hussein was the first journalist in Jordan to launch a campaign against honor killings. She became interested in covering this issue after returning from the USA with a bachelor's degree in mass communication and five years of experience editing at different newspapers. Her work in the media to expose the truth about violence against women in Jordan raised awareness inside and outside Jordan. Hence, the Jordanian National Committee for the Elimination of Honor Crimes was formed in 1998. As a result of the committee's efforts, thousands of signatures were collected and demonstrations held to demand the closure of the legal loopholes allowing for leniency in these crimes. In 2017, the Jordanian Parliament amended the Penal Code of Article 340 to plug some loopholes.<sup>9</sup> Despite all these efforts, honor killings in Jordan have not been eliminated. In 2020, 17 such murders have been estimated (DAWN n.d.).

Rana Hussein won a prize in the 1997 Reebok International Human Rights Competition and considers that "a turning point in her life" (Alghad 2011). She stated on *The Arab Weekly* that despite the local media becoming less interested in honor killings and considering them taboo, she continues reporting on the crimes and calling for the amendment of discriminatory laws against women. "Many people and officials view me with hostility, saying that I should not be covering such sensitive issues and that it is an issue of the family when a brother kills his sister for honor", Rana Hussein declared. Besides, she noted that honor killings are not religious but rather social

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<sup>9</sup> Detailed information about the amendment is provided in Chapter Three.

issues. This phenomenon prevails in all religions and social strata, and she emphasized that sometimes men are the victims because they are forced to kill women who they were raised to love and care for, only because society and people around them force them to do so (The Arab Weekly 2019).

In 2009, Rana Hussein wrote a book entitled *Murder in the Name of Honor: The True Story of One Woman's Heroic Fight Against an Unbelievable Crime*. In it, several stories were written about the conspiracy of silence surrounding honor killings as well as their stories. According to estimates, the victim's brother commits 69% of these crimes. As described in the book, the writer met international personalities who played a key role in combating honor killings. These personalities included Prince Ali, former Prime Minister Fayez Al-Tarawneh, and former Royal Court President Adnan Abu Odeh (Hussein 2009). The author emphasized that the success of the book stems from the fact that it tells the truth, as realistic stories are presented as they are without exaggeration. "The book attempts to address the problem from a fundamental perspective. Moreover, Jordan has been documented to be successful in deterring this phenomenon", Hussein told *The Arab Weekly* (2019).

As shown above, part of the campaigns and news about the most prominent violence against women, which circulated frequently and extensively on Jordanian and Arab news websites, were displayed. This media content was shown because it is relevant to my thesis topic in terms of investigating the role of news in addressing issues of violence, including physical and sexual violence as well as honor killings. However, the difference lies somewhat in the time period that will be achieved in this message to address the news content of issues of violence against women in a broader manner in terms of quantity and content during the year 2020. While the news and campaigns presented above addressed issues of violence between 2017 and 2022. The reason for



choosing these news texts is their great influence on public opinion due to the intensity of news coverage that the media agenda has given great attention to. Because of the repeated circulation of these news articles, human rights advocates have paid great attention to organizing marches defending women's rights and demanding amendments to protection from domestic violence laws. Also, some of these news stories—such as the story of physical violence against Fatima and the murder victim Ahlam—warmed human rights defenders by sharing them with pictures through social media and commenting on them in a way that proves their sympathy for the victim as well as their condemnation of the perpetrators.

The content presented above proves the main research argument of my project, i.e., the importance of the media in addressing issues of violence against women. Furthermore, this scope of the news and campaigns has been linked to the Agenda-Setting Theory, which indicates that repeated media coverage of a particular issue and giving it priority will influence public opinion, and these issues will become among its priorities. This is closely related to my thesis, as the theory will be applied in analyzing the news content of the research group by measuring the extent to which electronic newspapers are interested as well as their attribute and position on violence against women due to its impact on public opinion. In line with this, the second section of this chapter presents previous studies on the role of the media in addressing issues of violence against women based on theories of Agenda-Setting and Framing. A summary of the features of each of the studies selected, as well as their relevance for this dissertation, will also be provided. In addition, gaps that have not been addressed will be mentioned.

## **4.2. Previous Media Studies of Violence against Women in Light of Agenda-Setting and Framing Theories**

I have reviewed a wide range of academic studies on the role of the media in addressing violence against women, which include the studies by Ihechu et al. (2017); Akarika, Okon, and Kierian (2019); Zanuiddina and Saifuddinb (2020 b); Ekweonu (2020); Akmeşe and Deniz (2016); Kamel (2019); Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee (2021); Jahan and Razib (2023); Najadat (2006); Alattal (2015); and Al-Jwainat (2022). These works were selected based on their application of the Agenda-Setting and Framing theories, which makes them similar to my thesis in terms of subject matter and the application of media theories related to media content analysis. In the pages that ensue, I present a summary of these studies in terms of their objectives, importance, methodology, theories applied, and results. I also identify the gaps that were not addressed by the selected studies and how these gaps will be filled by my thesis.

### *4.2.1. Studies that Apply Agenda-Setting Theory*

The first study that I consider a reference for my work was conducted in 2017 by Innocent Ihechu, Chukwuemeka Okugo, Faith Amah, and Christian Afulike, and titled “Media Coverage and Framing of Cultural Practices that Target Nigerian Women”. The purpose of this work was to determine how far the Nigerian media has gone in covering and framing cultural practices that discriminate against women, including violence against them, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, etc. It also aimed to assess the level of awareness of cultural practices against women among journalists and determine the factors impacting the coverage of cultural practices against women in the Nigerian broadcast media. The objects of study are broadcast media Federal Radio

Corporation of Nigeria, Africa Independent Television, and print media—*The Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, and *The Nation*—(Ihechu et al. 2017, 59).

As part of their research, the scholars applied Agenda-Setting Theory to address whether the media highlights certain issues as important and works to arrange events and determine the importance of topics for the masses from their perspective. Therefore, this prism was used to examine how the media in Nigeria set the agenda regarding cultural practices against women in addition to some of the factors influencing this function. Additionally, they used Framing Theory as a second level of Agenda-Setting in the theoretical chapter to frame the patterns or attributes of the coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria, based on Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) (Ihechu et al. 2017, 64).<sup>10</sup>

Ihechu et al. applied a quantitative approach, using content analysis on the random sample. The researchers also identified the quantitative analytical units of media content, which are as follows:

- 1) Coverage of cultural practices against women in the selected broadcast media.
- 2) Specific cultural practices against women are reflected in the broadcast media such as early marriage, widowhood practices, female genital mutilation, domestic violence/ battering, divorce, wife inheritance, male preference syndrome, and bride price refund (sale in marriage).
- 3) Items and genres of coverage of cultural practices against women in the print media such as news, editorial, cartoons, advertisements, and features.
- 4) The genres of coverage of cultural practices against women in the broadcast media such as news, talk shows, drama, and documentaries.
- 5) The patterns of framing cultural practices against women in Nigeria.

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<sup>10</sup> For further information, please refer to Fairhurst, Gail, and Robert Sarr. 1996. *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

6) Awareness of cultural practices against women among journalists.

7) Constraints of media coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria, including low awareness of knowledge among reporters, low audience interest, the culture of patriarchy, lack of sponsorship, poor government/NGO attitude, and scarcity of events (Ihechu et al. 2017, 60–61).

According to the results, only 30 programs out of 2,812 covered cultural practices against women, which indicates that this topic was not well-covered. The percentage of domestic violence/battering was found to dominate the media coverage during the study period at 47%, followed by female mutilation at 27%, and divorce at 1%. Drama-soap opera genres were the most commonly used genres to cover cultural practices against women in Nigerian broadcast media, at 23%. Meanwhile, the advertisement jingles did not appear in the coverage. At the same time, at 48%, featured was the most common media item in print that discussed cultural practices against women, while advertisements received the least attention. Additionally, 35% of journalists were unaware of cultural practices discriminating against women, which indicates a very low awareness level. Because of this, journalists lacked the necessary knowledge to provide accurate coverage, as well as to frame issues that may arise as a result of these practices. Meanwhile, the aspect that constrained the media coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria the most was the low awareness of reporters of this issue at 85%. In contrast, the scarcity of events ranked lowest at 8%. Additionally, the low audience interest reached 18%.

The practice of sponsoring media content is common in Nigeria. By doing so, journalists are subjected to undue pressure from corporations whose interests include profit, among others. During good times, issues such as cultural practices against women may attract sponsorship. Consequently, news stories related to profits are more likely to receive attention than those not related to profits. According to Ihechu et al., lack of sponsorship is the largest obstacle to effective

coverage of cultural practices against women (81%). The patriarchal culture, in which men receive more educational and employment opportunities than their female counterparts do, reached 79%. While the attitude among government and non-governmental organizations toward media coverage of cultural practices against women was poor at 34 %. The researchers explain that the government and civil society organizations are not taking cultural practices against women seriously, which results in inadequate media coverage. The mass media does not give them sufficient attention because political and economic issues dominate the media agenda. Consequently, the Nigerian media does not pay much attention to issues such as cultural practices that discriminate against women. Instead, it pays more attention to more profitable news. Finally, media reports portray cultural practices against women in Nigeria as rituals that should be kept sacrosanct or respected. Hence, the media appear to have taken no neutral position regarding cultural practices against women in Nigeria. Generally, cultural practices against women receive less attention and have little chance of competing for attention (Ihechu et al. 2017, 66–70).

This study is a very important reference for my thesis when it comes to using theories such as Agenda-Setting and Framing in media analysis. However, it investigates only news reports of fewer variants of violence against women in the Nigerian media, such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence/ battering, which were classified as types of violence against women through UN Women (UN Women, n.d.d) unlike my thesis, which examines the role of the Jordanian digital press in addressing six forms of violence against women which are physical, emotional, sexual violence, honor crimes, and child marriage. Besides this, despite the importance of this study in exploring the role of the Nigerian media in addressing violence against women, its project to combat discrimination and violence as well as influence public opinion has not been examined. To address this gap, this thesis will examine the problem definition, causes,

consequences, and methods for reforming the issue of violence against women in accordance with Robert Entman's methodology for analyzing news framing.

In 2019, Daniel Akarika, Aniekeme Ikon, and Nnamdie Kierian conducted a quantitative study entitled "Uyo Residents' Perception of Selected Newspaper Coverage of Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria". Their purpose was to identify the perceptions of Uyo residents about newspaper coverage of gender-based violence (GBV) in Nigeria and its impact on them in light of the Agenda-Setting Theory. The researchers wanted to assess the extent to which GBV is covered in Nigerian newspapers. They employed a quantitative approach and surveyed 400 Uyo residents to determine their reactions to the coverage of GBV in *The Daily Sun* and *Vanguard*. As part of the study, Agenda-Setting Theory was applied as it was concerned with how the media shapes the attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of its audience about social problems. Due to the fact that individuals are unique personalities, the researchers considered the different reactions or feelings of Uyo residents towards the *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* in regard to their coverage of GBV issues in Nigeria (Akarik, Ikon, and Kierian 2019, 48).

According to the results, most respondents to the study (74%) indicated that the *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers do not frequently cover issues related to GBV in Nigeria. Furthermore, 26% of respondents indicated that newspapers often covered GBV issues. 28% of respondents said the *Daily Sun* or *Vanguard* covered physical violence stories most frequently, followed by rape stories (21.5%). Sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, and other forms of GBV (domestic violence, early marriage, commercial sexual exploitation, etc.) were listed by 12.6%, 20.8%, and 16.9% of respondents, respectively. Therefore, most believed that the *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers tend to cover physical violence issues regarding GBV.

The data in the study at hand showed that 65% of respondents were not satisfied with the *Daily Sun* or *Vanguard's* coverage of GBV in Nigeria, 34% were very satisfied, and 1% were undecided. The majority of respondents were not satisfied with the media coverage of GBV in Nigeria. According to 38.5% of them, few GBV stories in the *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers have positively impacted their behavior. A total of 25.9% of respondents were opposed to it. Those respondents who strongly agreed were 17.7%, 12.8% strongly disagreed, and 5.1% had not yet decided whether press reports on GBV issues had changed their behaviors. Therefore, the conclusion is that newspapers have a better chance of influencing the behaviors of Uyo residents by regularly reporting on issues related to GBV. In light of the above, this study examines how Nigerian newspapers cover, GBV based on the perceptions of Uyo residents. The purpose of Agenda-Setting theory was to evaluate readers' behavior and feelings concerning press coverage of violence based on news coverage, whereas this thesis utilizes the first and second levels of theory to examine how extensively news websites cover issues relating to violence against women, as well as determining the attribute and the positions of the sites towards this issue, which was not addressed in the study. The study could have explored the readers' perceptions of the effects of violence, its causes, and proposed solutions to reduce its spread, which will be discussed in this thesis from the point of view of analyzing news frames (Akarika, Ikon, and Kierian 2019, 49–53).

Hasmah Zanuddina and Norizzati Saifuddinb conducted the third study that I have selected as relevant for this thesis in 2020, with the title “The Media Agenda of Interpersonal Violence in Selected Malaysian Online Newspapers”. In their view, interpersonal violence is apparently common among Malaysians, requiring that more information be provided to combat these issues. Additionally, the media play a vital role in setting the agenda for educating Malaysians on the importance of interpersonal violence. The purpose of this article is to examine the framing of the

issue, sources, and tone of news used in the coverage of interpersonal violence in selected Malaysian online newspapers. According to the study, the World Health Organization defines *interpersonal violence* as the intentional application of physical force or pressure in a manner that poses a danger to or against another individual or injured individual or that is likely to result in injury, death, psychological abuse, or a significant loss. Interpersonal violence is of five types, including youth violence, child abuse, intimate partner abuse, elder abuse, and sexual violence. A quantitative content analysis was performed between August 2017 and October 2018 on selected Malaysian online newspaper, namely *Hmetro.com* to assess the media agenda of interpersonal violence. A random sample of 255 news articles was also used in this study (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020b, 481).

The researchers allocated four categories of news analysis, which are as follows:

1) The characteristic of covering interpersonal violence through online news such as the type of violence, the purpose of the news, the news provider, location of news coverage, type of news articles, attachment such as Images, and time.

2) The framing of the issue including types of story framing the main issue, types of frame.

3) The source of news.

4) The tone of the news (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020b, 481–482).

The results showed the percentage of site coverage by *Hmetro.com* for issues related to interpersonal violence in Malaysia, amounting to 54.9%. The largest number of news articles reported by the media were found to be on youth violence, with a percentage of 56%. This reflects that youth violence has received priority attention from digital newspapers in the agenda of Malaysian online newspapers. With regard to the attachment, most of the news articles used the image as evidence or to reflect the status of the mentioned issue of interpersonal violence in the



news articles with a percentage of 64%. The facility is highly reliable and a top priority for press coverage. The researchers also found that the percentage of correspondents write most of the news articles related to interpersonal violence was at a rate of 86%. This means that the opinions of reporters and journalists published through the news content of digital newspapers are of great importance when participating in building the media agenda (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020b, 481).

As the news website analysis indicates, most areas in which the problem occurred were in urban areas at 91%. This percentage reflects that the rural area is safer than the urban area as violence is less likely to occur in rural areas. Moreover, the analysis revealed that the priorities of the digital newspaper's interest in dealing with issues of interpersonal violence are to inform the public about the issue more than entertain them at 71%. According to the data, 93% of the news articles about interpersonal violence are written in the form of news stories. This news story is mostly intended to inform the public about interpersonal violence in Malaysia. The results showed that most of the news articles were published during the period between August and December 2017. The researchers confirmed that interpersonal violence occurred significantly during that period, as many incidents were reported during that period (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020b, 482).

According to the findings of the study, most of the articles relied heavily on a single main source of news used to report on violence between individuals, public officials, police officers, firefighters, physicians, and public prosecutors. It is clear from this that a single source is largely responsible for setting the agenda for the website at 63%. Due to a lack of news sources, *Hmetro.com* has low reliability in covering interpersonal violence, as most articles rely primarily

on one source, rather than retrieving information regarding the interpersonal violence issue from multiple sources such as family members of the victim, accusers, and the victims themselves.

Regarding the framing of the newspaper article on interpersonal violence, 46% determined that the conflict frame was the most common method of influencing people to think about this issue. The conflict frame emphasizes the conflict between individuals, groups, and institutions, as well as the differences between those entities and among themselves. Malaysian news online aims to address interpersonal violence conflicts to increase public awareness of the issue. In this respect, the researchers emphasize that the electronic newspaper sets its media agenda by framing the conflict as the primary issue. By doing so, it provides a framework of responsibility to tell people how they should view interpersonal violence. Regarding the main issue frame, as high as 67% classify interpersonal violence as the main problem of crime. Obviously, interpersonal violence is a result of crimes committed by those involved. Finally, 87% said the media employed a very negative tone to bring interpersonal violence to the forefront (Zanuddina and Saifuddinb 2020b, 483).

I regard this scholarly piece is extremely significant in the field of media due to the paucity of studies on how digital newspapers deal with societal violence from the perspective of setting the agenda. This thesis differs when it comes to the types of violence addressed through digital newspapers. Zanuddina and Saifuddinb have specialized in interpersonal violence but have not addressed its types, forms, and practices within the analysis categories including physical and emotional abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, and emotional ill-treatment, etc. In response, this gap will be filled by including these forms of violence in the thesis analysis categories, along with six types of violence against women in more detail which are: emotional, physical, sexual, digital violence, honor crimes, and child marriage. Additionally, the study did not address the role of the

press in promoting news awareness and the solutions suggested for combating this type of violence in previous studies. This will be addressed in this thesis, as mentioned above.

Chinedu Ekweonu published a paper in 2020 titled “Newspaper Coverage of Domestic Violence against Women During COVID-19 Lockdown”. It aims to examine the newspaper coverage of domestic violence against women in Nigeria during the global coronavirus lockdown. Additionally, it analyzes the predominant sources of interventions for victims of domestic violence and investigate whether newspapers actually followed up on domestic violence cases during the lockdown period. Furthermore, it applies Agenda-Setting Theory to detect the news coverage of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 lockdown because the public has been focused on this issue and its consequences as a result of the high prevalence of this issue during the pandemic (Ekweonu 2020, 3).

Ekweonu employed the quantitative content analysis method to analyze the news content of *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, and *Guardian* newspapers from March 23rd to June 2020. Among 115 publications selected, the author has also assigned content analysis categories, which include the following: analyze the placement of news stories on the front, inside, and back pages of a newspaper. The second category represents the intervention by the government, NGOs, human rights organizations, and the ministry of women to curb and rescue domestic violence victims. The third category is follow-up, which examines the frequency of publications using the number of articles published throughout the investigation period. Additionally, those that shared once without further review will be considered not followed up (Ekweonu 2020, 7).

The study concluded that the percentages of stories published on the front page, back page, and inside pages, inside pages’ center, and back pages are 12%, 57%, 22%, and 7%, respectively. Consequently, the Nigerian press did not pay enough attention during the lockdown period to

domestic violence against women. The results of the analysis showed that there was less intervention from the government in preventing domestic violence and helping women at 7% as a result of a lack of information about this issue, perhaps due to cultures forbidding women from sharing information about some of the acts committed against them by their husbands. The results indicated that only 20% of the newspapers followed up on domestic violence stories during the lockdown. Approximately, 80% were fresh news stories reported in passing by the media. Consequently, domestic violence issues were not at the top of the media agenda in the Nigerian press (Ekweonu 2020, 7–9).

Chinedu Ekweonu's is one of the early studies in the field of digital journalism and its role in spreading awareness about domestic violence during COVID-19. However, there was no discussion in it of how *The Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, and *The Guardian* attempted to raise awareness about this issue, including the causes, consequences, suggestions offered by officials, and methods of prevention. This approach to news framing will be examined in this thesis using Robert Entman's methodology. Despite the researcher's presentation of an overview of Agenda-Setting Theory and its importance in determining the public agenda, he failed to explain how this theory can be applied to the quantitative analysis process in two levels, as will be explained in the following chapter. Moreover, this paper intersects with this thesis in terms of the news coverage of violence against women during the COVID-19 lockdown and the application of the Agenda-Setting Theory. My project differs from it in that it investigates the way Jordanian online newspapers treat violence and its forms, in addition to checking the position and directions of the news websites for such issues, as well as measuring the purpose of disseminating the news blaming victims or justifying perpetrators, and the places where the news was covered throughout 2020, not just during lockdown. The intention of this thesis is also to explore the role that electronic

newspapers play in addressing the causes of violence and consequences as well as offering solutions to reduce this phenomenon, in contrast to Chinedu Ekweonu's study that examined only the placement of stories on domestic violence and follow-up stories of newspapers on domestic violence. Besides, this study investigated the frequency of coverage of domestic violence cases within the lockdown and the dominant source of intervention in domestic violence, but it did not specify the types of solutions these organizations offered to stop violence against women, which this dissertation intends to address.

All these studies did not explain how the theory of Agenda-Setting was applied in its first and second levels, except the study of Ihechu et al. (2017). This situation is contrary to what will be explained in detail in this doctoral thesis, where the first level looks at the volume of coverage of the Jordanian newspaper on violence against women, and the second looks at the attributes and the position of news topics regarding these issues.

#### *4.2.2. Studies that Apply Framing Theory*

In 2016, Zuhail Akmeşe and Kemal Deniz presented a conference paper at the 14th Communication in the Millennium Symposium in Istanbul, Turkey, entitled "Framing Violence against Women on TV News". News is undoubtedly a vital source of information about how social roles, stereotypes, and representations of different groups of people are constructed within society. The authors indicate that television programs reinforce patriarchal culture and the subordination of women to men by creating unrealistic stereotypes about women and men's roles, as the desired men are portrayed as controlling and aggressive, while the desired women are portrayed as young, beautiful, sexually attractive, and weak (Akmeşe and Deniz 2016, 650). In the media, violence against women is portrayed in a manner obscuring its seriousness and promotes a culture of

tolerance for it. The use of linguistic terminology contributes to normalizing violence against women and obscures its seriousness. Several newspapers and television programs use euphemisms such as domestic disputes, disputes between spouses, and domestic violence to conceal the brutality of the event and portray family violence as less severe. Thus, this paper investigates how television news portrays violence against women using representations and stereotypes (Akmeşe and Deniz 2016, 656).

The authors applied analysis of news frames as gendered stereotypes of women's representations of the daily evening newscast on Fox TV between January and March 2016. According to the results of the paper, 25 news stories can be found that include violence against women. In 23 of them, the attacker/suspect is a male. In two stories, female criminals share the guilt with male criminals. Of the news reports, fifteen identify the victim's relationship to the attacker while eight describe the threat of an unknown person. five news stories concern death. 1 of the deaths is by suicide. A total of fifteen victims have been killed in the other four murders. Nine members of the same family are murdered, including men, women, and children. The six women who survived were seriously injured. Three cases of violence were related to burglary attempts. During the street demonstrations, police committed four violent acts. Hence, the gatekeepers portrayed women only as victims of violence in the evening newscast. Women are stereotyped in the news as being constantly abused, killed, raped, or robbed. Therefore, the audience watches this news with sympathy rather than with the intention of stopping the violence (Akmeşe and Deniz 2016, 657).

This study is crucial in terms of how women are represented in violence through television news by gatekeepers. Although the researchers attempted to analyze the media frames used to cover violence against women in the media, they did not elaborate on the types of framing, and

they presented only results that demonstrated women as victims. This thesis differs from this paper in that the news frames will be analyzed from the approach of Robert Entman. The key component of this is to define violence, its causes, consequences, and solutions, and six forms of violence will be analyzed separately, which has not been discussed in this conference paper.

In 2019, Shireen Kamel conducted a study titled “Frameworks of Violence Against Women Issue on Women’s Websites (A Comparative Study)”.<sup>11</sup> The scholar believes that violence against women practiced by family members in all its forms is a serious social phenomenon that threatens the community system. This threat is due to its negative effects on society, such as physical illnesses and psychological including fear and insecurity. Thus, the news media addresses violence, spreads awareness about its dangers, reveals its causes, influences public opinion, directs it, and influences its priorities. This study aims to identify the methods of Egyptian news websites in addressing violence against women. It specifies the frames and contents adopted by websites in 2016 and compare the differences between them (Kamel 2019, 167–168).

In Shireen Kamel’s work, quantitative analysis was used to analyze the content of news sites addressing women’s issues, particularly the websites of the National Council for Women, the National Center for Women’s Rights, and the New Woman Foundation between January 1 and July 31, 2016. Additionally, media framing theory was applied using Robert Entman’s methodology in analyzing news frames with the goal of defining the problem, explaining its causes, evaluating, and proposing treatment proposals and solutions (Kamel 2019, 169).

In terms of the format of news coverage, Kamel identified the following categories of media analysis:

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<sup>11</sup> This study was conducted in Egypt written in Arabic. This is the title in English that appears in the academic journal’s website: [https://aafu.journals.ekb.eg/article\\_58887.html](https://aafu.journals.ekb.eg/article_58887.html).

- 1) The amount of coverage of topics related to violence against women.
- 2) Forms of press used to address violence against women, such as news items, articles, and research conducted by websites.
- 3) The type of presentation format, such as image, image with text, or video with text and images.
- 4) Features that facilitate interactivity with the content, such as commenting, sharing, linking to social media accounts of the websites, downloading files, and printing.
- 5) Sources of news (Kamel 2019, 179–181).

Regarding content, the categories of analysis include:

- 1) Identifying the purpose of addressing violence against women.
- 2) Presenting violence issues to the target group, i.e., women and men.
- 3) Presenting the subject in a balanced manner.

According to the researcher, several frames categories were employed in the analysis of violence against women issues:

- 1) Frames used to present the issue of violence against women, such as the victim-blaming framework, the humanitarian framework, the security framework, and the conspiracy framework.
- 2) Function of the framework in defining the problem of violence against women, its causes, and solutions.
- 3) Emotional attributes of the issue as either positive, negative, or neutral (Kamel 2019, 182–186).

Kamel's results indicated that the National Council for Women was more concerned with issues related to violence against women, having an average of 36 issues, compared to fourteen in the New Woman Foundation, and only six in the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights. Meanwhile,



the news was ranked first in terms of the form of the text in addressing topics related to violence against women, followed by a report by 19%, and a study conducted by the site by 10%. It was found that 58.9% of the corpus of the study used text and images as the primary presentation format. Among the organizations presenting the issue using text and images, the National Council for Women won first place. In the category “text only”, it came in second place, with a rate of 33.9% in which the National Council for Women did not utilize videos or photographs to address violence against women. Among the three websites, linking to social media accounts and sharing came in first at 90% as a feature facilitating interactivity. According to the three sites, most information sources related to violence against women came from within the same site 88.5%, followed by another site with 4%, and finally by the news agency with 3.6%. In the results regarding content, women were ranked first in the target groups of the three sites for presenting the topics of violence against women with a percentage of 41%, followed by men and women with 30%. As the study shows, the purpose of presenting the issue of violence against women is to introduce women’s rights related to the issue on the three sites with a percentage of 67.9%. Based on the study’s analysis of the balance in presenting the issue of violence against women, it was determined that 60% of the three websites relied on presenting one while 14% presented several different views (Kamel 2019, 179–181).

The sources examined by Shireen Kamel dealt with violence against women using several frameworks. The victim framework was the most widely employed to address violence against women, with a rate of 64.3%. The framework describes a woman who has experienced violence as both a victim of the perpetrator and of society as a whole. Next, the security framework was used with a percentage of 55.4%, followed by the humanitarian concerns framework with 53.6%, and the conspiracy framework was used with 5.4%. On the basis of the results of the study, the

websites used more than one function of the framework used to address the topic of violence against women. The definition function of violence against women stood out, with a 67% rate. Solution function of violence against women accounted for 50%, followed by the reason content function for 33%. Regarding the emotional traits associated with tackling violence against women, the results indicated that with a percentage of 46%, the positive trait was the most prominent among the three sites whereas the negative trait accounted for 42%, followed by the neutral trait accounting for 10% (Kamel 2019, 182–186).

Kamel's study was found to be a valuable reference when defining the categories for analysis and applying Robert Entman's methodology to this dissertation. Most of the researcher's categories will be included here. As explained earlier, my endeavor is to analyze the news of Jordanian newspapers in light of the Agenda-Setting theory. There are, however, some differences between the two studies, including the fact that Kamel's study did not identify the types of violence against women, such as physical, emotional, economic violence, and sexual, which will be analyzed through this thesis with a detailed definition of each type of violence. Moreover, an explanation will be provided here of the causes, consequences, and proposed solutions based on Robert Entman's findings for each type of violence absent from this study. Moreover, this thesis differs from Kamel's work in that it incorporates two media analysis theories (Agenda-Setting and Framing), even though their purposes in analyzing the news about violence against women are similar.

Shwetangbhai Diwanji, Awais Saleem, and Jaejin Lee conducted another study in 2021 on "A Night of Shame: A Quantitative Content Analysis of Newspaper Narratives of the Mass Molestation Event in Bangalore, India". These researchers believe that journalism is a significant source of information, facts, statistics, ideas, and opinions for the general public. It is a tool for the

broad dissemination of information when a topic affecting a large number of people is covered, such as sexual harassment. As such, this study provides a content analysis of newspaper articles addressing the mass harassment of 700 women in Bangalore. Hence, it contributes to raising awareness about the issue of sexual harassment, which is a form of violence perpetrated against women, rooted in patriarchal cultures that view women as subordinate and less deserving of rights and freedoms than men are. The paper examined patterns of the frames in print news coverage of the mass molestation event of 700 girls in Bangalore, India, using a quantitative content analysis of 299 journal articles published between January 1, 2017, and February 1, 2017, in *The Bangalore Mirror*, *The Times of India*, and *The Hindustan Times* newspapers (Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee 2021, 350).

The researchers identified seven types of media frames for analyzing the news coverage of sexual harassment in the three newspapers:

1) The justice frame consists of the news coverage the print media provided in relation to sexual violence against women. The purpose of this is to address the issue of victim blaming and of accusing women victims of sexual violence of being complicit in their abuse.

2) Adversarial frame: to examine whether these news reports portrayed both good and bad aspects by identifying the individuals responsible for these incidents. Additionally, to identify the victims charged with responsibility for the incident.

3) A rights-based framing of journalistic articles is examined in this study by looking into the attitudes of key participants in narratives of mass harassment in Bangalore in the three newspapers, including victims, defendants, police agencies, politicians, celebrities, and eyewitnesses. Additionally, to determine whether press articles cover mass harassment in a positive or negative light.

4) Thematic frame: the study also investigated whether coverage of mass harassment in these newspapers was thematic or episodic.<sup>12</sup>

5) Causal frame: the researchers used Robert Entman's method to examine how newspapers addressed the causes of the problem and the most prominent ones in an attempt to influence people's evaluation of the issue.

6) Responsibility frame: the researchers used the responsibility framework to analyze how newspapers attribute responsibility for mass harassment to the accused, politicians, the government, or victims.

7) Solution frame: The purpose of the solution frame in this study is to determine whether newspapers addressed the problem of sexual harassment and its consequences by providing solutions (Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee 2021, 347–349).

Frames of justice regarding mass harassment in Bangalore were identified in three English newspapers. *The Bangalore Mirror* utilized the justice framework at rate of 48%. *The Times of India* and *The Hindustan Times* both utilized the justice framework to the tune of 38% and 32%, respectively. Of the news articles analyzed from the three newspapers, about 59% were found to use an adversarial framework, as the newspapers clearly differentiated between the “good” sides of the incident, i.e. the victims, and the “evil” accused in almost every article they published. As a result, 45% of the news stories regarding the mass harassment event in Bangalore incorporated the human rights framework. In contrast, 70% of the articles in *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times* dealt with mass harassment in a neutral manner. The attribution of responsibility framework was used by *The Bangalore Mirror* with 45%, the Times of India with 39%, and the *Hindustan Times* with 32% of the articles in these three papers. Newspapers have blamed the victim for being

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<sup>12</sup> Please refer to Iyengar 1991.

subjected to mass violence. The purpose of this letter is to warn women that their irresponsible behavior such as wearing Western clothing and drinking may expose them to such incidents. *The Bangalore Mirror* uses the causal framework 42% more than other national daily newspapers. *The Bangalore Mirror* utilized both thematic and episodic frameworks, while the other two newspapers mainly utilized episodic frameworks.

The three newspapers discussed the consequences of the mass harassment incident in Bangalore at 13.9, although they did not adopt a framework of solutions to address the problem. Among these consequences was the cancellation of David Guetta's concert in the city as a result of the incident. Various marches and protests against the government's inactivity have also been announced. Additionally, the results of the study demonstrated that the researcher classified the sources of news. By doing so, the three newspapers demonstrated their ability to provide multiple sources of information within their own stories. It is reported that newspapers rely more heavily on information obtained from police (42%), government/politicians (25%), and general public (23%), namely victims and witnesses (Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee 2021, 352–355).

No doubt, this study is an essential reference for researchers studying the press coverage of women's issues. The reason is that they have used frameworks of analysis that, in my opinion, are sufficiently comprehensive to identify the mechanisms by which newspapers treat this type of issue. So, the analysis categories will be designed for this thesis corpus and will be incorporated into the Agenda-Setting Theory. A few of these categories are the tendency of newspapers to perpetrate violence against women, and the category of blaming the victims or the perpetrators of violence against women. Additionally, the purpose of the coverage category, the size of the coverage, the geographical area in which the news story was covered, and the journalistic form used in the coverage, which is not included in the study, will be added. Similar to my own thesis,

this study uses Robert Entman's methodology to address the issue of violence. However, this thesis examines the role of newspapers in addressing six types of violence against women, identified by the UN, in contrast to this study, which examined only one form, namely sexual violence.

In 2023, a quantitative study conducted by Nusrat Jahan and Mehedy Razib, titled "Child Abusing News: Episodic and Thematic Media Framing Adapting the Children Act and UNICEF's Principles in Bangladesh", was published. A significant aspect thereof is that it discusses the episodic and thematic framing of the Bangladesh Children's Act and the UNICEF Media Guidelines. It is also the first paper to examine how newspapers portray the type of crimes against children for both genders (boys and girls) in terms of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse contrary to previous research, which concentrated solely on the representation of physical assaults in the media. It examines how newspapers protect children's privacy by investigating how they report child abuse, based on section 81 of the Children Act (2013).<sup>13</sup> This work also examined those news articles in which the maximum age of the child being discussed was up to 18 years of age, as defined by The Children Act (The Children Act, 2013). Additionally, the research seeks to determine how newspapers use episodic and thematic frames to report on child abuse, to identify the media frames that violate Article 81 of the Children's Law of 2013 and additionally, to determine the media frames most consistent with UNICEF guidelines for children's reporting (Jahan and Razib 2023,118).

The scholars applied quantitative content analysis, and 1091 news articles between July 2020 and June 2021 were examined related to child abuse and juvenile crimes from Bangladeshi newspapers, which are *ProthomAlo*, *ManabZamin*, and *Daily Star*. The study applied Iyengar's

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<sup>13</sup> As described in Section 81, any photograph or information pertaining to a child's case which is under court proceedings may not be published in the media as it would violate the child's right to privacy (International Labour Organization 2013). See [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=94284](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=94284)

media framing paradigm to determine the episodic and thematic framing of news. Most episodic news stories focus on human characters. With episodic framing, readers are attracted to the different visual and alluring components of a story. This allows them to empathize more readily with the protagonist. Meanwhile, thematic news articles provide a broad perspective on political or social issues, providing an in-depth, interpretive analysis (Iyengar 1991, 119).

According to the findings, 82% of Bangladeshi newspapers used episodic framing in child abuse news, and only 17.9% of the stories were framed thematically. Among all types of child abuse, sexual abuse is primarily featured in Bangladeshi newspapers. Among news articles reporting sexual abuse, girls received 55.73% of the coverage, whereas boys received 1.56% of the coverage. Newspapers pay the least attention to emotional crimes among girls and boys at 9% and 1.8%, respectively. In juvenile crime articles, convicted boys accounted for 14.12% of the stories, while convicted girls accounted for only 1.19%. Accordingly, boys are more likely to commit juvenile crimes and receive more attention from the media than girls do (Jahan and Razib 2023, 120–125).

As for protecting the privacy of victims and juvenile convicts, the study found that 702 episodically framed articles dealt with victims, and 400 articles violated their privacy. A total of 148 articles on juvenile convicts were found in the same media framing. A total of 114 articles presented episodic media framings that violated the privacy of convicts. In terms of news framing that violates section 81 of the Children Act (2013), episodic framing was found to violate the privacy of a child more often at 50.84%, while thematic framing was found to violate it in only 2.97%. In regards to media framing that better adheres to UNICEF's reporting principles concerning children, the results indicate that the thematic frames in Bangladeshi newspapers

maintained the dignity and rights of children to a greater degree than episodic news at 84%, while 52.4% of episodic news maintained them (Jahan and Razib 2023, 125).

The study described in the previous lines is one of the few examining the role of Bangladeshi newspapers in reporting crimes against children of both genders. Additionally, it discusses the extent to which children's privacy is protected and the commitment to objectivity when covering news stories. In addition, since this study examines crimes against children, it is considered relevant to one specific aspect of my dissertation regarding the importance of revealing the role of Jordanian electronic newspapers in addressing child marriage. As I explained in my article "The Role of Digital Journalism in Framing the Issue of Child Marriage in Jordan", it is well known that child marriage constitutes a form of violence as classified by the UN Women (UN Women, n.d.d), and has a detrimental impact on the psychological, physical, sexual and mental health of girls (Altamimi 2023, 31).

Jahan and Razib's work, however, differs from the current thesis in terms of its subject matter. As explained previously, the subject of this dissertation is the coverage of violence against women in Jordanian electronic newspapers in a more comprehensive manner. In spite of the fact that both studies applied the Framing Theory, their methodologies significantly differ. While covering crimes against children, the researchers applied the Iyengar methodology to determine whether the newspapers adhered to thematic or followed episodic sensationalism. This thesis' approach will be based on Robert Entman's case definition. An examination of the problem, its reasons, evaluation, and solutions should be included, as this is one of the key deficiencies of this study. This thesis also highlights the categories of quantitative analysis that are absent from this study, such as those found in the work of Zanuddina and Saifuddina (2020b).



To sum up, and as explained in the pages above, my thesis differs from the existing literature regarding the application of the media framework analysis approach to address issues related to violence against women in the following manner: here, six types of violence against women are included according to UN Women's perspectives, while studies by Shwetangbhai Diwanji, Awais Saleem, Jaejin Lee, Nusrat Jahan, and Mehedy Razib identified one type of violence tackled within newspapers. Besides this, despite the application of Shireen Kamel's study, as well as Shwetangbhai Diwanji, Awais Saleem, and Jaejin Le the approach of Robert Entman, I will analyze in more detail the causes, consequences, and solutions than the two studies, which have presented them simplistically.

#### *4.2.3. Studies about the Jordanian Media*

Regarding the studies in Jordan, a few conducted on the topic between 2006 and 2023 have been identified, which obviously indicates a scarcity of academic studies on the impact of mass communication on tackling violence against women. This fact reinforces the relevance of my project, which comes to at least partially fill a gap in my country of origin.

The researcher Ali Najadat, in 2006, studied the "Jordanian Newspaper Coverage of Domestic Violence Issues". The purpose was to analyze the coverage trend of domestic violence issues in Jordanian newspapers, including *Alrai*, *Alghad*, *Addustour*, *Al-Arab Al-Youm*, and *Al-Diyar*, during 2004 and 2005. In addition to identifying the journalistic patterns used for news coverage, this study is important because it is one of the few examining the extent to which the Jordanian press covered violence against women and children at that time. The author employed a quantitative methodology using quantitative news analysis. As part of the quantitative analysis, he defined categories that included all forms of domestic violence, including verbal, physical, sexual,

and social violence. Furthermore, the categories include information about the types of victims, the location where the violence occurred, the type of press coverage, including news, news reports, journalistic investigation, category of the news source, category of journalistic tendency, and category of the geographical distribution of news coverage (Najadat 2006, 27–28).

According to Najadat's results, the Jordanian media did not adequately cover domestic violence issues. The five newspapers covered 105 topics distributed over 115 issues. The newspaper analysis showed that physical violence is the most prevalent form of violence at 31%, while verbal violence is the least prevalent at 0%. Despite verbal violence being the most prevalent, those subjected to this type of violence do not prefer to report it to preserve family cohesion and unity. This is the reason for the occurrence of physical violence in the first place. Among the places where violence was practiced, houses accounted for 26%, while workplaces came in last place. As a result of the low possibility of having more than one family member working in the same establishment, the workplace occupies this rank. Considering the possibility that a home is a place where domestic violence is practiced within an undisclosed category, it is clear that it is a natural place for family members to engage in violence against one another (Najadat 2006, 30).

This author's data also indicated that the mother was the most vulnerable to all forms of violence at 51%. In contrast, the father does this violence more than others toward other family members at 30%. Approximately 40% of all cases of domestic violence were reported in Amman, followed by 20% in governorate centers. In spite of the fact that domestic violence is one of the most important issues in Jordanian society, other news items and reports dominated the topic (79 topics), indicating that the daily Jordanian press does not go beyond the news and does not pay much attention to the analytical and interpretive aspects of this phenomenon, which fails to shed light on this issue despite its importance. Regarding the sources of news coverage, the study found

that the newspapers studied rely on their correspondents and delegates primarily at 32%. The Jordanian daily press tends to report negatively on domestic violence at 40%, implying that society rejects this type of violence, opposes it, and calls for exposing it, containing it, and limiting its effects (Najadat 2006, 31–36).

Although the study is significant, the researcher did not apply any media analysis theory such as Agenda-Setting or Framing. This is contrary to what is intended to be applied in this thesis. While Najadat's work is an excellent reference, this thesis will follow the same methodology of quantitative analysis for the categories of forms of press coverage, journalistic tendency, and geographical distribution of news coverage used in this study. The researcher also did not discuss the role of newspapers in raising public awareness of practices against women and children, their causes, and ways in which they can be prevented. To address this gap in the news analysis section, this thesis will address this point.

Wala Alattal completed a Master's Thesis in 2015 titled *Jordanian Press Coverage for Crimes against Women in Jordan: An Analytical Study*. The purpose of the project was to investigate in the most popular Jordanian newspapers the form and nature of coverage of crimes committed against Jordanian women in comparison with those registered in court which are: *Alghad* and *Alrai* newspapers. A quantitative content analysis method was applied, and the study revealed that killing was the most common crime reported in newspapers at 70%. However, other types of crimes, such as indecent assault, rape, and acts inconsistent with modesty, have been ignored despite an increasing number of reported incidents in Jordan. As for most journalistic forms used to cover crimes against women, they were news reports at 100%, and no other journalistic form was used. Regarding Jordanian trends in newspapers regarding covering crimes against women, they were neutral at 88%. As a result, journalists' attitudes remain neutral because

news items require describing event details objectively. This neutrality is a consequence of the press form used to report the event. According to the study, 35% of perpetrators of crimes against women in Jordan are brothers, while 23% are unknown. According to the analysis, 6.17% of the victims were sisters, 58% were girls, and 5% were wives and domestic workers. So, the results reflect the tendency to describe the nature of the crime without considering the victim's characteristics. Possibly, this happens due to social considerations or, as in the case of the sister, a confession of honor killing. At the end of the researcher's report, she emphasized that Jordanian newspapers do not pay attention to crimes against women, so such crimes cannot expect to receive sufficient press coverage. Besides this, she explained the tendency of the Jordanian press to treat this type of crime conservatively due to social customs and traditions that limit coverage of these issues (Alattal 2015, 60–81).

Alattal's study could become an interesting resource for researchers in the field of violence against women and the media, as there is a shortage of research on how mass communication can address violence against women in Jordan. However, the author could have enhanced the research by explaining more about the levels of Agenda-Setting Theory so that a sufficient understanding of how the Jordanian press has covered this type of crime could have been obtained. Additionally, the researcher did not explore whether the newspapers blamed the victim or justified the perpetrator's actions in relation to crimes. Conversely, this thesis examines this issue. In any case, the study supports the argument of this doctoral thesis that the Jordanian press lacks coverage of violence against women.

Marcel Al-Jwainat published a study in 2022 titled "The Jordanian Electronic Press's Treatment of Issues of Violence against Women Due to the Corona Crisis". It aims to examine how the Jordanian electronic press (*Ammon*, *Sawsanah*, and *Jordan Zad*) treated violence against

women during the corona crisis in 2020. This article determined several categories of quantitative analysis of news coverage that included:

1) The most influential factors that contributed to rejecting violence against women during the crisis.

2) Journalists addressed the topics of violence against women, as well as the social, emotional, physiological, legal, and political frames.

3) The patterns in which they handled these topics such as the news items, the articles, and the investigation reports.

4) The trend category means the direction of the electronic journalistic material in terms of support for and support for addressing issues of violence against women, opposition, and mixed.

5) The category of sources that electronic journalism relied on to address issues of violence against women such as delegates, reporters, and news agencies.

6) The solicitation category of tackling violence against women to influence public opinion, such as emotional and mental solicitation or using both of them (mixed), which journalists used.

7) The news prominence used by journalists to highlight the topic, such as pictures and colors.

The investigator indicated that the research problem arises from an increase in domestic violence cases in Jordan due to the curfew and staying-at-home laws during the corona pandemic, which has become a source of information for journalists through the Jordanian digital media (Al-Jwainat 2022, 352–355). Marcel Al-Jwainat argues that the importance of this study is attributed to the absence of studies on the role of online news in covering the violence against women during the corona pandemic in Jordan. The main result was that Jordanian electronic newspapers paid

significant attention to the repercussions of issues of violence against women, and the total number of topics that dealt with issues of violence against women reached 73%. The number one solution was the journalistic news pattern with 73.9%. However, the trend category had a clear discrepancy, with Jordanian newspapers focusing on positive trends (64.4%). The emotional and psychological frames that include the category of psychological and physical harm that women victims were subjected to ranked first with a percentage of 24.1%. Electronic newspapers proved that they relied on delegates and reporters by 47%. The “mixed” solicitation category ranked first at 74.0% when Jordanian electronic newspapers dealt with the topic of violence against women. Moreover, the results showed that the most influential factors in rejecting violence were opinion leaders. Finally, images were used in all of the topics journalists discussed (Al-Jwainat 2022, 372–381).

Although this paper examined the media coverage of domestic violence issues, it did not identify the types of violence perpetrated against women such as digital violence, honor killings, and child marriage, which will be handled in this thesis. Therefore, the author is only concerned with presenting the proportion of victims of psychological abuse and emotional abuse. Aside from that, the researcher could have applied Agenda-Setting Theory at the first and second levels to determine the priorities of electronic newspapers in dealing with violence issues, as it is very appropriate for the results of the quantitative analysis that she conducted. Nevertheless, this thesis examines some categories of quantitative analysis of news content based on Marcel Al-Jwainat’s study, including position or trends of the news, topics, and patterns or the forms of news items.

Last but not the least, and within the framework of my doctoral candidacy, I conducted an academic study titled “The Role of Digital Journalism in Framing the Issue of Child Marriage in Jordan” in 2023. It examines how Jordanian electronic newspapers address the issue of child marriage and the frameworks established by journalists in their coverage. Child marriage has

become a prevalent problem in Jordan in recent years, and electronic newspapers have played a significant role in providing news content on various aspects of this issue. However, there is a scarcity of academic studies dedicated to this topic, which motivated me to investigate the role of digital journalism in addressing child marriage (Altamimi, 2023, 23).

My study employed a quantitative method, analyzing 31 news articles published on *Al-Rai* between 2020 and 2022. Following Robert Entman's methodology, four news frameworks were identified:

1) Determining the motivations behind the enactment of early marriage laws by the Jordanian parliament, aiming to define the problem.

2) Exploring the reasons for the prevalence of child marriage in Jordan.

3) Highlighting the negative consequences of child marriage.

4) Discussing solutions, including the role of non-governmental organisations and human rights advocates in raising awareness about the dangers of early marriage for girls (Altamimi, 2023, 25–26).

The results showed that 51.6% of news reports on child marriage were published in 2019, 16.1% in 2020, and 32.3% in 2021. Analysis of the media frameworks revealed that the framework focusing on the age of marriage for individuals under 18 accounted for approximately 57.1% of the content on the *Alrai* website in 2019, 28.6% in 2020, and 14.3% in 2021. The research findings also indicated that the *Alrai* website did not address the Jordanian legislation's justification for enacting marriage laws. However, the framework discussing the need to protect girls from sexual harassment was covered in 100% of the articles in 2019 but was not addressed in 2020-2021. Poverty or economic status was mentioned in 66.7% of the articles in 2019, 22.2% in 2020, and 11.1% in 2021. The *Alrai* website reported that the increase in child marriage in 2019 was

attributed to the influx of Syrian refugees, accounting for 50% of the cases. This figure decreased by 25% in 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic was identified as the cause of child marriages in 2020, accounting for 100% of the cases. Traditional mentalities and customs were attributed to child marriage by the *Alrai* website, accounting for 60% of the cases in 2019 and 40% in 2021. Approximately 50% of the children who married in 2019 and 2020 were affected by family breakups.

In regards to the framework for the analysis of the negative effects of child marriage, the *Alrai* website identified that child marriage led to a 28.6% exposure to physical violence in both 2019 and 2020, and 42.9% in 2021. The volume of reports mentioning child marriages leading to divorce accounted for 66.7% in 2019 and 16.7% in both 2020 and 2021. *Alrai* identified education deprivation as a negative effect of child marriage at 60% and 20% in 2020 and 2021. For the issue of childbirth death, it covered it once in 2019 and once in 2020, with a rate of 50% for both years. The news reports indicated that 50% of children married in 2019 and 2021 experienced depression as a result of their marriage. The news website highlighted that early marriage negatively impacts girls' mental health, restricts their ability to work, and hampers their economic empowerment, with a rate of 50% across the three years. Unplanned pregnancies resulting from early marriage increased by 50% in 2019 and by 25% in 2020 and 2021, according to *Alrai*. Regarding the analysis of the fourth framework concerning efforts to end child marriage through awareness program such as lectures, conferences, meetings, and seminars, the website addressed it in 47.4% of the reports in 2019, 21.1% in 2020, and 31.6% in 2021.

The study adopts categories of analysis based on Robert Etman's methodology, examining the definition of a story, its causes and consequences, and the presented solutions. However, it should be noted that it focuses on the role of the *Alrai* news website in addressing one form of



violence against women, whereas this PhD Thesis expands the scope in order to examine the role of *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* in tackling six issues of violence against women, including child marriage. This wider project also analyzes additional categories not researched in my previous study, such as news attributes, the purpose of news dissemination, victim-blaming or perpetrator justification, and the geographical coverage of news.

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Based on the exposition above, this chapter overviews the importance of the media in addressing violence against women. It also presents the most famous cases of violence against women covered by Jordanian electronic newspapers. Additionally, it clarifies the importance of awareness campaigns that contribute to the creation of a popular movement to fight these practices that violate women's rights in Jordan. The most prominent previous studies dealing with the role of newspapers and the media in covering issues of violence against women or gender-based violence were presented. As a result, some gaps in the presented studies were found.

To work towards filling the aforementioned gaps in the literature, this thesis will examine the role of electronic newspapers in addressing six types of violence against women which have not been considered together. The theory of Agenda-Setting at the first and second levels will be used to quantitatively analyze journalistic content on violence against women in all its forms. Previous studies have not explained the use of these two levels in detail, with the exception of, except one study (Ihechu et al. 2017). With regard to the application of the Robert Entman's methodology for analyzing media frames, it was found that two studies (Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee 2021 and Shireen 2019) used this methodology to very briefly analyze the media content of issues

of violence against women, as the frameworks were not examined in terms of defining violence, its types of causes and consequences, and the types of solutions offered, and this is what will be dealt with in this dissertation in a more in-depth manner, with each type of violence separately. Finally, this thesis is distinguished from the research conducted in Jordan by applying the two media theories selected to investigate issues of violence against women. This process was not conducted in the studies of Alattal (2015), Al-Jwainat (2022), and Najadat (2006). Thus, my work is a valuable addition to scientific research in Jordan. This, especially in light of the spread of this phenomenon at the time of the COVID-19 lockdown.

The next chapter presents the analysis of the corpus using the quantitative method to fill in the gaps previously identified. Furthermore, several categories of news analysis were identified from a media theories perspective, namely, the Agenda-Setting Theory and the Framing Theory. The aim of this is to reach results that clarify the priorities of the agenda of electronic newspapers in Jordan in covering violence against women, in addition to examining the media frameworks employed by news newspapers in order to address the causes and consequences of violence as well as the solutions offered.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE JORDANIAN DIGITAL MEDIA METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE, AND RESULTS**

In the previous chapter, it was indicated that the Jordanian media play a significant role in addressing violence against women and raising public awareness on the need to combat these types of violations. Furthermore, an overview of previous studies conducted in Jordan and abroad on the role of newspapers and media in addressing issues of violence against women was presented. This chapter completes the objective of the thesis, which is to examine the role of Jordanian digital newspapers, specifically *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*, in addressing issues of violence against women. This will be achieved by applying a quantitative methodology and analyzing the news content of these sites based on Agenda-Setting and Framing theories.

#### **5.1. Methodology and Sample**

This thesis conducts a quantitative content analysis of electronic newspapers that deal with issues of violence against women in Jordan using the descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is a quantitative methodology and a basic method of thoroughly reviewing a situation. It is used to identify characteristics of a particular phenomenon based on observation and to explore the correlation between two or more phenomena (William 2007, 66). According to Creswell (2003, 18), quantitative research uses strategies such as experimental procedures and surveys to collect data on predetermined instruments that generate statistical findings. Additionally, quantitative research involves collecting data, and quantitatively and statistically analyzing it to support or refute a hypothesis (Creswell 2003, 153). Moreover, William states that the quantitative research process begins with the formulation of a problem, the formulation of a hypothesis or research

question, the review of related literature, and the analysis of data using quantitative methods (2007, 66).

Regarding data collection, the content analysis instrument is utilized here to dissect the press content by using a quantitative survey that corresponds to this thesis's objectives and research questions. The surveys include categories that have been defined to analyze the news content of the study sample and to reach the most accurate quantitative results, and SPSS software was used for quantitative analysis.<sup>14</sup> Surveys are the most common method used in collecting primary quantitative data. Through surveys or questionnaires, quantitative data may be collected in a standardized manner so that it can be analyzed consistently and coherently (Siddegowda and Meta 2012, 273). In quantitative studies, surveys—whether of audiences or content—are the basic instruments of data collection (Jensen 2002, 230), and they can also be used to analyze media content (Jensen 2002, 219). After the collection of numerical data, statistical techniques should be employed to analyze it. These mathematical methods are utilized to describe, organize, and explore relationships within the data (Jensen 2002, 230). Accordingly, the purpose of using the quantitative surveys in this thesis is to identify and subsequently discuss the topics that are most relevant to the Jordanian digital journalism agenda when it comes to covering violence against women.

As defined by Berelson, the content analysis technique is a tool for describing the content of communication in a systematic, quantitative, and objective manner (1952, 18). Meanwhile, according to Kerlinger (1986), content analysis refers to the process of methodically analyzing and interpreting communication in a systematic, objective, and quantifiable manner to measure

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<sup>14</sup> SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a widely used software program for social science research, allowing scholars to easily explore and analyze quantitative data. Data analysis is a complex and time-consuming task, but SPSS makes it much easier by providing various technical methods to help researchers explain the features of different variables and formulate output results through the representation of graphs and diagrams that are easy to understand. In today's world, computer software has become an essential tool for social science research (Gogoi 2020, 2424).

variables. Among the five primary purposes of content analysis, which were identified by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, 157–159), are the following:

- 1) An analysis of the mass media portrayals that reveal its patterns or trends.
- 2) The testing of hypotheses concerning the policies or intentions of media producers or journalists.
- 3) Analyzing media content in relation to real-world indicators; 4) Analyzing how certain groups are represented in the media; and 5) Analyzing inferences about media effects on the audience.

Drawing on Wimmer and Dominique, I believe that utilizing content analysis as a research tool can serve various purposes in the case of my thesis. Primarily, it can help in analyzing the trends and patterns of online news in Jordan related to violence against women. This includes identifying whether negative attitudes towards women were prevalent or neutralized during the production and dissemination of news content amid the pandemic in 2020. Moreover, content analysis helps in examining the extent to which the journalistic presentation of the phenomenon of violence against women matched the real situation in Jordan during the year 2020. The goal is to determine the consistency of media content with academic studies and reports issued by government, NGOS, or social institutions in Jordan regarding the actual rate of violence against women and its causes during the lockdown period. Thus, I have utilized a content analysis tool to examine how different groups—specifically the victims of violence against women and the aggressors—were portrayed across various news sites. My investigation focused on whether the blame was placed on one or the other. In addition, I analyzed how women were depicted based on factors such as their level of education, marital status, age, and employment status. The findings from my analysis are presented below and discussed in detail in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Based on a comprehensive review of various news websites in Jordan, the sources that were selected for this study are *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*. These websites were chosen because they have a greater coverage of news related to violence against women in 2020 than other news sites in Jordan. The selection of news content covering issues of violence against women within the time frame of January 1 until December 31, 2020, for the news analysis, was due to the 30% increase in cases of gender violence in Jordan due to the COVID-19 lockdown. In addition to this, a total of 10,735 domestic violence cases were also handled by the Ministry of Social Development in the same year (Khaberni 2021). Thus, this requires an investigation into the role of Jordanian digital media in addressing violence against women, including various forms of violence during the outbreak of COVID-19. As a result, I determined six forms of violence against women to analyze news content tackling such forms of violence, which are as follows: physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence, honor crimes, child marriage, and digital violence.

To better understand and interpret the texts through quantitative content analysis, it is essential to choose a specific sample of content media parts. This sample should be purposeful and chosen for specific reasons to allow the researcher to ask a specific set of questions and address a particular set of issues. It is important to note that the intent of quantitative content analysis is not to produce generalizable results (Anderson 2012, 330). I decided to use a purposive sampling approach to examine the way *Roya News*, *Alrai*, and *Alghad* address issues of violence against women while covering the news. Purposive sampling is also known as selective or judgmental sampling (Bhardwaj 2019, 161), and it is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the researcher selecting the units or population to be investigated based on their own criteria and judgments (Black 2010, 255). In this case, to gather a purposive sample, I used specific keywords related to violence against women, including *domestic violence*, *emotional*, *physical*, *sexual*

*violence, honor crimes, early marriage, and digital violence.* These terms were entered into a search engine of *Alrai, Algahd, and Roya News* websites to locate relevant news content. The sample size is relatively small, consisting of 192 news items released on the three websites in the form of news stories, reports, press investigations, caricatures or comics, and opinion pieces. It should be noted that the results obtained from the purposive sample of news analysis only represent the thesis corpus, and not other news sites in Jordan. Consequently, there is a significant disparity in the amount of news coverage between this research corpus and other sites in Jordan, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to all Jordanian news sites. Despite the sample size, this thesis makes a contribution to current research on the role of digital newspapers in Jordan in addressing violence against women. This is due to the scarcity of related research conducted in Jordan, particularly in light of the coronavirus epidemic's link to domestic violence prevalence. Through my research, I discovered that the academic field in Jordan lacks such topics, except for Al-Jwainat (2022), which also confirms this argument. Accordingly, this research is a valuable addition to the academic scientific heritage, providing specialized research on women's issues and how the media can help address them.

To dissect the collected data using the content analysis survey, frequencies and percentages were extracted, and the Chi-square test ( $\text{Chi}^2$ ) was utilized to assess the goodness of fit between the observed and theoretically expected values through the statistical program SPSS. This measurement was then correlated with the significant level (P) value=(Sig.), which represents the probability of error resulting from the statistical differences. Moreover, a confidence level of 0.95 was also used (Dahiru 2008, 22–25). Figures were relied upon to clarify the significance of these statistical differences to accurately achieve the objectives and questions of the Thesis.



In academic studies, establishing reliability and validity are primarily intended to ensure that data are reliable and reproducible, as well as the accuracy of results (Mohajan 2017, 2). *Validity* refers to how well the collected data fit the study's subject matter. It has to do with the layout of the questionnaire, including its feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting, and clarity of language. This is essentially the researchers' subjective assessment of whether the measuring instrument is suitable and well-presented, and if the items are reasonable, unambiguous, and straightforward (Taherdoost 2016, 29). To validate the thesis instrument, the content analysis questionnaires were reviewed by Dr. Marta Fernández Morales from the University of Oviedo (acting as my PhD supervisor) and the statistical experts Dr. Feryal Abu Awad Mr. Wesam Al-Resheq from the University of Jordan, and I made the required modifications by paraphrasing categories, deleting and adding new categories related to the subject of this study.

As suggested above, when conducting content analysis, it is important to also consider *reliability*, which refers to the consistency of results obtained through repeated measurement. Nevertheless, data collection is often conducted by researchers by recording or transcribing texts, images, or audio recordings. To achieve reliability, it is necessary to ensure the independence of the measuring procedure or instrument. Demonstrating reliability is essential in content analysis studies to ensure the trustworthiness of conclusions drawn from the data (Wang 2011, 11–12). In order to determine the level of reliability of the study tool, I carried out a post-study test based on the Holsti equation according to the following instructions:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1+N2}$$

$$N1+N2$$

where M refers to the number of symbolic decisions accredited by data analysts and N1 + N2 refers to the total number of symbolic decisions (Mao 2017, 740–743). For this purpose, two statistical

analysts, Dr. Mousa Al-Qaisi, and Mahmoud Al-Athamneh, were consulted to individually analyze 10% of the chosen contents of the study sample of *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* electronic news websites, and were provided with the final results of my analysis questionnaire. Both analysts agreed on 76 decisions out of 86 units. Consequently, the Holsti equation was applied to ensure precision outcomes as follows:

$$76 \times 2 = 152 = 88.4\%$$

$$86 + 86 = 172$$

According to the equation, the reliability level is 88.4%, so the tool used is applicable. Thus, if the reliability value between 70 and 80% is achieved, the results are accepted, which indicates the stability of the analysis, whereas a percentage below 70% of the corresponding is too low to be accepted. Meanwhile, if the correspondence was 85% or more, the stability of the analysis is high and accepted if this percentage was 70-75 (Mao 2017, 740–743).

Applying the theory of Agenda-Setting, level 1 and level 2 were applied to the analysis of the news texts in the sample. The aim was to determine which issues of violence against women were prioritized by digital newspapers to be covered. Moreover, the Framing Theory was also applied to investigate the role of digital journalism in framing issues of violence against women based on Robert Entman's paradigm, which was explained in detail in Chapter 1 and is briefly summarized below for the purpose of its application to my sample.

### *5.1.1. News Analysis Based on Agenda-Setting Theory Level 1*

As mentioned in the Chapter One, the first level of the theory states that the media determine what issues will be of interest to the audience, as evidenced by the volume of issues covered (Wu and Coleman 2009, 766). Accordingly, the first level of the Agenda-Setting theory will be applied to

analyze the news texts in the thesis sample that describe the role of digital newspapers in addressing six types of issues of violence against women. To investigate which types of violence against women are given the most attention of news and prominence in the digital journalism agenda when addressing such issues, four categories of quantitative analysis are defined and included within the first level to measure the frequency with which cases of violence against women are covered:

1) *Types of violence against women*: This category investigates the types of crimes practiced against women covered by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*, categorized as follows:

- I. Physical violence (hitting, slapping, burning, killing, and strangling);
- II. Emotional violence (insulting, neglect, control of behavior, threats, and isolation);
- III. Sexual violence (rape, kidnapping, harassment, sexual abuse);<sup>15</sup>
- IV. Honor crimes (honor killing, forced marriage, forced suicide, hitting, and genital mutilation);
- V. Child marriage;
- VI. Digital violence (abusing, sexual harassment, hacking websites or emails, electronic fraud, bullying).

2) *Forms of journalistic treatment*: This pertains to the forms of press coverage on which *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* relied on tackling issues of violence against women. It included:

- I. News reports: A reliable source of information that presents events impartially and satisfies the audience's need to know what is happening impartially. News reports

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<sup>15</sup> Kidnapping was categorized as a form of sexual violence as reported in news stories of *Roya News* dealing with such violence.

also guide public opinion and provide voices of reliable and various sources of information without expressing personal bias (Li, Zhao, and Lou 2023, 2).

II. News stories: Journalistic material written in the style of a literary story that describes suspenseful events, conflict, and characters' emotions in a literary style, with vivid scenes (Alswirki 2016, 55). According to Al-Mashhadani, news stories are concise reports on important events that answer the six key journalistic questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How (2020, 141).

III. Investigative reporting: According to Wuergler and Cancela, investigative journalism is considered the foundation of proactive journalism (2022, 2). In addition, it scrutinizes explanations provided by authorities and officials to shape public opinion specific to an event or case through analysis and accountability of all involved parties—governments, politicians, judges, police, NGOs, businessmen, and community leaders. It also plays a vital role in exposing systemic corruption and abuse of power, ensuring justice is served (Cordell 2009, 120-121).

IV. Opinion pieces: This is an important type of journalistic writing that allows writers to express their thoughts and feelings about a particular subject. These pieces are often featured in newspapers and magazines and are meant to attract readers by presenting a unique perspective on a topic (Afdal 2021, 2).

V. Caricatures: A popular journalism form that plays a key role in social and political criticism. Caricatures convey brief messages through symbols that viewers easily understand. Its satirical approach to aspects of life is more impactful than news articles, and they have become a distinctive feature in some magazines and newspapers (Alsaggar and Alrewely 2023, 379).

3) *Purpose of the news coverage*: This category aims to identify the goals of the journalists that drove them to investigate beyond the publication of news about violence against women. It has been divided into the following:

I. Excitement and suspense, which aim to focus on strange and abnormal aspects that break the monotony of the usual activities in life. This is determined by the proper use of words, sentences and phrases, and beautifying them by highlighting, using methods that stimulate reading, with the aim of drawing the readers' attention to the importance of the news story, and encouraging them to read it, whether it is within their interests or not, while adhering to honesty in conveying the facts to the recipient and in many ways. Sometimes news is reported at the expense of the truth, by releasing news with the aim of drawing attention in a smooth and interesting way, and the reader soon discovers that it is interpolated into the title, and is in excess of the content of the text. In general, these stories do not present useful facts for society as much as they convey controversial stories related to a particular issue, such as sexual assault or raping. For example, the title of a news story about sexual violence published on the *Roya News* website, which is classified as excitement and suspense, is "A Moroccan Woman Drugs her Friend and Gives her as a Gift to her Brother in Order for him to Rape her on his Birthday". Another title: "A Young Saudi Woman Accuses her Brother of Raping her over a Period of Six Years" (my translations).

II. Informing and reporting: This includes the prevalence rates of violence against women, its types, and the statements of officials regarding the issue.

III. Education and awareness: This relates to the provision of news to educate the public about violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the solutions provided to protect women from violence.

- 4) *Geographical coverage*: This category refers to the geographical area in which violence against women occurred, which has been divided into three categories: local—the news located in Jordan where the three periodicals are issued; Arabic—publications that focus on news related to the Arab world; and international—news consisting of stories about crime and violence against women outside of Arab countries.

#### *5.1.2. News Analysis Based on Agenda-Setting Theory Level 2*

Since the first level concentrates on the volume of news addressed by the journalists, the second level of salience refers to the attributes of the news items that were addressed (Wanta, Golan, and Cheolhan 2004). This second level of Agenda-Setting theory has been applied here by determining four categories for news analysis that describe the attributes of addressing news items and the tendencies of my corpus with regards to against women. These quantitative categories have been designed based on the following:

- 1) *Attributes of the perpetrators*: This category refers to the set of attributes assigned to criminal justice by the research corpus, which is classified into:
  - I. Positive attributes: The set of positive descriptions given to the aggressor, such as “strong”.
  - II. Negative attributes: negative descriptions that are given to the criminal, such as “oppressor,” “rapist,” or “repulsive”.

III. Without traits: journalistic materials that have neither positive nor negative mention of the attackers.

- 2) *Attributes of the victims of violence against women:* I have classified this category according to what I have seen in the news items and how women are represented in it. Accordingly, this category describes the way in which journalists portray the victims in terms of age group, marital status, occupation, and education.<sup>16</sup> This provides an obvious hint about the newspapers' attitude toward battered women, e.g., were they portrayed as having a high level of education, or were illiteracy and being uneducated emphasized? Additionally, this helps determine if journalists were objective in showing categories of women—including employed, journalists, politicians, celebrities, housewives, and refugees—who were subjected to violence; or did they only focus on a specific category of women?
- 3) *Blaming the offenders or the victims of violence against women:* In this category, the journalist's position toward violence against women was examined in relation to the blame given to the offender for their aggressive practices against women or the blame on the victim for being exposed to violence due to their bad attitude, dressing provocatively, or behaving aggressively.
- 4) *Position of the news coverage of violence against women:* This category focuses on the position of the three websites toward covering the types of issues of violence against women in terms of establishing several classifications: *Negative* demonstrates rejection of

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<sup>16</sup> More attributes of the victims were placed in these categories than those of the perpetrators, such as age, marital status, occupation, and education due to the lack of adequate description of the perpetrators in the news stories.

the subject of violence; *Neutral*: this demonstrates neutrality concerning violence against women.<sup>17</sup>

### 5.1.3. News Analysis Based on Framing Theory

As explained in Chapter Two, frame analysis is used to analyze news discourse to construct and portray public discourse as well as negotiate public issues (Pan and Kosicki 1993). Robert Entman's analysis of media frames indicates how public opinion can be influenced by highlighting particular issues more prominently in news reports. He defined four main types of frames for media content analysis:

- 1) Define a specific issue;
- 2) Diagnose the cause of this problem;
- 3) Make a moral judgment and evaluation on the subject;
- 4) Propose solutions to this issue (Entman 1993, 52).

In this thesis, Framing Theory was applied to the news content of *Alghad*, *Alrai*, and *Roya News*. Four categories of quantitative analysis of frames have been identified based on Robert Entman's methodology for analyzing selected news articles for the three sites. The news analysis aims to determine how news websites tackle six types of violence against women and how they present them to the public. Additionally, this analysis seeks to identify the hidden trend below the text of the news, where each form of violence will be analyzed separately according to the categories of media frames. I applied each of Entman's frames to the six forms of violence against women that I have selected to analyse from the point of view of human rights activists and sociologists, journalists in terms of:

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<sup>17</sup> Based on the data collected, all three websites were found to have a negative to neutral position. It was recommended by the statistical experts consulted to remove the *Positive* category, as there was no data collected for it (zero).



- I. Identifying the specific issue: this includes the forms of violence, an explanation of the Jordanian law on protection from violence, statistics on the spread of this phenomenon, and demographics in Jordanian society.
- II. Diagnosing the causes of the violence: this includes the causes of practicing violence against women which are listed in the tables according to what is discussed in the news websites.
- III. Negative effects of violence against women: this also contains the negative consequences of violence against women exactly as addressed in online news.
- IV. Proposing solutions to eliminate violence against women: this includes solutions discussed in news item.

Finally, my work examines the role of Jordanian media in addressing violence against women by applying quantitative methodology through the creation of quantitative questionnaires to track the news items relating to violence in the thesis corpus. The purposive sample consists of 192 news items selected from the news content. The Holsti equation was used to ensure the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data.

## **5.2. Results**

The purpose of this section is to conduct a statistical analysis of the news content of the thesis corpus using SPSS, which is integrated with the first and second levels of Agenda-Setting Theory, and with the Framing Theory, as explained above.

### 5.2.1. Results of the News Analysis Based on Agenda-Setting Theory Level 1

Using the first level of Agenda-Setting theory, I specified the categories of quantitative analysis, including the forms, purpose, and geographical news coverage of the issue of violence against women. To monitor the frequency of news coverage on the issue of violence against women, a quantitative survey was conducted using SPSS software, as detailed below.

Regarding the first question of the thesis (*What is the volume of media treatment of violence against women based on the patterns and forms of violence against women?*), the results are as follows:

**Table 1. Volume of the News Coverage of the Types of Violence against Women in Electronic Newspapers**

Types of violence	News Websites						Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Physical violence	6	19.4	15	48.4	10	32.3	31	16.0	2	3.935	0.140
Emotional violence	5	23.8	9	42.9	7	33.3	21	11.0	2	1.143	0.565
Sexual violence	9	19.1	13	27.7	25	53.2	47	24.0	2	8.851	0.012*
Honor crimes	4	18.2	14	63.6	4	18.2	22	11.0	2	9.091	0.011*
Child marriage	5	9.4	40	75.5	8	15.1	53	28.0	2	42.604	0.00*
Digital violence	7	38.9	9	50.0	2	11.1	18	9.0	2	4.333	0.115
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.500</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

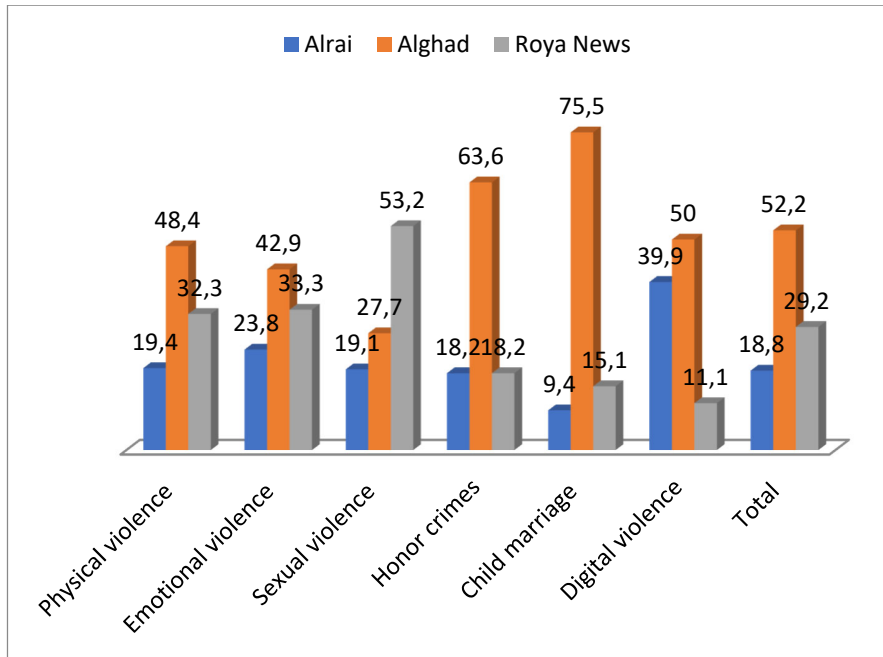
significant at level of (0.05).

The results of Table 1 show that the volume of the news coverage of the types of violence against women in electronic newspapers is different between the three news websites (*Alrai, Alghad, and*

*Roya News*). *Alrai* covered the types of violence with a total percentage of 18.8 from the distribution, *Alghad* covered with a total percentage of 52.2, and *Roya News* covered with a total percentage of 29.2; Chi<sup>2</sup> value was 33.500 and was significant at a level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* electronic newspaper. Through my analysis, it was found that the most common types of violence covered by the three electronic newspapers were as follows: (1) child marriage; (2) sexual violence; (3) physical violence; (4) honor crimes and emotional violence; and (5) emotional and digital violence. As a result, child marriage ranked highest on the Agenda-Setting priorities of the three electronic newspapers, while digital violence was the lowest.

The coverage of sexual violence differed by percentage—*Alrai* = 19.1%, *Alghad* = 63.6%, and *Roya News* = 53.2%)—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 8.851 and a significance level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. The results revealed statistically significant differences between the three newspapers in the coverage level of honor crimes—*Alrai* and *Roya News* at 18.2% and *Alghad* 63.6%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 9.091 and a significance level less than 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Child marriage considered as a type of violence differed by percentage between the three News Websites—*Alrai* 9.4%, *Alghad* 75.5%, and *Roya News* 15.1%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 42.604 and a significance level at 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*.

There is no statistically significant difference in the level of coverage of the physical, emotional, and digital types of violence against women between the news websites (*Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*), with Chi<sup>2</sup> values of 3.935, 1.143, and 4.333 respectively, and these values are not significant at the level of 0.05 as shown in Figure 1, which means these websites have closely addressed the types of coverage against women in terms of the physical, emotional, and digital violence.



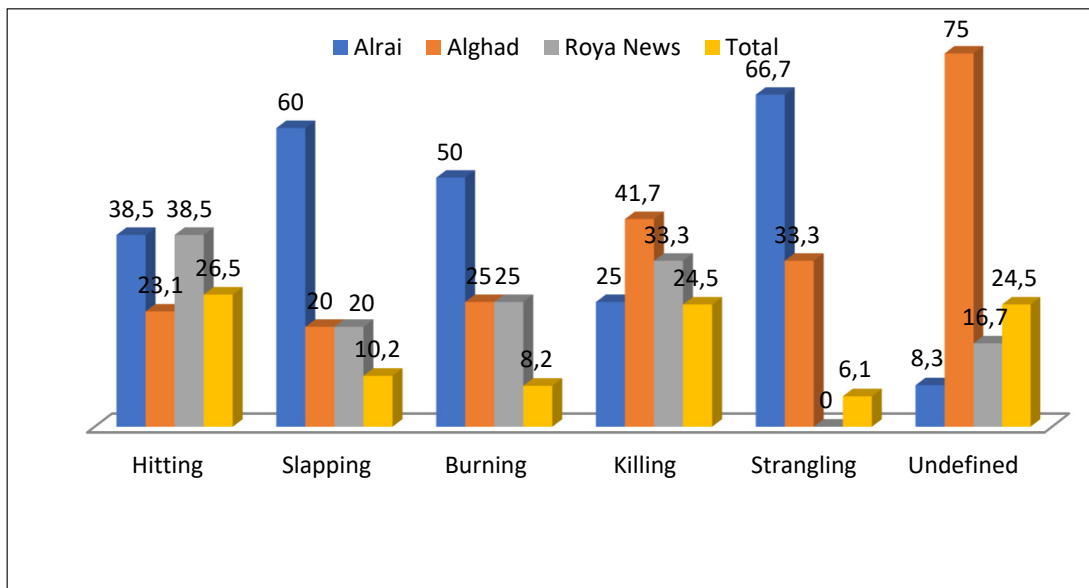
**Figure 1. Volume of the News Coverage of the Types of Violence against Women in Each Electronic Newspaper**

**Table 2. Forms of Physical Violence**

Forms of physical violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Hitting	5	38.5	3	23.1	5	38.5	13	26.5	2	0.615	0.735
Slapping	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	5	10.2	2	1.600	0.735
Burning	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	4	8.2	2	0.500	0.779
Killing	3	25.0	5	41.7	4	33.3	12	24.5	2	0.500	0.779
Strangling	2	66.7	1	33.3	--	--	3	6.1	1	0.333	0.564
Undefined	1	8.3	9	75.0	2	16.7	12	24.5	2	9.500	0.009*
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.510</b>	<b>0.470</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 2 shows that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of coverage between the three electronic newspapers with regard to the physical violence forms (hitting, slapping, burning, killing, and strangling) and the total forms of physical violence ( $\text{Chi}^2$ ) values were 0.615, 1.600, 0.500, 0.500, 0.333, and 1.510, and these values were not significant at the level of 0.05, which indicates that the three electronic newspapers had equally covered these violence forms. On the other hand, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the coverage of the three electronic newspapers of the undefined physical violence form—*Alrai* = 8.3%, *Alghad* = 75%, and *Roya News* = 16.7%—with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  test value of 9.500, which is significant at the level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, while the most physical violence covered from the three electronic newspapers was of hitting as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Forms of Physical Violence**

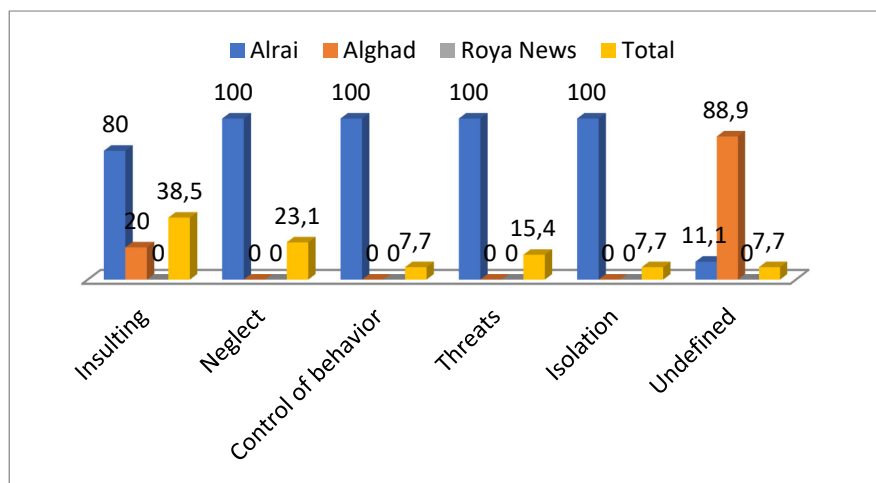
**Table 3. Forms of Emotional Violence**

Forms of emotional violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Insulting	4	80.0	1	20.0	--	--	5	38.5	1	1.80	0.180
Neglect	3	100.0	--	--	--	--	3	23.1	--	--	--
Control of behavior	1	100.0	--	--	--	--	1	7.7	--	--	--
Threats	2	100.0	--	--	--	--	2	15.4	--	--	--
Isolation	1	100.0	--	--	--	--	1	7.7	--	--	--
Undefined	1	11.1	8	88.9	--	--	9	7.7	1	5.44	0.020*
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.513</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 3 summarizes that there were no statistically significant differences between the coverage of the three electronic newspapers with regard to the emotional violence forms (insulting, neglect, control of behavior, threats, and isolation) and the total forms of emotional violence (Chi<sup>2</sup>) values

= (1.800, 0.429), and these values are not significant at level of 0.05, which indicates that the three electronic newspapers had equally covered these violence forms. On the other hand, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the coverage of the three electronic newspapers of the undefined emotional violence form—*Alrai* = 11.1%, *Alghad* = 88.9%, and *Roya News* not covered—with a  $\chi^2$  value of 5.444, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, while the form of emotional violence most widely covered by the three electronic newspapers was insulting, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Forms of Emotional Violence**

**Table 4. Forms of Sexual Violence**

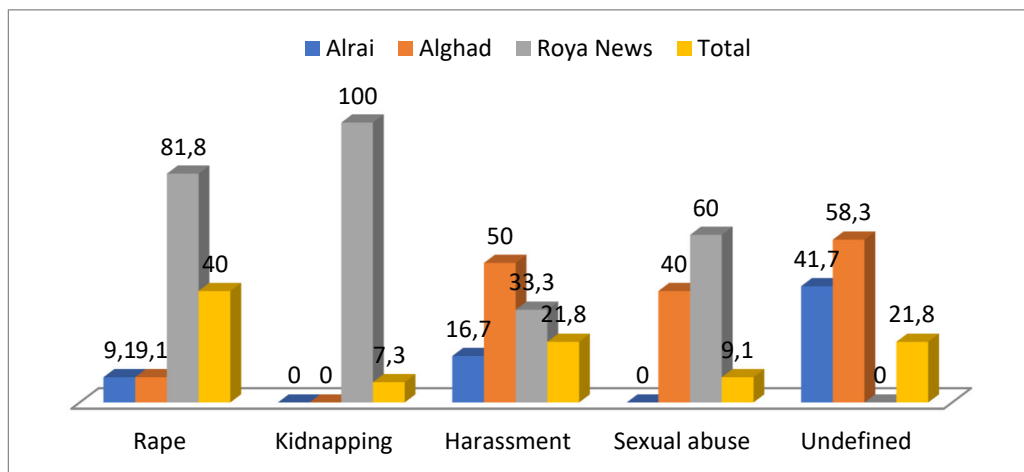
Forms of sexual violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Rape	2	9.1	2	9.1	18	81.8	22	40.0	2	23.273	0.00*

Kidnapping	-	--	--	--	4	100.	4	7.3	--	--	--
	-					0					
Harassment	2	16.7	6	50.0	4	33.3	12	21.8	2	2.000	0.368
Sexual abuse	-	--	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	9.1	1	0.200	0.655
	-										
Undefined	5	41.7	7	58.3	-	--	12	21.8	1	0.333	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.055</b>	<b>0.004*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 4 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the coverage of the three electronic newspapers with regard to the sexual violence forms (harassment, sexual abuse, and undefined), with Chi<sup>2</sup> values of 2.000, 0.200, and 0.333, respectively, and these values are not significant at level of 0.05, which indicates that the three electronic newspapers had equally covered these violence forms. And Only four news stories were covered by *Roya News* on kidnapping as form of sexual violence. On the other hand, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the coverage of the three electronic newspapers of the rape violence—*Alrai* = 9.1%), *Alghad* = 9.1%, and *Roya News* = 81.8%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 23.273, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. The total forms of sexual violence covered by *Alrai* was 16.4%, *Alghad* covered 30.9%, and *Roya News* 52.7%, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 11.055, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*, while the most forms of the sexual violence was represented with the rape type, as shown in Figure 4. Thus, the three news websites prioritized covering rape cases as part of their agenda more than other forms of sexual violence against women.





**Figure 4. Forms of Sexual Violence**

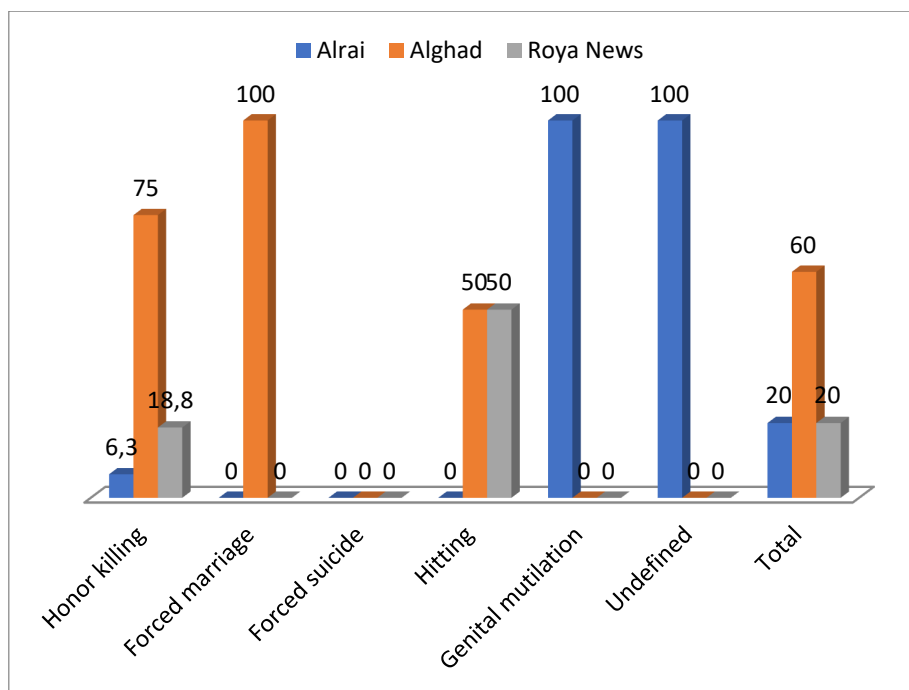
**Table 5. Forms of Honor Crimes**

Forms of honor crimes	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Honor killing	1	6.3	12	75.0	3	18.8	16	0.73	2	12.87	0.002*
Forced marriage	0	0.00	1	100.0	0	0.00	1	0.05	-	-	-
Forced suicide	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-
Hitting	0	0.00	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	0.09	1	0.00	1.000

Genital mutilation	1	100.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.05	-	-	-
Undefined	2	100.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2	0.09	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6.400</b>	<b>0.041*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

The results reveal that all three electronic newspapers covered honor killing as one of the violence types having the most frequency with a total of 16 (=73.0%) from the distribution—*Alrai* = 6.3%, *Alghad* = 75%, and *Roya News* = 18.8, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 12.875, which is significant at level of 0.05, and this indicates that there were statistically significant differences in the coverage of honor killing according to the electronic newspapers, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. It was observed that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers (*Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*) in the coverage of honor crimes related to forced marriage, in just *Alghad* with frequency (1); no coverage of forced suicide from the three electronic newspapers; and hitting crime covered by *Alghad* and *Roya News* was 50% each, (1) coverage for genital mutilation in *Alrai* and (2) coverage for undefined crime in *Alrai* also. Finally, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in the coverage of honor crimes forms ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 6.400$ ), which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* with 60%, *Alrai* 20%, and *Roya News* 20%.



**Figure 5. Forms of Honor Crimes**

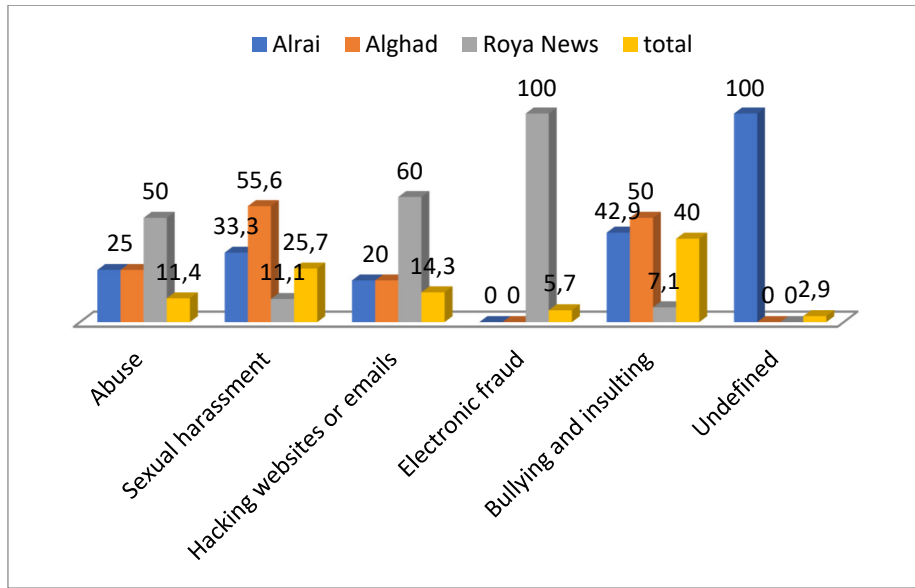
**Table 6. Forms of Digital Violence**

Forms of digital violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Abuse	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	11.4	2	0.500	0.779
Sexual harassment	3	33.3	5	55.6	1	11.1	9	25.7	2	2.667	0.264
Hacking websites or emails	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	5	14.3	2	1.600	0.449

Electronic fraud	--	--	--	--	2	100	2	5.7	--	--	--
Bullying and insulting	6	42.9	7	50.0	1	7.1	14	40.0	2	4.429	0.109
Undefined	1	100.0	--	--	--	--	1	2.9	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.086</b>	<b>0.581</b>

\*: significant at level of (0.05).

Table 6 shows no statistically significant differences between coverage of the three electronic newspapers in the form of digital violence (abuse, sexual harassment, hacking websites or emails, bullying and insulting, and total forms of digital violence), with Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.500, 2.667, 1.600, 4.429, and 1.086, respectively, and these values are not significant at level of 0.05, which indicates that the three electronic newspapers had covered these violence forms equally. *Roya News* covered only electronic fraud violence with frequency (2) news and *Alrai* covered undefined digital violence with frequency (1) news, as shown in Figure 6. Finally, bullying and insulting were the most common types of digital violence that have been circulated among the three websites by 40%.



**Figure 6. Forms of Digital Violence**

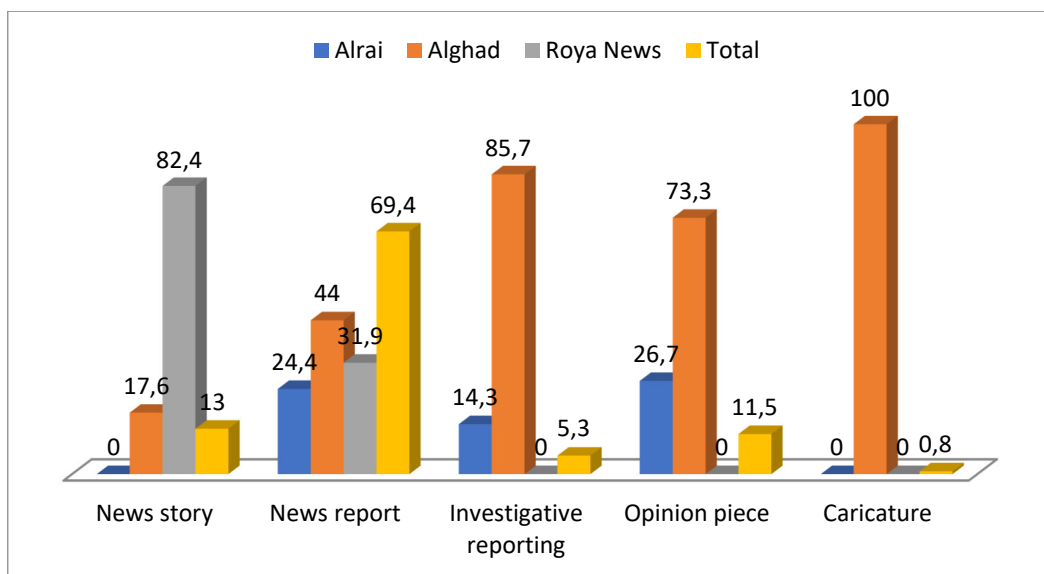
**Table 7. Forms of News Coverage Regarding Violence against Women**

Forms of news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F	%	F.	%	F.	%					
News story	--	--	3	17.6	14	82.4	17	13.0	1	7.118	0.008*
News reports	22	24.4	40	44.0	29	31.9	91	69.4	2	5.429	0.066
Investigative reporting	1	14.3	6	85.7	--	--	7	5.3	1	3.571	0.059
Opinion piece	4	26.7	11	73.3	--	--	15	11.5	1	3.267	0.071

Caricature	--	--	1	100.	--	--	1	0.8	--	--	--
				0							
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13.25</b>	<b>0.001*</b>
								<b>0</b>		<b>2</b>	

**Significant at level of (0.05)**

The results reveal that the three electronic newspapers depended on many forms of news coverage. *Alghad* depended on the coverage of 17.6% of news stories and *Roya News* depended on 82.4%, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 7.118, which has a significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. Meanwhile, *Alrai* did not use news stories to address the issue of violence against women. News reports make up 69.4% of the agendas of the three websites, more so than other types of news coverage. However, the results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the forms of news coverage about the news reports, investigative reporting, opinion pieces, and caricature between *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*, with Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 5.429, 3.571, and 3.267, respectively, and these values were not significant at level of 0.05. The total forms of news coverage have statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers—*Alrai* = 22.3%, *Alghad* = 50.4%, and *Roya News* = 27.3%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 13.252, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 7. Forms of News Coverage Regarding Violence Against Women**

Regarding the second question (*What are the purposes of Jordanian digital journalism in tackling violence against women?*), the results show as follows:

**Table 8. The Purpose of the Coverage of Issues Regarding Violence against Women**

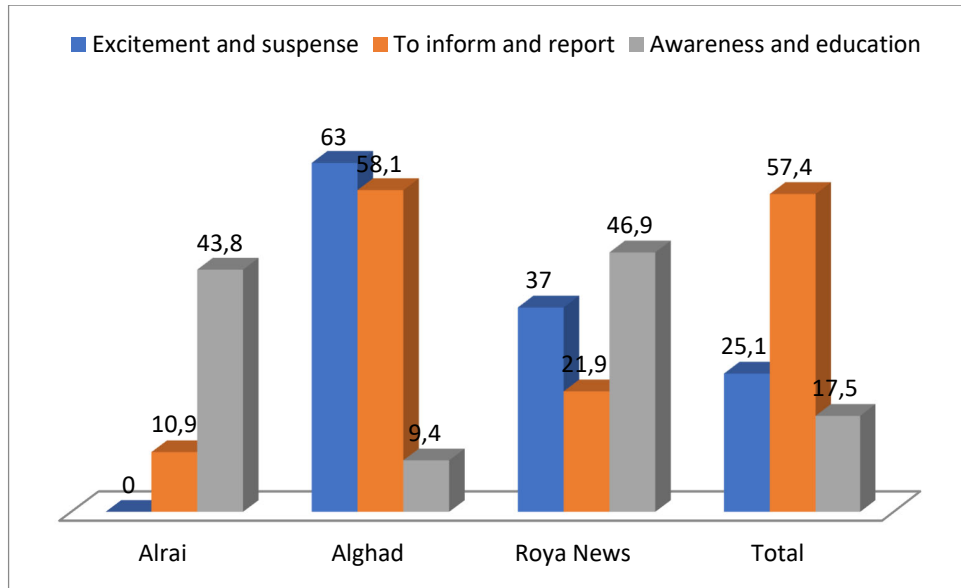
Purpose of the coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Excitement and suspense	--	--	29	63.0	17	37.0	46	25.1	1	3.130	0.077
To inform and report	2	10.	61	58.1	23	21.9	105	57.4	2	29.02	0.00*
	1	9								9	

Awareness and education	1 4	43. 8	3	9.4	15	46.9	32	17.5	2	8.313	0.016*
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b> <b>5</b>	<b>13.</b> <b>7</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100.</b> <b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38.29</b> <b>5</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 8 shows that there are many purposes of digital journalism against violence against women. Excitement and suspense are present in *Alghad* with 63%, in *Roya News* with 37%, and there is no any record in *Alrai* about this purpose, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 3.130, which is not significant at level of 0.05. This explains that there were no statistically significant differences between the two electronic newspapers about the purpose of the coverage related to excitement and suspense. Accordingly, *Alghad* and *Roya News* have given considerable attention to the suspense aspect of addressing violence against women in an equal manner. The purpose related to the inform and report was 10.9% from *Alrai*, *Alghad* covered 58.1% and *Roya News* covered with 21.9%, with  $\text{Chi}^2$  value = 29.029, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Finally, the purpose related to awareness and education was 43.8% from *Alrai*, *Alghad* covered 9.4%, and *Roya News* covered 46.9%, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 8.313, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. When the study makes the comparison between the three electronic newspapers about the purpose of the coverage of issues regarding violence against women, the results revealed that there was a significant difference ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 38.295$ ) and its significance is at level of 0.05, whereas the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 8.





**Figure 8. The Purpose of the Coverage of Issues Regarding Violence against Women**

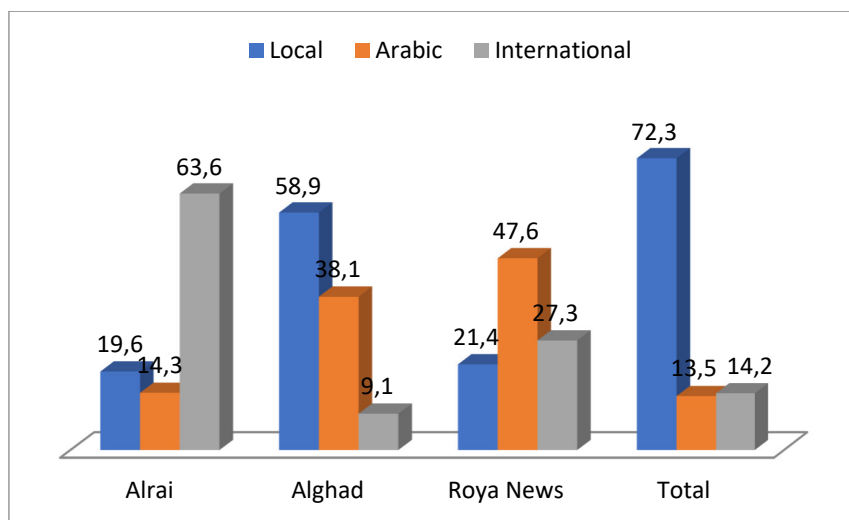
**Table 9. Category on the Geographic Coverage of Violence against Women**

Geographic coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Local	22	19.6	66	58.9	24	21.4	112	72.3	2	33.07	0.00*
Arabic	3	14.3	8	38.1	10	47.6	21	13.5	2	3.714	0.156
International	14	63.6	2	9.1	6	27.3	22	14.2	2	10.18	0.006*
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17.20</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 9 shows that all three news websites had a geographic coverage of violence against women: *Alrai* covered 19.6% of the local violence against women, *Alghad* covered 58.9%, and *Roya News* covered 21.3%, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 33.071, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance in the coverage of local violence against women was in favor of *Alghad*. In other words, *Alghad* website paid more attention to local news than the other websites, proving that local news was among *Alghad*'s top priorities. The results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers regarding Arabic coverage of violence against women, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 3.714, which is not significant at level of 0.05, and variance is found between the frequencies, but it is not significant. This means the three websites paid attention to covering Arabic news of violence against women in a similar manner. Meanwhile, the international coverage of violence against women was higher—*Alrai* = 63.6%, *Alghad* = 9.1%, and *Roya News* = 27.3%—with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 0.182, which had a significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alrai*. In other words, the *Alrai* website paid more attention to international news than others, proving that international news items were among *Alrai*'s top priorities of its agenda.

When a comparison between the three electronic newspapers with regard to the geographic coverage of violence against women was carried out, the results revealed that there was a significant difference, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 17.200, which had a significant level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 9. Moreover, the results revealed that local news was the most preferred media agenda among the three news channels with 72% and a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 33.071, which is significant at level of 0.05.



**Figure 9. Category on the Geographic Coverage of Violence against Women**

### 5.2.2. Results of the News Analysis Based on Agenda-Setting Theory Level 2

On the second level of the Agenda-Setting Theory, several categories of news analysis were created encompassing the attribute of the perpetrators, attributes of the victims, the blaming of the perpetrators or victims, and the position of the news coverage of violence against women, which is analyzed as follows:

Regarding the third question of the thesis (*How does Jordanian digital journalism represent the perpetrators and the victims of violence against women?*) The results show the following:

**Table 10. Attributes of the Perpetrators**

Attribute of the perpetrators	Alrai		Alghad		Roya News		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Strong	---	---	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Repulsive	8	12.1	30	45.5	28	42.4	66	44.0	2	13.455	0.001*
Without attribute	17	20.2	45	53.6	22	26.2	84	56.0	2	15.929	0.000*
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25.000</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

The results reveal that none of the three electronic news channels covered the “strong” attribute. The “repulsive” trait was covered—*Alrai* = 12.1%, *Alghad* = 45.5%, and *Roya News* = 2.4%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 13.455, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Mostly, Jordanian digital journalism as per my sample represents the perpetrators without any attribute—*Alrai* = 20.2%, *Alghad* = 53.6%, *Roya News* = 26.2%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 15.929, which had a significant level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Table 10 shows that Chi<sup>2</sup> value = 25.000 for the total attribute of perpetrators and its significant at level of 0.05, while the variance in the level of covering was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 10.

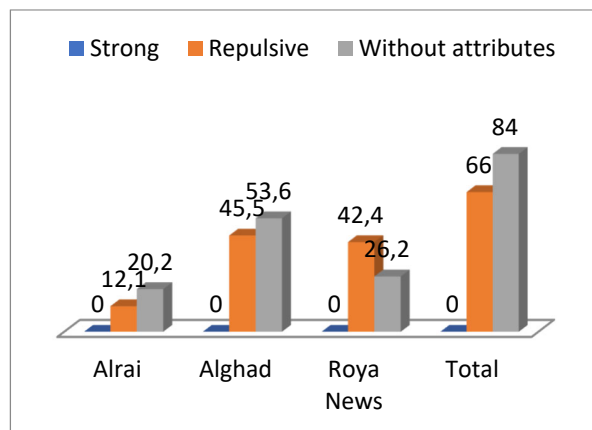


Figure 10. Attribute of the Perpetrators

**Table 11. Attributes of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Age<sup>18</sup>**

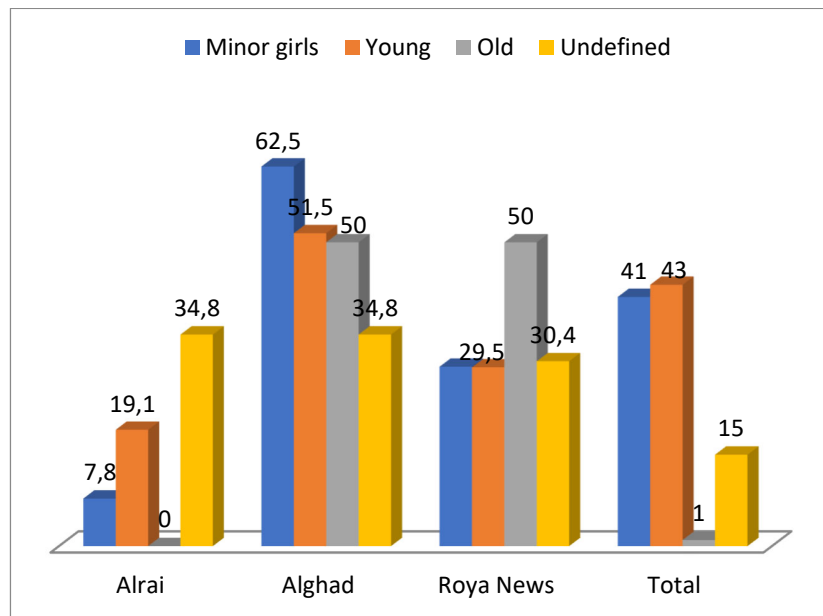
Age	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Minor girls	5	7.8	40	62.5	19	29.5	64	41.0	2	29.094	0.00*
Young	13	19.1	35	51.5	20	29.4	68	43.0	2	11.147	0.004*
Old	--	--	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	1.0	1	0.00	1.00
Undefined	8	34.8	8	34.8	7	30.4	23	15.0	2	0.087	0.957
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32.955</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

The results reveal the attributes of the victims of violence against women among minor girls—*Alrai* = 7.8%, *Alghad* = 62.5%, *Roya News* = 29.5%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 29.094, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of young-age victims was 19.1% by *Alrai*, 51.5% by *Alghad*, and 29.4% by *Roya News*, and Chi<sup>2</sup> value was significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of old age victims was 50% by *Alghad* and 50% by *Roya News*, which is significant at a level more than 0.05. The coverage of undefined age attributes of the victims of violence against women was 34.8% by *Alrai* and *Alghad* and 30% by *Roya News*, which indicates that there were no statistically significant differences, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 0.087, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The results revealed that the coverage of most of the attributes of the victims of violence against women was 53.5% by *Alghad*, 16.6% by *Alrai*, and 29.9% by *Roya News*, as shown in Figure 11. Finally,

<sup>18</sup> This thesis divides the age group into three categories: under 18 years old (minors), 18-54 years old (young), and 55 and above (old).

the victims featured on the three websites were mostly younger in age, with 43% belonging to that age group.



**Figure 11. Attribute of the Victims of Violence Against Women Regarding Age**

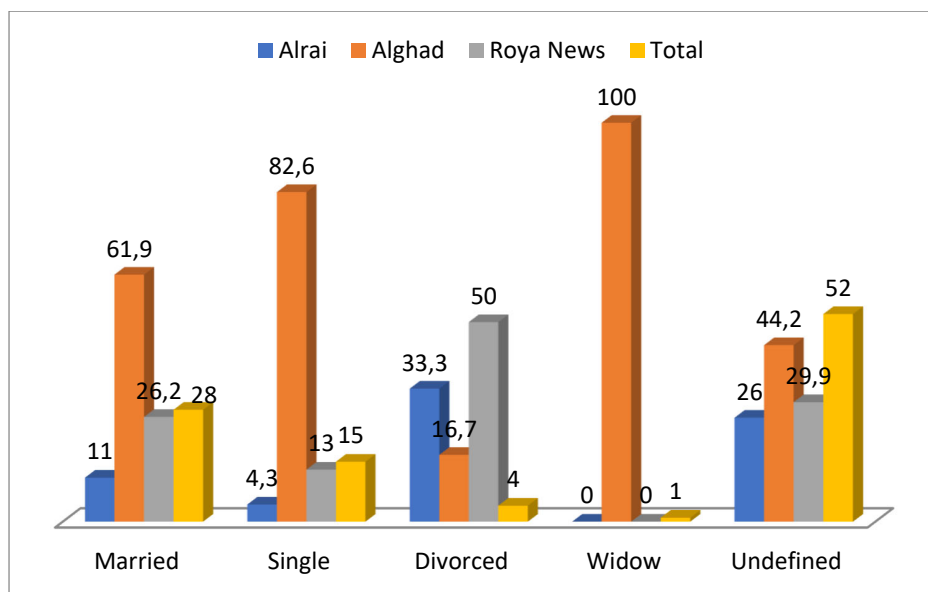
**Table 12. Attributes of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Marital Status**

Marital status	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Married	5	11.0	26	61.9	11	26.2	42	28.0	2	16.71	0.00*
Single	1	4.3	19	82.6	3	13.0	23	15.0	2	25.39	0.00*
Divorced	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	6	4.0	2	1.000	0.607
Widow	0	0.00	2	100.0	0	0.00	2	1.0	-	-	-

Undefined	20	26.0	34	44.2	24	29.9	78	52.0	2	4.234	0.120
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.23</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

The results reveal the attribute of the victims of violence against women among married women—*Alrai* = 11%, *Alghad* = 61.9%, and *Roya News* = 26.2%—with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 16.714, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of the attribute of victims who were single was 4.3% by *Alrai*, 82.6% by *Alghad*, and 13% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value that was significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of the attribute of victims who were divorced was 33.3% by *Alrai*, 16.7% by *Alghad*, and 50% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.000, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of widows was 100% in *Alghad*. The coverage of the undefined attribute of the victims of violence against women was 26% by *Alrai*, 44.2% by *Alghad*, and 29.9% by *Roya News*, which indicates that there were no statistically significant differences, and the Chi<sup>2</sup> value was 4.234, which is not significant at level of 0.05. Finally, the results revealed that most of the attributes of the victims of violence against women covered by *Alghad* was 55%, *Alrai* 18.5%, and *Roya News* 26.5%, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 33.232, which was significant at level of 0.00, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 12.



**Figure 12. Attribute of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Marital Status**

**Table 13. Attributes of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Occupation**

Employment	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Journalist	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	1.3	1	0.000	1.00
Political candidate	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	6	3.9	2	1.000	0.607
Unemployed	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	1.9	2	0.000	1.000
Housewife	1	11.1	3	33.3	5	55.6	9	5.8	2	2.667	0.264
Celebrities	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	1.9	2	0.000	1.000
Employed	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	2.6	2	0.500	0.779
Student	1	8.3	8	66.7	3	25.0	12	7.8	2	6.500	0.039*

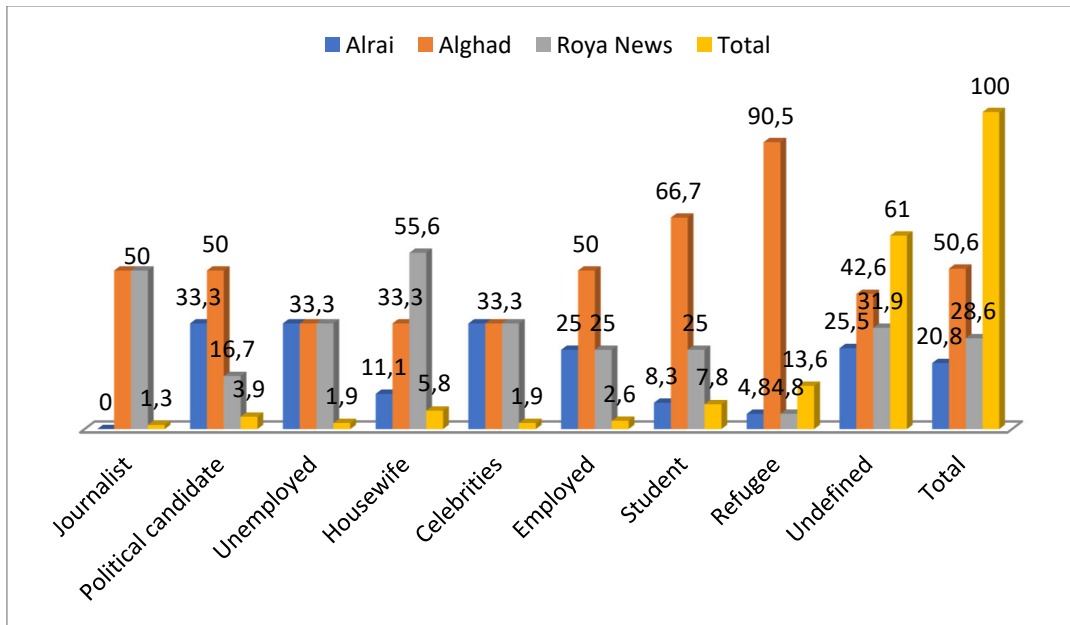


Refugee	1	4.8	19	90.5	1	4.8	21	13.6	2	30.857	0.00*
Undefined	24	25.5	40	42.6	30	31.9	94	61.0	2	4.170	0.124
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22.182</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

The results reveal that the coverage of the attribute of the victims of violence against women among journalists was 50% by *Alghad* and 50% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.00, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of political candidate attributes of victims was 33.3% by *Alrai*, 50% by *Alghad*, and 16.7% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value that was not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of the unemployed attributes of victims was 33.3% by each of *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.000, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of housewives was 11.1% by *Alrai*, 33.3% by *Alghad*, and 55.6% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 2.667, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of celebrity victims of violence against women was equal between the three electronic newspapers, with 33.3% for each and a Chi<sup>2</sup> value not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of violence against employed women was 25% by *Alrai* and *Roya News* and 50% by *Alghad*, and the variance between them was not significant. The coverage of student violence varied between the three electronic newspapers—(*Alrai* = 8.3%, *Alghad* = 66.7%), and *Roya News* = 25%, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 6.500, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of violence against refugee women was 4.8% each by *Alrai* and *Roya News* and 90.5% by *Alghad*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 30.857, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. On the other hand, the undefined type of violence against women was 25.5% by *Alrai*, 42.6% by *Alghad*, and 31.9% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 4.170, which is not significant

at level of 0.05. The total of employed victims of violence against women was in favor of *Alghad* (50.6%) compared with *Alrai* (2.8%) and *Roya News* (28.6%), with a  $\chi^2$  value of 22.182, which is significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 13.



**Figure 13. Attributes of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Employment**

**Table 14. Attribute of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Education**

Education	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Educated	-	-	5	55.6	4	44.4	9	6.4	1	0.111	0.739
Uneducated	1	3.8	23	88.5	2	7.7	26	18.4	2	35.615	0.016
Undefined	26	24.5	49	46.2	31	29.2	106	75.2	2	8.283	0.00*

<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19.</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30.443</b>	<b>0.00*</b>
		<b>3</b>									

significant at level of (0.05).

The results reveal that the coverage of the attribute of the victims of violence against women as “educated” was 55.6% by *Alghad* and 44.4% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 0.111, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The coverage of the “uneducated” attribute of the victims was 3.8% by *Alrai*, 88.5% by *Alghad*, and 7.7% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 35.615, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The coverage of the “undefined” attribute of victims was 24.5% by *Alrai*, 46.2% by *Alghad*, and 29.2% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 8.283, which is significant at level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The study compared the coverage of the education attribute of the victims of violence against women between the three electronic newspapers, and the results revealed that the variance was in favor of *Alghad* by 55%, as shown in Figure 14.

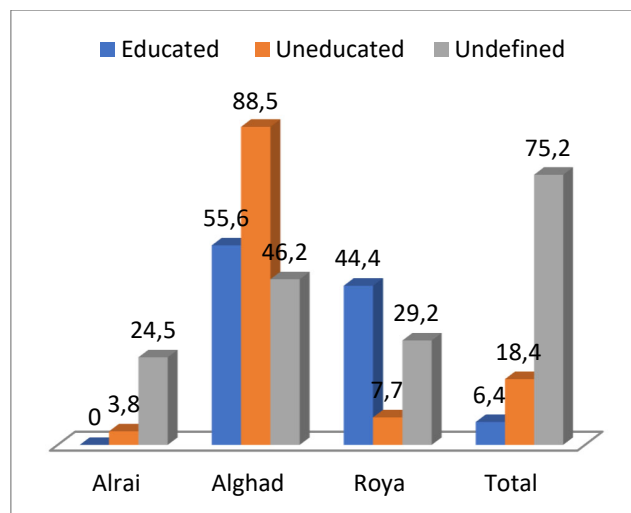


Figure 14. Attributes of the Victims of Violence against Women Regarding Education

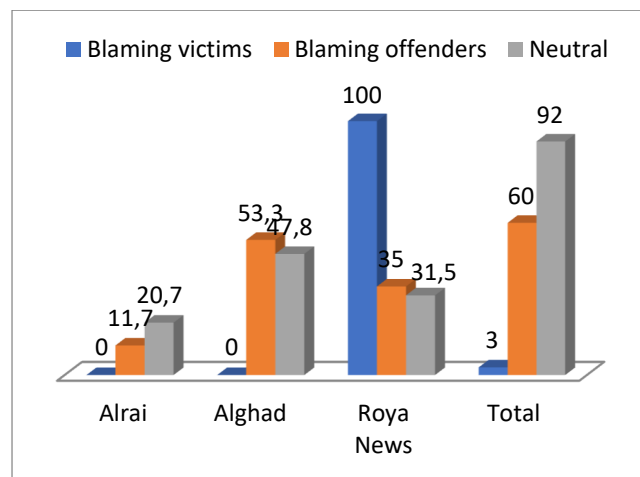
**Table 15. Category of Blaming the perpetrators or the Victims of Violence against Women**

Blaming	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Blaming victims	-	00	-	00	3	100.0	3	1.9	--	--	--
Blaming offenders	7	11.7	32	53.3	21	35.0	60	38.7	2	15.700	0.00*
Neutral	19	20.7	44	47.8	29	31.5	92	59.4	2	10.326	0.006*
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24.245</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant level of (0.05).

Table 15 shows that there is no mention of blaming victims of violence against women by *Alrai* or *Alghad*, while *Roya News* highlighted this aspect three times and with 100% coverage. The coverage of blaming offenders was 11.7% by *Alrai*, 53.3% by *Alghad*, and 35% by *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 15.700, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. In other words, *Alghad* took a more negative stance toward the perpetrators when it came to accusing him of his cruel acts toward the victim compared with other newspapers. The coverage of the neutral position toward offenders or the victims of violence against women was 20.7% in *Alrai*, 47.8% in *Alghad*, and 31.5% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 10.326, which was significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The results revealed that there

were statistically significant differences in the three electronic newspapers related to blaming the perpetrators or the victims of violence against women or neutral position, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 24.245, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* at 49%. In conclusion, the results revealed that the “neutral” position toward the perpetrators or victims was most frequently reported in the news items, at the rate of 59.4%.



**Figure 15. Category of Blaming the Offenders or the Victims of Violence Against Women**

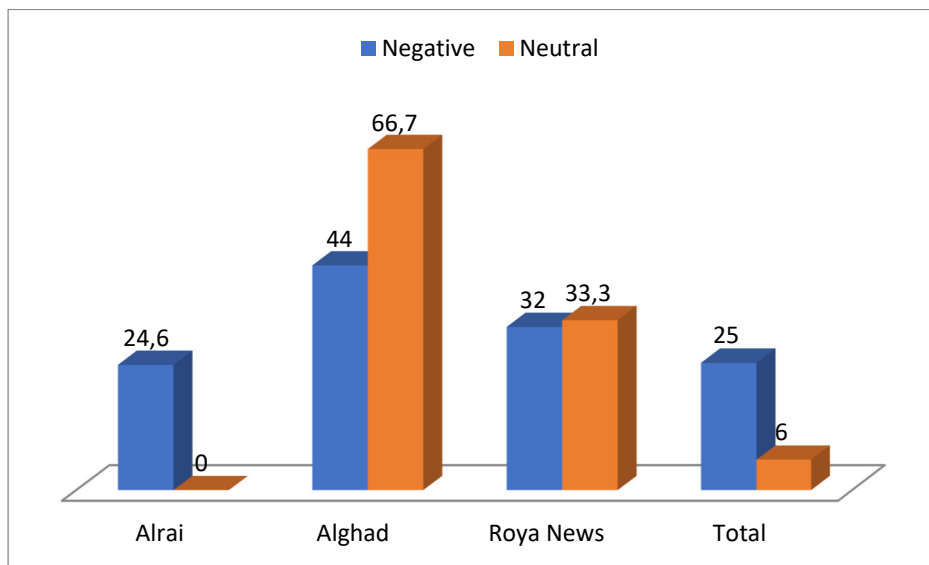
Regarding the fourth question of the thesis (*What is the dominant position of Jordanian digital journalism when addressing the issue of violence against women?*), the result are:

**Table 16. Position of the News Coverage of Physical Violence against Women**

Position of the news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	6	24.6	11	44.0	8	32.0	25	80.6	2	1.520	0.468
Neutral	0	0.00	4	66.7	2	33.3	6	19.4	1	0.667	0.414
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.935</b>	<b>0.140</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 16 shows that the negative position of the news coverage of physical violence against women was 24.6% in *Alrai*, 44 % in *Alghad*, and 32% in *Roya News*, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 1.520, and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The results revealed that the neutral position of the news coverage of physical violence against women was 66.7% in *Alghad* and 33.3 in *Roya News*, with a  $\text{Chi}^2$  value of 0.667, and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 16. However, in total results, the negative position was most frequently addressed with regard to physical violence through the three websites by 80.6%.



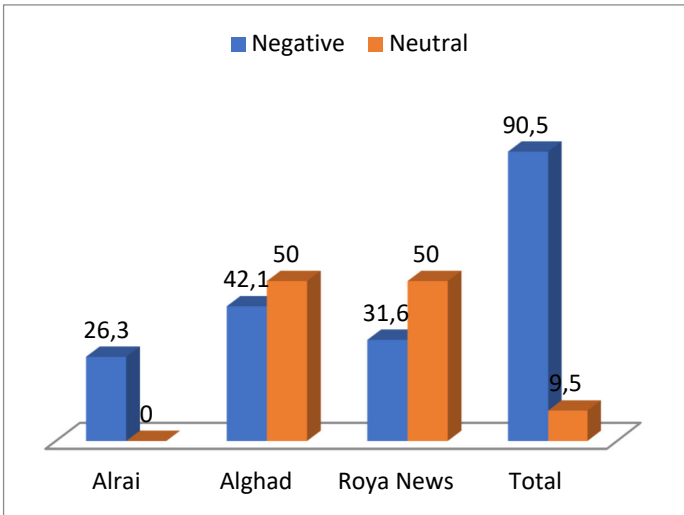
**Figure 16. Position of the News Coverage of Physical Violence against Women**

**Table 17. Position of the News Coverage of Emotional Violence against Women**

Position of the news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	5	26.3	8	42.1	6	31.6	19	90.5	2	0.737	0.69 2

Neutral	0	00	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	9.5	1	0.000	1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.143</b>	<b>0.56</b>
											<b>5</b>

Table 17 shows that the negative position of the news coverage of emotional violence against women was 26.3% in *Alrai*, 42.1% in *Alghad*, and 31.6% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 0.737, and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The results revealed that the neutral position of the news coverage of emotional violence against women was 50% in both *Alghad* and *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value = 0.00, and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the position of the news coverage of emotional violence against women, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.143, which is significant at level more than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of the negative position in the three websites, as shown in Figure 17. Accordingly, the views of the three newspapers on emotional violence are more negative than neutral.



**Figure 17. Position of the News Coverage of Emotional Violence against Women**

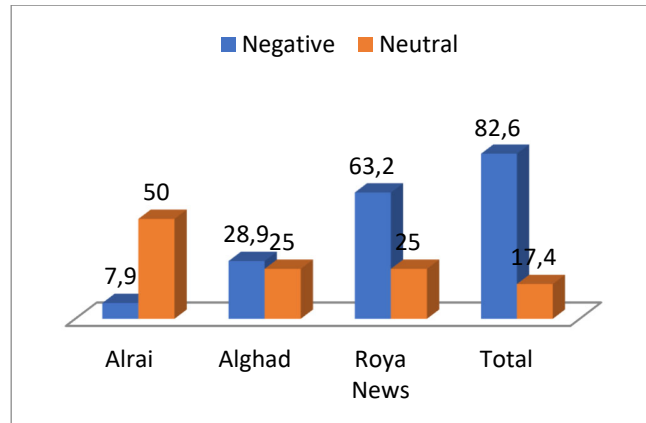
**Table 18. Position the News Coverage of Sexual Violence against Women**

Position of news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	3	7.9	11	28.9	24	63.2	38	82.6	2	17.73 7	0.00*
Neutral	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0	8	17.4	2	1.000	0.607
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12.30</b> <b>4</b>	<b>0.002*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 18 shows that the position of the news coverage of sexual violence against women was 7.9% in *Alrai*, 28.9% in *Alghad*, and 63.2% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 17.737, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. The results revealed that the neutral position of the news coverage of sexual violence against women was 50% in *Alrai* and 50% distributed between *Alghad* and *Roya News*, i.e., 25% each, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.00, and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the position of the news coverage of sexual violence against women in the three electronic newspapers, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 12.304, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of the negative position in *Roya News*, as shown in Figure 18.





**Figure 18. Position of the News Coverage of Sexual Violence against Women**

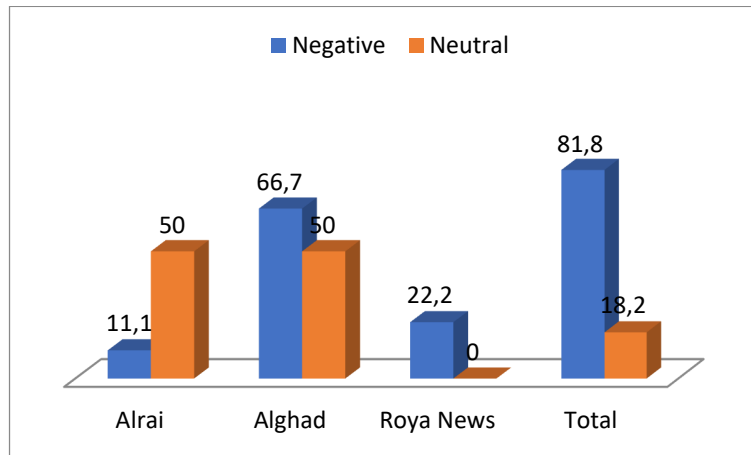
**Table 19. Position of the News Coverage of Honor Crimes against Women**

Position of news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	2	11.1	12	66.7	4	22.2	18	81.8	2	9.333	0.009*
Neutral	2	50.0	2	50.0	--	--	4	18.2	1	0.00	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9.091</b>	<b>0.011*</b>

\*: significant at level of (0.05).

Table 19 shows that the negative position of the news coverage of honor crimes against women was 11.1% in *Alrai*, 66.7% in *Alghad*, and 22.2% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 9.333, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The results revealed that the neutral position of the news coverage of honor crimes against women was 50% in *Alrai* and 50% in *Alghad*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> test value of 0.00, which is not significant at level of 0.05. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the position of the news

coverage of honor crimes against women, with a  $\chi^2$  value of 9.091, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of the negative position in *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 19.



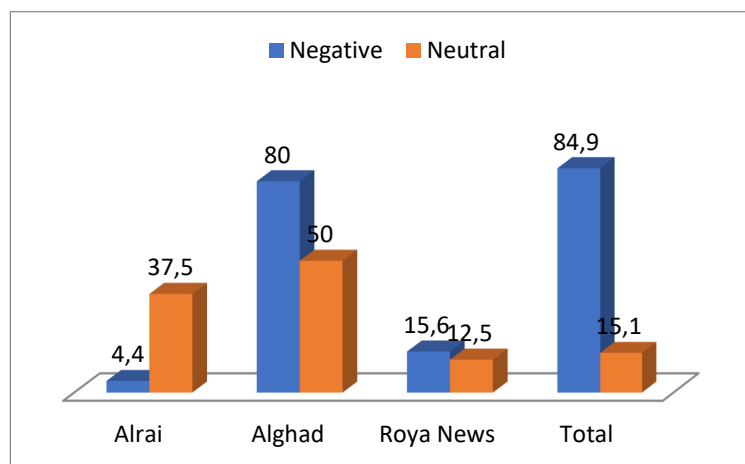
**Figure 19. Position of the News Coverage of Honor Crimes against Women**

**Table 20. Position of the News Coverage of Child Marriage**

Position of news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	2	4.4	36	80.0	7	15.6	45	84.9	2	44.93	0.00*
Neutral	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	8	15.1	2	1.750	0.417
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42.60</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 20 shows that the negative position of the news coverage of child marriage was 4.4% in *Alrai*, 80.0% in *Alghad*, and 15.6% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 44.930, which is significant at the level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. The results revealed that the neutral position of the news coverage of child marriage was 37.5% in *Alrai*, 50% in *Alghad*, and 12.5% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 1.750, and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers with regard to position of the news coverage of child marriage, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 42.604, which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of the negative position in *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 20.



**Figure 20. Position of the News Coverage of Child Marriage**

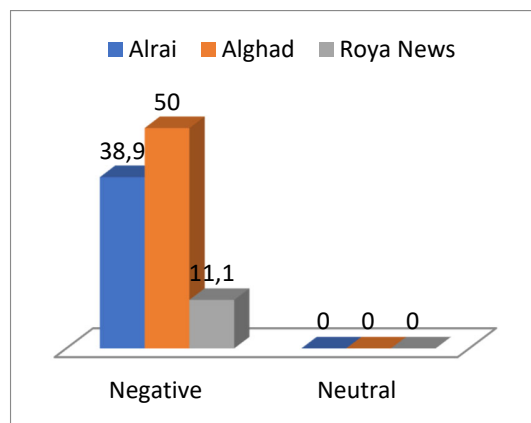
**Table 21. Position of the News Coverage of Digital Violence against Women**

Position of news coverage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative	7	38.9	9	50.0	2	11.1	18	100.0	2	4.333	0.115

Neutral	--	--	--	-	--	--	--	--	--		
Total	7	38.9	9	50.0	2	11.1	18	100.0	2	4.333`	0.115

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 21 shows that the negative position of the news coverage of digital violence was 38.9% in *Alrai*, 50.0% in *Alghad*, and 11.1% in *Roya News*, with a Chi<sup>2</sup> value of 4.333, which is not significant at level of 0.05, and this means the position of the three websites toward digital violence are similar.



**Figure 21. Position the News Coverage of Digital Violence against Women**

### 5.2.3. Results of the News Analysis Based on Framing Theory

The SPSS software has been used to conduct quantitative surveys to assess the reporting frequency of the issues on violence against women by news media according to the news frames, which includes the following topics: definition of the problem, causes, negative effects, and the solutions, as displayed below.

Regarding the fifth question of the thesis (*What is the role of Jordanian digital journalism in educating the public about violence against women?*), the results are follows:

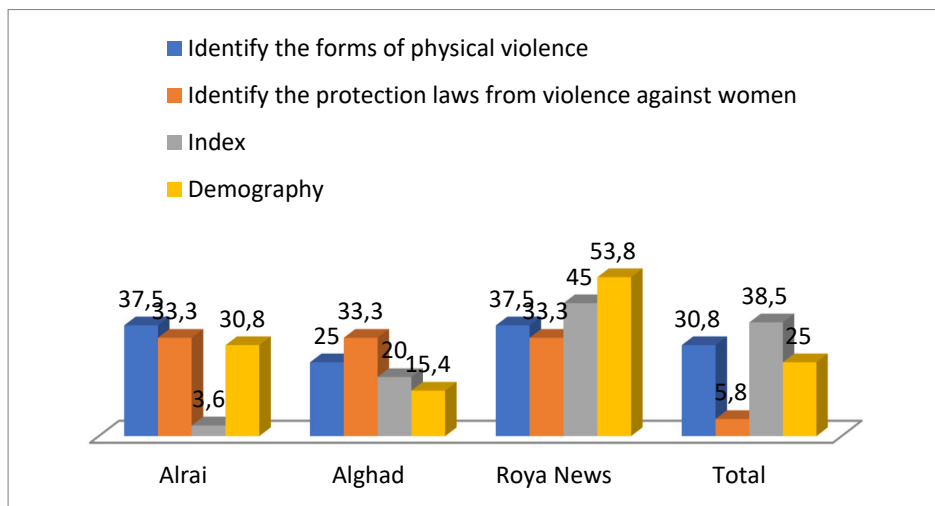
### Regarding Physical Violence

**Table 22. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Physical Violence**

Frame category Identify specific issue	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Tot al	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Identify the forms of physical violence	6	37.5	4	25.0	6	37.5	16	30.8	2	0.50 0	0.779
Identify the protection laws from physical violence against women	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	5.8	2	0.00 0	1.000
Index	7	3.6	4	20.0	9	45.0	20	38.5	2	1.90 0	0.387
Demography	4	30.8	2	15.4	7	53.8	13	25.0	2	2.92 3	0.232
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.</b> <b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.19</b> <b>2</b>	<b>0.123</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 22 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of physical violence related to the following: identifying the forms of physical violence, identifying the protection laws from violence against women, index, and demography (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.500, 0.000, 1.900, 2.923, and 4.192), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 22. This indicated that during 2020 the news websites addressed the volume of the first frame of physical violence (“Identify the physical violence”) in terms of types, protection laws, and index of spreading and its demography in a similar manner.



**Figure 22. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Physical Violence**

**Table 23. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Physical Violence**

Frame category											
Diagnosing the causes of physical violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					

Poverty or economic situation	4	44.4	3	33.3	2	22.2	9	14.3	2	0.667	0.717
Inheritance of traditions that offend and discriminate women between both sexes	1	8.3	6	50.0	5	41.7	12	19.0	2	3.500	0.174
Exposure to physical violence since childhood	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	4.8	2	0.000	1.000
Failure to study	1	25.0	-	-	3	75.0	4	6.3	1	1.000	0.317
Family disputes	3	37.5	3	37.5	2	25.0	8	12.7	2	0.250	0.882
The wife's betrayal of her husband	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	5	7.9	2	1.600	0.449
Fear of reporting violence and	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-	4	6.3	1	1.000	0.317

filing a complaint											
COVID-19 pandemic	9	50.0	4	22.2	5	27.8	18	28.6	2	2.333	0.311
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.381</b>	<b>0.827</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 23 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of physical violence related to the following: Poverty or economic situation, inheritance of customs and traditions that offend and discriminate women between both sexes, exposure to physical violence since childhood, failure to study, family disputes, the wife’s betrayal of her husband, fear of reporting violence and filing a complaint, and COVID-19 pandemic, and Total (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.667, 3.500, 0.000, 1.000, 0.250, 1.600, 1.000, 2.333, and 0.381), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 23. This proves that the three websites provided close attention to addressing the causes of physical violence against women in 2020 as discussed across the online news.



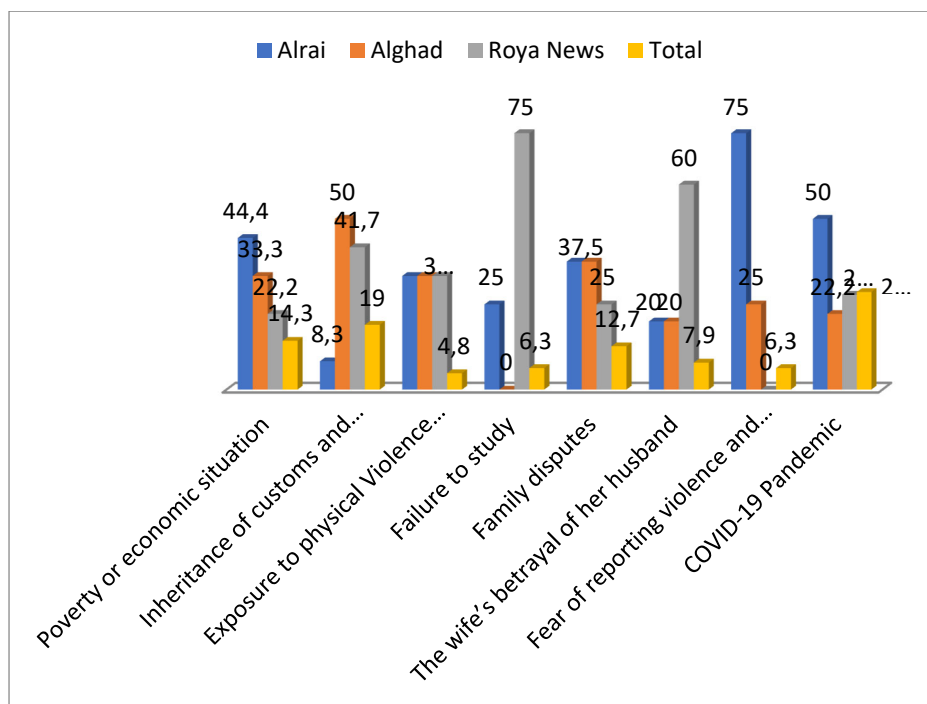


Figure 23. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Physical Violence

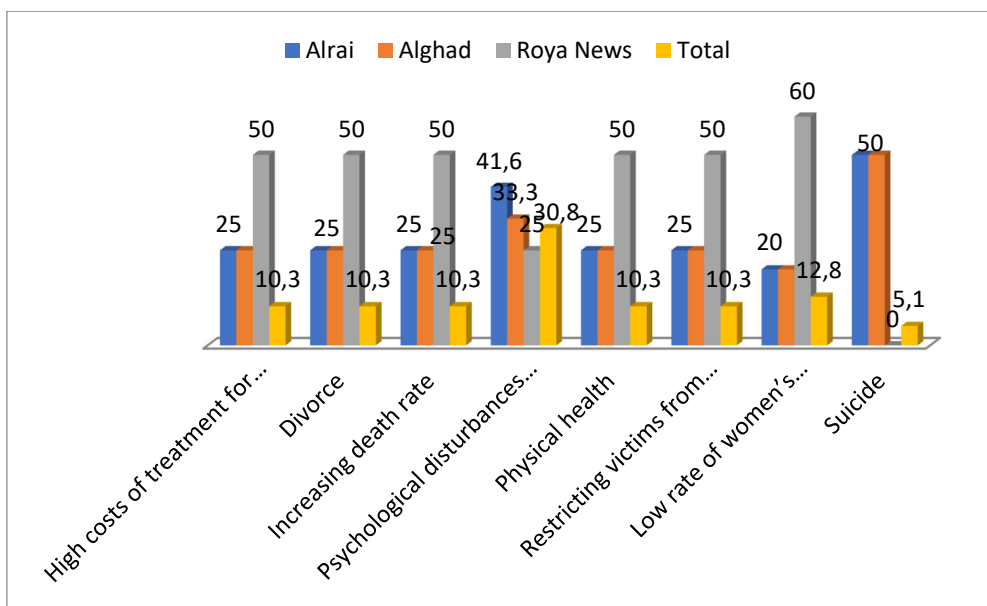
Table 24. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Physical Violence

Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative effects of physical violence											
High costs of treatment for physical and psychological injuries	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	10.3	2	4.333	0.115
Divorce	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	10.3	2	0.500	0.779

Increasing death rate	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	10.3	2	0.500	0.779
Psychological disturbances such depression and anxiety and low of self esteem	5	41.6	4	33.3	3	25.0	12	30.8	2	0.500	0.779
Physical health	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	10.3	2	0.500	0.779
Restricting victims from performing their role inside home or at workplace	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	10.3	2	0.500	0.779
Low rate of women's economic participation	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	5	12.8	2	1.600	0.449
Suicide	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	2	5.1	1	0.000	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.077</b>	<b>0.584</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 24 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #3 of physical violence related to the following: High costs of treatment for physical and psychological injuries, divorce, increasing death rate, psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety, low of self-esteem, physical health, restricting victims from performing their role at home or workplace, low rate of women’s economic participation, and suicide ( $\chi^2$  values = 4.333, 0.500, 0.500, 0.500, 0.500, 0.500, 1.600, 0.000, and 1.077), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 24. It can be seen from this that *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* have a homogenous interest in treating the negative effects of practicing physical violence against women in 2020.



**Figure 24. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Physical Violence**

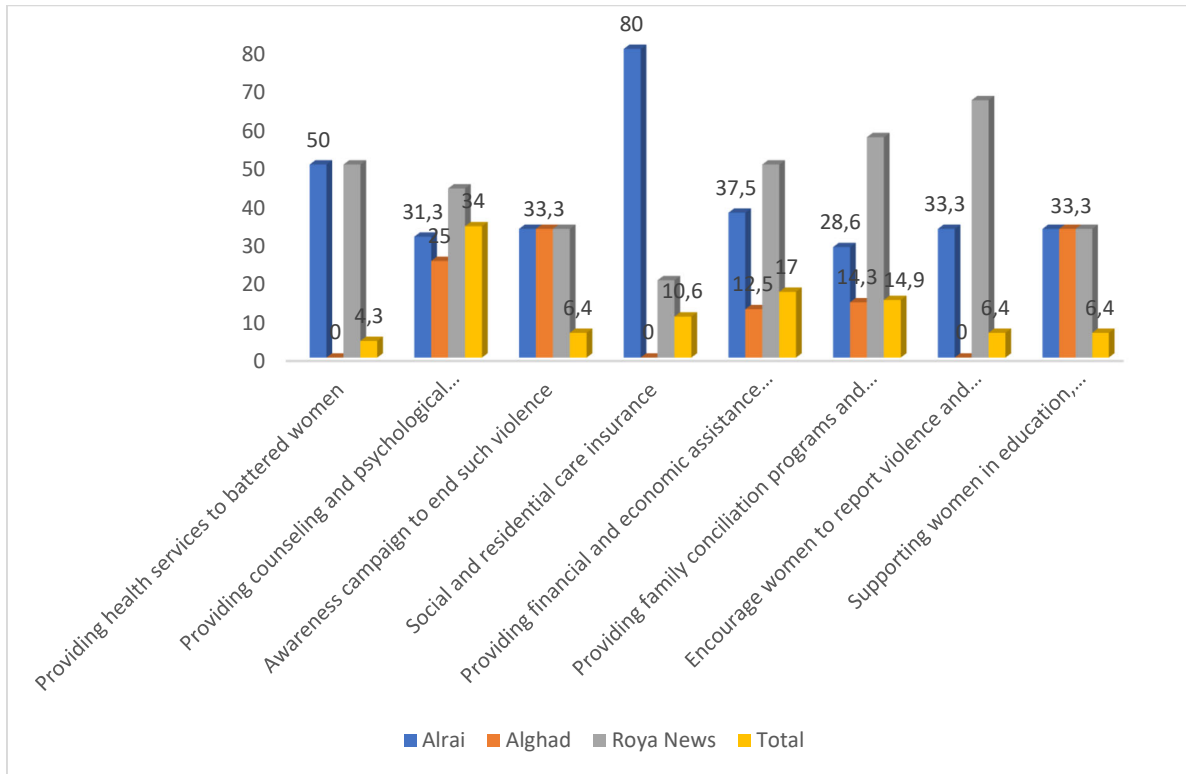
**Table 25. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Physical Violence**

Frame category											
Proposing solutions to eliminate physical violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Providing health services to battered women	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	50.0	2	4.3	2	0.00	1.00
Providing counseling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes	5	31.3	4	25.0	7	43.8	16	34.0	2	0.875	0.64
Awareness campaign to end such violence	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	6.4	2	0.00	1.00
Social and residential care insurance	4	80.0	0	0.00	1	20.0	5	10.6	1	1.800	0.18
Providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50.0	8	17.0	2	1.750	0.41
Providing family conciliation programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems	2	28.6	1	14.3	4	57.1	7	14.9	2	2.000	0.36

Encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence	1	33.3	0	0.00	2	66.7	3	6.4	1	0.333	0.564
Supporting women in education, employment, and participation	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	6.4	2	0.00	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.915</b>	<b>0.052</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 25 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of physical violence related to the following: Providing health services to battered women, providing counseling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes, awareness campaigns to end such violence, social and residential care insurance, providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers, providing family conciliation programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems, encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence, and supporting women in education, employment, and participation (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.00, 0.875, 0.00, 1.800, 1.750, 2.000, 0.333, 0.00, and 5.915), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 25. This shows that the *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roy News* stories focused on similar solutions to end physical violence in a similar pattern.



**Figure 25. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Physical Violence**

**Regarding Emotional Violence**

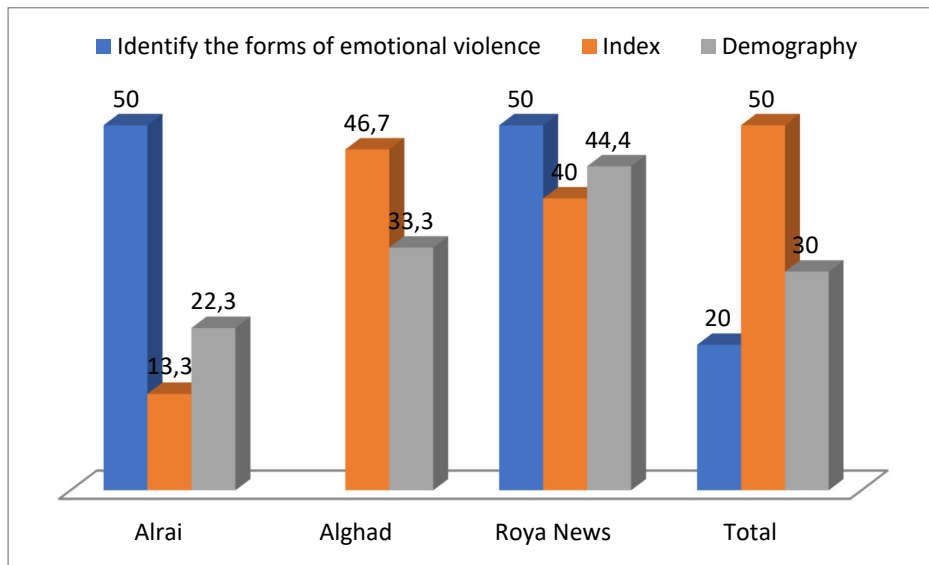
**Table 26. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Emotional Violence**

Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		To tal	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Identify specific issue											
Identify the forms of emotional violence	3	50.0	0		3	50.0	6	20.0	1	0.00	1.00
Index	2	13.3	7	46.7	6	40.0	15	50.0	2	1.98	0.76
									4		2

Demography	2	22.3	3	33.3	4	44.4	9	30.0	2	3.76	0.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.62</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 26 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of emotional violence related to the following: Identify the forms of emotional violence, index, and demography ( $\text{Chi}^2$  values =0.000, 1.984, 3.761, and 3.334), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 26. Based on this, the three websites covered frame 1 of emotional violence consistently.



**Figure 26. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Emotional Violence**

**Table 27. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Emotional Violence**

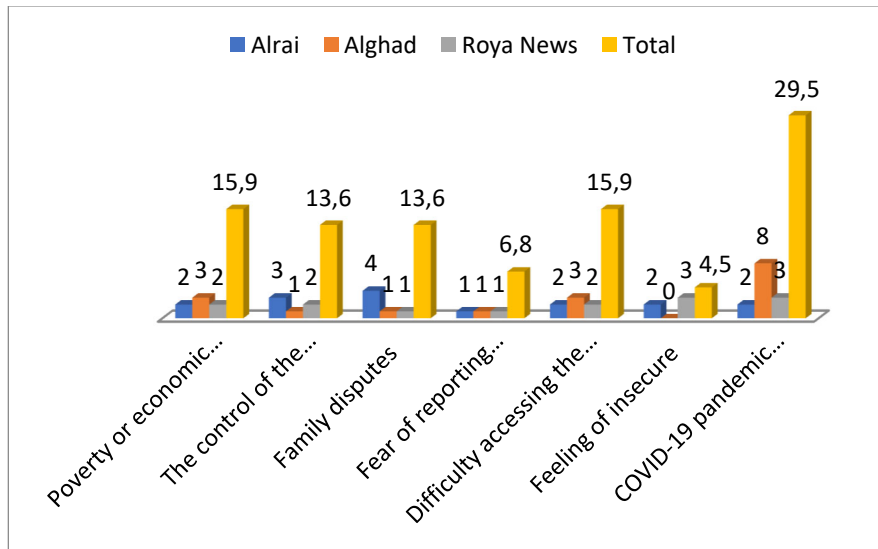
Frame category											
Diagnosing the causes of emotional violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Poverty or economic situation	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	28.6	7	15.9	2	0.286	0.867
The control of the patriarchal society	3	50.0	1	16.7	2	33.3	6	13.6	2	1.000	0.607
Family disputes	4	66.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	6	13.6	2	3.000	0.223
Fear of reporting violence and filing a complaint	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	6.8	2	0.000	1.000
Difficulty accessing the Family Protection	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	28.6	7	15.9	2	0.286	0.867
Feeling of insecure	2	40.0	--	--	3	60.0	2	4.5	1	0.200	0.655
COVID-19 pandemic lockdown	2	15.4	8	61,5	3	23.1	13	29.5	2	4.769	0.092
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.409</b>	<b>0.494</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 27 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of emotional violence related to the following: Poverty or economic situation, the control of the patriarchal society, family disputes, fear of reporting violence and filing



a complaint, difficulty accessing the Family Protection Centre during the curfew period, Feeling of insecure, COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.286, 1.000, 3.000, 0.000, 0.286, 0.200, 4.769, and 1.409), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 27.



**Figure 27. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Emotional Violence**

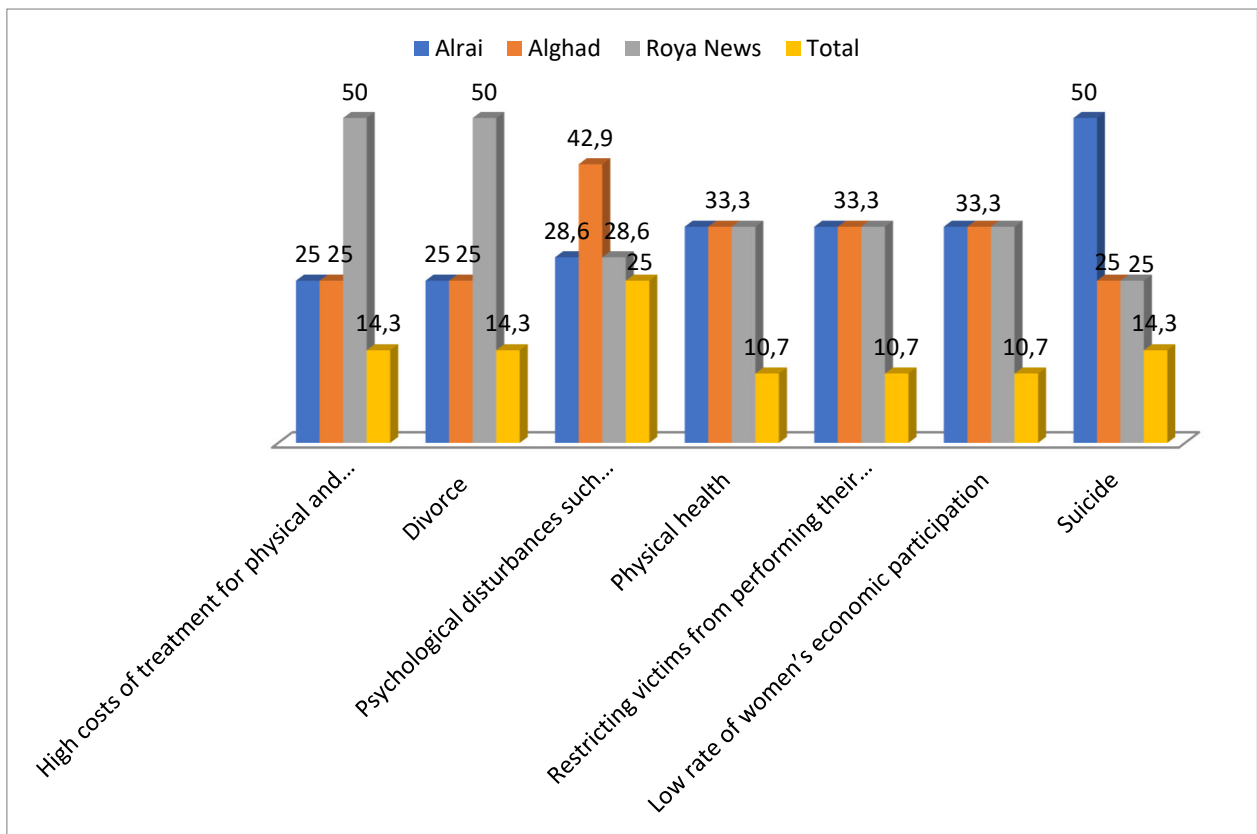
**Table 28. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Emotional Violence**

Frame category	The negative effects of emotional violence						Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
High costs of treatment for physical and psychological injuries	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	14.3	2	0.50	0.779

Divorce	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	14.3	2	0.50	0.779
Psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety and low self-esteem	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	28.6	7	25.0	2	0.286	0.867
Physical health	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	10.7	2	0.00	1.000
Restricting victims from performing their role inside home or at workplace	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	10.7	2	0.00	1.000
Low rate of women's economic participation	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	10.7	2	0.00	1.000
Suicide	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	4	14.3	2	0.50	0.779
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.071</b>	<b>0.965</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 28 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #3 of emotional violence related to the following: High costs of treatment for physical and psychological injuries, divorce, psychological disturbances such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, physical health, restricting victims from performing their role at home or workplace, low rate of women’s economic participation, and suicide (Chi<sup>2</sup> values =0.500, 0.500, 0.286, 0.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.500, and 0.071), which is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 28. This reflects that the sample tackled the negative effect of emotional violence homogenously.



**Figure 28. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Emotional Violence**

**Table 29. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Emotional Violence**

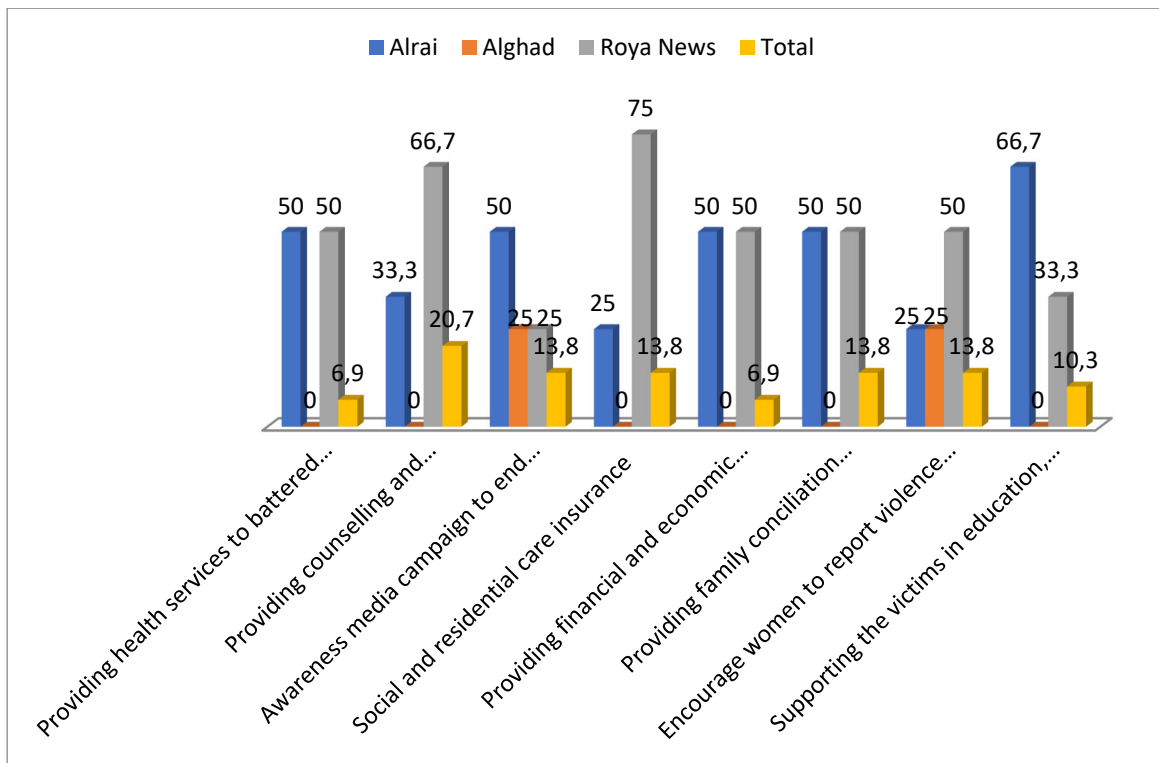
Frame category											
Proposing solutions to eliminate emotional violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Providing health services to battered women	1	50.0	0	0.0 0	1	50.0	2	6.9	1	0.00 0	1.00
Providing counselling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes	2	33.3	0	--	4	66.7	6	20.7	1	0.66 7	0.414
Awareness media campaign to end such violence	2	50.0	1	25. 0	1	25.0	4	13.8	2	0.50 0	0.779
Social and residential care insurance	1	25.0	0	--	3	75.0	4	13.8	1	1.00 0	0.317
Providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers	1	50.0	0	--	1	50.0	2	6.9	1	0.00 0	1.000
Providing family conciliation	2	50.0	0	--	2	50.0	4	13.8	1	0.00 0	1.000

programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems											
Encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	13.8	2	0.50	0.779
Supporting the victims in education, employment and participation	2	66.7	0	--	1	33.3	3	10.3	1	0.33	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>9.58</b>	<b>0.008</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 29 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of emotional violence related to the following: Providing health services to battered women, providing counseling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes, awareness media campaign to end such violence, providing social and residential care insurance, providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers, providing family conciliation programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems, encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence, supporting the victims in education, employment, and

participation ( $\text{Chi}^2$  values = 0.000, 0.667, 0.500, 1.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.500, and 0.333), which is not significant at level of 0.05, but the  $\text{Chi}^2$  test value for the total was 9.586, with significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News* for the coverage of frame 4 of emotional violence, as shown in Figure 29. This means *Roya News* is the website that addressed frame 4 (solutions to eliminate emotional violence) the most compared to other websites by 51.7%.



**Figure 29. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Emotional Violence**

**Regarding Sexual Violence**

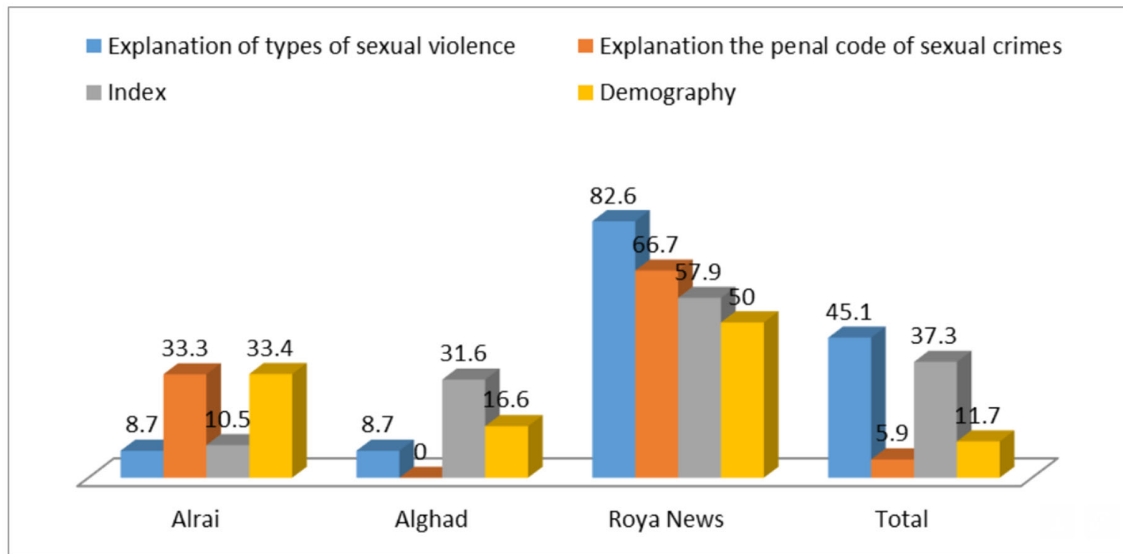
**Table 30. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Sexual Violence**

Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Identify specific issue	F	%	F	%	F	%					
	.										

Explanation of types of sexual violence	2	8.7	2	8.7	19	82.6	23	45.1	2	12.76	0.00*
Explanation the penal code of sexual crimes	1	33.3	--	--	2	66.7	3	5.9	1	0.675	0.612
Index	2	10.5	6	31.6	11	57.9	19	37.3	2	2.761	0.561
Demography	2	33.4	1	16.6	3	50.0	6	11.7	2	0.887	0.568
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34.91</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 30 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of sexual violence related to the following: Explanation of types of sexual violence, and the coverage is 8.7% each by *Alrai* and *Alghad* and 82.6% by *Roya News* (Chi<sup>2</sup> value = 12.760), which is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. On the other hand, the results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of sexual violence related to the following: Explanation the penal code of sexual crimes, index, and demography, which is not at a significant level of 0.05. The Chi<sup>2</sup> test value for the total was 34.914 and the variance was in favor of *Roya News* for the coverage of frame #1 of sexual violence as shown in Figure 30. This proves that *Roya News* addressed frame #1 of sexual violence at a rate of 68.7%, which is the highest rate of all three websites.



**Figure 30. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Sexual Violence**

**Table 31. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Sexual Violence**

Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Diagnosing the causes of sexual violence	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Poverty and unemployment	1	16.7	1	16.7	4	66.7	6	12.0	2	3.00	0.22
Childhood emotional neglect and psychological trauma	1	14.3	1	14.3	5	71.4	7	14.0	2	4.57	0.10

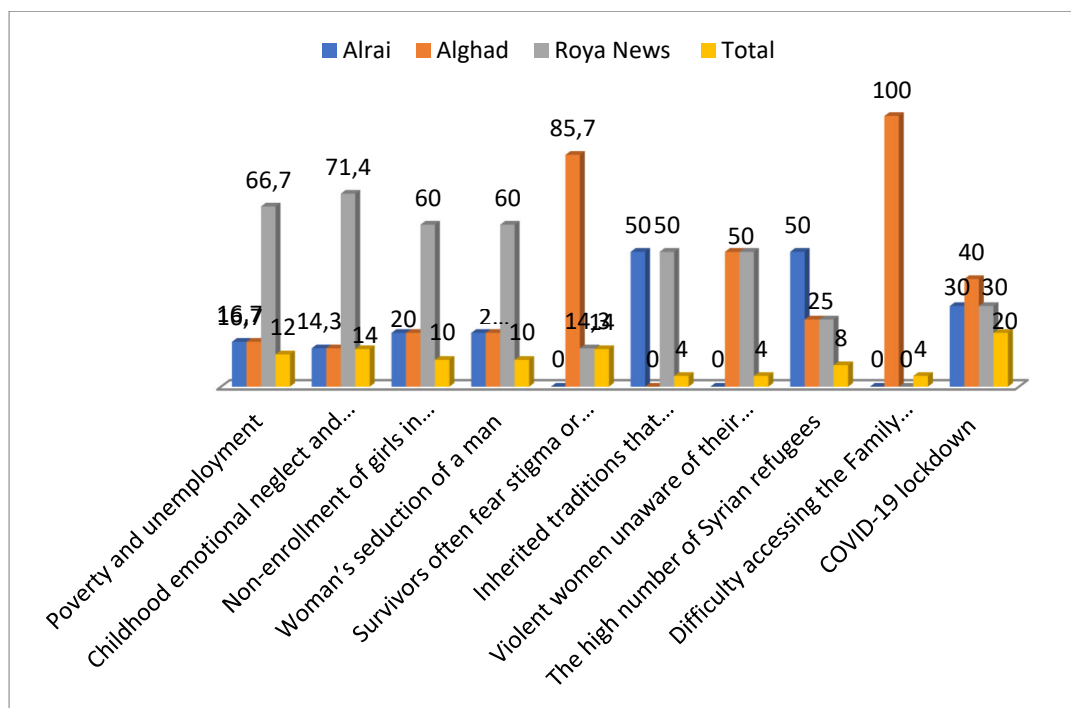


Non-enrollment of girls in education	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	5	10.0	2	1.60	0.44
Woman's seduction of a man	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	5	10.0	2	1.60	0.44
Survivors often fear stigma or retaliation from perpetrators when reporting sexual violence	--	--	6	85.7	1	14.3	7	14.0	1	3.57	0.05
Inherited traditions that discriminate women	1	50.0	--	--	1	50.0	2	4.0	1	0.00	1.00
Violent women unaware of their rights	--	--	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	4.0	1	0.00	1.00
The high number of Syrian refugees	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	4	8.0	2	0.50	0.77

Difficulty accessing the Family Protection Centre during the curfew period	--	--	2	100.0	--	--	2	4.0	-	-	-
COVID-19 lockdown	3	30.0	4	40.0	3	30.0	10	20.0	2	0.20	0.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>0.10</b>
										<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 31 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of sexual violence related to the following: Poverty and unemployment, childhood emotional neglect and psychological trauma, non-enrollment of girls in education, woman's seduction of a man, survivors often fear stigma or retaliation from perpetrators when reporting sexual violence, inherited traditions that discriminate women, violent women unaware of their rights, the high number of Syrian refugees, difficulty accessing the Family Protection Centre during the curfew period, and COVID-19 lockdown (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 3.00, 4.571, 1.600, 1.600, 3.571, 0.000, 0.000, 0.500, 0.200, and 4.480), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 31, which means all these causes of sexual violence practiced against women were treated similarly in the thesis corpus (*Alrai, Alghad, and Roya News*).



**Figure 31. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Sexual Violence**

**Table 32. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Sexual Violence**

Frame category	Thesis Corpus						Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative effect of sexual violence											
Women experience anxiety, fear, and depression	1	12.5	4	50.0	3	37.5	8	32.0	2	1.75	0.41
Restricting victims from performing their	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-	3	12.0	1	0.33	0.56

role inside home or at workplace											
Drug addiction	1	25.0	3	75.0	-	-	4	16.0	1	1.00	0.31
Suicide	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-	3	12.0	1	0.33	0.56
School failure	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-	3	12.0	1	0.33	0.56
Abortion resulting from rape	1	25.0	-	-	3	75.0	4	16.0	1	1.00	0.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.14</b>
										<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 32 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #3 of sexual violence related to the following: Women experience anxiety, fear, and depression, restricting victims from performing their role at home or workplace, drug addiction, suicide, school failure, and abortion resulting from rape (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 1.750, 0.333, 1.000, 0.333, 0.333, 1.000, and 3.920), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 32. Accordingly, there was close attention to the negative consequences of sexual crimes on the three websites.

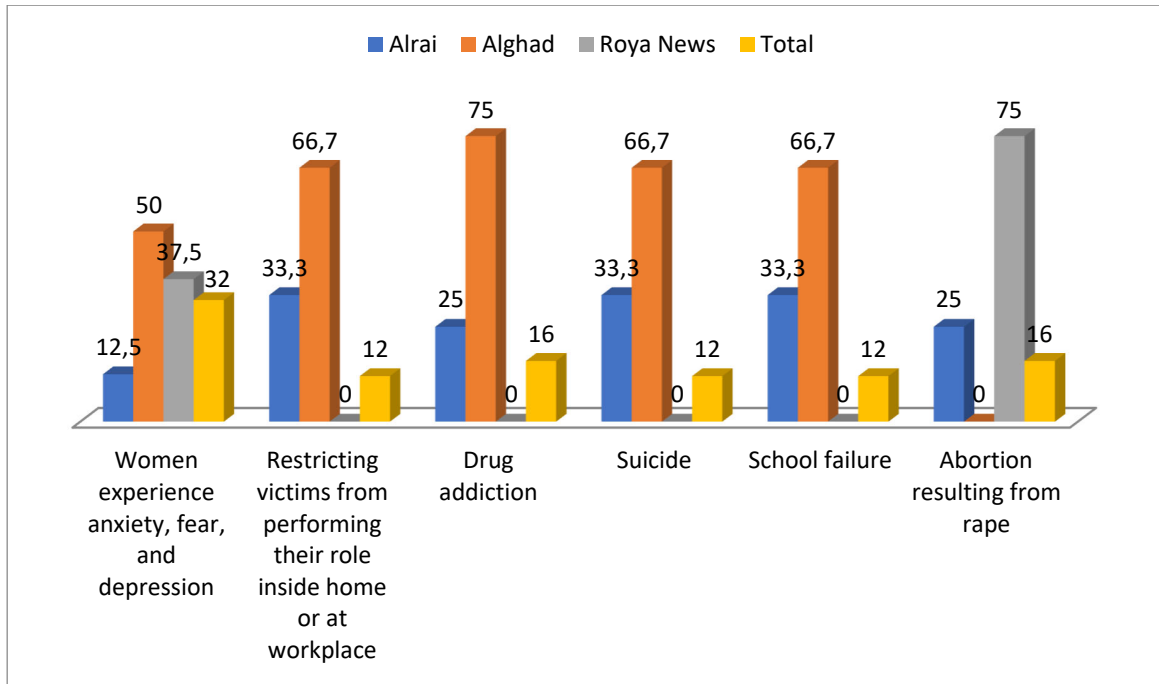


Figure 32. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Sexual Violence

Table 33. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Sexual Violence

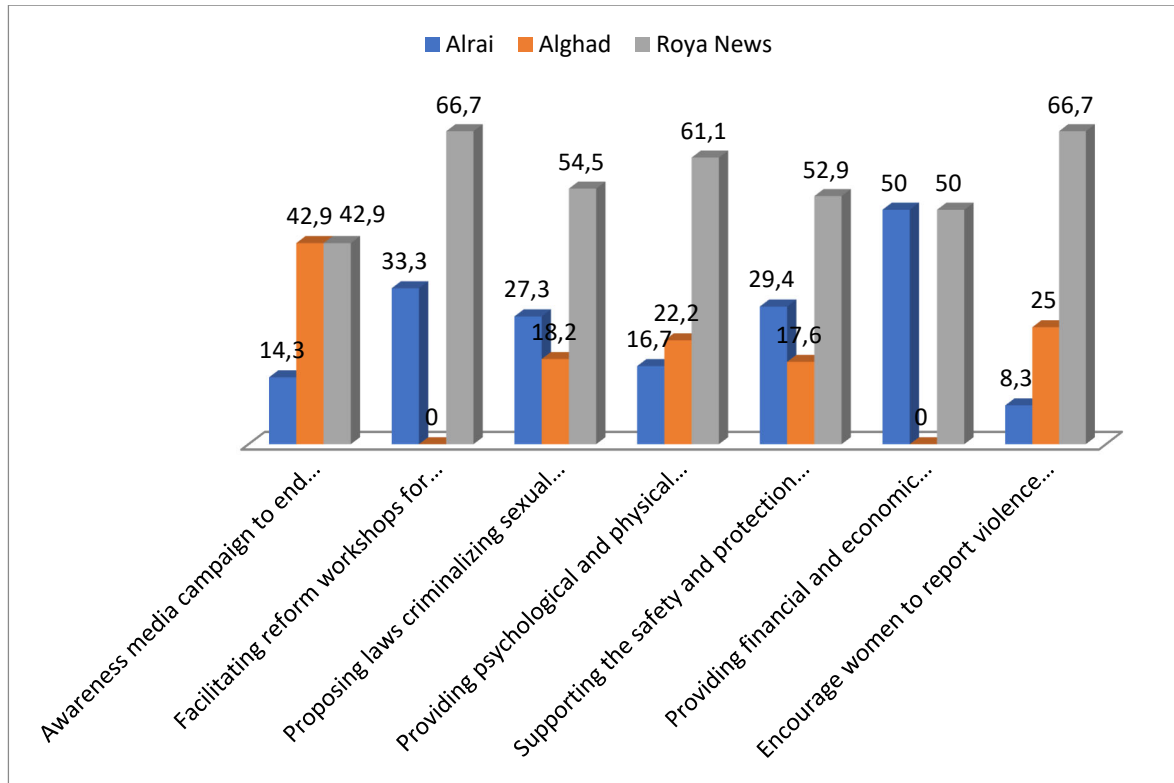
Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Proposing solutions to eliminate sexual violence											
Awareness media campaign to end sexual violence	1	14.3	3	42.9	3	42.9	7	10.0	2	1.143	0.565
Facilitating reform	1	33.3	-	-	2	66.7	3	4.3	1	0.333	0.564

workshops for criminals											
Proposing laws criminalizing sexual harassment	3	27.3	2	18.2	6	54.5	11	15.7	2	2.364	0.307
Providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls	3	16.7	4	22.2	11	61.1	18	25.7	2	6.333	0.042*
Supporting the safety and protection agenda for women by civil society organizations	5	29.4	3	17.6	9	52.9	17	24.3	2	3.294	0.193
Providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0	2	2.9	1	0.000	1.000

Encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence	1	8.3	3	25.0	8	66.7	12	17.1	2	6.500	0.039*
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17.857</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 33 shows that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of sexual violence related to the following: Providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls and Encouraging women to report violence and break the culture of silence (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 6.333, 6.500, and 17.857), and it is significant at the level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. This means *Roya News* provided more attention to these solutions than *Alrai* and *Alghad*. Table also shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of sexual violence related to the following: Awareness media campaign to end sexual violence, facilitating reform workshops for criminals, proposing laws criminalizing sexual harassment, supporting the safety and protection agenda for women by civil society organizations, and providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 1.143, 0.333, 2.364, 3.294, and 0.000), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 33.



**Figure 33. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Sexual Violence**

### Regarding Honor Crimes

**Table 34. Quantitative Survey of the Frame #1 of Honor Crimes**

Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Identify specific issue	.										
Explanation of article 340 of penalty code	1	20.0	3	60.0	1	20.0	5	38.5	2	1.60	0.449



Index	1	20.0	4	80.0	0	-	5	38.5	1	1.80	0.180
Demography	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	-	3	23.1	1	0.33	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.00</b>	<b>0.018*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 34 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of honor crimes related to the following: Explanation of Article 340 of Penalty Codes, index, and demography (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 1.600, 1.800, and 0.333), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, but the Chi<sup>2</sup> test value for the total was 8.00 with a significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* for coverage of frame #1 of honor crimes by 69.2%, as shown in Figure 34.

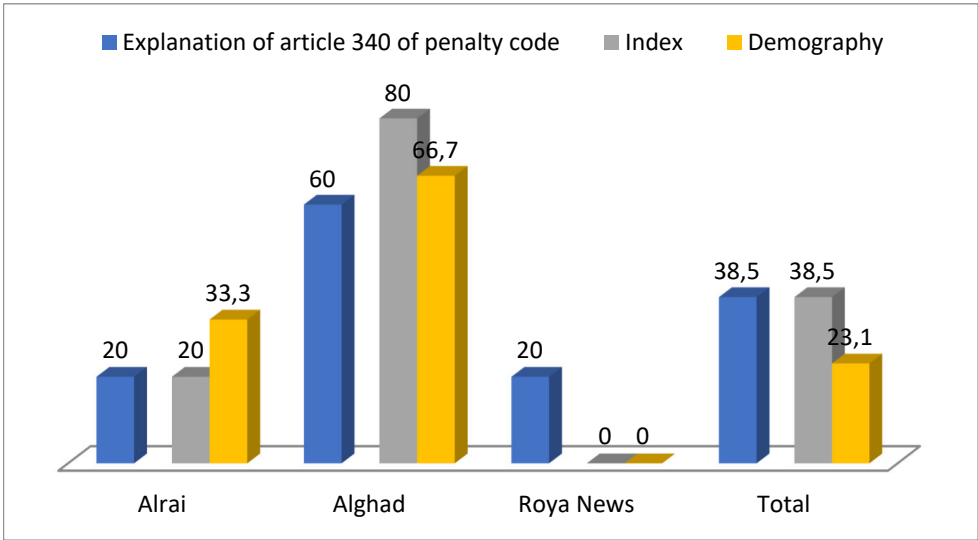


Figure 34. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Honor Crimes

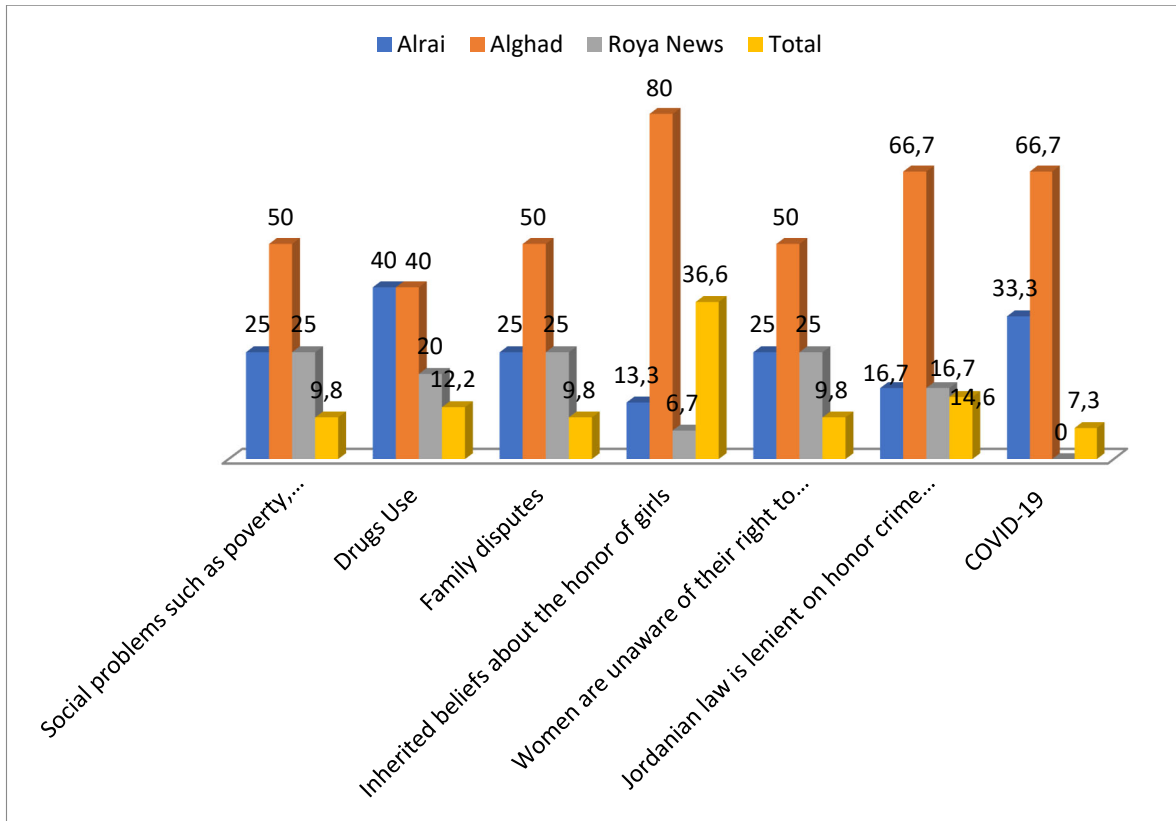
**Table 35. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Honor Crimes**

Frame category											
Diagnosing the causes of honor crimes	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Social problems such as poverty, ignorance, and unemployment	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	9.8	2	0.500	0.779
Drugs use	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	5	12.2	2	0.400	0.819
Family disputes	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	9.8	2	0.500	0.770
Inherited beliefs about the honor of girls	2	13.3	12	80.0	1	6.7	15	36.6	2	14.800	0.001*
Women are unaware of their right to protection from violence	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	9.8	2	0.500	0.779
Jordanian law is lenient on honor crime perpetrators, and	1	16.7	4	66.7	1	16.7	6	14.6	2	3.000	0.223

police agencies hold case files											
COVID-19	1	33. 3	2	66.7	0	--	3	7.3	1	0.333	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22. 0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100. 0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17.02 4</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 35 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of honor crimes related to the following: Social problems such as poverty, ignorance, and unemployment, drugs use, family disputes, women unaware of their rights to protection from violence, Jordanian law is lenient on honor crime perpetrators, and police agencies hold case files, and COVID-19 (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.500, 0.400, 0.500, 0.500, 3.000, and 0.333), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, but the Chi<sup>2</sup> test values for the inherited beliefs with regard to the honor of girls and total were 14.800 and 17.024, respectively, with significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* for coverage of frame 2 of honor crimes by 63.4%, as shown in Figure 35.



**Figure 35. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Honor Crimes**

**Table 36. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Honor Crimes**

For the third frame, the three news sites failed to cover the negative effects of practicing honor crimes against women, so statistical results cannot be presented here in the same manner as they were in the previous frames.

**Table 37. Quantitative Survey of Frame # 4 of Honor Crimes**

Frame category								
Proposing Solutions to	<i>Alrai</i>	<i>Alghad</i>	<i>Roya News</i>	Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.

eliminate honor crimes	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%						
Awareness campaign to end honor crimes	1	20.0	4	80.0	0	-	5	14.7	1	1.800	0.180	
Claiming for amending the penal code of honor crimes	2	25.0	5	62.5	1	12.5	8	23.5	2	3.250	0.197	
Develop a comprehensive complaints system for cases of honor crimes	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	11.8	2	0.500	0.779	
Establishing shelters for women to protect them	1	14.3	5	71.4	1	14.3	7	20.6	2	4.571	0.102	
Isolate criminals in intensive correctional programs	3	42.9	4	57.1	0	0.00	7	20.6	1	0.143	0.705	

Providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	--	3	8.8	1	0.333	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16.647</b>	<b>0.00*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 37 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of honor crimes related to the following: Awareness campaign to end honor crimes, claiming to amend the Penal Code of honor crimes, developing a comprehensive complaints system for cases of honor crimes, Establishing shelters for women to protect them, Isolating criminals in intensive correctional programs, Providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls ( $\text{Chi}^2$  values = 1.800, 3.250, 0.500, 4.571, 0.143, 0.333, and 16.647), and it is not significant at level of 0.05. The  $\text{Chi}^2$  test value for the total was 16.647, with a significant level less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* for coverage of frame #4 of honor crimes by 64.7%, as shown in Figure 37.

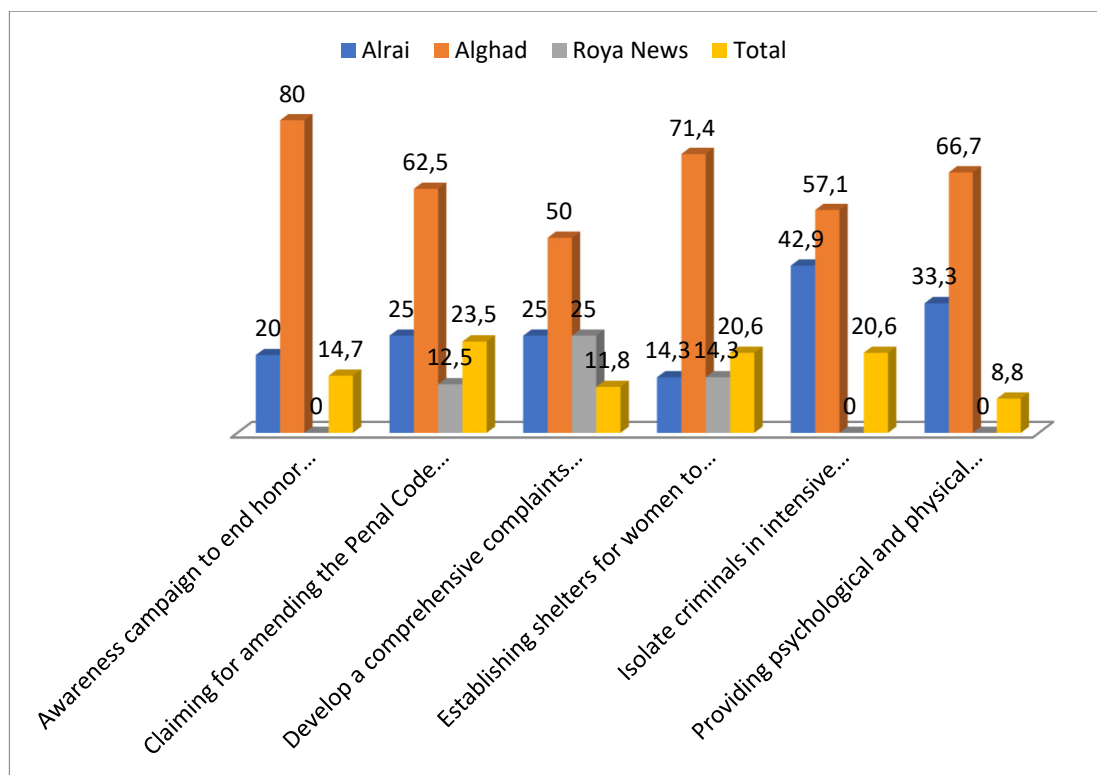


Figure 37. Quantitative Survey of Frame # 4 of Honor Crimes

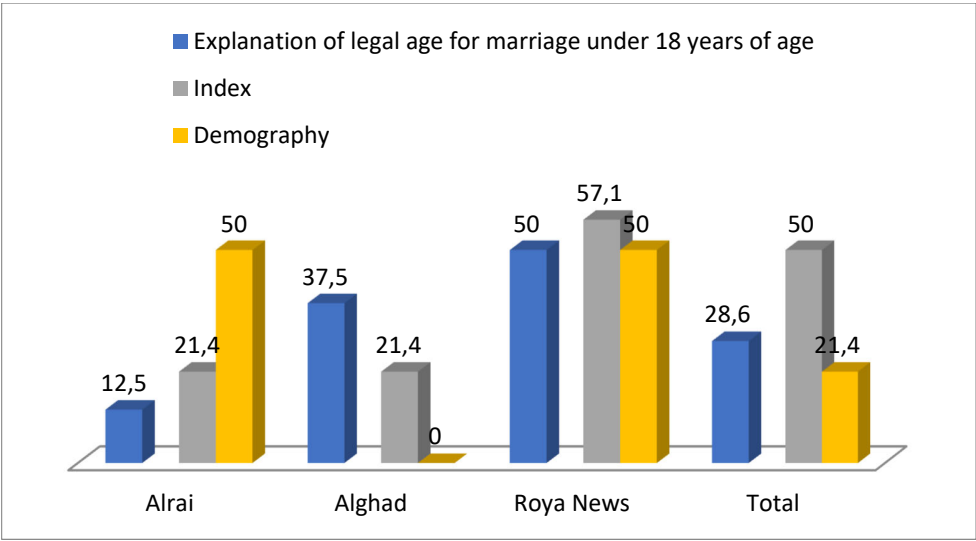
### Regarding Child Marriage

Table 38. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 Child Marriage

Frame category							Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Explanation of legal age for marriage under 18 years of age	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50.0	8	28.6	2	1.750	0.417

Index	3	21.4	3	21.4	8	57.1	14	50.0	2	3.571	0.168
Demography	3	50.0	0	--	3	50.0	6	21.4	1	0.000	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.214</b>	<b>0.074</b>

Table 38 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of child marriage related to the following: Explanation of legal age for marriage under 18 years of age, index, and demography (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 1.750, 3.571, 0.000, and 5.214), and it is not significant at level of 0.05, as shown in Figure 38.



**Figure 38. Quantitative Survey of Frame # 1 of Child Marriage**



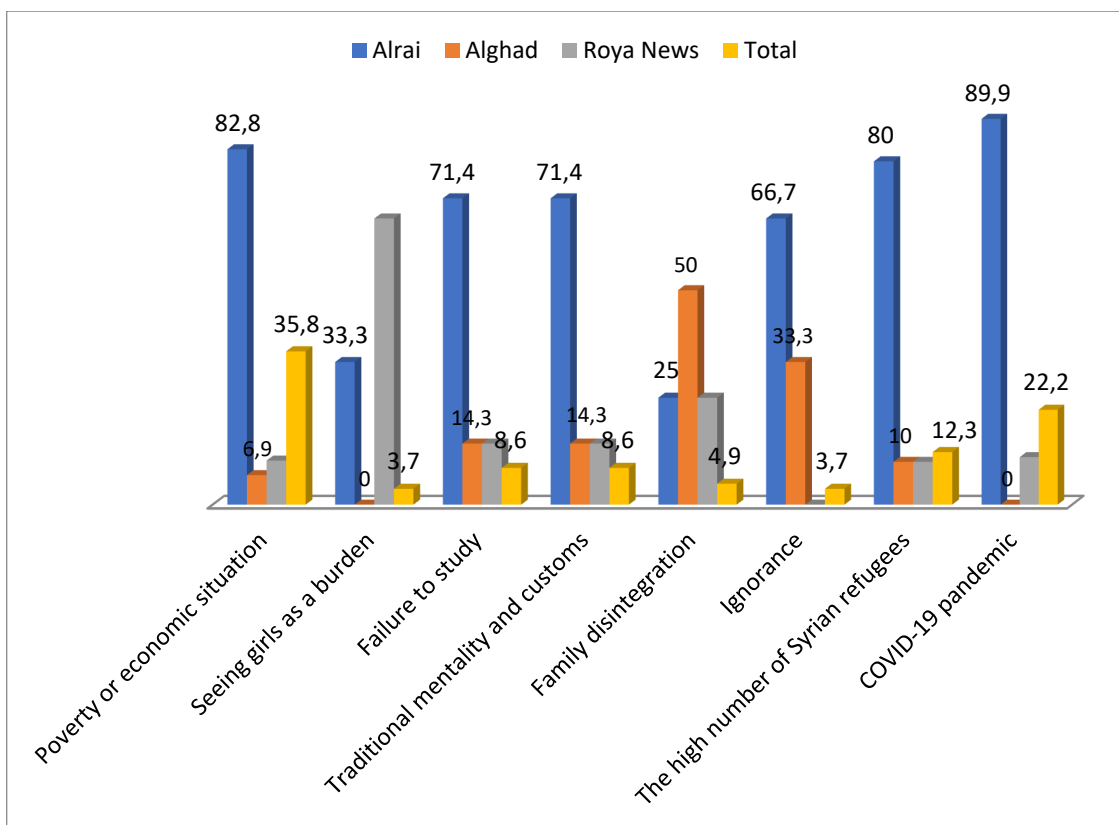
**Table 39. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Child Marriage**

Frame category							Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Diagnosing the causes of child marriage	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Poverty or economic situation	24	82.8	2	6.9	3	10.3	29	35.8	2	31.93	0.00*
Seeing girls as a burden	1	33.3	0	--	2	66.7	3	3.7	1	0.333	0.564
Failure to study	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	7	8.6	2	4.571	0.102
Traditional mentality and customs	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	7	8.6	1	1.286	0.257
Family disintegration	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	4.9	2	0.500	0.779
Ignorance	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	--	3	3.7	1	0.333	0.564
The high number of Syrian refugees	8	80.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	10	12.3	2	9.800	0.007*

COVID-19 pandemic	16	89. 9	0	--	2	11.1	18	22.2	1	10.88 9	0.001*
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>76. 5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100. 0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>68.22 2</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 39 illustrates that there are statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of child marriage related to the following: Poverty or economic situation, the high number of Syrian refugees, The COVID-19 pandemic, and total (Chi<sup>2</sup> values =31.931, 9.800, 10.889, and 68.222), and it is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alrai*. There are no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in the following causes: Seeing girls as a burden, failure to study, traditional mentality and customs, family disintegration, and ignorance (Chi<sup>2</sup> test values for the total were 0.333, 4.571, 1.286, 0.500, and 0.333), with significant level more than 0.05, as shown in Figure 39. This means that these causes were addressed in a similar manner between the three websites in 2020. Even so, the total results show that *Alrai* website has more coverage than any other platform, i.e., 76.5% of frame 2 of child marriage.



**Figure 39. Quantitative Survey of the Frame # 2 of Child Marriage**

**Table 40. Quantitative Survey of Frame # 3 of Child Marriage**

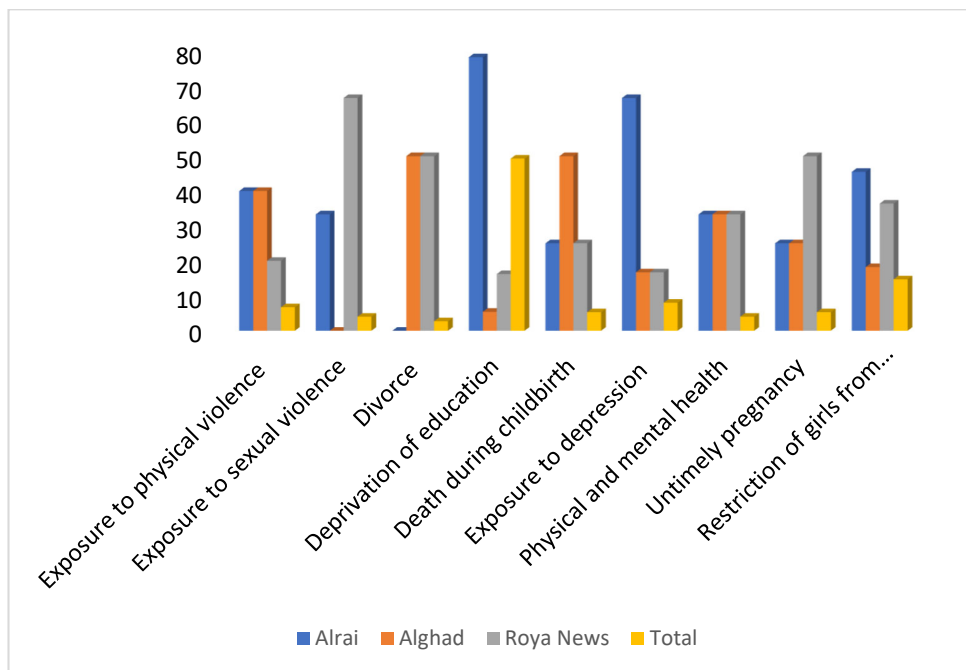
Frame category	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative effects of early marriage											
Exposure to physical violence	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	5	6.7	2	0.400	0.819
Exposure to sexual violence	1	33.3	0	-	2	66.7	3	4.0	1	0.333	0.564
Divorce	--	--	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	2.7	1	0.000	1.000

Deprivation of education	29	78.4	2	5.4	6	16.2	37	49.3	2	34.432	0.000*
Death during childbirth	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	5.3	2	0.500	0.779
Exposure to depression	4	66.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	6	8.0	2	3.000	0.223
Physical and mental health	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	4.0	2	0.000	1.000
Untimely pregnancy	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4	5.3	2	0.500	0.779
Restriction of girls from job/employment and economic empowerment	5	45.5	2	18.2	4	36.4	11	14.7	2	1.273	0.529
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22.640</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 40 shows that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #3 of child marriage related to the following: Deprivation of education, and total ( $\text{Chi}^2$  values = 34.432 and 22.640), and it is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alrai*.  $\text{Chi}^2$  test values for the total were 0.400, 0.333, 0.000, 0.500, 3.000, 0.000, 0.500,

and 1.273 for exposure to physical violence, exposure to sexual violence, Divorce, Death during childbirth, Exposure to depression, physical and mental health, untimely pregnancy, and restriction of girls from job/employment and economic empowerment with a significant level more than 0.05, as shown in Figure 40. This means there are no significant differences in addressing these effects between the three websites, as a result, these effects were addressed equally. In total, the results proved that frame 3 of child marriage was covered most frequently, i.e., by 58.7%, through *Alrai* website.



**Figure 40. Quantitative Survey of Frame # 3 of Child Marriage**

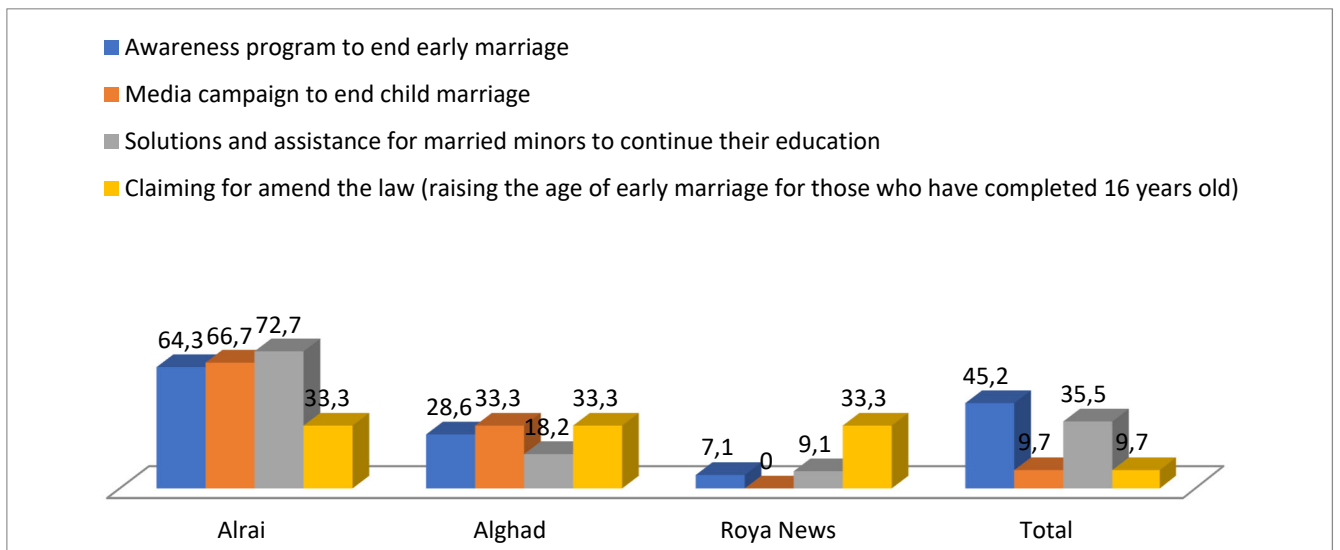
**Table 41. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Child Marriage**

Frame category											
Proposing solutions to	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					

eliminate child marriage											
Awareness program to end early marriage	9	64.3	4	28.6	1	7.1	14	45.2	2	7.000	0.030*
Media campaign to end child marriage	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	--	3	9.7	1	0.333	0.564
Solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education	8	72.7	2	18.2	1	9.1	11	35.5	2	7.818	0.020*
Claiming for amend the law (raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years old)	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	9.7	2	0.000	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14.774</b>	<b>0.001*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 41 shows that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of child marriage related to the following: Awareness programs to end early marriage, solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education, and total (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 7.000, 7.818, and 14.774), and it is significant at level of 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alrai* website. Chi<sup>2</sup> test values were 0.333 and 0.000 for media campaigns to end child marriage and claiming for amendment of the law (i.e., raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years), with a significant level of more than 0.05, as shown in Figure 41. In other words, there are no significant differences in addressing these solutions of frame #4 in the three websites. In total, it is possible to say that *Alrai* newspaper deals the most with solutions to child marriage, with 64%.



**Figure 41. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Child Marriage**

### Regarding Digital Violence

**Table 42. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Digital Violence**

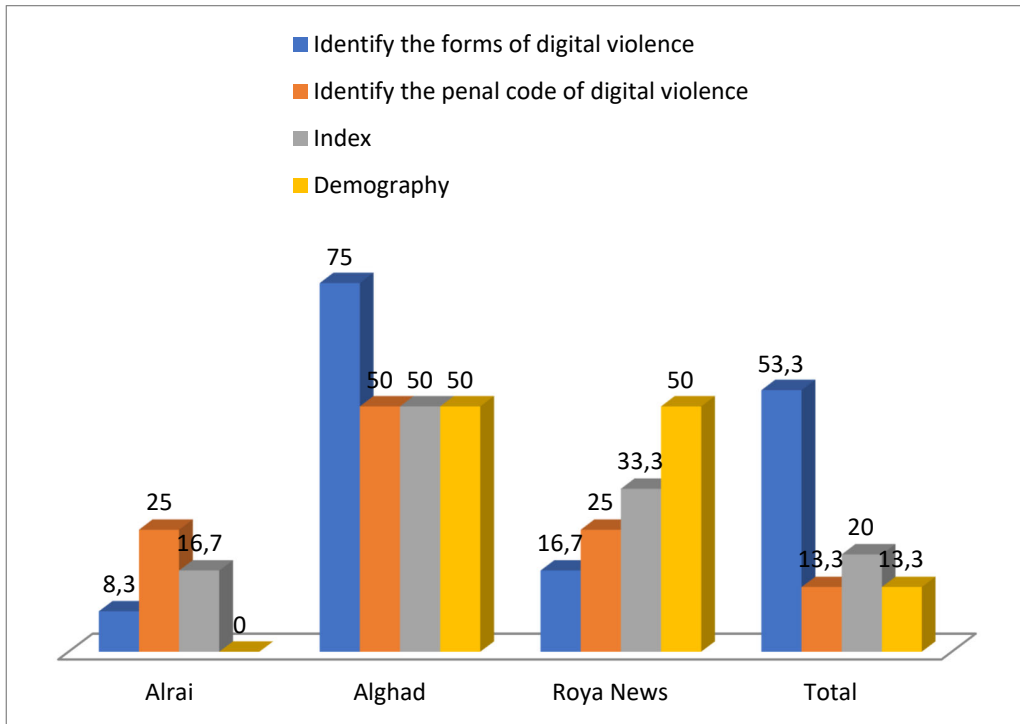
Frame category							Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Identify the forms of digital violence	5	8.3	9	75.0	2	16.7	16	53.3	2	9.500	0.009*
Identify the penal code of digital violence	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	13.3	2	0.500	0.779
Index	1	16.7	3	50.0	2	33.3	6	20.0	2	1.000	0.607
Demography	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	4	13.3	1	0.000	1.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.400</b>	<b>0.067</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 42 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #1 of digital violence related to the following: Identify the forms of digital violence (Chi<sup>2</sup> value = 9.500), and it is significant at level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. And Chi<sup>2</sup> test values to identify the penal code of digital violence, index, demography,



and total were 0.500, 1.000, 0.000, and 5.400, with a significant level of more than 0.05, as shown in Figure 42, which means no statistically significant differences in addressing these categories between the three websites. In total, *Alghad* proved to be the most frequently covered website for frame #1 of digital violence by 53.3%.



**Figure 42. Quantitative Survey of Frame #1 of Digital Violence**

**Table 43. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Digital Violence**

Frame category							Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Diagnosing the causes of digital violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Discrimination against women	1	11.1	8	88.9	-	-	9	17.0	1	5.444	0.020*

due to poor cultural awareness and ignorance											
Exposure to emotional neglect and psychological trauma since childhood	1	20.0	4	80.0	-	-	5	9.4	1	1.800	.180
Symptoms of grandiosity, narcissism, and insecurity on the perpetrator's part	5	35.7	7	50.0	2	14.3	14	26.4	2	2.714	0.257
Family disputes	2	40.0	3	60.0	-	-	5	9.4	1	0.200	0.655
Inflicting physical or moral harm to the victim	5	50.0	3	30.0	2	20.0	10	18.9	2	1.400	0.497

Lack of controls on electronic harassment	1	33. 3	2	66.7	-	-	3	5.7	1	0.333	0.564
Ease of use of the Internet	1	25. 0	3	75.0	-	-	4	7.5	1	1.000	0.317
COVID-19 pandemic lockdown	1	33. 3	2	66.7	-	-	3	5.7	1	0.333	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32. 1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100. 0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22.22 6</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

**significant at level of (0.05).**

Table 43 illustrates that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #2 of digital violence related to the discrimination against women due to poor cultural awareness and ignorance and Total (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 5.444 and 22.226), and it is significant at level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Meanwhile, there are no significant differences between the three websites in terms of addressing the following causes: Exposure to emotional neglect and psychological trauma since childhood, symptoms of grandiosity, narcissism, and insecurity on the perpetrator's part, family disputes, inflicting physical or moral harm to the victim, lack of controls on electronic harassment, ease of use of the Internet, and COVID-19 pandemic lockdown). Chi<sup>2</sup> test values were 1.800, 2.714, 0.200, 1.400, 0.333, 1.000, and 0.333), with significant level of more than 0.05, as shown in Figure 43. In total, compared with other websites, *Alghad* website tackled frame #2 the most with 60.4%.

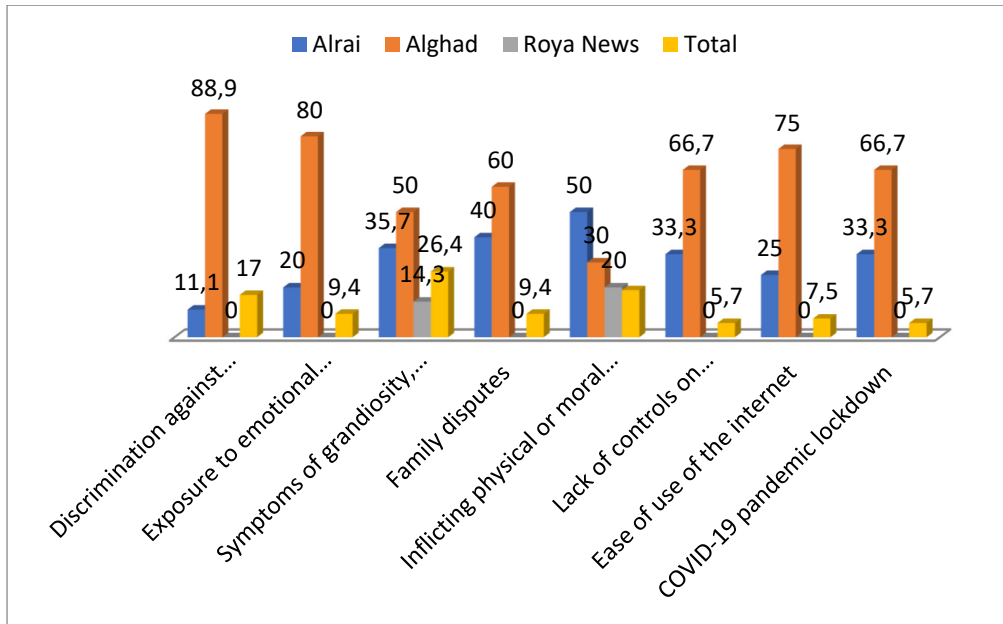


Figure 43. Quantitative Survey of Frame #2 of Digital Violence

Table 44. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Digital Violence

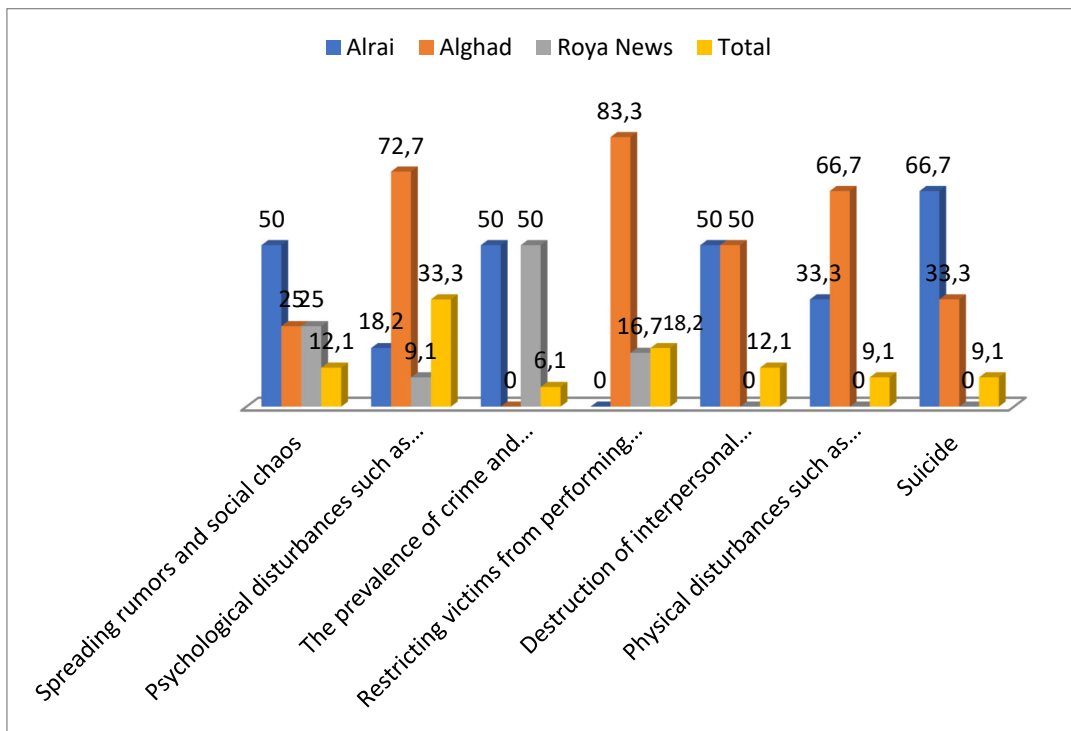
Frame category											
	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>		Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Negative effects of digital violence											
Spreading rumors and social chaos	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	4	12.1	2	0.500	0.779
Psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety	2	18.2	8	72.7	1	9.1	11	33.3	2	7.818	0.020*
The prevalence of crime and	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0	2	6.1	1	0.000	1.000

violence in society											
Restricting victims from performing their role at the workplace	-	-	5	83.3	1	16.7	6	18.2	1	2.667	0.102
Destruction of interpersonal relationships	2	50.0	2	50.0	-	-	4	12.1	1	0.000	1.000
Physical disturbances such as headache, stomach and colon pain	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-	3	9.1	1	0.333	0.564
Suicide	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-	3	9.1	1	0.333	0.564
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10.364</b>	<b>0.006*</b>

\*: significant at level of (0.05).

Table 44 illustrates that there were statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #3 of digital violence related to the following: Psychological disturbances

such as depression and anxiety and total ( $\text{Chi}^2$  values =7.818 and 10.364), and it is significant at level of 0.05, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. There were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in spreading rumors and social chaos, the prevalence of crime and violence in society, restricting victims from performing their role at the workplace, destruction of interpersonal relationships, physical disturbances such as headache, stomach, and colon pain, and Suicide), and  $\text{Chi}^2$  test values were of 0.500, 0.000, 2.667, 0.000, 0.333, and 0.333, with a significant level more than 0.05 as shown in Figure 44. Meanwhile, the results revealed that *Alghad* is the website that tackled the negative effect most frequently, i.e., 57.6%.



**Figure 44. Quantitative Survey of Frame #3 of Digital Violence**

**Table 45. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Digital Violence**

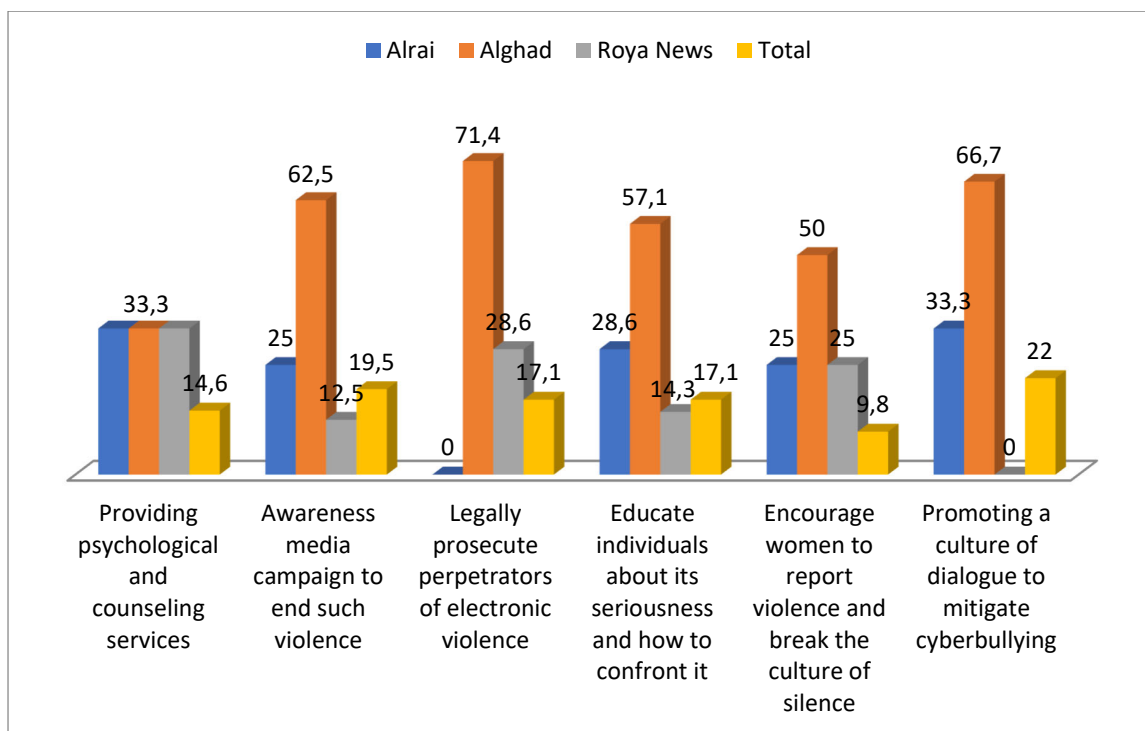
Frame category							Total	%	d.f	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Proposing solutions to eliminate digital violence	<i>Alrai</i>		<i>Alghad</i>		<i>Roya News</i>						
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%					
Providing psychological and counseling services	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	6	14.6	2	0.000	1.000
Awareness media campaign to end such violence	2	25.0	5	62.5	1	12.5	8	19.5	2	3.250	0.197
Legally prosecute perpetrators of electronic violence	-	-	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	17.1	1	1.286	0.257
Educate individuals about its seriousness and how to confront it	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	7	17.1	2	2.000	0.368
Encourage women to report	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	4	9.8	2	0.500	0.779

violence and break the culture of silence											
Promoting a culture of dialogue to mitigate cyberbullying	3	33. 3	6	66.7	-	-	9	22.0	1	1.000	0.317
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24. 4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100. 0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12.04 9</b>	<b>0.002*</b>

significant at level of (0.05).

Table 45 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the three electronic newspapers in frame #4 of digital violence related to the following: Providing psychological and counseling services, awareness media campaigns to end such violence, legally prosecuting perpetrators of electronic violence, educate individuals about its seriousness and how to confront it, encourage women to report violence and break the culture of silence, and Promote a culture of dialogue to mitigate cyberbullying (Chi<sup>2</sup> values = 0.000, 3.250, 1.286, 2.000, 0.500, and 1.000), and it is not significant at level of 0.05. A Chi<sup>2</sup> test value was 12.049 for the total with a significant level of less than 0.05, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*, as shown in Figure 45. According to this, *Alghad* is the website that addresses frame 4 solutions, i.e., 58.5%.





**Figure 45. Quantitative Survey of Frame #4 of Digital Violence**

To sum up, this chapter utilizes a quantitative approach to analyze news content from three different websites: *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*. A total of 192 news items were examined, using 45 quantitative surveys that were designed to categorize the news content using SPSS. The categories and news frames were formulated based on the first and second levels of Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory to perform a quantitative news analysis. The study also applied the Holsti equation test to ensure the trustworthiness of conclusions drawn from the data. To complete the objectives of this thesis, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven provide a discussion of the results of the news from the perspective of the Agenda-Setting and Framing theories, and a comparison to the results of previous studies on the same topic conducted both inside and outside Jordan is presented.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ANALYZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE JORDANIAN DIGITAL MEDIA DISCUSSION (I)**

In Chapter Five, I provided a detailed explanation of the methodology used in this thesis, which included the categories of analysis and the process for applying news analysis to the research corpus in accordance with the levels of Agenda-Setting theory and the Framing Theory through the vision of Robert Entman. I also presented the tool used to measure the validity of the research instrument, as well as the reliability of the results of news analysis using the Holsti equation. Furthermore, my quantitative results were shown using illustrative tables and figures.

In this chapter, I elaborate a detailed discussion of the results obtained during the analysis of the news content from three news sites from which I have extracted my sample (*Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*), in line with the Agenda-Setting presented in the first part of my thesis. I also explain how these results relate to the previous studies on media and violence against women that I discussed in Chapter Four. I conclude with several ideas for further research.

The first theory, Agenda-Setting, with levels 1 and 2, was chosen to determine the priority given by the agenda of digital newspapers for covering issues related to violence against women, in terms of the volume and attributes of the news coverage. Level 1, which incorporates the quantitative analysis of the volume of news, tackled the violence in terms of these categories: type of violence, its forms, forms of journalistic treatment, the purpose of news coverage, and geographical coverage. Level 2 included the analysis of the attributes of news coverage in terms of these categories: attributes of the perpetrators, attributes of the victims, blaming the offenders or the victims of violence against women, and position of the news coverage of violence against women.

Based on interpreting quantitative results using Agenda-Setting theory and gender studies theories, the research questions which were answered are:

- I. *What is the volume of media treatment of violence against women based on the patterns and forms of violence against women?*
- II. *What are the purposes of Jordanian digital journalism in tackling violence against women?*
- III. *How does Jordanian digital journalism represent the offenders and the victims of violence against women?*
- IV. *What is the dominant position of Jordanian digital journalism when addressing the issue of violence against women?*

### **6.1. Discussion of the Results According to Agenda-Setting Level 1**

Regarding answering the first research question (*What is the volume of media treatment of violence against women based on the patterns and forms of violence against women?*), it is evident that there are significant differences ( $p = 0.05$ ) in the volume of news coverage of the various types of violence against women across the electronic newspapers I have examined. The variance was in favor of the *Alghad* website, indicating that it is the news outlet that gives more attention to the various types of violence against women, compared to the other two. There was a specially significant difference ( $p = 0.05$ ) in the percentage of child marriage addressed as a form of violence among the three sites, where the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. This means child marriage has been primarily prioritized in *Alghad's* agenda, compared to the other websites.

The research findings suggest that *Roya News* covered cases of sexual violence more frequently and more prominently than *Alrai* and *Alghad*, as evidenced by a statistically significant

difference ( $p = 0.05$ ). This indicates that *Roya News* made it a priority to cover these cases, bringing attention to the issue in its agenda.

The statistical analysis showed that there were significant differences among the three newspapers in terms of the coverage of honor crimes, and the variance was in favor of *Alghad* ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that *Alghad* gave more attention to honor crimes cases in its agenda in 2020, with the aim of informing the public opinion about this issue. Additionally, no significant difference was found with respect to addressing physical, emotional, and digital violence against women across the three news websites ( $p = 0.05$ ). Accordingly, the level of coverage was closely similar in all three websites, indicating that they have addressed the issue of violence against women in a familiar manner.

Finally, the results show that the three new websites covered mostly five types of violence in order of importance in their agendas: 1) Child marriage at 28%; 2) sexual violence at 24%; 3) physical violence at 16%; 4) honor crimes and emotional violence at 11%; and 5) digital violence at 9%. Child marriage was the most frequently addressed type of violence, while digital violence was the least often tackled. This indicates that child marriage was the highest priority issue in the agenda of the three electronic newspapers, while digital violence was the lowest.

My findings are inconsistent with the results of the study conducted by Anderson in 2020, which investigated the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, and rights among adolescent girls in Jordan. According to this research, emotional violence and physical violence were the most common forms of violence experienced by women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic (73% and 54%, respectively). Cyberbullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape were also reported (18%, 17%, 14%, and 8%, respectively). Meanwhile, the results of my thesis have confirmed that child marriage is the most addressed form of violence

against women across the news of the three websites in 2020, accounting for 28% of cases. Sexual violence is the second most common form (24%), followed by physical violence (16%). Emotional and digital violence were the least circulated form of violence (11%), which is contrary to the previous report from Anderson's study, where emotional and physical violence were the most common forms of violence in 2020, while sexual violence was the least.

It should be noted that the digital coverage of violence against women by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* presents different results than those from study by the Ministry of Social Development called "Analysis of Social Service Offices' Data". According to this document, physical violence is the most common type of violence experienced by women and girls, accounting for 54% of reported cases in 2020. Neglect was reported as the second most common type of violence, with 2,731 cases. Conversely, sexual violence was the least reported form of violence, accounting for only 7.6% of the total cases during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It is worth asking why *Alghad* and *Roya News*, among the three electronic newspapers, focused more on addressing child marriage and physical violence through news than on other types of violence, even though the studies by Anderson and the Ministry of Social Development confirmed that physical and emotional violence had the highest prevalence in Jordan during COVID-19 pandemic, based on the number of reported cases in 2020. Therefore, it is likely that child marriage will not be among the concerns of the Ministry of Social Development in 2020. Instead, the ministry's focus is on victims of physical and emotional violence, which may be one of the consequences of child marriage. The results could be attributed to the prevalence of child marriage in 2020. As reported by *Alwakeel News*, there were 7,964 documented cases of minors getting married, driven by girls' desire to reduce the economic burden on their families, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Alwakeel News 2021). There is a possibility that the

significant number of cases of physical and psychological violence observed in social development may be attributed to the high prevalence of marriages involving individuals under the age of 18. As discussed in Chapter Three, child marriage exposes girls to various forms of abuse, including psychological, emotional, and physical violations. Studies by Fry et al. (2019), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (2021), and Ahmed (2015) have all highlighted these issues. However, this raises the question of whether there is a need for another academic study to investigate why Jordanian digital media has provided more media coverage to tackle early marriage and sexual violence in their agendas than other forms of violence, such as physical and emotional violence, during the same period.

This thesis examined the news coverage of different types of violence against women by three electronic newspapers and found that there were no significant differences in the level of coverage between them regarding physical forms of violence such as hitting, slapping, burning, killing, and strangling. This indicates that all three electronic newspapers have similarly covered these types of violence. From the present study, the three electronic newspapers covered physical violence differently in terms of undefined forms of physical violence, and these differences were statistically significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). The *Alghad* website was one of the most prominent platforms that defined types of physical violence when covering news items on such topics, compared to *Alrai* and *Roya News*. The most prevalent form of physical violence in 2020 as reported by the three electronic newspapers was hitting, and it is evident from this that addressing hitting in the news coverage as physical violence has been high on the agenda of the three news outlets.

There were no statistically significant differences among the coverage of the three electronic newspapers regarding the various forms of emotional violence (insulting, neglect, control of behavior, threats, and isolation) ( $p = 0.05$ ). Conversely, the results revealed that there

were statistically significant differences among their coverage of undefined emotional violence ( $p = 0.05$ ). Thus, *Alghad* was one of the prominent platforms that defined the types of emotional violence when covering news items on such topics. In addition, the most recurrent emotional violence covered by the three electronic newspapers was *insulting* (38.5%). Clearly, insulting appears to have been the first topic on the agenda of all three websites as a type of emotional violence in 2020. This result contradicts a study by the Ministry of Social Development which was published on the *Khaberni* news website, stating that neglect was the most common type of emotional violence experienced by women in 2020 (Khaberni 2021).

The present study shows that regarding sexual violence, there were no significant differences in coverage among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ). This includes harassment, sexual abuse, and undefined types. Accordingly, the results indicate that the three newspapers provided similar coverage of these forms of violence in 2020. Meanwhile, only *Roya News* frequently addressed kidnapping as a form of sexual violence with (four news) and it was not part of the agenda of *Alrai* and *Alghad News*. Conversely, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in coverage among the three electronic newspapers regarding rape ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. This means that *Roya News* allocated more attention to tackling rape in its agenda than did the others. The total forms of sexual violence were covered differently by the three websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), with *Roya News* most comprehensively addressing these forms of sexual violence. The most prevalent form of sexual violence reported by the three websites was rape (40%). Thus, the three news websites prioritized covering rape cases as part of their media agenda, compared to the other forms of sexual violence against women.

Regarding forms of honor crimes, the results show that there were significant differences in the coverage of honor killings among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ), with *Alghad*

covering the honor killing stories more frequently than the other platforms. The coverage of honor crimes related to forced marriage was not statistically significant among the three electronic newspapers, although *Alghad* covered them with greater frequency (1). Forced suicide was excluded from the agendas of the three newspapers as a form of honor killing. Regarding hitting crimes, *Alghad* and *Roya News* covered them equally; genital mutilation was only included once in the news agenda of *Alrai* website. However, only *Alrai* addressed honor crimes without having to define their forms twice. Furthermore, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in coverage among the three electronic newspapers regarding the various forms of honor crimes ( $p = 0.05$ ), which were mostly covered by *Alghad* (70%). The results revealed that all three electronic newspapers reported honor killing as one of the most frequent forms of violence (73.0%). This is consistent with the results of the Master's Thesis by researcher Walaa Alattal (2015), which showed that killing in the name of honor was the most common crime in newspapers (70%). Alattal's study revealed that other forms of crime, such as indecent assault, rape, and indecent acts, were overlooked, despite the increasing number of reported cases in Jordan. This increase can be attributed to various social and cultural factors that hold special consideration in each of Jordan's governorates. As indicated in Chapter Three, Jordan is mainly governed by tribes and families, along with their values and social norms, including honor. The concept of honor is associated with the family in urban settings, while in rural communities, it is associated with the family, clan, and community (Faqir 2001). Jordanian society, as described by Shoutard et al. (2015), is characterized by a conservative culture and social norms, especially in relation to violence, particularly sexual violence crimes. The Jordanian authorities protect the identity of victims during investigations of sexual crimes by taking necessary measures to preserve their reputation and prevent serious social consequences (from stigma to scandal and disgrace).



Therefore, these reasons may hinder the Jordanian press from expanding its investigation into sensitive issues that threaten the reputation of girls in Jordanian society, such as rape and honor killings aimed at washing away shame if the victims are involved in extramarital relationships. These factors could explain the increase in the need to conceal honor crimes related to Jordanian women by online news outlets. In addition, Wala Alattal pointed out that honor crimes in Jordan, such as murder and those related to security, receive more attention from the press and readers than other types of crimes, such as indecent assault, rape, kidnapping, genital mutilation, and forced marriage (Alattal 2015). This may explain why such honor crimes committed in Jordan were not adequately covered by the three digital newspapers in 2020. This lack of coverage could be attributed to the severity of the crimes and the prevailing conservative mindset in the country.

It is also possible that honor killings received more attention on the news agenda in the same year because digital newspapers aimed to cater to their readers' interests in relevant issues. For example, in Chapter Four, I referred to the story of the honor-killing victim "Ahlam", who was killed by her father. As explained before, the details of the murder were described in an interesting way. This sparked controversy among readers due to the rapid spread of the story across news sites and social networking platforms, making it the most widely discussed public issue in the Arab world, not just in Jordan. In addition, this is a case of premeditated murder committed in the name of honor, portrayed in a way that condemns the father and elicits sympathy for the victim. Despite the fact that the electronic news regarded Ahlam's story as an honor crime, they did not delve into details beyond the murder and its investigation. Other circumstances of the case were concealed, such as the real reason for the father's intention to kill his daughter with such brutality, the testimony of other witnesses from the victim's family, and the legal punishment imposed on the father. In 2020, the three digital newspapers primarily covered news stories about Ahlam's case,

while other types of honor crimes, such as genital mutilation or forced suicide, received little to no coverage. This could be explained based on the research by Jumana Irsheidat, who confirmed that Jordanian journalists have been restricted from publishing accurate information and more details regarding the victim “Ahlam” based on a decision issued by the Public Prosecutor. Otherwise, it may be considered a violation of the decision (Irsheidat 2023, 415). This confirms Alattal’s viewpoint that newspapers and readers pay more attention to murder out of curiosity than to other types of crimes, which is why more attention is paid to it. On the other hand, newspapers are hesitant to publish any further details that may adversely affect the girls’ reputation and cause problems for conservative Jordanian families.

There were no significant differences in the coverage of digital violence (including abuse, sexual harassment, website or email hacking, bullying, and insults) among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ). which indicates that the three electronic newspapers had allocated equal spaces of coverage of these forms in their media agendas. In contrast, however, only *Roya News* included electronic fraud in its media agenda, with a total of two news items during the year 2020, while *Alghad* and *Alrai* websites failed to mention this type of electronic violence. In addition, only the *Alrai* website addressed digital violence without defining the type with frequency (1) news.

Bullying and insulting were the most common types of digital violence that have occupied the top priority on the agendas of the three electronic newspapers in 2020, with 14 news items. According to The Economic and Social Council (2020), the number of electronic crimes through social media increased in Jordan due to the pandemic, and around 300 such crimes have been recorded. However, the results from the present study indicate that news related to digital violence was the least circulated in three news sites. This raises the question of why digital news sites do

not give enough attention to cyber violence and why they do not use their platform to raise awareness and help prevent such crimes. This question can be explained by several factors. The first might be that Jordanian society is not accustomed to reporting digital harassment through social media to the authorities, despite a significant number of girls being subjected to cyber harassment on social media sites. This is in reference to a study by Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon (2021), which reports in its fourth chapter that nearly 44% of Jordanian women have encountered cyber violence on social networking sites, and 80% have experienced sexual harassment. Despite the presence of cybercrime units, victims did not report such crimes to the authorities, and simply blocking online attackers was deemed sufficient to prevent such crimes from occurring. As a result, newspapers might have been unwilling to focus on such a topic, especially because the Economic and Social Council recorded only 300 cases of digital violence compared to 10,375 cases of physical, emotional, and sexual violence in the Ministry of Social Development's report, which did not mention any form of digital violence. This may have prompted digital newspapers to shift their focus to addressing other forms of violence that are prevalent in Jordan rather than solely focusing on digital violence. Secondly, Alzoubi (2023) stated that bullying rates in Jordan gradually decreased after the establishment of the Cybercrime Unit, which led to the development of the combat system in Cybercrimes Law 27. Thus, the scope and penalties for bullying activities in Jordan have been expanded since 2015. The Cybercrime Unit may have contributed to journalists' reluctance to publish real news stories about girls, as they may be unwilling to publish real data about victims of digital violence via the Internet, such as verbal harassment and threats, to protect the girls' reputations (Alzoubi 2013, 126).

Considering the panorama that I have presented in the first part of this thesis about women's rights and equality in Jordan, it is not surprising that the three websites primarily focused

on addressing digital violence by publishing opinion pieces or news reports that generally discussed this phenomenon, including its effects and causes, without providing any further information or investigations related to real facts affecting the reputations of girls who are victims of this type of violence. This lack of in-depth coverage by newspapers explains the overall lack of interest in covering these topics. However, it is important to note that two reports published by the *Alghad*<sup>19</sup> website discuss the issue of female candidates being bullied and harassed online during the 2020 parliamentary election campaign. The prevailing patriarchal ideology emphasizes traditional social roles for women, requiring them to continue caring for their families. The difference may be attributed to the fact that the female candidates are public figures who have experienced public violence. Therefore, their cases are viewed as public issues that do not require concealment, unlike other girls who have been subjected to similar attacks but remain unknown.

My findings reveal that the three electronic newspapers depended on many forms of news coverage. There were significant differences among the three websites when using news stories ( $p < 0.05$ ). *Roya News* had the highest number of news stories on its agenda regarding violence against women compared to other press forms. The results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the forms of news coverage about the news reports, investigative reporting, opinion pieces, and caricatures among *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* ( $p = 0.05$ ). This proves that the three websites used these forms of news coverage of violence against women cases similarly in their media agendas. Nevertheless, news reports comprise 69.4% of the content on the three sites, which is higher than other forms of news coverage. This shows that a high priority was given to news reports regarding violence against women in the media agendas of *Alghad*, *Alrai*, and *Roya news*. In this regard, my results align with those from the studies conducted by Najadat

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<sup>19</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/944993> (Alghad 2020a) and <https://alghad.com/story/912308> (Alghad 2020b).

(2006), Alattal (2015), and Al-Jwainat (2022), indicating that news reports are the most commonly used journalistic form when reporting on issues of violence against women. This suggests that for journalists in Jordan, news reports are the preferred form of newspaper coverage.

Finally, the total forms of news coverage had statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. This shows that *Alghad* uses a greater variety of news forms for covering issues of violence against women compared to other platforms. Chapter Five of the thesis emphasizes the importance of press reports in addressing issues objectively, without letting personal biases interfere. However, when it comes to the topic of violence against women, new websites have taken a more assertive approach. They focused on covering news related to this subject by sourcing information from reliable and diverse voices, and presenting solutions and reasons to raise awareness. This has been done to help the public understand the dangers of violence against women, and its negative effects on society, with clarity and ease of understanding. Such form of coverage aims to make it easier for the public to understand the issues of violence against women, without any excessive bias towards any party. The results have shown that the sites tend to be more neutral in terms of placing blame on the parties involved in incidents of violence. This neutrality helps to accurately and objectively report on incidents of violence against women, without overemphasizing any particular narrative.

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Answering the second question of the thesis (*What are the purposes of Jordanian digital journalism in tackling violence against women?*), the results showed that there were no notable differences among *Alghad* and *Roya News* websites in terms of the purpose of coverage related to

excitement and suspense. Both websites gave equal attention to the suspense aspect of addressing violence against women in their agendas. In Chapter Five, I mentioned that newspaper coverage of issues related to violence against women often uses the method of excitement and suspense to publish strange and controversial stories that deviate from the norm. To accomplish this, newspapers use carefully chosen words, sentences, and phrases to beautify the content and entice readers to read the story, even if it falls outside their interests. However, some of these stories are not entirely true, as news outlets sometimes prioritize sensationalism over accuracy by distorting the truth in the title or content. Through *Alghad* and *Roya News*, the stories often center on controversial issues such as sexual assault, rape, killings, and physical crimes rather than providing useful facts to society. *Alrai* and *Roya News* presented several headlines of news stories related to violence in an engaging manner, which prompted Internet users to visit the websites and read the news. However, they did not delve deeper into these issues. For example, the titles of news stories about sexual violence published on the *Roya News* website, which are classified as sensational and suspenseful, include: “A Moroccan Woman Drugs her Friend and Gives Her as a Gift to Her Brother to Rape Her on His Birthday”,<sup>20</sup> and “A Young Saudi Woman Accuses Her Brother of Raping Her Over a Period of Six Years”.<sup>21</sup> Other headlines of news stories published by *Alghad* included “Ahlam’s screams,” trending on Twitter in Jordan following the murder of a young woman at the hands of her father, and “The Trial of French Runner Benjamin Compaore on Charges of Assaulting His Partner.”<sup>22</sup> Most of the stories presented on the webpage were interesting and factual, but their primary purpose seemed to be to increase website views. They

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<sup>20</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/224656> (Roya News 2020b).

<sup>21</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/221733> (Roya News 2020c).

<sup>22</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/814240> (Alghad 2020c).

did not provide any useful information that could benefit society, such as statistics on sexual violence, its causes, negative consequences, and possible solutions to address it.

Furthermore, the results showed a significant difference among the three websites regarding their coverage of informative and reporting purposes ( $p = 0.05$ ). The variance showed that the *Alghad* website covered the issue more extensively than the other two websites, thus indicating that it was more dedicated to reporting and informing the public about violence against women. The news related to reporting and informing the public about violence against women includes coverage of prevalence rates, types of violence, and statements by officials and the Jordanian government on this issue. This result can be linked to *Alghad* newspaper's commitment to informing the Jordanian public about the penetration of feminist ideology and the movement to liberate women from discrimination and practices of violence against them, in light of the issues introduced in the first part of this thesis. As mentioned in my second chapter, violence against women has become a widespread and escalating phenomenon, especially with the spread of the coronavirus epidemic in 2020. Newspapers have been reporting on cases of violence as they provide a wealth of material that needs to be highlighted, as news coverage is often associated with increased reporting rates by victims/survivors (UNICEF and UN Women 2022, 7). The rate of violence increased by 33% during the ban period on the one hand and continued throughout the year due to the epidemic on the other (Lannazzone Clough, and Griffon 2021, 10).

As explained in Chapter Four, many human rights practitioners and institutions have embraced the responsibility of advocating for women's rights. They have published articles in newspapers and other media outlets to support women in their fight for their rights. One such organization is the Solidarity is Global Institute (SIGI), which has played a major role in helping victims of violence. They have also used digital newspapers to issue statements condemning

violent practices and demanding their cessation. This is due to the alarming statistical numbers of violence in Jordan, such as underage marriage, physical violence, and certain penal laws that discriminate between the sexes and permit the practice of some forms of violence, such as Law Article 340. This evidence indicates that digital newspapers, particularly *Alghad*, have adopted the issues of fairness, women's empowerment, and standing up to violence by publishing statements from women's rights defenders, thus continuing the Jordanian feminist movement. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the movement began after the British invasion, led by activist Emily Bisharat, and the establishment of the first women's organization, the Women's Solidarity Society, in Jordan in 1944. Since then, more organizations and civil society institutions have been established to advocate for women's freedom and protection from violence. One such organization is CEDAW, which was ratified in Jordan in 1992 to protect women's rights and eliminate gender discrimination.

Feminist thought and women's demands remain relevant today. One of the most noteworthy news items in this respect within my sample was an article from the *Alghad* newspaper in which women's rights advocates engaged in constructive and frank criticism of Penal Code 340, which addresses honor crimes. This reflects the newspaper's stance on this issue. Moreover, the piece titled "The UAE Abolishes a Legal Article that Reduces Sentences in 'Honor Crimes'" discusses the United Arab Emirates' decision to abolish a legal article that previously allowed for the reduction of penalties in cases of honor crimes (Alghad 2020 d).<sup>23</sup> Article No. 334 stipulates the punishment of "temporary imprisonment" against "whoever is surprised to see" another person close to him red-handed in the "crime of adultery." Then he proceeds to kill this person, "the one who committed adultery with him," or both. Together with the abolition of the penalty reduction

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<sup>23</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/922572> (Alghad 2020d)



article, the perpetrator of an honor killing now faces one of the penalties for regular murders, including life imprisonment or death, or imprisonment for at least seven years “if blood relatives pardon their right to retaliation.” The article also highlights the complex and sensitive nature of addressing this issue in the Arab world, especially in conservative societies that adopt laws often protecting perpetrators of this type of crime, with particular concern in Jordan. Local and international human rights organizations are calling for the abolition of Penal Code 340 related to honor killings and for treating this crime like any other murder. According to a statement from the SIGI, the law is considered discriminatory against women because it justifies a man’s exemption from punishment in the event of killing or wounding his wife or one of his female relatives if she commits adultery by reducing their punishment.<sup>24</sup> In this case, *Alghad*’s position is evident in its treatment of the issue of honor killings as a complex and controversial matter. The news did not present any opposing opinions from lawyers or the judiciary to defend the enactment of this law or justify the crime of murder.

It is evident that the *Alghad* website has prioritized justice, supporting women, and taking a stand against this type of violence. On the one hand, this is reflected in the statements of women’s rights defenders who are advancing the feminist movement in Jordan. They argue that the penal code discriminates against women by favoring the perpetrator over the victim and justifying killing in the name of family honor. Consequently, they argue for its abolition from the constitution, citing the UAE as an example. On the other hand, *Alghad* published another news story discussing the launch of the Free...to Be initiative (Alghad 2020 e),<sup>25</sup> organized by Plan International to advocate for girls’ rights to a safe digital environment free from harassment, abuse, and discrimination. The news also discussed the organization’s launch of the Girls in Leadership Roles campaign, which

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<sup>24</sup> For more detail, please review Chapter Two.

<sup>25</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/910130> (Alghad 2020e).

emphasizes the importance of assuming leadership positions and making decisions in all fields. Therefore, *Alghad* plays a crucial role in highlighting the significance of women and their status in society and protecting them from digital violence. This contributes to the success of the fourth wave of the feminist movement, which began in Jordan with the launch of the campaign Rape and Marry for Free on social media and online news to combat sexual violence. This initiative led the Jordanian Parliament to repeal Article 308, which previously allowed rapists to avoid punishment by marrying their victims. Moreover, it has been promoting the hashtag #Jerash\_Crime to deny one of Jordan's most famous cases of physical violence. This has had a significant impact on Jordanian society, motivating feminist women to launch protests, raise awareness, seek justice, and confront violence by breaking the silence.<sup>26</sup>

After analyzing the coverage related to awareness and education in the three websites, the results showed that there were significant differences ( $p = 0.05$ ). The variance was in favor of *Roya News* due to its special attention to covering women's issues to raise awareness and educate people. In comparing the coverage of issues regarding violence against women among the three electronic newspapers, the result showed a significant difference ( $p = 0.05$ ). The data showed that *Alghad* had the highest variance, meaning that it covered the issues of violence against women the most, and for the purpose of excitement, informing, and educating.

Feminist reform movements have emerged, led by women and girls who demand equality and justice for both men and women in every aspect of life, as I have explained earlier. In addition, the United Nations participate in promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women as basic human rights and values. Yet, despite global progress, women still face regular violations of their rights, and discrimination based on various factors persists. Violence against

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<sup>26</sup> Review Chapter Three for more on this.

women is widespread and deprives them of equality, dignity, independence, and even life (United Nations Human Rights 2014). Hence, the media plays a crucial role in collaborating with civil society organizations and feminists to create a world in which every woman is treated with the respect, dignity, and equality she deserves. This involves providing strong journalistic content to educate and protect women, as well as guiding them to assert their rights and challenge discriminatory ideas and oppression against women. Accordingly, journalism plays a crucial role in amplifying the voices of women and girls and combating various forms of gender-based violence. This role becomes even more important during humanitarian crises (UNFPA Arab States 2018).

With the rise of digital media, there has been an increase in online violence and instances of sexual extortion. Therefore, journalists can play a big part in raising awareness about these issues and advocating for solutions to protect individuals from these harmful practices. UN Women emphasizes the importance of promoting gender equality through journalism. Journalism plays a crucial role in advancing gender equality by amplifying the voices of those who are often marginalized. It challenges harmful social norms and behaviors while promoting solutions to such violence (UN Women, n.d.e).

In light of the results presented in my previous chapter, the quantitative analysis of the purpose category for treating Jordanian digital journalism reveals that the *Alghad* website played a major role in raising awareness and guiding public opinion on issues of violence against women. Through news texts, the website addressed the reasons for the practice of violence and its detrimental effects on society and its relationships. Also it addressed inherited ideas rooted in Jordanian society that differentiate between genders and the collaborative efforts with women's support associations to address and eliminate this phenomenon. For example, *Alghad* published a

news report in 2020 discussing the issue of female political candidates facing bullying and digital harassment on social media platforms (Alghad 2020f).<sup>27</sup> The report highlighted that electoral violence against women is prevalent in Jordan, where it is reinforced by cultural traditions that allow male heads of families to deprive women of their independence to participate on an equal footing as voters and candidates in the democratic process. *Alghad* presented another news report titled “Former Female Candidates for Parliamentary Elections Narrate their Experiences of Being Bullied” (Alghad 2020a). It discussed the experiences of female candidates who faced bullying and ridicule during their campaigns. The bullies questioned the women’s ability to represent the local community in Parliament and undermined society’s confidence in the women’s sector. The candidates’ academic degrees and certificates were also ridiculed, and their ability to secure citizens’ votes was mocked. According to the piece, this type of harassment often leads to disappointment, psychological and social distress, and depression, causing some candidates to withdraw from public service, especially electoral activities. In this news report, the issue of patriarchal ideology and the stereotypical roles assigned to women in Jordan as wives and mothers were addressed. This has led to female politicians being subjected to ridicule and facing difficulties during election periods, especially in the era of the Internet and technology. These advancements have facilitated the practice of bullying, particularly among adolescents without regard for punishments or societal values and morals.<sup>28</sup>

As seen in Chapter Two, despite the long and rich history of the feminist movement aiming to liberate women and demand their equality with men, which began globally and in the Arab world before and after World War II until now, the phenomenon of bullying of female politicians and candidates for parliamentary elections confirms that patriarchal thought is still widespread in

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<sup>27</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/805350>.

<sup>28</sup> As mentioned in the study by Lomba, Navarra, and Fernandes 2021 in Chapter Two.

Jordan. Despite the significance of women's status in Jordan, as demonstrated by the 1974 decree from the Jordanian royal administration granting women the right to run for parliamentary elections and to vote in general,<sup>29</sup> women's political participation is still limited compared to men's representation in the Jordanian parliament. The statistics pertaining to the representation of Jordanian women in the parliamentary elections held in 2016. At that time, there were 1,252 candidates, including 257 women. Out of these, only five women were able to win the competition, and an additional 15 seats were reserved for women. As a result, the total number of female representatives increased to 20 out of 130 deputies. In the 2020 elections, the *BBC* website reported that women's representation had decreased to 11.5%. Only 15 women out of 360 female candidates were able to secure victory through the quota system (BBC 2020b). This indicates a decline in the success rate of female candidates in winning competitive seats in Parliament. There is a possibility that this fear stems from the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in society, where men are regarded as superior and more successful at the expense of women's rights. This may lead to a fear of being bullied and harassed in female politics and may contribute to the belief that men are more capable of holding political leadership positions than women. The news highlighted the Mizan Foundation's efforts to advance the role of feminist activists in supporting women affected by cyberbullying through organizing lectures and seminars in addition to providing free consultations to victims to deal with this type of violence.

Regarding the geographical coverage of issues of violence against women, the results showed that there were statistically significance differences among the three sites ( $p = 0.05$ ). *Alghad's* website paid more attention to local news than did *Alrai* and *Roya News* websites, showing that *Alghad's* agenda included local news as one of its highest priorities. As for Arabic

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to Chapter Two.

coverage of violence against women, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ). This suggests that the three sites were similarly interested in covering Arab news about violence against women. My study found that *Alrai's* website prioritized covering violence against women on an international level more than did *Alghad* and *Roya News* ( $p = 0.05$ ).

When comparing the geographical coverage of violence against women, statistically significant differences were found among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ). *Alghad* had the highest coverage of violence against women locally, as well as in the Arab and international regions, compared to the other two electronic news. This indicates that *Alghad* paid more attention to geographic coverage compared to the other sites. In addition, I found that out of the three news websites, local news was the most preferred and discussed media agenda (72%,  $p = 0.05$ ). This means that local news was given more priority in the websites' agenda in covering issues of violence, compared to Arabian and international news. As a researcher, I believe that this result shows that the three websites focused on educating the public and providing news about violence against women in Jordan, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Therefore, it can be explained that newspapers focus on addressing local issues of violence, as previously mentioned, due to the widespread prevalence of violent practices in Jordan. This is according to statements by the Ministry of Social Development and the Solidarity Foundation in light of the coronavirus epidemic during and after the closure period, which spread fear and anxiety among Jordanian citizens and led to an increase in the rate of violence (Economic and Social Council 2020). Testouri (2020, 4) also indicated that the epidemic's closure led to an increase in sexual, physical, and emotional violence due to poverty, the need for food supplies, and the lack of financial resources. The three digital newspapers prioritize addressing local issues of violence

because Jordanian citizens, especially women and minors, are in dire need of understanding how to deal with the phenomenon, its causes, and the solutions provided to women exposed to violence. This is what the researcher Al-Jwainat (2022) pointed out: the impact of electronic journalism on shaping the perceptual and cognitive structure of the individual has increased.

During 2020, widespread closures led to a surge in the relationship between online newspapers in Jordan. This increase in electronic press followers had a significant impact on the rise in cases of violence against women, attributed to factors such as home confinement, economic hardship, depression, and fear of the future. There are also local issues that have sparked controversy in Jordanian society, which require focused attention, priority, and coverage in newspapers to educate the public. One such issue is the Ahlam murder case, as mentioned previously, which involved insulting stories on three websites about honor killing cases. These stories were considered a scoop and quickly circulated across various websites. In 2020, the issue of child marriage spread widely as parents sought to alleviate the financial burden of caring for their daughters during the pandemic, leading to thousands of cases (Alghad 2021). According to Shahin et al. (2022), women expressed fear of sexual harassment, particularly among Syrian refugees. This is a Jordanian phenomenon that deserves sufficient local coverage, and the results discussed above have proven it.

## **6.2. Discussion of the Results According to Agenda-Setting Level 2**

To answer the third question of the thesis (*How does Jordanian digital journalism represent the offenders and the victims of violence against women?*), it has not been possible to identify the personality characteristics of perpetrators of crimes, as discussed in Chapter Five. The news stories did not provide sufficient information about the perpetrators, including their occupation, age, and

marital status. There was a greater emphasis on describing the victims than the criminals. The most frequently mentioned aspect has been the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, whether it is a father, brother, or wife. Besides this, the offender has been portrayed in a negative light by the media, being described as repulsive. There is an explanation for this in the fact that news websites often focus on framing issues of violence in terms of their causes, effects, and spread rather than providing information about the attributes of the perpetrators. Additionally, the news coverage centered on describing the victim in terms of age group, education, and marital status. This was due to the journalists' attempts to prove new websites' solidarity with the abused woman rather than with the man responsible for the violence.

The results show that, regarding representing the attribute of the perpetrators, none of the three electronic news channels covered the positive attribute, while the "repulsive" trait was covered differently by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. It follows that *Alghad* represented perpetrators as more repulsive than did *Alrai* and *Roya News*. Regarding representing perpetrators without any attribute in the three websites, the results revealed that there were significant references ( $p = 0.05$ ), and of the three, *Alghad* was the most representative of perpetrators without attributes. Finally, the attributes of the perpetrators as a whole were significant ( $p = 0.05$ ), and *Alghad* outperformed in terms of coverage.

In terms of age, the results revealed that the coverage of the age of the victims of violence against women among young girls and minors was significantly different among the three websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Thus, *Alghad* had the widest coverage of violence against women among young girls and minors. Meanwhile, the coverage of old-age victims was similar for *Alghad* and *Roya News* (50%), but excluded *Alrai*. The coverage of the undefined age of the victims of violence against women indicated that there were no statistically



significant differences ( $p = 0.05$ ), meaning that the three websites similarly covered the stories of victims of violence without defining their age. In addition, most of the victims represented on the websites were young, with 43% of them belonging to that age range. This means that the three websites focused more on representing victims at a young age through the news.

There is a possibility that the electronic newspapers tried to prove that young women were the most common victims of violence in Jordan in 2020. This result could be attributed to several reasons. First, UN Women reports that intimate partner violence affects nearly a third of all women in the world (30% of all women 15 years and older) in 2020 (UN Women n.d.f). Meanwhile, according to global statistics from the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the majority of intimate partner violence occurs among women aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 (National Domestic Violence Hotline n.d.). Furthermore, the results of the Ministry of Social Development's study in Jordan confirmed that most of the individuals subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual violence under the Ministry's supervision were over 18 years of age (Khaberni 2021).

The statistics mentioned above are consistent with the results of this thesis, which indicate that the age group most exposed to violence among young women in Jordan is between eighteen and 54. This age group is not small and is certainly composed of various segments of society who are victims of violence, as evidenced by the sample of news articles that include refugee women, married women, divorced women, working women, students, politicians, housewives, educated and uneducated women, and more. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the victims of digital violence, especially middle-aged female political candidates in parliamentary elections, are a result of the patriarchal mentality and societal expectations that define women's roles as mothers and wives (Lannazzone, Clough, and Griffon 2021). This age category may also include victims of honor killings. A report issued in 2020 confirmed that Jordan witnessed approximately fifteen domestic

murders against women and girls, with more than eighteen women and girls as victims. These crimes are related to inherited ideas about honor. Among them were attempted murders that were not reported to the police, as reported by Alshiek and Abu Zain Aldein (2020, 9). Notably, a report published by the *Roya News* (2021) website presented statistics on the victims of women in their twenties, thirties, and forties who were killed by their fathers, husbands, and children in the same year (Roya News 2021c). Noha Al-Shdayfat (2017, 240–243) conducted a study on emotional abuse among Syrian refugee women in Jordan, focusing on the ages of nineteen and 55 years. Another study by Kheirallah et al. (2023) reported that the prevalence of physical violence was higher among women aged 25 to 30 compared to those in the fifteen-to-24 age group. These statistics are consistent with the results of my research regarding the prevalence of violence against women in this age group.

Regarding marital status, my data showed that the representation of violence against women among married and single women was significantly different in the three websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. Consequently, *Alghad's* website had the greatest representation of divorced and married victims of violence against women in the online news. According to my analysis, there was no difference in representing divorced victims ( $p = 0.05$ ), thus indicating the similarity in the volume of coverage of divorced victims on the websites. Regarding widows, *Alghad* represented them only twice in 2020. However, there was no significant difference in coverage of the undefined attribute among the websites ( $p = 0.05$ ). This proves that *Alrai*, *Roya News*, and *Alghad* similarly covered stories of victims of violence against women without defining their marital status.

Finally, the results revealed that most of the attributes of the victims of violence against women were covered by *Alghad's* website (55%), compared to other platforms. Thus, it is

important to discuss how *Alghad* addressed this marital status category in the news. According to a recent article titled “Solidarity: A Horrifying Video of a Jordanian Woman Subjected to Violence that Requires Immediate and Emergency Interventions to Protect Her,” divorced, widowed, and separated women are regularly subjected to violence. This group is often excluded, marginalized, and ostracized by their societies due to cultural practices and customs prevalent in many countries. They are deprived of inheritance, exposed to physical attacks that may even lead to murder, and forced into situations where they have to marry relatives of their husbands. As a result, their children suffer from health and educational difficulties. Circumstances force individuals to work or push their children to work and marry early to support their families. This often leads to psychological suffering and harsh treatment for both the parents and their children. According to the Department of General Statistics, 42.7% of widows, divorcees, and separated women in Jordan had previously experienced emotional violence, 42.3% had experienced physical violence, and 13.6% had experienced sexual violence. In general, 51% of them reported being exposed to one or more forms of violence, compared to 24.1% of currently married women (Alghad 2020k). This indicates that *Alghad* tried to prove that in some Jordanian circles, the mindset promoting male dominance and female subordination is still prevalent, as women are considered absolute and not under the protection of a man who provides for or protects them. This results in women being discriminated against and deprived of their rights to live with dignity and make their own decisions without being subject to someone else’s authority. Roya News website, citing the SIGI website, reported that wives’ tendency to justify their husbands beating them is rooted in many aspects of inequality and discrimination between the genders in both private and public spheres, as well as in the portrayal and stereotypes of males and females and in customs and traditions that are

detrimental to women (Roya News 2020d).<sup>30</sup> In general, these factors serve to reinforce male dominance, enabling men to exert power over women, dictate their choices, and control their lives.

Regarding employment, the data that I have analyzed revealed that there were no significant differences in terms of the coverage of the attribute of the victims of violence against women among journalists, political candidates, unemployed, housewives, celebrities, and employed women. The representation of news stories of these attributes of violence against women was equivalent among the three electronic newspapers in 2020. The results for coverage of categories of student victimization and refugee women were significant ( $p = 0.05$ ), with *Alghad* covering these attributes more than other press outlets. Conversely, the undefined type of violence against women was not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). In other words, the three websites similarly represented victimized women through online news without defining their jobs or occupations. *Alghad* covered all the attributes of occupation victims of violence against women more extensively than *Alrai* and *Roya News* (50.6%).

The employment category was defined within the news analysis categories for several reasons. First, the news media plays a decisive role in shaping public opinion. Media representations of individuals can influence personal, political, and social justice responses (Sutherland et al. 2019, 2). Therefore, it is important to highlight the occupations of women who are victims of violence to inform public opinion and educate them about the most common problems faced by women who experience violence. This will raise awareness about how to address violence and discrimination against women, especially because acts of violence are not limited to a specific group but rather affect all segments of society, including politicians, influential and prominent figures, female journalists, refugees, mothers, workers, and other women who are

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<sup>30</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/197790> (Roya News 2020d).

exposed to violence in various forms. Also, the public, especially women, may be unaware of incidents of violence against women. Digital media is one of the most accessible means to keep them informed about stories of violence, its causes, and ways to prevent it. This is achieved through the initiatives of civil society organizations that contribute to attending to women and providing assistance. By engaging with them and finding solutions, we can contribute to stopping assault and violence for all segments of society. The most striking evidence of this is the coverage of the press report on the *Alghad* website, as mentioned earlier. It addressed the issue of female politicians running for parliamentary elections in Jordan being exposed to cyberbullying and highlighted how the Mizan Organization provided solutions and psychological consultations to combat this type of violence.

Displaying digital news stories about violence involving influential figures in society can potentially inspire girls who have had similar experiences, leading them to speak out and put an end to this harmful practice. For example, *Roya News* published a press report about the well-known program presenter Nojoud Al-Qassim being subjected to sexual harassment and bullying on social networks. She conveyed her experience of enduring offensive comments from Internet users and expressed her determination to take action against anyone who insults her using all available means, thus encouraging girls not to retreat but to continue on their path, speaking out, and transforming the culture of silence surrounding violence (Roya News 2020e).<sup>31</sup>

In addition to featuring prominent figures, the Jordanian press also covers the experiences of refugees in Jordan, including female employees, housewives, Syrian refugee women, and others who have been exposed to violence. This was proven by the studies mentioned in Chapter Three, including the research by Al-Shdifat, which confirmed that Syrian refugee women and those with

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<sup>31</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/206185> (Roya News 2020e).

low incomes are vulnerable to emotional violence and oppression. Furthermore, the study conducted by the Jordan Communication Advocacy and Policy Activity (2016, 22) titled *Family Planning among Syrian Refugees in Jordan* stated that Syrian girls are exposed to sexual violence such as sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. The study conducted by Hyde (2013, 10), Gausman et al. (2021), and Anderson (2020) confirmed that refugee women residing in the Zaatari camp are exposed to sexual and domestic violence due to challenging economic conditions and a lack of privacy in their environment. According to the Jordanian General Statistics Department, approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees have sought shelter in Jordan since the outbreak of the war in Syria. Out of this number, 16% are currently residing in refugee camps located in the city of Azraq, Jordan (Gausman et al. 2021, 2). The concentration of refugees in these camps is one of the reasons why Syrian refugee women have become the subject of digital press coverage in Jordan. The reports highlight incidents and stories related to exposure to domestic violence, early marriage, and sexual harassment. This is a concerning issue that needs urgent attention and action to protect the safety and well-being of these vulnerable women.

Meanwhile, other studies, such as those conducted by Alunaiti and Assaf (2012) and Abuhammad (2020), have also indicated that unemployed women and housewives are more vulnerable to domestic and emotional violence than employed women. However, these categories of women did not receive much attention in the news sample of the thesis corpus. This might prove that introducing the occupation of women was not a priority for digital newspapers, as mentioned earlier, regardless of whether they were housewives, politicians, journalists, or employed in other professions. The important thing was to address the event itself or to cover the issues of violence against women in Jordan in light of the coronavirus epidemic. The percentage of women not being identified was 61% within the category of professions in the news. The second-highest percentage

was for the representation of women as refugees at 13%, and the lowest percentage was the representation of 1.3% non-Jordanian female journalists. This may be attributed to the comments made by female journalists in Chapter Three who specialize in investigating cases of violence against women, including Rana Al-Sabagh and journalist Rana Hussein. They emphasized the difficulty of expanding and bringing significant attention to issues of violence against women in the media arena due to the mindset of Jordanian society and the conservative environment. This hinders progress in researching these issues, especially in highlighting the characteristics of the victims based on their occupation, with the exception of public figures, as mentioned earlier, such as the case of TV presenter Nujoud Al-Qasim and female political candidates.

Dealing with stories of violence that have become public opinion issues, such as the case of “Ahlam” in the name of honor, Walaa Alattal confirmed that Jordanian newspapers often conceal crimes of violence against women, particularly sexual crimes, due to the cultural norms of eastern Jordanian society. These norms prevent some stories of female victims from being covered and limit the representation of their characteristics and the incidents that occur in Jordan due to their sensitive nature (Alattal 2015). This result can also be explained by referring to the analysis of the purpose category of media coverage. In this instance, the purpose was to inform the public about incidents of violence against women, raise awareness, and educate them. The focus here is on the statement of the Jordanian government and women’s rights organizations regarding the prevalence of violence against women in Jordan, particularly in light of the epidemic and the laws penalizing such violence. Some of these laws may be considered discriminatory against women in Jordan. The discussion also addresses the causes and consequences of the spread of violence, as well as potential solutions to eliminate it. Thus, it is obvious the journalists did not try to delve into the specific details of the true stories of Jordanian women who have faced violence in Jordan,

whether they are students, employees, celebrities, politicians, journalists, etc. Most of the news stories categorized under “excitement and suspense”, which ranked second in news analysis, focused on violence against victims outside Jordan. The digital press did not prioritize stories about Jordanian women. This may be due to fear for the girls’ reputation due to the traditions that control Jordanian society.

Regarding education, the results showed that coverage of the attributes of the educated victims of violence against women was not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). However, there was a significant difference among the three websites in the coverage of the attributes of uneducated victims ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the *Alghad* platform represented ignorant victims more than *Alrai* and *Roya News*. Among the three websites, the results indicate that there was a significantly different representation of victims of violence against women without defining their education level ( $p = 0.05$ ). *Alghad* had the most news that failed to define the attributes of victims of violence against women. In light of the studies on gender-based violence presented in Chapter Three, education as an attribute of the victim is relevant to analyze how victims are portrayed across news sites, because it has significant impact on increasing women’s awareness and protecting them from exposure to violence because it empowers them and helps them understand their rights (United Nations Development Program 2013). According to a study by Fry et al. (2019), women with low levels of education are more likely to experience violence and face barriers to economic participation and equal opportunities compared to men.

In line with these data, it was necessary to analyze the extent to which these studies conform to my results, and to identify how the attributes of abused women in Jordan are represented, regardless of their level of education. My study found that the representation of uneducated women affected by violence was higher at 18.4% than 6.4% for educated women,



confirming that uneducated women are more vulnerable to violence. However, the results also showed that 75.2% of websites did not specify the education level of abused women. Perhaps the reason, as mentioned earlier, is that journalists aimed to inform readers about incidents of violence against women in general in light of the pandemic. The websites highlighted girls' ignorance and lack of education as factors exposing them to violence. They also discussed awareness campaigns aimed at helping girls access education and confront violence. This addresses the issue of underage marriage and the deprivation of education, which exposes young individuals to domestic violence due to a lack of awareness. Furthermore, the lack of access to education and truancy are contributing factors to girls' delinquency and their exposure to sexual violence, such as rape and harassment (Roya News 2020f).<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the newspapers did not prioritize addressing the educational background of the victims or survivors of violence, except when presenting the experiences of highly educated female politicians and female journalists who were subjected to digital and sexual harassment. But when it comes to dealing with the case of victims of honor killings, such as the story of "Ahlam", the focus is not on her attributes, background, or level of education. This is due to the strict secrecy surrounding this incident, as per the instructions of the public prosecutor, who ordered that the details of this case be prevented from being circulated through newspapers. Another example, is that, in most stories about victims of sexual violence, the press focused more on their educational background than on the incidents of harassment. This was done to arouse the curiosity of readers, often by highlighting stories of celebrities, women, or minors who were harassed in an interesting way.

In terms of blaming the perpetrators or victims, there was no mention of blaming victims of violence against women by *Alrai* and *Alghad*, while *Roya News* highlighted this aspect three

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<sup>32</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/215988> (Roya News 2020f).

times in 2020. According to these results, *Alrai's* and *Alghad's* sites sympathized more with victims than with perpetrators, and found that violence is the responsibility of men, unlike *Roya News*. Hence, the two newspapers adopted the approach of Bucqueroux and Seymour (2009), who emphasized the importance of avoiding journalistic mistakes that tend to justify the criminal's behavior or promote theories that hold the victim responsible for sexual violence, like walking alone at night or being inebriated.

When examining the journalistic coverage of news stories related to violence against women, it became evident that the victims' opinions were not conveyed due to the sensitive nature of the situation. Jordanian society is tribal, and it prohibits women from sharing their experiences due to the fear of stigma or shame. Nevertheless, feminists and lawyers advocating for women's rights expressed their opinions in online news. Social workers of both sexes also condemned the violence, denounced its actions, and did not justify it. This demonstrates the newspapers' support for women and highlights their rights, which are absent from the Jordanian legislation. For example, Dr. Salma Al-Nims, the Secretary of the National Committee for Women, and Tuna Aleris, the Norwegian Ambassador to Jordan, were cited in a press release published on the *Alrai* website. The release covered an online workshop organized by the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies in cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy in Amman. The workshop was titled "In the Name of the Nineteenth House of Representatives: Towards a Comprehensive National Legislative Framework to Protect Women from Violence."<sup>33</sup> Dr. Salma Al-Nims stated that there are still many gaps in the Jordanian legislation, such as the failure to recognize multiple forms of violence, such as sexual harassment,<sup>34</sup> as one of the most dangerous and widespread forms of sexual violence

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<sup>33</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10556989/> (Alrai 2020a) محليات/دليل-لإجراءات-التسوية-لحل-نزاعاتالعنف-الأسري

<sup>34</sup> Noting that there is no term related to "harassment" in the Jordanian law, there are acts that fall under the concept of sexual crimes found in the Jordanian Penal Code, such as indecent assault, rape, kidnapping, and indecent acts (Roya News 2020g): <https://royanews.tv/news/195715>.

alongside political violence.<sup>35</sup> She stressed that “there is a need for there to be a law that protects women from violence, especially in light of the existence of laws that do not define or hold accountable violence in all its forms”.<sup>36</sup> She also confirmed her aspiration for a law against discrimination against women, emphasizing that restricting violence against women to the Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 15 narrows the process of treating and eliminating violence.<sup>37</sup>

Discussing taboo issues at the state and societal levels is difficult because women are still often viewed as the property of the family and the husband. Despite the prevailing mentality, there is a tendency to refer individuals to a family violence protection center to settle disputes when problems arise, regardless of the risk factors.<sup>38</sup> The *Alghad* website also addressed the issue of female candidates being exposed to digital violence, also known as “political or electoral violence”. This showed the campaigners’ support for the female candidates by acknowledging the mental and psychological effects of their exposure to bullying, blackmail, threats, ridicule, and belittlement online. These effects include feelings of fear, stress, and withdrawal from political work, especially considering that some of the candidates are visually impaired. In addition, *Alghad* website has highlighted the inadequacy of Jordanian legislation in protecting female candidates from political violence. This concern is particularly relevant during the parliamentary elections

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<sup>35</sup> According to the United Nations, political violence against women is defined as a form of violence practiced against them that can take many forms, such as physical, sexual, or psychological harm, and women are robbed of their right to express their political opinions, such as running for parliament, the ability to vote, hold public office, cast a ballot privately, or participate in political parties. It can be committed by a family member, a member of the community, and even by the government (UN Women 2021b, 4).

<sup>36</sup> In the Jordanian Labor Law, there is no article that protects a working woman if she is exposed to harassment by her co-workers or the public if she deals directly with clients.

<sup>37</sup> For more details, please Review Chapter Two.

<sup>38</sup> For more details, visit the Facebook page of Al-Quds Center for Political Studies: [https://www.facebook.com/alquds.center4political.studies/photos/a.10150270052235304/10164190325755304/?type=3&eid=ARCI0opLoTIugH\\_acaYjKruVHHzPv9Kb7q7yO6C2zfSYlagepooifazQhnRAZ3M3CIZ7m46SZOgEo7ZM&locale=ar\\_AR&paipv=0&eav=AfbpdihNsDGcq\\_DVTUDp4ELjMNtkVxil\\_Mo79fJUzLiTCIZQxLNpUI8QK0LNPSA5kvs&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/alquds.center4political.studies/photos/a.10150270052235304/10164190325755304/?type=3&eid=ARCI0opLoTIugH_acaYjKruVHHzPv9Kb7q7yO6C2zfSYlagepooifazQhnRAZ3M3CIZ7m46SZOgEo7ZM&locale=ar_AR&paipv=0&eav=AfbpdihNsDGcq_DVTUDp4ELjMNtkVxil_Mo79fJUzLiTCIZQxLNpUI8QK0LNPSA5kvs&_rdr)

held in 2020. The lack of legal protection for female candidates constitutes a form of discrimination, as male candidates are afforded such rights. The absence of protective measures against violence during political campaigns can be detrimental to the participation of women in political affairs. Thus, it is vital to address these shortcomings and ensure that equal protection and opportunities are provided to all candidates, regardless of their sex. For example, *Alghad* recently posted on a consulting and training report by lawyers from the Karak Castle Center: *Violence against Women during Elections in Jordan*.<sup>39</sup> According to this document, although the Independent Election Commission has implemented policies and mechanisms to safeguard those involved in electoral operations against violence, there are no specific policies in place to address gender-based violence against female employees and workers during elections. The report underscores the importance of developing strategies that provide equal economic rights, protect women from domestic and electoral violence, and offer resources to enable women to participate independently in public life. By addressing these issues, it is possible to mitigate election-related violence (Alghad 2020g).

The news reports that I examined did not include the perspective of the criminal or their family, the motives behind the crime, or any attempt to justify the violent acts against the victim. *Alghad* tried to show that some of these crimes were committed for illogical reasons based on suspicions or rumors about the girl's behavior without verifying them. Especially when the criminals' justifications for murder are presented, they are often dealt with in a way that condemns the perpetrator and sympathizes with the victim. She may have tried to resist some of society's patriarchal customs, such as refusing to be forced into marriage, seeking a divorce, or asserting

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<sup>39</sup> For more details, review the link of the study (in Arabic): [https://2b52a425-3ca6-4c14-88df-7381bcbe9b20.usrfiles.com/ugd/2b52a4\\_5a86795a5bfc476ab5fe379d95df1344.pdf](https://2b52a425-3ca6-4c14-88df-7381bcbe9b20.usrfiles.com/ugd/2b52a4_5a86795a5bfc476ab5fe379d95df1344.pdf) (Mhadeen et al. 2020).

her right to inheritance. This confirms that she lived in an unjust reality that deprived her of the right to live freely.<sup>40</sup>

The news websites highlighted the ongoing problem of discrimination against underprivileged girls, which prevents them from exercising their rights and living a dignified life. This issue is particularly apparent in the prevalence of underage marriage among impoverished girls who are seeking security, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Alrai 2020b).<sup>41</sup> According to SIGI, this situation has further hindered these girls' ability to complete their education, live with dignity, and exercise their freedom of choice to become active members of society. Accordingly, it is a stark reminder of the systemic inequality that persists in our world and the urgent need for collective action to address it (Alrai 2020c).<sup>42</sup> The sites also highlighted some poignant stories that show the journalists' empathy toward the victims, such as the experiences of female journalists who were subjected to sexual violence and gender-based discrimination. For example, *Alghad* covered an investigative report titled "Harassment: The Open Secret in the Lives of Arab Female Journalists", which presented the experiences of Arab female journalists who faced verbal harassment and sexual blackmail by their superiors at work in exchange for professional advancement. This led to several female journalists withdrawing from journalistic work because they refused to provide sexual services in exchange for information or a scoop. The piece also addressed the inability of girls to defend themselves and their fear of confrontation or filing a complaint. According to the victims' description, local media institutions in Arab countries do not deter such acts and do not develop policies to protect their female journalists in the field from harassment. One Lebanese journalist admitted that she would be blamed if she filed a complaint

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<sup>40</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/883873> (Alghad 2020g).

<sup>41</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10567658/مجليات/47-نسبة-الأطفال-غير-المتحقين-بالمدراس-في-الأردن> (Alrai 2020b).

<sup>42</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10520743/مجليات/انخفاض-عدد-زواج-القاصرات-يعزز-فرصهن-باستكمال-تعليمهن> (Alrai 2020c).

because of her inappropriate clothing or if she tried to exploit her body to obtain information or privileges. The *Alghad* website also failed to cite the perpetrators' second opinion to justify their actions. Instead, the article was limited to presenting the victims' stories from their perspective, demonstrating the news site's empathy toward the victims of sexual violence. This confirms that discrimination against women in the workplace is attributed to the male mentality that condemns women, especially in the absence of laws that protect women from such violence (Alghad 2020h).

The media coverage provided by journalists on women's rights was impactful and emotionally charged, aiming to promote justice and fairness for women, who represent a significant portion of society. In addition, the presented examples of some news reports demonstrate that certain journalists from *Alrai* and *Alghad* supported feminist ideals that advocate for women's freedom and equal opportunities. They called for the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, underage marriage, and the denial of educational opportunities, as well as political discrimination against women. These feminist ideas were conveyed through the criticism of the patriarchal society in Jordan by Dr. Salma Al-Nims, who proposed the amendment of the Protection for Domestic Violence Law in Jordan. She also condemned the absence of legislation criminalizing sexual harassment and political violence in Jordan. Additionally, *Alrai* conveyed criticism from the SIGI regarding child marriage, highlighting the negative consequences of such practices. On the other hand, *Alghad* conveyed the recommendation of Karak Castle Center to enact laws that protect women in politics from the political violence they face on social media platforms, in a manner equal to male candidates. Consequently, by emphasizing the importance of women's rights, the media was able to shed light on the various challenges women face in society and encourage the public to take action toward achieving gender equality.

On the other hand, the *Roya News* website presented the perspective of a poll of young women in Jordan conducted by the Al-Quds Center for Studies, which blamed women who are exposed to sexual harassment. The poll respondents communicated that a woman is to blame when she is exposed to harassment because she seduces a man. There is also a belief that if a woman takes a long time to file a harassment complaint, she must be lying. In addition, participants also saw women using harassment complaints as a form of threatening or blackmailing men. This exposition of victim-blaming at *Roya News* aligns with the findings of a study by Diwanji, Saleem, and Lee (2021), which indicated that Indian newspapers had blamed the victims of sexual mass violence for their irresponsible behavior, such as wearing Western clothing and drinking. Although the reasons for blaming women may vary between the Indian sources and *Roya News*, they are similar in their tendency to attribute responsibility to women for experiencing harassment. However, according to both studies, it is obvious that Jordanian journalism distinguishes itself from Indian journalism in several attributions regarding sexual harassment. First, the *Roya News* blamed women for being subjected to harassment based on findings of the Al-Quds Center's study, which surveyed the opinions of a group of Jordanian participants who represent a part of society. *Roya News*'s coverage of this issue can be considered relatively objective, given that the journalists have excluded any personal opinions or inclinations to support or agree with the study's findings. This is because the presented news included an additional scientific perspective on SIGI, a feminist institute that advocates for women who have suffered from violence. The perspective of SIGI confirmed that the outcomes of the study are unequivocally due to the prevalence of a male-dominated mentality in Jordanian society, which holds women accountable, particularly in the face of the proliferation of the culture of silence among girls. This factor has facilitated the rise of sexual violence, as girls are afraid of the stigma or shame that may result from disclosure. Therefore,

news treatment can be considered a rational and scientific approach that presents clear evidence and information. It highlights the findings of a purely scientific study and also presents a persuasive argument that explains the reasons behind the control of the masculine mentality. Thus, the *Roya News* website provided comprehensive coverage of the issue of harassment in Jordan, including valuable insights into the social and cultural factors that contribute to the problem. The ultimate aim of this treatment is to bring attention to the issue at hand and create awareness among the general public that there is a problem that needs to be highlighted and addressed. The process is intended to be fair, unbiased, and objective. It is a proactive approach to problem-solving that seeks to promote greater understanding and social responsibility. The study by Saleem and Lee (2021) revealed that news stories blamed victims of group harassment for wearing Western clothing, drinking, and thus inciting violence, according to the Indian Home Minister's statement. Accordingly, this tackling proves that the Indian press perpetuates deep stereotypes against women rooted in society. Thus, Indian journalistic discourse is dominated by the dominant masculinity prevalent in patriarchal societies. In contrast, the Jordanian newspapers took a different approach when it came to the issue of blaming girls. Rather than relying on biased opinions and accusations, they dealt with the issue from the standpoint of an objective scientific study. Moreover, they provided a logical interpretation of the events from a feminist point of view, which shed light on the underlying causes of the problem. This approach not only helped to identify the root of the problem but also encouraged constructive dialogue.

Further, the *TRT Arabi* news website featured an investigative report titled "Harassment and Rape: Why Do Arab Societies Blame Women and Hold Them Responsible?" It addressed why women are held accountable when men harass them based on their appearance, clothing, or behavior. This blame often leads to women ignoring the harassment and remaining silent out of



fear of stigma and shame, which further perpetuates the phenomenon. Sociologist Abdul Rahim Al-Otari has confirmed that the justification for harassing women due to their immodest clothing is illogical. He points out that reality shows that harassment affects even those who wear Islamic dress or veil, as well as pregnant women who are pushing their child's stroller. This indicates that all women are not safe from sexual harassment today. Meanwhile, Sharh Sanaa Al-Aji, a sociologist and writer, highlighted that in cases of harassment and rape, the blame is consistently placed on women due to the prevailing male mentality that seeks to protect men. This reinforces the masculine concept, which justifies a man's actions discriminating against women and implies that he has privileges that place him in a preferred position at the expense of women in Arab society (TRT Arabi 2020a).

The coverage of blaming offenders was significantly different among the three websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Alghad*. In other words, *Alghad* took a more negative stance toward the offender when it came to blaming them for cruel acts toward the victim, compared to other platforms. The data indicated that the coverage of neutral attitudes toward offenders and victims of violence against women significantly differed ( $p = 0.05$ ), where *Alghad* took the most neutral approach, compared to *Alrai* and *Roya News* regarding blaming perpetrators or victims. The results revealed that the neutral position of the three websites toward the perpetrators or victims was most frequently reported in news items (59.4%). Thus, the three news sites that I have dissected seemed to approach the issue of blaming the victim of violence or the criminal with an objective and balanced view while covering stories of violence.

In an article published in the British monthly *Prospect Magazine* in 2007, television journalist and former president of the English television network, London Weekend Television, David Cox, explains the difference between neutrality (impartiality) and objectivity. Neutrality

means allocating equal space to opposing points of view, and it is nothing more than an attempt. It is about considering different ideas, opinions, interests, or individuals individually. Objectivity is usually what journalists mean by trying to exclude personal judgment on matters through the media (Cox 2007).<sup>43</sup>

However, some media outlets tend to report on cases of sexual violence by questioning the believability of the victims and portraying their stories as dubious. This approach makes it difficult for the public to discern the facts. Debates concerning the authenticity of claims of sexual violence are a complicated, persistent, and unresolved issue, as noted by Sarah Banet-Weiser and Kathryn Claire, the authors of *Believability: Sexual Violence, Media, and the Politics of Doubt*. Discussions surrounding the veracity of such claims are often challenging to navigate, and require careful consideration of the facts and evidence involved (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 200).

The issue of believability of stories of sexual violence in the media is linked to two factors, as described by Banet-Weiser and Higgins. These factors are *subjectivity* and *performance*. Subjectivity refers to the judgment on the believability of victims and the accused based on a range of factors, such as their identity, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and transgender status. It is important to note that bias against certain groups, such people of color and transgender individuals, who are often marginalized in a patriarchal society, can contribute to doubting the believability of such groups in media (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 8–11). This is because such groups are often subject to preconceptions and stereotypes that can negatively impact their perceived credibility.

Furthermore, the performance of both the victim and the accused can also impact the believability of their stories. Additionally, how the story is told can also impact its perceived

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/essays/51982/impartiality-imperilled> (Cox 2007)

credibility. For example, a story that is told in a sensationalized or exaggerated manner may be viewed as less credible than one that is presented in a more measured and factual way. For instance, during the hearing regarding the domestic violence allegations made by actor Johnny Depp against actress Amber Heard, the media questioned the credibility of Heard's testimony, citing her perceived affectation and exaggeration. This raised concerns about the veracity of her claims and called into question the reliability of her account (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 10–16). Such scrutiny of witness testimony is not uncommon in legal proceedings, and it underscores the importance of credibility and accuracy in establishing the facts of a case.

Banet-Weiser and Higgins (2023) referred to the concept of *economy of believability*, which focuses on the conflict over the issue of the truth of accusations of sexual crimes between two opposing sides. The first side is the feminist defender of women's rights. It represents the #MeToo movement, which calls upon girls who are victims of sexual violence—from all groups, races, and marginalized groups such as people of color and trans people—to convey their experiences of harassment and violence through social media platforms that enable them to have their voices heard and believed. This brings real consequences for the accused and tarnishes his reputation. The other side is the side represented by the angry, misogynistic, and white supremacist reactions against the #MeToo movement. It is represented by the upper white class in the society—those with authority, power, and influence in the state. This puts the accusations of victims of sexual violence and the demands for their rights into question (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 27–36). The #HimToo movement resulted in a backlash against the #MeToo movement, which was launched in 2018 in support of men who are victims of false allegations of sexual violence on social media platforms (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 164).

Accordingly, the marginalization of certain groups in society, coupled with ingrained racism and injustice complexes, has rendered them vulnerable to misogynistic media. This has weakened the believability of marginalized individuals, particularly women of color, black or trans people, and lower-class individuals, who accuse those in positions of power of sexual violence. The Me Too movement, in particular, has suffered from this problem, as the media often portrays the movement in a negative light, casting doubt on the veracity of sexual violence allegations. These issues are more pronounced when the accused individuals are men of wealth and influence. In such cases, the media often provides them with opportunities to defend their position and maintain their believability in a society that is ruled by a patriarchal and capitalist system. This further undermines the credibility of the marginalized, who are often portrayed as liars and opportunistic individuals seeking money and fame. This is because their accusations often run counter to prevailing power politics, power relations, and the various ways in which money elites promote impunity. The legal system also compounds this problem (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 12–36).

Banet-Weiser and Higgins also shed light on the issue of women's silence when it comes to reporting sexual violence. It highlights that women, particularly those who belong to the least powerful sections of society, tend to remain silent due to the belief that their testimony will not be of any help to them in the face of their aggressors. This is especially true when the aggressors are white men who belong to the upper class and wield greater power and influence. In such cases, the victim often faces the prospect of being silenced by the aggressors themselves, who are often men of privilege. The perpetrators might offer the victim a payment in exchange for their silence, which can further complicate matters for the victim of sexual violence. This explains the reason behind

a small number of sexual violence cases make it to court, and even fewer lead to convictions (Banet-Weiser and Higgins 2023, 40–50).

Among the news reports that the *Roya* website dealt with was the issue of questioning the believability of victims of sexual violence and the coverage of the case of the accused student from the American University in Cairo, Ahmed Bassam Zaki. He was arrested after he was accused of indecently assaulting dozens of girls, harassing them, and raping one of them, who was underage. He also tried to threaten others by revealing matters that harmed their honor, according to the Egyptian media. As a result, feminist activists in Egypt brought the issue of sexual harassment to the forefront through social media after dozens of girls filed harassment and rape charges against the young man, using the hashtag #Harasser. They revealed his name, especially on Instagram, and invited other victims to disclose what happened to them (Roya News 2020h).<sup>44</sup>

The lawyer of the accused denied these claims and demanded that his client confront any of those who sustained that he had harassed them. According to the lawyer, these accusations were made by unknown and unreal persons, and their claims were meaningless and did not amount to an accusation or evidence of condemnation. The public prosecution confirmed that it had not received any official complaints or reports against the young man from any complainant or person harmed by him, except for one complaint from a girl. This complaint was submitted via the official electronic link in 2016 to accuse Zaki of demanding sexual favors (Roya News 2020i).<sup>45</sup> Through another news report, the accused gave his statement that he had met six girls through a social networking site. After getting to know them, he received pornographic pictures of the girls from them. He kept the pictures and later threatened to send the pictures to their families after they expressed their desire to end their relationship with him. During the investigations, the public

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<sup>44</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218238> (Roya News 2020h).

<sup>45</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/225155> (Roya News 2020i).

prosecution issued a statement by Zaki denying what was broadcast and promoted—contrary to what he had admitted—on social media sites regarding accusations of rape and indecent assault (Roya News 2020j).<sup>46</sup> Therefore, his statement was an attempt to cast doubt on the victims' accusations by blaming them for taking the initiative to woo and seduce him by sending him pornographic pictures.

Through the story of the perpetrator, Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the *Roya News* website embodied the economy of believability through the covering of the feminist movement, which used #Harasser to encourage girls to talk about their experience and expose and condemn the accused. Zaki's attempt to cast doubt on the victims' accusations was successful due to insufficient evidence. This was because reports of sexual violence did not reach the court, hampering the credibility of the girls who accused Zaki of rape and indecent assault. Here lies the fact that the culture of silence has the greatest impact in obstructing the feminist trend toward eliminating sexual violence. This is because girls in Arab societies, especially those who are sexually abused, tend to remain silent and not speak out for fear of harming their reputations due to shame. The fear for their reputation and social status—being subjected to the stigma of sexual abuse—works against them due to male dominance and the importance of their perception in society.

This was confirmed in a press release by the Egyptian *El-Yom* news website, which conveyed the call by Radwa El-Sherbiny, a TV presenter and Egyptian feminist, to the girls regarding the need to break the silence to confront any attempt by the aggressor to continue his sexual assaults (El-Yom 2020).<sup>47</sup> For its part, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) website broadcast the statement of a member of the board of trustees of the New Women Foundation, Mai Saleh. According to the statement, although sexual harassment is punishable by imprisonment of

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<sup>46</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218468> (Roya News 2020j).

<sup>47</sup> <https://el-yom.com/news/archives/340813> (El-Yom 2020).

six months to one year if repeated, the culture of impunity has hampered the effectiveness of this law for years. She also asserted that cases of sexual violence are not given priority and are not treated seriously, even when they are reported to the police. Cases of theft and terrorism are considered more important in Egypt. The procedures and circumstances of arresting the perpetrators also allow for escaping punishment. The Director of the Psychological Support Unit, Mira Morcos, pointed out that the motivations for silence in cases of sexual harassment are based on three reasons: feelings of shame, denial, and despair. She also confirmed that women and girls are surrounded by a tight circle of fear—for their reputation, threats, and blackmail from the harasser, loss of jobs, future work opportunities, relationships, and education, and fear of having their stories questioned (BBC 2020c).<sup>48</sup>

In its fourth chapter on the issue of impartiality, the BBC Editorial Guidelines Booklet<sup>49</sup> clarifies that due impartiality does not necessarily require covering a range of different points of view or opinions in equal proportions, whether within a single television program, webpage, or news item. Achieving neutrality does not necessarily require giving the opinions that enjoy greater support and universal acceptance the same space as the opinions of the minority (or the group that does not enjoy the same amount of support). Among the news reports on the neutrality in the covering of sexual violence by the news sites, is a press report published on the *Alghad* website with the title “Saad Lamjarred’s Concert in Egypt Is Reconsidered after an Electronic Campaign to Cancel It”.<sup>50</sup> It was reported that the famous pop singer Saad Lamjarred was scheduled to perform in Egypt. The event announcement was made online following the spread of social media posts calling for its cancellation since he had been accused of raping three girls in France and the

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-53411091> (BBC 2020c).

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/impartiality/guidelines#impartialityinbbccontent>.

<sup>50</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/910563> (Alghad 2020i).

United States. Saad Lamjarred was first arrested on suspicion of beating and raping a woman in New York in 2010. Six years later, he was accused of sexually assaulting a French woman named Laura Priola. In the fall of 2018, he was accused again of raping a girl on the Riviera beach in France.

The news reported the interaction of social media users expressing their negative attitude towards the singer, as he was accused of rape. These include launching hashtags such as #We\_don't\_want\_Saad\_Lamjarred\_in\_Egypt, and #Saad\_Lamjarred\_is\_a\_rapist. Activists in Saudi Arabia launched the hashtag #We\_reject\_Saad\_just\_in\_Riyadh in objection to his participation in a concert at the end of 2019, but he performed the concert anyway. Among these interactions, the most famous and popular personas that opposed sexual violence in Egypt were highlighted. For example, the interaction of the famous young Egyptian actress, Mayan Al-Sayed, with the calls for a boycott was reported by re-publishing the calls to cancel the concert. She is the actress who had previously announced that she had been subjected to sexual harassment in more than one incident. Regarding allegations about Lamjarred, the opinion of the famous feminist lawyer and blogger Nihad Abu Al-Qumsan was reflected on social media. She had stated her position against crimes of harassment and violence against women, asking with disapproval: "How does a company invite a singer accused of raping girls at the same time?" This confirms the reference to holding the famous singer responsible and condemning him for the act of rape. The news confirmed that the Egyptian Parliament approved legislative amendments protecting the confidentiality of the data of victims of sexual harassment when they report crimes against them. This is an attempt to overcome social customs in Egypt that prevent girls from complaining about sexual assault. However, the news conveyed an opinion contrary to the opinions mentioned above, through a belief from the Moroccan singer's fans that his widespread fame in the Arab and



European countries caused him to be exposed to a conspiracy, as groups intervene to prevent him from performing at international concerts so as not to increase his fame.

Some of the singer's fans suggested that the women who accused him of raping them did so to exploit Lamjarred's fame. This is an explicit reference to the attempt to blame the victims for their actions by portraying them as women exploiting the singer for fame and claiming that he is innocent. Here, it has been proven that the news attempted to present the truth of the singer being accused of sexual harassment and rape in its entirety, without falsification or fabrication. However, the news did not give the opposing party an equal space in its coverage as that of other parties whose viewpoints were consistent with the goal of the coverage—to address the issue of sexual violence, such as rape and harassment, and to condemn it and blame it. There are two options at play here—an attempt to prove the injustice done to girls and expose the crime of singer, Saad Lamjarred. The other option is to try to absolve him of the accusation and blame the other party, who are the victims.

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To answer the fourth question (*What is the dominant position of Jordanian digital journalism when addressing the issue of violence against women?*), the results give us the following significant topics for discussion:

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on domestic violence in Jordanian households (Alrai 2020 d).<sup>51</sup> With home quarantine measures in place, many families have been forced to spend more time together in close quarters, often leading

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<sup>51</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10566081/محليات/المعاينة-الأردن-اتخذ-إجراءات-عديدة-للتعامل-مع-العنف-ضد-النساء> (Alrai 2020d).

to heightened tensions and conflicts. Economic struggles, food insecurity, and psychological distress have further exacerbated the issue, resulting in domestic violence, family breakdowns, and other adverse outcomes for women and girls of all ages, as revealed by the Economic and Social Council (2020). During the peak of domestic violence incidents amid the pandemic, news websites amplified their coverage of such issues while taking a predominantly unfavorable stance towards most of the violence cases. This increased coverage was aimed at bringing awareness to the issue and providing information to the public on how to prevent and mitigate such occurrences.

My quantitative study revealed that the negative position of the news coverage of physical violence against women among *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* was not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ), and that the neutral tendency of the news coverage of physical violence against women among the three websites was also not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). The three sites took very similar positions regarding physical violence when dealing with negative or neutral tendencies while covering such issues. Nevertheless, the three websites most frequently addressed the negative position regarding physical violence by 80.6% overall. In other words, the three websites condemned physical violence against women by addressing this issue of online news in 2020.

Chapter Four above underscores the pivotal role that the media plays in challenging social norms and behaviors that perpetuate violence against women. The media serves as an effective tool for identifying and exposing perpetrators, raising awareness about gender equality issues, shattering the wall of silence, and bringing such issues to the forefront. Through increased media attention, the fight against gender-based violence can gain momentum, and the media can serve as an invaluable ally in the quest for social justice. In light of these ideas, it becomes clear that the newspapers took a negative stance toward physical violence by highlighting four main points. These include the legal treatment of physical violence, the focus on its negative effects on women,

the social treatment of physical violence in the context of Jordanian tribal society, which boosts male hegemony, and the vision of women's rights activists in raising awareness about the reasons for the spread of violence against women. In terms of legal treatment, the news websites that I have examined condemned the dilemma of the Law of Protection from Domestic Violence No. 15, according to the vision of Dr. Salma Al-Nims. The law solely focuses on protecting women from physical violence when they file a complaint by seeking the Center for Protection from Violence Family support for conflict resolution when a problem occurs, regardless of risk factors (Alghad 2020j).<sup>52</sup> Deterrents are not imposed on the perpetrator unless there is a felony.

The three sites in my sample highlighted the negative effects of physical violence on the victim as indicated by social scientists. This includes an increase in the divorce rate, a rise in the death rate, a tendency toward suicide, and other effects, which will be explained below in the section analyzing the results of the news framing (Alrai 2020e).<sup>53</sup> They criticized the patriarchal system that justifies men's dominance over women, their oppression, and the higher privileges given to men to correct women's behavior and exploit them (Alrai 2020f).<sup>54</sup> They also highlighted the practice of physical violence by men, and addressed the spread of the culture of silence among abused women, who fear stigma, shame, losing custody of their children, and the inability to obtain financial support and economic independence or their weak knowledge of the law or the necessary steps to be followed when exposed to violence, especially if it results in physical injuries that could endanger their lives. Some victims resort to ignoring and tolerating the perpetrators of violence, either at the legislative or societal level, as some of them waive their right to seek criminal penalties for the violence against them due to social pressures from their family and society, which force

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<sup>52</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/777247> (Alghad 2020j).

<sup>53</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10565085/أبواب-لو-كان-العنف-رجلا> (Alrai 2020e).

<sup>54</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10544792/كتاب-العنف-المبني-على-النوع-الاجتماعي-يعيق-وصول-المرأة-للعدالة> (Alrai 2020f).

them to relinquish their rights (Alghad 2020k).<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the news sites did not quote the opinions of the judiciary or members of the House in support of the physical violence law, nor did the news media convey the criminals' opinions and justifications for their actions toward the victim. This proves their negative attitude toward these acts.

*Alghad*, *Alrai*, and *Roya News* held similar positions regarding negative trends toward emotional violence. Furthermore, the results indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in the media coverage of emotional violence against women among the three websites ( $p > 0.05$ ), and that the variance among them was in favor of the negative position. In this regard, the three newspapers had a more negative view of emotional violence than they did a neutral one. Furthermore, the data indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in the media coverage of emotional violence against women among the three websites ( $p > 0.05$ ), and that the variance among them was in favor of the negative position. In this regard, the three digital news websites had a more negative view of emotional violence than they did a neutral one. From the analysis of the news texts, it is evident that the news showed several approaches to covering emotional violence in a negative manner. First, it highlighted the consequences of emotional violence against women, particularly during quarantine amid the epidemic, including isolation, depression, and suicidal tendencies. In addition to the financial losses incurred by the victims, there are also costs associated with psychological therapy sessions due to their exposure to humiliation, neglect, threats, and emotional blackmail. On the other hand, the news sites did not try to justify men who practice this type of violence against their wives or female family members. Instead, these practices were criticized by women's rights practitioners, who strongly condemned patriarchal ideology that grants men the right to humiliate women to modify their behavior and

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<sup>55</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/814118> (Alghad 2020k).

discipline them, as mentioned in the study by Btoush and Haj-Yahia (2008, 1548). The perpetrators were not praised or portrayed as heroes, nor were their actions excused. Most of the assailants were anonymous, and their attributes in terms of education, age, career, or occupation were not determined. Consequently, the intensification of news coverage focused on the negative effects of violence on women. This includes addressing the motives behind the aggressor's behavior and condemning the perpetrator, the mindset of masculine society, and criticizing the laws regarding domestic violence protection. Addressing the man's insecurity, which leads to his use of violence, as well as challenging patriarchal thinking that reinforces these behaviors and tackling the issue of the inability to access the Family Protection Center during the lockdown, are examples of such interventions.

A significant negative position was found in the coverage of sexual violence against women by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* ( $p = 0.05$ ), and the variance was in favor of *Roya News*. Accordingly, *Roya News* took the most negative position towards sexual violence compared to *Alrai* and *Alghad*. In this study, the neutrality position of the news coverage of sexual violence against women was not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). Therefore, the three websites in this study covered the news in a neutral manner and with a similar approach to sexual violence at 17%. Nevertheless, the news of three websites most regularly discussed the negative side of sexual violence with 82.6%. It becomes clear through the interpretation of the results that the news sites took a negative stance toward sexual violence, consistent with their treatment of other violent issues. Firstly, the news sites emphasized the negative effects of sexual violence. For instance, a news report on the *Roya News* website highlighted that complaints of sexual crimes, especially rape, witnessed an increase of 16.2% in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is despite the precautionary measures implemented by the police, the closures due to the pandemic, and the presence of

potential social, psychological, and health services for women and girls being exposed to sexual violence. The report pointed out the negative impact of sexual violence on their future and lives because they suffer from its psychological and social effects that extend for many years. In addition, the girls are exposed to psychological trauma, physical and health problems, and complications of abortions resulting from rape (Roya News 2020k).<sup>56</sup> In a report published on the *Alghad* website, the consequences resulting from sexual violence against girls include the constant feeling of helplessness, fear and weakness, loss of trust in others, and fear of betrayal by friends and relatives. The victims may also suffer from feelings of stigma, disgrace, embarrassment, and scandal, in addition to the suffering associated with any future sexual activity, which may become painful and frightening. They may feel rejected and unable to experience future sexual activities in their normal functional form (Alghad 2020l).<sup>57</sup> Therefore, *Alrai* also indicated that sexual violence may hurt the feelings and dignity of women and affect the privacy of their bodies because of insulting comments made about her on social media sites or by hearing sexual comments and harassment in the streets (Alrai 2020f).<sup>58</sup>

Secondly, websites like *Alghad* newspaper have focused on criticizing the penal code in Jordan, which they argue is not a sufficient deterrent to the practice of sexual harassment. They point out the absence of the term “harassment” in the Penal Code and its reduction as an act contrary to public modesty. This highlights the inadequacy of the law to protect female workers from sexual harassment or assault by their co-workers or company clients (Alghad 2020m).<sup>59</sup> According to women’s rights organizations, *Roya News* also criticized the prevailing mentality that pushes girls to give up their right to report sexual violence to the authorities. They also

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<sup>56</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/241748> (Roya News 2020k).

<sup>57</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/919296> (Alghad 2020l).

<sup>58</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10544792-المرأة-للعدالة-وصول-يعيق-اجتماعي-وعلى-النوع-الاجتماعي-يعيق-وصول-المرأة-للعدالة> (Alrai 2020f).

<sup>59</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/788910> (Alghad 2020m).

criticized the practice of family members preventing their daughters from suing criminals out of fear of tarnishing the family's reputation due to stigma and shame. This confirms that the statistics on the prevalence of sexual harassment may be inaccurate and unrealistic due to victims' fear of presenting and repeating their statements before legal authorities (Roya News 2020g). The websites also addressed the issue of blaming the perpetrator in cases of rape and harassment outside Jordan, which represented the websites' condemnation of such practices and solidarity with the victim.

The negative position of the news coverage of honor crimes against women was significantly different among the three websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), with *Alghad* showing a stronger tendency in a negative direction than *Alrai* and *Roya News*. The results revealed that the neutral tendency of the news coverage of honor crimes against women was equal between *Alrai* and *Alghad*, although not significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, *Roya News* did not assume a neutral position toward such crimes. Generally, the position of three websites toward honor crimes was found to be predominantly negative (81.8%). This finding contradicts the study by Alattal (2015), which described the tendency of the Jordanian press to treat this type of crime conservatively as a result of social customs and traditions that restrict the coverage of such crimes.

Jordan, a Middle Eastern country, is predominantly governed by tribes and families who uphold their respective values and social norms, particularly the concept of honor. Jordanian society is known for its conservative culture and strict adherence to social norms, especially regarding honor crimes. These crimes revolve around the idea of committing a crime against a girl when she is suspected of having a relationship with a young man outside of marriage (Rsheidat 2023, 126). The Jordanian authorities have opted not to disclose specific details about sexual crimes to safeguard the anonymity of the victims during investigations. This is done to ensure that

the necessary measures are taken to preserve their reputation and to prevent serious social consequences such as stigma, scandal, and disgrace. By prioritizing the protection of victims' identities, authorities strive to mitigate the negative impact that such crimes can have on society. As in the case of the Palestinian victim of honor killing, Israa Gharib, the public prosecutor denied the suspicion of honor killing and withheld the details out of respect for the victim's privacy (Alghad 2020g).<sup>60</sup>

Journalists face many challenges when covering women's issues, especially in oppressive and authoritarian political systems and in socially closed and tense societies (Al-Shawabkeh, Aghbari, and Jibril 2020, 72). These may be the reasons that prevent the Jordanian press, as mentioned by Wala Alattal, from expanding its investigations into sensitive issues that pose a threat to the reputation of girls in Jordanian society. Meanwhile, journalist Dalal Salama wrote an opinion piece from 2008 on the Ammon News website titled "Murder Is Acceptable as a Principle, Provided that It Is Verified... The Crime of Honor: The Media Supports the Killer out of Favoritism towards Society". She affirmed that intellectual repression hidden within conservative customs, traditions, and the patriarchal system hinders the journalistic treatment of honor killing cases. This is evident in the superficial presentation of such cases and the sympathetic portrayal of the killer. Jordanian media coverage of honor killings is characterized by ambiguity and a lack of confrontation. It often contented itself with simply reporting that a crime had occurred and associating it with a girl's extramarital affairs. As a result, journalists do not confront the truth, nor do they take a frank position on it. Instead, the treatment focused on secondary matters, such as suggesting that the crime is often a cover for family disputes or inheritance issues, without delving into the real motives behind honor killings with honesty, clarity, and transparency (Salama 2008).

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<sup>60</sup> Check the link to explore more details visit the link of the news Report: <https://alghad.com/story/883873>



Meanwhile, journalist Asma Qandil issued an opinion piece on the International Journalists Network blog titled “Here Are the Most Important Professional and Ethical Controls for Covering Murder Crimes.”. According to her, the coverage of honor crimes related to girls in the Arab world can cause severe psychological damage to the victims’ families when they discover videos of the murder of their relatives circulating on online news and social media networks. This coverage also leads to the spread of fear and panic among certain segments of society (Qandil 2022). Therefore, these opinions could also be considered logical in justifying Jordanian newspapers’ reluctance to report on honor killing cases, taking into account the sanctity of private life when publishing information about crime victims. This is especially relevant in light of a patriarchal society that is ruled by its customs and traditions, as is the case in Jordan. Qandil believes that the solution lies in professionalizing journalists by providing them with training to adhere to ethical standards and journalistic controls. This includes teaching them how to apply principles of accuracy, credibility, balance, objectivity, and impartiality in their press coverage.

The news items in my sample, as stated above, adopted a negative stance in addressing honor killings, using words and phrases that condemn and denounce violence against women. For example, *Alghad* used the phrase “the legal defect that Jordan suffers from”<sup>61</sup> to refer to Penal Code 340 on honor killings, indicating *Alghad*’s rejection of this law, which has caused a systemic imbalance in society. Meanwhile, *Roya News* described honor killing in an article as “deceptive social legacies” and “heinous crimes”<sup>62</sup>. At the same time, *Alrai* described this issue as “obsolete customs and traditions”,<sup>63</sup> an indication that it takes a negative approach toward these crimes and indirectly condemns patriarchal society and the customs and traditions that promote the

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<sup>61</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/883873> (Alghad 2020g).

<sup>62</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/219681> (Roya News 2020l).

<sup>63</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10574515> (Alrai 2020g).

perpetration of harmful practices against girls. Additionally, the cited sources include statements and opinions from female sociologists and lawyers condemning violence against women in the press regarding honor issues. They also denounce the horrendous acts committed by brothers and husbands against women and call for their protection, indicating their disapproval of killings in the name of honor. For example, *Alghad* addressed Law 340 and its consequences in an investigative reporting titled “Honor Killings: Murder Under the Eyes of the Law”.<sup>64</sup> It cited the opinion of researcher Abeer Al-Dababneh, who believes that this law reinforces discrimination against women and encourages the continued commission of murders under the pretext of defending honor. According to the Jordanian Women’s Solidarity Institute Association, “nine domestic murders have been recorded against women in Jordan since the beginning of 2020”. This opinion was supported by lawyer Banan Zain al-Din, who confirmed that the Penal Code for Honor Crimes is biased toward the perpetrator and encourages a policy of impunity from punishment. “The lenient sentences suggest that any man can kill his daughter, sister, or wife without punishment”, Banan said. The lawyer stresses in her statement the injustice of Jordanian laws that follow a patriarchal approach by applying the policy of impunity and justifying the perpetrator’s actions, even if it is at the expense of the victim and her reputation.

Therefore, it becomes evident that newspapers in Jordan are completing the bridges of the women’s movement by giving a large space for women to express their opinions about rejecting honor killings and deeming them shameful. Further, support their efforts to achieve gender equality and eliminate violence. Even though the issue of achieving equality is still thorny in Jordan, in light of the application of this type of punishment law, which is supposed to protect women from

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<sup>64</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/883873> (Alghad 2020g).

murder, unfortunately, sexual discrimination due to masculine concepts and customs remains prevalent in conservative societies. Jordan serves as the greatest example of this.

According to the discussion above, there has been massive progress in tackling honor killings between 2018 and 2020. This could be attributed to several reasons as follows: first, as stated in Chapter Five above, Jordanians became more aware of such killings after the murder of Ahlam by her father came to light. As a result, most Arabs, namely, Jordanians, sympathized with the victim on social media platforms. People created a hashtag #AhlamScream on Twitter to express their feelings. They accused her father of indifference and irresponsibility for killing her brutally—sufficient to have tea beside her body! Accordingly, the interactivity of the users through social media drove the journalists to cover this story of crime and relay it through online news. As mentioned before, the story of Ahlam received widespread coverage across the news sample for the study. Although the orders of prosecutors to stop investigating the crime against Ahlam prevented the news platforms from addressing and penetrating the details of the story, we cannot deny their role and effort in shedding light on the case in response to the public movement on social media. For example, the Roya website reported the negative opinions of social media users regarding Ahlam's crime and their condemnation of the father (Roya News 2020m).<sup>65</sup>

The journalists believed that there was a persistent need to take advantage of the case and cover the crime to attract the attention of the public and bring more visitors to the websites. This shows the solidarity of news websites with the protesters across digital platforms in condemning Ahlam's murder. Journalists who rushed to cover Ahlam's story may be justified by their desire to meet the public's needs in covering controversial issues that shook the Arab world. This is especially true since this issue is the first of its kind to spread rapidly across digital platforms,

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<sup>65</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/219441> (Roya News 2020m).

causing women's rights advocates to demand increased penalties for perpetrators of such crimes. This is a unique incident, since the Jordanian press rarely covered any honor-related incident against a Jordanian girl before, given the seriousness and sensitivity of the situation in Jordanian society. The judiciary is discreet about the publication of these cases through Jordanian newspapers because these cases affect the reputation of Jordanian girls. In addition, publishing private stories about families contradicts media ethics and is considered a crime punishable by law. However, this story of Ahlam gained traction due to the brutality of the murder—a crime committed by a father toward his daughter. Ahlam's screams awakened the Jordanian people to the extent of the persecution and injustice that girls like Ahlam faced. The victim's screams were also recorded on smartphones by her neighbors, and clips of the recordings were posted on YouTube to bring this story to justice and educate people about this crime. Accordingly, this issue became a scoop that drove journalists to compete to cover the incident.

This issue could be seen as a manifestation of the fourth wave of the feminist movement that began in Jordan in 2016 following the demands of feminists and media professionals to abolish Law 308, which waived the penalty for perpetrators of the crime of rape if they agreed to marry their victims. The campaign Rape and Marry for Free was launched to this effect. Due to the demands of feminists on social media platforms, the law was repealed and the punishment for the rapists was increased. The #Jerash\_Crime campaign and the #AhlamScreams campaign are also considered an extension of the feminist movement in Jordan. The activists campaigned for women's freedom and the abolition of discrimination by demanding the amendment of laws and harsher punishment for perpetrators of murder and domestic violence. The news websites also supported the feminist discourse by presenting the opinions and ideas of feminist activists on honor killings and publishing news articles aimed at dismantling misconceptions about honor and its

connection to the woman's body. For example, this issue was reported through a news report on *Alghad* demanding the need to tighten punishments for perpetrators of honor killings to stop the spread of such crimes in Jordan (Alghad 2020g).<sup>66</sup> These acts were denounced by conveying the opinions of female lawyers and feminists. They declared that these practices followed the patriarchal mentality and concepts of masculinity that condemned the girl, reduced her dignity, and approved rulings that humiliated the girl and took her life as soon as she behaved in a manner inconsistent with the customs and traditions of Jordanian society. This is especially true since the killing of girls is attributed to reasons related to a perceived sense of honor. However, the Penal Code 340 still justifies the perpetrator's actions and has not been repealed due to the Judicial Council's reservations regarding this type of case, based on the tribal society that prevails in Jordan. However, we can consider the coverage of Ahlam's case through the media as a development in itself and key to an initiative by feminists who have always sought to combat such crimes, especially after society's sympathy for the victim. Fighting such crimes is possible by continuing the attempts to intensify the coverage of these issues in newspapers and launching campaigns that may have a significant impact on amending the laws that encourage this type of unjust practice. This is similar to the success of the campaign to drop the Penal Code of Sexual Crimes No. 308 to protect girls from such violence.

In line with this tendency, the increase in domestic violence against women during COVID-19, especially during lockdown in 2020, prompted journalists to focus their attention on addressing domestic violence in all its forms as a means of raising public awareness about critical issues that have been spreading widely. Therefore, covering these issues is among the priorities of the digital media agenda of newspapers. This is demonstrated by new websites' interest in addressing issues

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<sup>66</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/883873> (Alghad 2020g).

by focusing on the causes of violence, its consequences, and the solutions offered to reduce the spread of such issues. In addition, Ahlam's incident coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the same year. Therefore, this case was considered part of the newspapers' priority agenda in dealing with cases of honor killing as a type of violence targeted by digital newspapers during the pandemic period. It is no less important than other practices of violence against women, especially in light of the eighteen cases of femicide at the beginning of 2020. This has proved that the story of Ahlam has brought the issue of killing women in the name of honor to the forefront of Jordanian media. Although journalists were prevented from conducting in-depth research into the circumstances of the victim's story, the three websites that I have examined attempted to expand the investigation into the root causes that lead to honor killings and provided analyses of the social and cultural factors that contributed to the exacerbation of this phenomenon. The news sample participated in feminist and social research efforts to combat honor killings by providing solutions that eliminated such crimes. For example, the *Alrai* website indicates that nine domestic murders occurred in 2020, based on a statement by the SIGI. The majority of them were committed to protecting the honor of the families because of a defect in the implementation of a response plan for domestic violence created in 2018 by the National Council for Family Affairs.<sup>67</sup> The implementation process was flawed, resulting in gaps in coverage leading to loss of lives, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, specialists and civil society organizations have called for its strict adherence and for the strengthening of a comprehensive and effective protection system to prevent future incidents (Alrai 2020h).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> For more information, review this link (in Arabic): link <https://ncfa.org.jo/uploads/2020/08/7af17841-4485-5f31151707f5.pdf> (Miqdadi 2018).

<sup>68</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10545285/محليات/خلل-بتنفيذ-خطة-الاستجابة-للعنف-الأسري-ومطالب-بمنظومة-حماية-فعالة> (Alrai 2020h).

In his remarks, Muhammad Miqdadi, secretary-general of the National Council for Family Affairs, called for addressing the problem until the system has been fully implemented. Moreover, he emphasized that the shortage of trained and qualified professionals to deal with cases of violence, including social workers and psychologists, and the low wage system contributed to the defect. Miqdadi asked to change the mindset and trends of the Jordanian society that accepted femicide or honor killing based on different justifications (Alrai 2020h). In addition, Alrai's website referred to the services provided by the Family Health Care Institute, which holds awareness sessions and lectures regarding the dangers of domestic violence and honor killings. The institute also offers specialized programs for girls in the fields of psychological, physical, and women's empowerment. For example, it provides psychological sessions and emotional release to survivors of violence and torture. These services come as part of the institute's participation in the 16-day campaign to combat violence against women (Alrai 2020i).<sup>69</sup>

These discussions might therefore provide a reasonable explanation for the progress made in covering violence against women and taking a position against such practices. However, despite the improvement in the coverage of honor crimes by news websites in recent years, it has not resulted in a sufficient amount of news coverage to address these issues compared to other types of violence against women. This is especially true when it comes to discussing the consequences of a society killing girls oppressively since it is difficult to identify the actual cases occurring in Jordan. A more detailed explanation is provided in Chapter Seven.

Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the negative position of the news coverage of child marriage among the websites ( $p = 0.05$ ), *Alghad* being more negative than *Alrai* and *Roya News* toward the issue. There were, however, no significant differences in the neutral

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<sup>69</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10564073/محلّيات/معهد-العناية-بصحة-الأسرة-يبدأ-حملات-مناهضة-العنف-ضد-المرأة> (Alrai 2020i).

tendency of coverage of child marriage, which assured that the *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* took the neutral position in a similar manner. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers regarding the position of the news coverage of child marriage, and the variance was in favor of the negative tendency (84.9%). This shows that the three websites condemned the practice of child marriage in Jordan in 2020.

The analysis of the news reveals that the issue of child marriage or the marriage of young women was predominantly discussed in Jordanian newspapers in a negative light, reflecting various tendencies. The three websites focused on the negative effects of underage marriage, as reported by women's rights organizations such as SIGI, which strongly condemned these practices to eliminate the financial burden of girls due to poverty, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jordanian society suffered from difficult economic conditions, especially the poorest. As a means of alleviating financial hardship, parents forced their daughters out of school at a young age to marry someone who would provide them with financial support, safety, and protection (Alghad 2020n).<sup>70</sup> This situation generates physical and sexual violence, leading to girls falling victim to ignorance, early miscarriage, and deprivation from education, freedom of choice, and financial independence (other consequences mentioned in the analysis of the Framing Theory section in 5.2.3). *Roya New's* SIGI statement, for example, discusses the negative effects of child marriage as the first factor that keeps girls from pursuing their education in school or universities. This prevents them from following their career opportunities that contribute to the development of society. It also hides their abilities in their economic and social lives. Furthermore, child marriage makes girls subject to sexual violence and leads to unplanned pregnancies and miscarriages. Exposure to sexual activity at a time when they

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<sup>70</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/938206> (Alghad 2020n).



do not know much about their bodies and their sexual and reproductive health is detrimental to their physical and psychological health (Roya News 2020n).<sup>71</sup> As mentioned in the news article by *Alrai* above, SIGI also condemned early marriages because they adversely affect the professional futures of minors due to interruptions in education, preventing them from obtaining jobs that will guarantee their livelihoods (Alrai 2020c).

In contrast, the reasons for enacting the law allowing early marriage for those under 15 years of age were not discussed across the three sites. It was possible to convey the opinions of a representative of the Jordanian parliament who may hold an alternative viewpoint that supports early marriage as a means to protect Syrian or poor girls from sexual harassment. This viewpoint suggests that marriage is the best way to safeguard their honor, as outlined in the study by Shahin et al. (2022) referenced in Chapter Four. This law was permitted in accordance with the belief of several families that girls must marry at an early age, as it is not their duty to support the family or take on responsibilities, whereas men are expected to do so (Fry et al. 2019). Instead, journalists were limited to treating marriage from a negative angle, focusing on its causes and viewing it as a kind of discrimination against girls who are poor and have limited opportunities to pursue education and a career. The news websites portrayed a negative attitude toward the marriage of underage girls by conveying the opinions of local communities and organizations. For example, *Roya News* reported that ECPAT, an organization aiming to end sexual exploitation of children, has reported that many Syrian families are marrying their underage daughters to Turkish men to obtain money as a result of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. The organization confirmed that Turkey has the largest number of refugee children in the world and that girls among them are highly vulnerable to forced marriage, human trafficking, and sexual

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<sup>71</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/226617> (Roya News 2020n).

exploitation. The girls were also offered in marriage so that Syrian families could obtain money for rent. These marriages are also not recognized as official marriages by the Turkish state. Therefore, Syrian girls and women married in this way are not entitled to legal rights and protection, which makes them vulnerable to mistreatment, assault, sexual exploitation, and slavery. The news report indicated that underage girls were interrupted from continuing their education due to forced marriages. Previously, there were protection measures and teachers could report such problems to ECPAT. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, it became difficult to reach out to children from Syrian families to protect them (Roya News 2020o).<sup>72</sup>

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries implemented mandatory home quarantine measures to curb the spread of the virus. This has led to an increase in reports of domestic violence, particularly against women and children. Additionally, instances of electronic violence have also risen sharply due to the increased usage of the Internet and social media platforms (BBC 2020 d).<sup>73</sup> As a result, news websites covered digital violence negatively, and no significant differences were found ( $p = 0.05$ ). Through the analysis of the news, it becomes clear that the three sites addressed digital violence in a way that paralleled physical violence. This can be summarized by focusing on three key issues: addressing the negative effects of digital violence against women, the spread of violence and the tendency to commit suicide, and exposure to psychological and physical disorders such as depression, anxiety, and headaches. The patriarchal ideology has also been criticized for allowing racist practices via the Internet against women politicians who run for parliamentary elections. This includes insults, bullying, and threats based on the belief that women do not have the right to enter politics and participate in elections, which is considered a fundamental right for men. According to the *Alghad* website, female political

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<sup>72</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218595> (Roya News 2020o).

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-52691248> (BBC 2020d).

figures in Jordan are subjected to biased evaluations based on their physical appearance, and their potential for advancement is limited by their perceived role as caretakers. This reductionist stereotype confines women to traditional gender roles, in sharp contrast to male politicians, who face no such scrutiny (Alghad 2020f).<sup>74</sup> As mentioned before, the viewpoint of feminist activist Dr. Salma Al-Nims was also presented. She discussed the absence of laws protecting women from political violence when they participate in political activities, such as running for parliamentary elections or holding sensitive positions. According to *Alrai*, political violence against women is a form of violence that deprives women of their right to express their political opinions, such as running for parliament, municipal councils, or political parties. It manifests in psychological, physical, and sexual forms and has serious consequences. A woman's desire and ability to engage in political life are influenced (Alri 2020j).<sup>75</sup>

Through news websites like the ones chosen to extract my sample, victims of digital violence, female political candidates, and TV presenters have found a platform to share their experiences and stand up against cyberbullying. Their stories serve as a source of inspiration for others who may be going through similar struggles, demonstrating that it is possible to overcome such challenges with resilience and determination. In addition, online platforms have addressed the discourse of feminists and advocates of women's rights, expressing their condemnation of various forms of violence, including bullying, intimidation, and the spread of rumors that women may be subjected to. These advocates showed solidarity with women who have experienced such forms of violence by providing them with practical advice and solutions. Thus, these measures are designed to enable women to avoid and cope with such acts, as well as to support them in their pursuit of justice and empowerment. Through the three news websites, feminists and advocates of

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<sup>74</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/805350> (Alghad 2020f).

<sup>75</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10553093/شباب-وجامعات/قيادات-نسوية-تتعرضن-لإساءات-وتنمر-إلكتروني> (Alrai 2020j).

women's rights sought to create a more equitable and just society where women are respected and valued as equal members of the community. Finally, the attributes of perpetrators of violent acts were obscured and presented in a negative light, condemning their actions.

Generally, the results proved that *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* took negative positions toward violence against women in terms of physical, emotional, sexual, honor crimes, child marriage, and digital violence, and at the same time, these results are contrary to the those from the study by Ihechu et al. (2017). In the study, it was found that Nigerian media coverage did not address issues of violence against women or cultural practices that discriminate against them, such as early marriage, widowhood practices, female genital mutilation, domestic violence/battering, divorce, wife inheritance, male preference syndrome, or bride price refund. Consequently, the media consider cultural practices against women as sacred rituals that should be preserved and respected, demonstrating that no neutral or negative stance was taken by the media toward such issues. Conversely, the Jordanian digital press took a negative stance against practices of violence against women, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The results from the study by Najdat (2006) agree with mine that the Jordanian daily press outlets, such as *Alrai*, *Alghad*, *Addustour*, *Al-Arab Al-Youm*, and *Al-Diyar*, tend to deal with domestic violence in a negative manner. Despite the difference in the research sample as well as that in the time frame in which the two studies were conducted, their results confirmed the negative position of the press toward violence against women. This implies that the Jordanian press is actively rejecting and condemning this type of violence, which is a positive step forward in the fight against gender-based violence. Regarding the result from the study by Al-Juwainat (2022), which indicates the trend category for digital journalism (*Ammon*, *Sawsanah*, and *Jordan Zad*), the positive trends were 64.4%. Here, the researcher clarified that what is meant by the positive trend

is the Jordanian digital press's attempt to address positive opinions that support issues of violence against women; it stands with abused women and supports their needs. This may imply that the result from Al-Juwainat's study is similar to those found in my analysis of, which condemned the violence and supported abused women.

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This chapter has provided an explanation of the results of quantitative data analysis of news about six types of violence against women published on *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* during COVID -19 in 2020. These results were discussed and in detail with the theories about gender and media that I have selected as the pillars for my thesis. the Agenda-Setting Theory was applied with two levels: Level 1 to determine the priorities of the news sites' agenda in addressing violence against women; Level 2 to determine the attributes and the position of news and sites' coverage regarding this type of violence. It turned out that child marriage was the type most widely circulated across the three online platforms, while digital violence was the least covered. The results also showed that the most position of the three sites toward blaming victims or perpetrators was neutral, while their position toward six types of violence against women was negative.

Moreover, the three website sites also addressed discriminatory legislation that promotes violence and hinders women's rights, such as the Domestic Violence Law No.15 and Article 340 of penal code of honor killings. The results of the quantitative research of the news were compared with previous research and studies mentioned in the third and fourth chapters on violence against women and the media's treatment of the spread of this type of issue. In addition, the quantitative

results were discussed and analysed under the light of gender discrimination, the penetration of feminist movements, and violence against women as discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

News websites have also addressed the practices of violence against women in Jordan, such as honor killings, physical violence, electronic bullying, and early marriage during. This is largely attributed to the patriarchal mentality and the patriarchal society that dominates many Jordanian families, which reinforces the concept of women's subordination to men. The three websites have shown support for women who have suffered abuse by expressing their sympathy towards them, condemning violence, and standing alongside civil society organizations and women's rights advocates. These websites have communicated statements, opinions, and solutions to strengthen the feminist movement. They have called for the abolition of discriminatory legislation and the development of laws that promote gender equality and eliminate all forms of violence. In the next Chapter, Framing Theory is applied to analyze media frames in order to explain the results of the quantitative analysis of news according to Robert Entman's methodology, by discussing four frames of violence against women, which are: identifying the issue, diagnosing the causes of the violence, the negative effects of the violence, and providing solutions to eliminate violence against women.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **ANALYZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE JORDANIAN DIGITAL MEDIA DISCUSSION (II)**

In this chapter I present a detailed discussion of the results obtained from the quantitative analysis of news. The items are related to violence against women and were analyzed using Framing Theory to answer the fifth research question, which is: *What is the role of Jordanian digital journalism in educating the public about violence against women?* The results of this analysis have been compared with previous studies on media and violence against women that were discussed in previous chapters. Framing Theory was chosen as it is an extension of the Agenda-Setting Theory and helps in measuring the characteristics of news treatment of issues related to violence against women and their impact on public opinion. As mentioned in Chapter Five, applying Robert Entman's paradigm is important for media scholars to frame the media and present news on various issues. The four frames of news have been identified:

- #1. Identifying a specific issue (violence against women).
- #2. Diagnosing the causes of violence against women.
- #3. Negative effects of violence against women.
- #4. Proposing solutions to eliminate violence against women.

My results are as follows:

The data indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in terms of identifying the forms of physical violence, identifying the protection laws from violence against women, index of spreading the violence, and demography of the spreading of this issue ( $p = 0.05$ ). Based on this, the news websites of 2020 discussed the volume of the first frame of physical violence (identify the physical violence) similarly in terms of types, protection laws, spreading rate, and demography.



The news sites that I have studied addressed the Protection from Domestic Violence Act of 2017. This law obligates all health and educational service providers to report domestic violence with the consent of the affected individual if the act committed involves violence. It relies on the Family Protection Center of the Public Security Directorate to deal with all complaints of domestic violence received and to document them. Despite these efforts, the Jordanian Women's Union's vision has detected some gaps in the norm. They argue that it does not require the Family Protection Center to transfer the case to the judiciary unless it involves a felony. Additionally, they advocate for prioritizing the safety of the affected woman over excluding the perpetrator from the location of the conflict. Exposed women or survivors of violence are transferred to safe centers and places to protect them. As reflected in some of the news items in my sample, in some cases women who are at risk of honor crimes are placed in prison for their own protection (Alghad 2020j).<sup>76</sup> Dr. Salma Al-Nims discussed this dilemma in the law, as mentioned previously. Unfortunately, restricting efforts to address violence against women solely to the provisions of Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 15 narrows the process of treating and eliminating violence. The Center for Protection from Domestic Violence is responsible for resolving disputes when they arise, regardless of the situation. Due to the prevailing mentality and patriarchal culture, women's freedom is restricted by the absence of strict laws and punishments that protect them from violence unless they commit a crime. However, there is leniency toward the perpetrators of murder, which reduces the punishment for the crime and justifies the criminal for his action, as seen in the Penal Code for Murder in the Name of Honor 340 and as reflected in my sample (Alrai 2020k).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/777247> (Alghad 2020j).

<sup>77</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10550361/> محليات/مختصون-يدعون-لبرنامج-يعزز-الإرشاد-الأسري-ويطوق-العنف (Alrai 2020k).

According to a report issued by the Department of General Statistics and cited by *Roya News*, approximately 25.9% of wives were subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional violence from their husbands in 2019. Solidarity Is Global Institute (SIGI) indicates that out of every 100 wives, 26 wives experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from their husbands. In contrast, approximately one out of every 100 husbands has been exposed to physical violence by their wives, confirming that females are exposed to it many times more than males. This violence has physical, psychological, and social effects that persist throughout their lives (Roya News 2020d).<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, *Roya News* also reported that the number of domestic killings of females had risen to 18 since the beginning of 2020 in Jordan, with most of the cases occurring in the governorates of the Kingdom, the regions of the desert, and the northern Jordan Valley (Roya News 2021c).<sup>79</sup> According to *Alghad*, the number of incidents of violence against women and girls reached a peak in the first half of 2020, with the Family Protection Department handling 4,678 cases, most of which involved physical violence. *Alghad* also confirmed that the reported numbers of violence are significantly lower than actual figures, because the victims' feelings of shame, social pressure, and restrictions on their movement act as barriers to reporting violence (Alghad 2020 o).<sup>80</sup>

According to the analysis of the second frame of physical violence, which explains the reasons for physical violence against women, the three websites attributed the reasons—from the perspective of sociologists, journalists, and human rights workers—to poverty or economic situation, as well as the inheritance of customs and traditions that harm women and discriminate against them. Additionally, exposure to physical violence since childhood, failure to study, family

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<sup>78</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/197790> (Roya News 2020d).

<sup>79</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/235975> (Roya News 2021c).

<sup>80</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/931707> (Alghad 2020o).

disputes, the wife's betrayal of her husband, the fear of reporting violence and filing a complaint, and the spread of COVID-19 are all contributing factors to this condition. In these regards, the results presented in Chapter Five showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing these causes ( $p = 0.5$ ). This proves that the three sites tackled the causes of physical violence against women in 2020 in a similar pattern: on the three sites, it was largely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic (28.6%). These results are consistent with those from the study by Testouri (2020) and Anderson (2020), which pointed out that COVID-19 contributed to increasing physical and emotional violence due to the economic situation among the Jordanian girls who were located in some governorates in Jordan such as Irbid, Karak, Amman, alongside the Syrian refugees in Zartai Camp. This has been confirmed by the results from the analysis of the online news (*Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya*). According to a report by *Alghad*, the United Nations Population Fund published a study stating that domestic violence increased by 69% during the months of the curfew.<sup>81</sup> The actual number of cases is expected to be much higher than what is being reported by the Family Protection Center because victims are forced to reside with their abusers due to the ban. Moreover, the health-protection measures prevent victims from accessing services and communication means. *Alghad* confirmed that the year 2020 witnessed catastrophic events that have had a profound impact on society, particularly affecting families. The implementation of curfews has essentially confined people to their homes, leading to worsening economic conditions. As a result, many families have resorted to negative measures to cope with their new circumstances, such as pulling their children out of school and

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<sup>81</sup>[https://jordan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/20200511\\_Daring%20to%20ask%20Rapid%20Assessment%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://jordan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/20200511_Daring%20to%20ask%20Rapid%20Assessment%20Report_FINAL.pdf). The study mentioned is Anderson's (2020), which included a sample size of 400 adolescent and adult men and women from Irbid, Karak, Amman governorates, and Za'atari refugee camps, Azraq. The participants were joined by service providers, youth educators, and members of the government.

forcing their underage daughters into marriage. Additionally, there has been a rise in violence and family disputes. According to the same study conducted by the United Nations Population Fund, a significant proportion of families, amounting to 68%, lost their primary sources of income during the period of lockdowns. This resulted in a sharp increase in cases of violence against women and girls during the first half of this year. The Family Protection Department reported that it dealt with a total of 4,678 cases during this period, with the majority of these cases involving physical violence, as reported by *Alghad*. The findings of the study highlight the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations. The loss of livelihoods has had far-reaching effects, not only on individuals and families but also on the wider community. The rise in cases of violence against women and girls is particularly concerning and underscores the urgent need for measures to protect and support those affected (Alghad 2020p).<sup>82</sup>

In addition, fear of reporting violence and filing a complaint as causes of physical violence are compatible with the report released by Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2020), which indicated that victimized women are afraid to report intimate partner violence to the police for fear of social unacceptance or retaliation from their oppressor. In 2020, the *Alghad* website published a press report featuring the perspective of Sirine Al-Bitar, a feminist activist specializing in women's rights. In her opinion, several factors discourage Jordanian women from reporting incidents of violence to official authorities. The tribal nature and structure of Jordanian society play a significant role in this regard. Many women may seek help from their immediate family members or the chief of the clan due to the prevalence of consanguineous marriage. Consequently, reporting a husband who is also a cousin may lead to undesirable family conflicts, and many individuals may prefer to resolve such conflicts within the family rather than reporting them.<sup>83</sup> On

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<sup>82</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/946938> (Alghad 2020p).

<sup>83</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/777247> (Alghad 2020j).

the other hand, as stated in a study conducted by Al-Hawari and El-Banna (2017), financial hardships, poverty, family disintegration, and academic difficulties are factors that contribute to the exposure of domestic violence victims to physical and emotional abuse.

According to my analysis of the second frame of physical violence, these reasons were covered by all three news platforms in 2020. The inheritance of traditions that harm women and discriminate between genders is cited as the reason for husbands beating their wives, which is the most frequent form of physical violence, according to quantitative results. The *Roya News* website tackled this issue in a press release titled “Violence against Women in Jordan: Shocking Numbers and Implications”, citing the results of the Population and Family Health Survey. The report highlighted that the younger the age of married or previously married women, the higher the percentage of those who justify their husbands hitting them. The results showed that 62.5% of married women aged fifteen to nineteen agreed with at least one specific reason as a justification for their husbands slapping or hitting them. Some of the reasons wives use to justify their husbands hitting or slapping them include marital disputes such as burning food, arguing with the husband, leaving the house without informing the husband, neglecting the children, insulting the husband, or not obeying the husband (Roya News 2020d).

According to the SIGI, the wives’ tendency to justify beating their husbands is a consequence of various societal problems in Jordan, stemming from gender inequality and discrimination, as well as stereotypes about men and women and offensive customs and traditions that contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal beliefs and practices. In general, it allows males to dominate females on the one hand, while on the other hand, it restricts their choices and controls their lives (Roya News 2020d). These facts are consistent with a study by Btoush and Haj-Yahia (2008) which confirmed that Jordanian society justifies practicing physical violence against

women and blames them due to the influence of the patriarchal system prevalent within some Jordanian families. This belief asserts that men have the right to control and punish women for their misbehavior.

In connection with frame #3 (negative effects of physical violence), *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* provided the negative effects of perpetrating physical violence against women, according to sociologists' vision, which include high costs of treatment for physical and psychological injuries, divorce, increasing death rate, psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, physical health, preventing victims from performing their role at home or workplace, low rate of women's economic participation, and suicide. Based on the result of my quantitative analysis, it was pointed out in the previous chapter that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing these negative effects of physical violence such as hitting, slapping, burning, etc. ( $p = 0.5$ ). This indicates that the three sites distributed their interest in treating the negative effects of the physical violence during 2020. These results are compatible with the report *Violence against Women during COVID-19* (UN Women 2021 a), which evinced that exposure to physical violence during COVID-19 caused women to become tense and anxious about their physical health, restricting victims from performing their roles at home or workplace. Based on the results, the sample of news for this thesis confirmed that Jordanian women suffered from many negative effects resulting from their exposure to physical violence, such as divorce, psychological pressure, mental disorders, the tendency to commit suicide, and others. In an opinion piece published on the *Alrai* website, the sociologist Amer Awrtani highlighted that when women are subjected to physical violence, such as being beaten and tortured, it can have a profound impact on their sense of self-worth and value. The trauma of such experiences can cause lasting emotional scars, leading to feelings of

powerlessness and hopelessness. In light of the physical and psychological repercussions stemming from the inflicted trauma, the affected individual may experience a range of negative effects. These effects may include, but are not limited to, depression, anxiety, and a propensity towards social withdrawal and self-neglect. Furthermore, the victim's ability to maintain regular work and care for their children may be compromised as well (Alrai, 2020e).<sup>84</sup>

According to a report on the *Alghad* website, women who have experienced domestic violence may be at a higher risk of developing chronic health issues. These health problems can include frequent headaches, chronic pelvic pain, back and abdominal pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and digestive disorders. The article further suggests that the physical and emotional stress of domestic violence can have long-lasting effects on a person's overall wellbeing. The World Health Organization's<sup>85</sup> report *Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women* indicates that physical abuse experienced by women can increase their vulnerability to mental and emotional disorders. Such conditions include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, eating and sleep disorders, a tendency to suicide, and psychosomatic diseases (Alghad 2020j).<sup>86</sup>

According to *Roya News*, SIGI believes that violence is never acceptable, regardless of a person's sex. In addition, females are subjected to physical violence more frequently than males. Additionally, males have more options and opportunities to avoid violence. On the other hand, women often lack choices and opportunities, making them more vulnerable to continued and escalated violence. Additionally, when someone becomes a victim of violence, they may feel afraid and powerless, and their future may be uncertain. The repercussions of such violence can manifest

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<sup>84</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10565085/أبواب-لو-كان-العنف-رجلا> (Alrai 2020e).

<sup>85</sup> [https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/77431/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.43\\_eng.pdf;jsessionid=15EF30227143CD2F805DB0E346753B0A?sequence=1](https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/77431/WHO_RHR_12.43_eng.pdf;jsessionid=15EF30227143CD2F805DB0E346753B0A?sequence=1) (World Health Organization 2012).

<sup>86</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/777247> (Alghad 2020j).

themselves in many different ways, not just physically but also psychologically and socially. These effects can be long-lasting and can persist throughout the victim's life. Furthermore, many victims do not receive the support and assistance they need to confront, stop, or prevent future violence from occurring. This can make the road to recovery even more challenging to navigate (Roya News 2020p).<sup>87</sup>

Regarding frame #4 of physical violence, the three electronic newspapers addressed the solutions to eliminate physical violence from to the point of view of human rights activists and sociologists as follows: providing health services to battered women, offering counseling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes, launching awareness campaigns to end such violence, social and residential care insurance, providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers, providing family conciliation programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems, encouraging women to report violence and break the culture of silence, and supporting women in education, employment, and participation. My results proved that there were no significant references ( $p = 0.5$ ) in presenting these solutions; *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roy News* focused on similar solutions to end physical violence.

The news outlets discussed here have proposed solutions grounded in feminist ideology that aim to uphold women's rights and eradicate violence against women. These are designed to empower women to break their silence, despite their fears, by coordinating with survivors and providing them with the necessary support. This approach reflects the positive websites' position on the matter and highlights their commitment to the cause. For example, *Roya News* published a news report about SIGI's opinion, stating the importance of eliminating the culture of silence among women who experience violence. This culture of silence has persisted for far too long, and

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<sup>87</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/213295> (Roya News 2020p).



it is directly linked to the prevailing societal culture that implicitly condemns the victim and denounces women's right to seek help from official authorities. The institute recognizes that addressing violence against women is a complex issue that demands a multifaceted approach. It is not enough to rely solely on legal frameworks and law enforcement agencies to tackle the problem. Therefore, the institute believes that changing the prevailing culture is crucial for reducing the incidence of violence against women. This requires a concerted effort from all segments of society to create an environment that encourages women to speak out about their experiences and seek help without fear of being stigmatized. It also involves reducing the level of sympathy and tolerance toward the perpetrators of violence, both at the legislative level and in society as a whole (Roya News 2021c).<sup>88</sup>

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Concerning emotional violence, the results indicate there was no significant difference in the coverage of frame #1 of emotional violence among the three electronic newspapers. This means that they equally discussed the types of emotional violence, its spreading rate, and the demographics of its spread. For example, *Alrai* website referenced a survey conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan which confirmed that over half of Jordanians (54%) do not know how to communicate with the relevant institutions to access services in the event of domestic violence during the curfew. The survey showed that the COVID curfew led to quarrels, disagreements, or violence within the family for over a third of Jordanians (34%). The most prominent forms of this were verbal violence (17%), psychological violence (9%), and neglect (6%). The main parties involved in these disputes were the husband and wife (96.34%), the father and male brothers (13%), brothers and sisters (11%), and male brothers among

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<sup>88</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/235975> (Roya News 2021c).

themselves (10%) (Alrai 2020l).<sup>89</sup> Therefore, all three websites addressed frame one of emotional violence in a consistent manner. According to *Alghad*, a study was conducted by Daem For Women's Development,<sup>90</sup> entitled *The Impact of Defense Orders and Curfews, Implemented Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, on Women's Reporting of Domestic Violence*. It surveyed 483 respondents and found that 76.4% of the women reported not experiencing domestic violence during the pandemic. However, 23.6% of the respondents reported experiencing one or more forms of domestic violence, regardless of the severity, during the pandemic. 62.7% of the participants disclosed that they had been subjected to verbal violence, and 61.0% of the abused women had been subjected to emotional violence. 55.5% of them assured that the fear of abused women for the fate of their children prevented them from leaving the house and informing their families or authorities. Specifically, 36.4% of the surveyed individuals refrained from reporting due to a lack of understanding from their family members, while 41.8% cited the absence of a safe shelter as a reason for not reporting. Furthermore, 29.1% of respondents considered fear of the attacker as an obstacle to reporting, while 28.2% refrained from reporting due to societal views and the associated stigma. These findings underscore the need for increased education and awareness campaigns to promote reporting of abuse, as well as the provision of safe spaces and support mechanisms for survivors (Alghad 2020q).<sup>91</sup>

According to the SIGI report on the *Roya News* website in 2020, wives who are older than their husbands are at a higher risk of experiencing different types of violence from their husbands. One in three wives who are older than their husbands has already been exposed to one or more forms of violence. Besides this, the Institute pointed out it has been observed that a significant

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<sup>89</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10536723/> (Alrai 2020l). محليات/تزايد-العنف-الأسري-في-ظل-الحجر-المنزلي-وأزمة-كورونا

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.daemwe.org/en/> (Daem For Women's Development n.d.)

<sup>91</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/937405> (Alghad 2020q).

proportion of women who are older than their husbands have been exposed to various forms of violence. Specifically, the report reveals that 25.6% of such women have been exposed to emotional violence, 23.1% to physical violence, and 8.2% to sexual violence. In contrast, 16.3% of wives who were 1-4 years younger than their husbands were exposed to emotional violence, 13% to physical violence, and 4% to sexual violence. These findings have important implications for policymakers and practitioners working in the field of domestic violence and call for targeted interventions that address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women in such relationships (Roya News 2020d).<sup>92</sup>

In terms of the second frame (diagnosing the causes of emotional violence), there has been considerable discussion in *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*. This includes the exposure of poverty or harsh economic conditions, patriarchal control, family disputes, feeling insecure, fear of reporting violence, difficulty accessing the Family Protection Centre during curfew periods, as in some cases, the fact that the abused woman is under the abuser's supervision, as the he sometimes confiscates her mobile phone to prevent her from obtaining protection by communicating with authorities. My results pointed out that there were no significant differences in tackling these causes ( $p = 0.5$ ), meaning that the three chosen sites paid close attention to addressing the multitude of reasons to practice emotional violence against women such as neglect, threat, bullying, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown was the most common cause of emotional violence that was addressed across the three sites in 2020 (29.5%). As reported by *Alrai*, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the rates of domestic violence across the world. It resulted in the implementation of comprehensive and partial closure procedures, leading to forced coexistence of family members. This has further escalated tensions between family members due to food

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<sup>92</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/197790> (Roya News 2020d).

insecurity and fear of exposure to infection. These factors have contributed to the increase in the number of abused women during the pandemic. A large percentage of these women have found it challenging to access assistance during the pandemic. In addition, many women working in the healthcare sector were at a higher risk of contracting the disease, which had a negative impact on their physical and mental health. Furthermore, the closure measures led to many of them losing their jobs, putting them at risk of psychological and economic exploitation, with significant social and psychological consequences (Alrai 2020e).<sup>93</sup>

*Roya News* reported that the elderly were more susceptible to psychological complications and neglect leading to mortality from COVID-19 than other age groups. This is attributed to the age-based discrimination that the elderly have faced in healthcare protocols, hampering their access to vital emergency medical services. Furthermore, this situation has not only impacted their psychological and social wellbeing, but also posed a threat to their employment and financial stability, given the virus's rampant spread. SIGI confirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns have led to a decline in care services for the elderly. As a result, cases of psychological violence against them have increased. The institute has emphasized that mistreatment of elderly individuals can lead to serious problems and consequences, including psychological effects such as loneliness, anxiety, loss of dignity and hope, and physical effects such as injuries, permanent disability, and deteriorating health conditions (Roya News 2020q).<sup>94</sup>

The *Alghad* website reported that SIGI has condemned the increased risk of domestic violence against women and children due to the precautionary measures taken by the government in response to the coronavirus outbreak. According to the Institute, women and children are at a greater risk of experiencing emotional and physical violence while staying at home during the

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<sup>93</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10565085/أبواب-لو-كان-العنف-رجلا> (Alrai 2020e).

<sup>94</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/216533> (Roya News 2020q).

mandatory quarantine. This is because the lack of food and financial resources may lead to psychological pressure, which in turn can result in violent outbursts, even in homes that are generally considered safe (Alghad 2020k).<sup>95</sup>

In addition, this result is consistent with that from the study by the Economic and Social Council (2020) that the lockdown was the main reason for increased domestic violence, namely, verbal violence among people (29%), and that it helped to increase domestic murders during quarantine. It is also compatible with those from the studies by Testouri (2020) and Anderson (2020), which pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor in the cause of such violence as mentioned above in frame two of physical violence. In addition, the data from the present study are also consistent with those from the study by Alunaiti and Assaf (2012), which proved that the economic situation related to low family income is one of the reasons that may cause the wife to be exposed to emotional abuse practices such as neglect, disrespect, and cruel treatment.

Regarding the patriarchal system and family disputes as contributing factors to girls experiencing emotional violence, *Roya News* reported the story of a Jordanian woman, Iman Al-Khatib. She narrated her tragic experience of injustice, persecution, and psychological and physical abuse in her family's home and during her marriage. Due to her upbringing in a male-dominated environment that discriminates between men and women, she was treated unequally within her family. Al-Khatib was denied her right to education and work because her family preferred her male brothers over her. This prompted her to marry, thinking that this would protect her and allow her to achieve her dream of education and work. However, she suffered the same injustice because the man felt that the family did not provide support and protection, leading him to belittle her. She

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<sup>95</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/814118> (Alghad 2020k).

explained that her mother's harsh treatment was influenced by her own upbringing in a society that discriminated between the sexes and belittled the status of women. This led to her aggressive reactions toward her daughter. According to family relations advisor Dr. Khalil Al-Zyoud, as reported on *Roya News*, the Jordanian society is heavily influenced by masculine thinking and tends to link a woman's identity with the man in her life, regardless of her education or social status. This results in outdated educational practices that favor men over women, leading to discrimination against other family members and causing further harm. This is what happened when Iman Al-Khatib began to harbor feelings of hatred toward society, her family, and marriage, which is not in the family's best interest (Roya News 2020d).<sup>96</sup>

With regard to the third frame of emotional violence (negative effects) of perpetrating such a type of violence, the websites described some of the negative consequences or effects according to experts, as I have previously mentioned. Among the adverse effects of emotional violence which are similar to the effects of physical violence are the high costs associated with treatment for physical and psychological injuries, divorce, psychological disturbances such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, physical health, the inability of victims to perform their roles at home or in the workplace, low rate of women participating in the economy, and suicide tendency. The results of the quantitative analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in tackling the negative effects of emotional violence, ( $p = 0.05$ ). This reflects that the websites tackled these negative effects of emotional violence homogeneously. For example, according to the *Alrai* website, the COVID-19 lockdown led to a rise in domestic conflicts in Jordanian families. Women were often subjected to humiliation, neglect, insults, cursing, and immense psychological pressure as a result of the stress. This caused many

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<sup>96</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218790> (Roya News 2020d).

women to suffer from fear, emotional trauma, and psychological disorders. In some cases, the aggressor went so far as to destroy the victim's property and blackmail her emotionally (Alrai 2020f).<sup>97</sup> According to recent data published on the *Roya News* website, divorce rates in Jordan have increased in 2020 due to a combination of factors. The prolonged confinement of families together during the pandemic, coupled with the added stress of transitioning to online learning, has led to a sharp increase in conflicts between family members. This has especially affected children who require social interaction and have been forced to stay at home for extended periods of time. As a result, women have been placed under a greater burden, both physically and emotionally. The news report noted that the victims experienced a distressed psychological state and strained relationships with their partners, which has led to verbal abuse and other forms of mistreatment (Roya News 2020r).<sup>98</sup> Meanwhile, *Alghad* indicated that 26 wives out of every 100 were exposed to physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husbands, which left physical, psychological, and social effects that will remain with them throughout their lives, not to mention the matter that leads to their inability to continue working and participating economically (Alghad 2020r).<sup>99</sup>

Thus, the results from my digital news analysis across all three sites regarding the negative effects of such violence are consistent with those from the studies by Moglia (2010), Al-Shdayfat (2017), and Godfrey et.al. (2020), which found that emotional violence is associated with insomnia, depression, anxiety, physical problems, and suicide for its victims. Emotional violence also negatively affects self-confidence, ability to work, and ability to produce.

Regarding analyzing the fourth frame of emotional violence, the websites presented the solutions to eliminate such violence based on the criteria of human rights activists, who placed

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<sup>97</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10544792/كتاب-العنف-المنبي-على-النوع-الاجتماعي-يعيق-وصول-المرأة-للعدالة>. (Alrai 2020f)

<sup>98</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/236300>. (Roya News 2020r).

<sup>99</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/931713> (Alghad 2020r).

emphasis in providing health services to battered women, providing counseling and psychological treatment programs for both sexes, launching awareness media campaigns to end such violence, providing social and residential care insurance, providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers, providing family conciliation programs and family mediation to solve family crises and problems, encouraging women to report violence and break the culture of silence, supporting the victims in education, employment, and participation. In Chapter Five, the quantitative analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing frame #4 of emotional violence ( $p = 0.05$ ): the news sites paid attention to addressing these solutions of emotional violence almost at a similar level. Nevertheless, it was found that there were statistically significant differences when addressing the total of this frame ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the analysis, *Roya News* was the website that addressed solutions to eliminate emotional violence the most, ranking 51.7% higher than other websites.

According to Menon et al. (2020) violence against women and crimes have been on the rise globally, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the media has a crucial responsibility to increase public awareness about this matter. The United Nations has also emphasized the importance of media in empowering women and enhancing their value in society. This can be achieved by launching advocacy campaigns and cooperating with civil society organizations that address this issue. In Jordan, news sites have played a significant role in defending women's rights. They have collaborated with civil society organizations and the judiciary to fight against discrimination and demand equality. One of the leading organizations in this regard is SIGI. It has been instrumental in educating abused women about violence and providing them with the necessary support and resources to overcome their challenges. With such initiatives, Jordan is taking important steps towards creating a safer and more equitable society for



women. For example, *Roya* recently reported on 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence,<sup>100</sup> which takes place from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day) (Roya News 2020 d).<sup>101</sup> The news article shared the view of the Solidarity Foundation that women need to break the culture of silence to escape violence. They should not turn a blind eye or tolerate the perpetrators of violence, and instead, the government should provide care and rehabilitation services for the victims. In addition, *Roya News* referenced the same campaign launched in 2020, with the slogan “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect” (Roya News 2021d).<sup>102</sup> The campaign aimed to address the increase in incidents of domestic violence, both locally and globally, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the campaign sought to provide support to women and girls who are survivors of violence, ensuring their safety and freedom from harm. This highlights *Roya*’s commitment to tackling issues of violence against women and collaborating with the United Nations to raise awareness about this menace and safeguard women from its harmful effects.

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About sexual violence, in terms of frame #1, the results showed that there were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in terms of explanation of types of sexual violence ( $p = 0.05$ ), and *Alghad* covered this category the most. Conversely, the results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in the explanation the penal code sexual crimes, index, and demography of spreading

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<sup>100</sup><https://eca.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/16-days-of-activism#:~:text=2020%20UNiTE%20Campaign%20Theme%3A%20%22Orange,Respond%2C%20Prevent%2C%20Collect!%22>. (UN Women, n.d.g).

<sup>101</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/197790> (Roya News 2020d).

<sup>102</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/263542>. This article was published in 2021 and referred to the 16-day campaign launched in 2020.

this type of violence ( $p = 0.05$ ). In addition, *Roya News* addressed frame #1 of sexual violence at a rate of 68.7%, the highest rate among all three websites. Also, the three news websites addressed issues of the penal code for sexual crimes in other Arab countries. A press release published on the *Alrai* website, titled “For the First time in the History of Lebanon... Sexual Harassment Is a Crime”, reported that the Lebanese Parliament has approved the punishment for sexual harassment, especially in the workplace. This is a significant step toward empowering women and upholding human rights. According to Lebanese law, the punishment ranges from imprisonment for one month to two years or paying a fine of twenty-three times the minimum wage, which is equal to 675,000 liras or 450 dollars (Alrai 2020m). In relation to this, and according to *Roya News*, the term “sexual harassment” does not exist in the Jordanian legal system. All sexual crimes have been completely addressed under various names, including crimes of indecent assault, rape, kidnapping, fondling, and indecent acts (Roya News 2020g).<sup>103</sup> Article 306 of the Jordanian Penal Code stipulates that individuals who commit acts that violate public morals shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of no less than six months. These acts include uttering immoral words that violate modesty by word, deed, movement, or gesture, particularly if the expressions are a form of flirting and teasing. Concerning legal procedures for women’s rights in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace, Article 29 of Jordanian Labor Law No. 8 of 1996 stipulates that “the worker has the right to leave work without warning to preserve his legal rights to terminate service if the employer or his representative assaults him during work by beating, humiliating, or in any form of punishable sexual assault; he must file a complaint and inform the police of this” (Jordan Lawyer n.d.).

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<sup>103</sup> For more details, visit the link <https://royanews.tv/news/195715>

Meanwhile, SIGI has requested an amendment to a news report on the *Alghad* website titled “Solidarity Calls for Amending an Article on Sexual Harassment in the Labor Code” The request is based on the stipulation that the employer will be punished if he harasses the employee, without addressing the possibility of her being subjected to harassment by her colleagues or clients. The institute called for adding the term “harassment” to the Jordanian legislative system in accordance with international standards. They also define the term at work and make it clearer for dealing with issues like this, as it is applied in Lebanon (Alghad 2020m). These laws may be some of the legal loopholes that Dr. Salma Al-Nims pointed out at the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies conference, which hinder women’s freedom and protection from violence.

With regards to the index of sexual violence, it was reported by *Roya News* that the Criminal Information Department, affiliated with the Public Security Directorate, indicated a 9.5% decrease in the number of complaints of crimes against morals and public morals during 2020 compared to 2019. The department received 1,402 complaints in 2020, down from 1,550 in 2019. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, preventive measures, and lockdown, there was a 16.2% increase in rape complaints in 2020, with 200 complaints submitted compared to 172 in 2019. Kidnapping complaints decreased by 6.6%, with 168 complaints compared to 180 in 2019, and indecent assault complaints decreased by 18.8%, with 822 complaints compared to 1,013 complaints in 2019 (Roya News 2020k).<sup>104</sup>

Regarding frame #2 of sexual violence, the websites diagnosed the causes of sexual violence, which include poverty, unemployment, childhood emotional neglect, psychological trauma, non-enrollment of girls in education, women’s seduction of a man, survivors often fear stigma or retaliation from perpetrators when reporting sexual violence, inherited traditions that

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<sup>104</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/241748> (Roya News 2020k).

discriminate women, violent women unaware of their rights, the high number of Syrian refugees, difficulty accessing the Family Protection Centre during the curfew period, and the COVID-19 lockdown. The results showed no significant differences among the cases of sexual violence perpetrated against women ( $p = 0.05$ ), meaning that they were treated similarly in the sample.

These results of frame #2 are in accordance with several studies diagnosing the causes of sexual violence: Anderson (2020) and Testouri (2020) confirmed that the COVID-19 lockdown contributed to increasing this type of violence in Jordan. In addition, Testouri (2020) confirmed that the poverty of refugees during COVID-19 was among the critical causes of sexual violence in 2020. Besides, Jordan Communication Advocacy and Policy Activity (2016), Gausman et al. (2021), and Hyde (2013) also confirmed that high prevalence of Syrian refugees was the main reason for exposure to sexual violence. This complements what was tackled via online news. Furthermore, Gausman et al. (2021) also confirmed that discrimination between gender caused the prevalence of this type of violence among the youth in Jordan.

According to the *Alrai* website, the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on refugee women is proving to be particularly severe, exacerbating the incidence of violence, exploitation, and sexual assault against them. Furthermore, these women are experiencing an increase in economic burdens due to the imposition of quarantine measures. This information suggests that refugee women are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of the pandemic and require additional support and resources to mitigate their effects (Alrai 2020n).<sup>105</sup>

The issue of gender-based discrimination and the perpetuation of harmful beliefs that justify violent behavior against women and place them in a stereotypical role that holds them responsible for being subjected to sexual abuse is a widespread problem. This was highlighted in

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<sup>105</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10541456/محليات/الأعلى-للسكان-اليوم-العالمي-للاجئين-مناسبة-لاستعراض-التحديات> (Alrai 2020n).

a news report, published on the *Roya News* website,<sup>106</sup> which covered the findings of a study conducted by the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies titled *The Phenomenon of Harassment and the Reasons for Denying It - Attitudes and Trends*. The study was presented at the “Towards a Safer Environment for Women in Jordan” conference held in 2020.<sup>107</sup> According to the summary of the results, 40% of the participants do not believe that harassment is prevalent in Jordan. However, the percentage of those who deny its existence increases to 60% when taking into account their positions and tendencies in favor of denial. According to the study, the prevailing state of denial of sexual harassment in society can be attributed to several reasons. The participants, including 71% of females and 61% of males, believed that men’s lack of control over their sexual needs justifies their actions. 63% of women and 73% of men believe the woman is sometimes to blame for harassment, even if the man does not really want to. 35% of men and 55% of women believe that women who wait before reporting harassment are lying. In addition, 56% of women and 72% of men think that some women use harassment complaints to threaten or blackmail. 37% of males and 54% of females think women sometimes mean yes when saying no during harassment.

The observations and perspectives shared by the individuals in the study exhibit a bias towards patriarchal beliefs. These tend to rationalize and justify men’s violent behavior while censuring women for the same. This indicates a prevalent societal construct that perpetuates gender inequality and reinforces harmful stereotypes against women. Additionally, many female victims are reluctant to report such incidents due to concerns about their reputation and a lack of encouragement from family members. There seems to be a prevalent issue of societal tolerance

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<sup>106</sup> For more details, visit the link of the news report in Arabic Language: <https://royanews.tv/news/195715> (Roya News 2020g).

<sup>107</sup> Al-Quds Center for Political Studies held this conference in November 2019 in Amman. For more details, visit <https://www.alqudscenter.org/index.php?l=ar&pg=UFJPR1JBTVM=&sub=V29tZW4gRW1wb3dldm11bnQ=&cat=Q29uZmVyZW5jZXMsIFNlbWluYXJzIGFuZCBXb3Jrc2hvcHM=&id=2450>.

towards individuals who are accused or found guilty of sexual harassment. This problem is particularly concerning as it can lead to a lack of accountability and justice for the victims, as well as a perpetuation of harmful behavior. The *Roya News* report also highlighted an important issue regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment. According to a statement by the SIGI, the available data and statistics related to this problem are weak and limited due to several reasons. The most significant of these factors is the low legal awareness among victims, which often leads to underreporting of cases. Additionally, the absence of a female judicial officer to receive complaints further discourages victims from speaking out. Moreover, the lengthy and complex legal procedures that require victims to repeatedly provide statements before legal authorities can be daunting and draining. All of these factors combined make it difficult to accurately assess the scale and severity of the issue, and to provide timely and effective support to victims (Roya News2020g).

Regarding frame #3 of sexual violence, the three websites addressed the negative effects thereof and concluded that women experience anxiety, fear, depression, restricting victims from performing their role at home or workplace, drug addiction, suicide, school failure, and abortion resulting from rape. My results show that there were no significant differences in addressing these issues ( $p = 0.05$ ). Their coverage is generally in line with findings from previous studies as discussed in Chapter Three. For instance, the research conducted by Krug et al. (2002) and UN Women (2021 a) confirmed that depression, anxiety, suicide, and miscarriage are among the negative effects that women are exposed to sexual violence suffer. Meanwhile, Gausman et al. (2021) proved that, as reported on some of the online news, drug use is a result of sexual violence acts. According to the research conducted by Olivia et al. in 2020, the mass media can play a crucial role in raising awareness about sexual crimes. To achieve this, it should accurately describe

the extent of sexual violence and its negative impact on society. It should also highlight sexual violence as a widespread issue that needs to be addressed. Additionally, the media should portray the stories in a way that sympathizes with the victim and does not blame or condemn them (Olivia et al. 2020, 1759.)

In addition, the media provide a platform for female survivors and those who are less fortunate to share their stories and express the traumas they suffered due to harassment by their employers. In 2021, a study titled *The Impact of the Media Coverage of Sexual Violence on Its Victims/Survivors* was conducted by Jaidaa Arafa. It revealed that some victims of sexual harassment in Egypt chose to share their traumatizing experiences through the media in an attempt to seek justice. This approach played a crucial role in highlighting the issues that were previously considered neglected by Egyptian newspapers due to the sensitivity and prohibition of approaching such topics. The deeply ingrained patriarchal society in Egypt is a significant factor that perpetuates the silence surrounding sexual violence. However, the victims hold the belief that the media can play a vital role in helping to uncover criminals. According to their perspective, the media is the most accessible tool for disseminating information to the public, which can lead to the identification and capture of the perpetrators of raping and harassment. In addition, the victims placed a significant amount of trust in the media's ability to raise awareness and generate leads, potentially aiding in the investigation and resolution of criminal activity of sexual violence (Arafa 2021, 94). Upon examining the digital newspapers in Jordan, it is evident that a significant number of news articles highlighted the detrimental effects of sexual harassment on girls. One such example is an investigative report published on the *Alghad* website, which shed light on the struggles of Arabic female journalists who suffered psychological traumas as a result of being subjected to harassment by their managers and colleagues. The report detailed how this harassment

had a lasting impact on their careers, with many struggling to complete their work as a result of depression and stress. Moreover, some were even forced to leave their job (Alghad 2020h).<sup>108</sup>

Regarding frame #4 of sexual violence, *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* presented several solutions, which include: providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls, encouraging women to report violence, and breaking the culture of silence. In addition, providing awareness media campaigns to end sexual violence, facilitating reform workshops for criminals, proposing laws criminalizing sexual harassment, supporting the safety and protection agenda for women by civil society organizations, and providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers. The results of my study estimated that there were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in covering providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls and encouraging women to report violence and break the culture of silence ( $p = 0.05$ ). *Roya News* covered these two solutions mostly, compared to other platforms. Also, the data showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in tackling awareness media campaigns to end sexual violence, facilitating reform workshops for criminals, proposing laws to criminalize sexual harassment, supporting the safety and protection agenda for women by civil society organizations, and providing financial and economic assistance to service seekers. This proved that the three websites paid attention to these solutions almost at a similar level.

Considering the results, it is important to discuss some of the solutions presented in the news reports for eliminating sexual violence. Among its many contributions to advancing public awareness, the *Alghad* website reported and conveyed the We've Had Enough of Hiding

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<sup>108</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/926668> (Alghad 2020h)



campaign.<sup>109</sup> The purpose of this campaign is to raise the voices of girls who are afraid to speak openly about the sexual abuse they have sustained over the years, and who suffer from mental health issues. Additionally, the campaign strives to motivate women of all ages who have experienced abuse to disclose and discuss what happened to them at some point in their lives, leading some of them to attempt suicide due to the pressure they were under. The organizer of the campaign from the Arab Centre for Consulting and Training Services, Martina Qandah, explained that the purpose of the campaign is to change stereotypical thinking that contributes to women's violence and harm. It also aims to change the culture of society in which victims of sexual violence are often viewed as responsible. Even though they are victims, they usually hold themselves accountable for what happened to them, due to society's restrictions make it difficult for them to talk about their fears. Thus, this campaign follows the steps of the Everyday Sexism campaign,<sup>110</sup> which encourages girls to share and discuss their experiences. The campaign offers psychological counseling to women who have broken their silence to seek treatment and support under transparent policies and conditions that ensure their confidentiality (Alghad 2020s).<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, *Roya News* reported on a campaign launched by a group of female students in Egypt to combat sexual harassment online (Roya News 2020h).<sup>112</sup> After dozens of girls filed accusations of harassment and rape against a young man, the hashtag #Harasser was used to reveal his name on Instagram and to invite those who were victims of him to share their stories. It is intended that this campaign will serve as a continuation of #MeToo. In an appeal for action, the National Council for Women called for the confrontation and punishment of those who engage in

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<sup>109</sup> <https://accts-awt.com/>. This campaign was created by Arab Centre for Counselling and Training Services.

<sup>110</sup> . <https://everydaysexism.com/about>. This campaign seeks to foster a culture of empowerment among women by inviting them to document their personal experiences of sexism and sexual harassment that they have encountered in their daily lives across the world.

<sup>111</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/791767> (Alghad 2020s).

<sup>112</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218238> (Roya News 2020h).

sexual harassment, providing a report to the Attorney General to investigate such incidents, and encouraging all victims to report their cases.

In the vein of these efforts to make activist initiatives visible, one of the successful feminist movements highlighted by *Alrai* is the experience of passing a law in Lebanon that criminalizes sexual harassment, rehabilitates its victims, and supports them.<sup>113</sup> This achievement was the result of years of joint effort between the President of the National Authority for Lebanese Women, Claudine Aoun, and the Mashreq Gender Facility program, which was supported by the World Bank and funded by the Canadian and Promotional governments. The main aim of this initiation was to criminalize all forms and locations of sexual harassment (Alrai 2020o).

Based on the above, it is evident that Jordanian digital journalism is of utmost importance in completing the objectives of the feminist movement to claim women's rights and enact laws to protect them from widespread harassment. Jordanian news websites have the power to shed light on various campaigns and movements aimed at increasing awareness about addressing women's fears and encouraging them to speak out against violence in all its forms. By addressing online news, the websites provided a voice to those who have been silenced and marginalized due to their gender. Coverage from *Alrai*, *Roya News*, and *Alghad* can also help in changing the narrative around women's issues and portraying them in a more positive and empowering light. Additionally, by highlighting the stories of women who have fought against all odds and succeeded in achieving their goals, the media can inspire and motivate others to do the same. This is exactly what happened with the SIGI's initiative to amend Article 98 of the labor law and introduce the term "sexual harassment" into Jordanian Penal Code No. 306, following Lebanon's example by

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<sup>113</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10568385/منوعات/النواب-الليبانويون-يقرون-أول-قانون-لمعاقبة-مرتكبي-التحرش-الجنسي> (Alrai 2020o).

approving the Sexual Harassment Punishment Law. Thus, the media has a critical role to play in shaping public opinion and in creating a more equitable and just society for all.

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In terms of honor crimes, the results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in tackling honor crimes related to the explanation of Article 340 of penalty codes, index, and demography of the spread of this issue ( $p = 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, when comparing most of the sites that processed the total of the first frame, we see that there is a difference in statistical significance between the three sites: *Alghad* was the platform that covered it the most (69.2 %). To further the discussion, as stated in Chapter One and under the Legislation on Women's Rights in Jordan, it is relevant to recall that Article 6 of the Jordanian law stipulates that Jordanian citizens have equal rights and duties before the law. They should not be discriminated against concerning their rights and duties based on their race, language, or religion. Although Jordan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 1992 and enacted many laws to protect women from violence and affirm their rights, as well as implemented national and civil society awareness programs on women's rights, Article 340 of the Penal Code of Honor Crimes in Jordan provides reduced sentences for murder based on social norms that justify and accept the killing of women. Killing in defense of honor is socially acceptable in several Arab and non-Arab countries. It has been reported by the *Alghad* website that a poll conducted by the independent Arab Barometer research network in the Middle East and North Africa region for BBC Arabic indicated that Algeria had the highest rate of acceptance of honor-killing practices to wash away shame, followed by Morocco at 25% and Jordan at 21%. *Alghad* also pointed out that the police do not treat reports with the required seriousness, and a pledge from the family is often deemed sufficient in cases of domestic

violence complaints, which frequently escalate into murder. Moreover, the police sometimes handle honor killing cases discreetly and refrain from disclosing details out of respect for the victim's privacy, according to the Public Prosecutor (Alghad 2020g).<sup>114</sup>

The *Alghad* site also addressed the gaps in Jordan's penal code concerning honor crimes and protection from domestic violence in a news report that fell within my sample. This information was based on a monitoring report issued by the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, in partnership with civil society organizations and national institutions, titled *Commitments Awaiting Implementation* (Momani 2020). The report urged the Jordanian government to fulfil its international obligations and pledges by implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive League for Human Rights, which Jordan represented in November 2018 (Alghad 2020t).<sup>115</sup> Upon reviewing these recommendations at the national level and assessing their implementation, it has been shown that the government has not taken any legislative or administrative action specifically addressing violence against women. Furthermore, the Penal Code has not been reviewed for honor crimes or violence directed against women. The incidence of domestic violence crimes associated with the family's "honor" is constantly increasing, with the number of reported domestic crimes against women and girls reaching 20 since the beginning of 2019. This marks a 186% increase compared to the same period in 2018, resulting in 15 domestic murders of women since the beginning of the year 2020. Moreover, the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence has not been reviewed and developed to serve as a legislative framework for protecting women from all forms of violence. Furthermore, the definition of sexual harassment remains vague and is not addressed in national legislation. Finally, the report called for a review of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, the activation of

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<sup>114</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/883873> (Alghad 2020g).

<sup>115</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/948035> (Alghad 2020t).

the role of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs to establish a national registry for domestic violence, and the development of a comprehensive national complaints system for issues of violence against women. In addition to this, increasing the penalties for any form of violence against women and ratifying the International Labor Organization Convention against Violence and Harassment in the World of Work would be beneficial (Momani 2020, 13).

Regarding the second frame (diagnosing causes of honor crimes), *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* presented the explanations thereof based on sociologists' point of view in Jordan, which are: social problems such as poverty, ignorance, unemployment, drug use, family disputes, women being unaware of their rights to protection from violence, Jordanian law being lenient on honor crime perpetrators, police agencies holding case files and inherited beliefs with regard to the honor of girls, and the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the quantitative news analysis, there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in covering these causes of honor crimes except for inherited beliefs with regard to the honor of girls ( $p = 0.05$ ). This means that the three websites paid proximate attention to addressing the multitude of reasons for which some Jordanian society perpetrate honor crimes against women and girls.

In relation to the identification of the inherited beliefs of honor as a reason to perpetrate honor crimes, there was a significant difference in covering this cause among the three websites ( $p < 0.05$ ), and the *Alghad* website was the platform that most addressed it. Moreover, it was the most widely discussed reason for practicing honor killings among the three websites (36.6%). Additionally, my results indicate that *Alghad* had the greatest coverage of these causes of honor crimes in general ( $p < 0.05$ ), as compared to other platforms with 63.4% coverage.

My data with regards to some of the reasons for the spread of honor killings against girls are consistent with those from the study by Nasser, Belbeisi, and Atiyat (1999), which report that

poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy are among the reasons driving the spread of this phenomenon. In addition to the study by Nannis (2003), which confirmed that the cultural heritage believes that calls for “cleansing” the honor due to the girl’s unusual moral behavior is one of the reasons for the motive for killing, and it was the most common reason that was circulated on the electronic websites, especially *Alghad*. These results could be attributed to several reasons. As mentioned above, most Jordanian families adhere to a patriarchal society that discriminates against women. Honor killings are systematically carried out against women who have relationships outside of marriage. In contrast, men will not be held accountable for performing the same actions as women (Rsheidat 2023, 126).

In an interview with Jordanian journalist Samar Haddadin, researcher Jumana Rashidat confirmed that many cases of honor killings observed in Jordan are based on doubts, rumors, or speculation about the girl’s morals. For example, there are cases where a brother may discover that his sister has a mobile phone or is talking with her friend at night, and he may then proceed to kill her, justifying his actions by saying that he wanted to restore his honor (Rsheidat 2023, 130). This is supported in the study by Nanes cited in Chapter Three (2003, 117). Also, it was confirmed by a news report on the *Alghad* website titled “Perpetrators Escape Severe Punishments for Beatings Leading to Death”. The text stated that the brother might decide to kill his sister if he discovered that she had an account on social networking sites or if she was late returning home at night. It quoted the criminal saying: “I want to correct my sister’s behavior. I was drunk and drugged. Every day had problems. I complained about her behavior. She was absent from her home... etc.” All of these are reasons that were repeated by the killers in the Grand Criminal Court to justify their crimes against a sister, mother, wife, or daughter. This allows culprits to reduce their punishment (Alghad 2020u).

Based on an in-depth review of judicial files conducted by *Alghad*, numerous cases of murders against women and girls were divulged. For example, some families of the victims waive the right to seek justice and prosecute the perpetrators given the leniency of Jordanian law toward those who commit honor crimes and the fact that the police retain case files. This is considered one of the strong reasons for the spread of this phenomenon in the country. In addition, according to forensic examinations, it was found that the majority of girls who were killed in defense of honor were virgins. The report also revealed that many of these crimes stem from family disputes, as men feel entitled to limit women's choices. This can include forcing a girl to marry, preventing her from marrying someone of a different religion or nationality, entering into a romantic relationship with someone the family rejects, as well as denying her request for divorce. The killing may be due to financial disputes, such as a dispute over inheritance, for example. The perpetrators exploit honor to evade or reduce punishment (Alghad 2020t).

In a popular opinion piece on the *Alghad* website titled “Yes, Honor Killings Are a Social Phenomenon”, journalist Dhuqan Obaidat addressed the roots of honor killings in Jordan. He argued that they are a phenomenon linked to the masculine concept of masculinity, which reinforces the idea that women are subordinate to men. This also justifies the killing of girls in the name of honor, often with the support of reformers and community leaders who allegedly safeguard and defend virtue through the implementation of an incorrect understanding of morals and Islam.<sup>116</sup> There are many Jordanian values associated with girls' honor that reinforce the masculine concept of preserving honor, displaying heroic behavior, and not tolerating insults or shame. Furthermore, the writer stressed that in honor killings, the perpetrator may not be personally convinced of their actions but is compelled to act due to social convictions (Obaidat

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<sup>116</sup> Detailed discussion of honor crimes in Chapter Three.

2020). This was confirmed by Doğan (2020, 128–130), who found that men in Turkey are forced to murder to eliminate stigma and restore their honor. Otherwise, they face the risk of being killed, ostracized, or neglected.

On the other hand, the *Alrai* website addressed the status of women in Jordan in light of the presence of this phenomenon in a news report titled “Honor Killings and Causes: Women Are Protected Religiously and Legally”. The piece quoted the view of Dr. Abdel Nasser Abu Al-Basal, who confirmed that the Islamic religion forbids crimes that violate women’s rights, regardless of their causes. It guaranteed their protection and preservation and considered them half of society, which means women were equal to men in rights and had duties just like men. However, we find that honor crimes are linked to Arab and Islamic societies, especially Jordan, which is controlled by a patriarchal system that still views women, regardless of their status, as inherently weak. This is the result of an upbringing that instilled in men the belief that reputation and honor are only associated with women (Alrai 2020g).

Moving onto the third frame, my study proves that the three news sites selected for my sample failed to cover the negative effects of the practice of honor crimes against women. This is consistent with findings from Walaa Alatta’s study (2015), which confirmed that justifications of honor killings and social and cultural factors in Jordan have special considerations, and can explain the high need to hide information about honor killings related to women. Despite the media awareness campaigns launched by Rana Hussein about the necessity of confronting honor killings,<sup>117</sup> the issue is still under wraps in the news.

The Jordanian press is selective regarding the coverage of honor crimes, according to Journalist Ibtihal Mahadin, who stated in her article “Honor Crimes in Jordanian Media”,

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<sup>117</sup> Review Chapter Four.



published through news website *Tiber*, that it is difficult to follow the progress of many cases of honor that come up in the Jordanian media. Most of these violent events become just part of the news which readers—both male and female—buzz about, but do not cause any significant responses. In part, this can be attributed to the inadequacies of the Jordanian media, which are a result of the patriarchal system in which we live as a country, a society, and as individuals. Furthermore, Mahadin stated that according to Jordanian media discourse, there has been a decline in the formulation of news about violence leading to murder against women to become the result of “family disputes.” It is, however, difficult to determine the causes of these crimes because ambiguity in the media wording and the lack of follow-up on these cases have made it difficult. Thus, she concluded in her article that Jordanian media is regarded as a representative of the patriarchal system as well as a reflection of the Jordanian authorities’ failure to ensure the safety of its citizens and to ensure their right to live without fear of violence or discrimination (Mahadin 2015). Accordingly, these justifications may provide the closest and most convincing explanation for the ambiguity in the Jordanian press’s coverage of this type of issue.

Regarding providing solutions to eliminate honor crimes (frame #4), the three websites provided the following, based on the view of human rights activists: launching an awareness campaign to end honor crimes, claiming to amend the penal code of honor crimes, developing a comprehensive complaints system for cases of honor crimes, establishing shelters for women to protect them, isolating criminals in intensive correctional programs, and providing psychological and physical empowerment programs for victimized girls. My results show that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in tackling this frame for honor crimes ( $p = 0.05$ ): the three websites paid attention to addressing these solutions to eliminate such violence to a similar level. Furthermore, a significant level of coverage was

estimated for all solutions found for frame #4 ( $p < 0.05$ ), and *Alghad* covered more of these solutions of honor crimes than other websites (64.7%).

Based on the above, the issue of killings committed in the name of honor is a serious concern that requires urgent attention. To address this problem, several solutions have been proposed, one of which is an amendment to the Penal Code. Currently, the law treats the perpetrators of these crimes too leniently, which has led to an increase in such crimes. To prevent the spread of these crimes, it is essential to take a comprehensive approach that includes both legal and social measures, utilizing media platforms. For example, the *Alrai* website recently quoted Dr. Nisreen Albahri, a sociology expert, who emphasized the need to implement more stringent laws to address this issue. She argued that the perpetrators of these crimes must be held accountable for their actions and that the laws should not be relaxed in any way. This is an issue that requires a sustained effort from society as a whole. Preventative measures are necessary to deter the spread of these crimes. Society needs to practice self-restraint and self-censorship while also implementing family education programs and raising public awareness. Additionally, the problem of family murder must be studied from multiple perspectives, including social, psychological, and legal perspectives. By taking this approach, a comprehensive understanding of the problem can be cultivated, leading to the development of effective solutions aimed at preventing such crimes in the future (Alrai 2020k).<sup>118</sup> The phenomenon of honor crimes is a result of an outdated mindset perpetuated by the dominant masculine system, which hinders gender equality and boosts discrimination against women. *Alrai*'s website featured lawyer Youssef Al-Azza's call for families to treat their children fairly and justly, regardless of their gender. He considered that true family justice can only be achieved when both sexes are granted equal rights and opportunities. Also, Al-

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<sup>118</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10550361/محليات/مختصون-يدعون-لبرنامج-يعزز-الإرشاد-الأسري-ويطوق-العنف> (Alrai 2020k).

Azza has proposed revising the provisions of the Penal Code to encompass legislative texts that deal with family crimes, including the mistreatment of family members. The suggested changes would also result in stricter penalties for such offenses, taking into account their societal impact. As a result, these transformations would help protect the rights of family members and prevent abuse by making the law a more effective tool. Moreover, Al-Azza is urging women who experience violence from anyone to seek refuge with the competent authorities. He highlights the existence of a hotline for family protection and public security, available to anyone who needs help. This hotline can provide assistance and guidance to victims of violence and refer them to appropriate services and resources. In conclusion, Al-Azza's message is clear: families must strive for fairness, equality, and justice, while the law and government agencies must work together to protect the rights of all family members and prevent abuse (Alrai 2020g).<sup>119</sup>

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As for frame #1 of child marriage, the results indicated that there were no significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in terms of explanation of legal age for marriage under 18 years of age, index, and demography of spreading this phenomena ( $p = 0.05$ ). The three websites failed to address the justification for enacting the law concerning marriage under eighteen. Regarding the index, *Roya News* pointed out that one billion girls around the world deal daily with challenges and barriers such as child marriage, inequality in education, violence and justice (Roya News 2020n),<sup>120</sup> and revealed that the number of marriage contracts for minors in 2020 reached 7,224 (Roya News 2020s).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10574515/> محليات/ جرائم-الشرف-بحث-في-الاسبابالمرأة-محمية-ديناو-عرفا-وقانوننا (Alrai 2020g).

<sup>120</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/226617> (Roya News 2020n).

<sup>121</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/216705> (Roya News 2020s).

During my analysis of news coverage of the issue of minors being married, I noticed that the three websites tend to focus more on the marriages of Syrian refugee women who reside in Jordan or Turkey. Here it is clear that the digital newspapers tried to link early marriage as a form of violence against women to low-income females, perpetuating stereotypes that link poverty and migration to the minor victim. Consequently, these practices and customs were not represented adequately by minors from different social classes. The reason why the websites tend to concentrate their attention on Syrian refugee women in Jordan could be attributed to a number of factors. One could be the fact that these women have been displaced from their homes and have lost everything they once had. This has left them in a vulnerable position where they are heavily reliant on humanitarian aid to survive. Additionally, many of these women lack legal status and may not have access to basic services such as healthcare and education. This makes them even more vulnerable and in need of assistance. Consequently, they may be more exposed to violence against women, like exploitation and trafficking. As is the case in Turkey, where the *Roya News* website reported that Syrian refugee women are subjected to sexual blackmail, and families may marry off their daughters to obtain money or to remove the economic burden (Roya News 2020o).<sup>122</sup>

*Alrai* reported that Article No. 4 of 2017 stipulates the conditions for granting permission to marry individuals aged fifteen to eighteen. The law requires the suitor to be compatible with the fiancée, and the judge must ensure complete consent and choice. The court must verify the necessity required by the interest and the implications in terms of achieving a benefit or preventing harm, using the means of verification it deems appropriate. Moreover, the age gap between the two parties should not exceed fifteen years, and the suitor must not be married. Additionally,

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<sup>122</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/218595> (Roya News 2020o).

marriage should not interrupt the suitor's education. The suitor must be able to provide financial support, pay the dowry, and prepare the marital home (Alrai 2020p).<sup>123</sup> Although news websites have explained the impact of early marriage laws on society, they have not provided a comprehensive explanation of why such laws were enacted in Jordan. While they have addressed the motives of families who wish to marry off their daughters early, they have not presented the aspects of this practice that some Jordanian judges or sociologists consider positive. This highlights the journalists' negative stance toward this issue. However, in 2017, Petra News Agency in Jordan featured the opinion of a sociologist who underscored the necessity of allowing early marriage in Jordan. The sociologist Abla Al-Weshah argued that the marriage of underage girls was a longstanding practice. She stated that the decisions issued by the Jordanian judiciary aimed to address fundamental problems faced by girls who do not wish to pursue education and employment, as well as those who are orphans living with stepmothers. Thus, early marriage supposedly proves suitable for them (Petra News Agency 2017). Yet, this is not something that *Alghad*, *Alrai*, or *Roya News* decided to highlight in their coverage of the issue.

In terms of frame #2, the websites attributed the causes of child marriage to several factors according to the view of specialists, including poverty, the high number of Syrian refugees, the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing girls as a burden, failure to study, traditional mentality and customs, family disintegration, as well as ignorance. The data that I have extracted from the sample indicate that there were significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing the following causes: poverty, the high number of Syrian refugees, and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Alrai* was the website that addressed these causes more than any other. Meanwhile, there were no significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) in addressing these causes of child marriage: seeing girls as a

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<sup>123</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10549000/> محليات/العاصمة/تضامن-65-عقد-زواج-لقاصر اتخلال-عام-2019 (Alrai 2020p).

burden, failure to study, traditional mentality and customs, family disintegration, and ignorance. The three websites have paid close attention to providing information on the plethora of causes why Jordanian families decide to marry off their daughters at a young age. In addition, it was estimated that poverty or economic situation was the most cause of spreading early marriage in 2020 (35.8%). Overall, *Alrai's* website had more coverage of frame two of child marriage than any other platform (76.5%).

Some of these reasons are similar to those pointed out by El Arab and Sagbakkenb (2019) and Ahmed (2015), who found that the high number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, as well as poverty and economic circumstances, can contribute to child marriage. Meanwhile, the study by Fry et al. (2019) agrees with my analysis in that traditional mentality and customs are responsible for the practice of child marriages. According to the analysis of the sample of news articles, it appears that Jordanian news websites have extensively covered the issue of child marriage, shedding light on the underlying reasons that compel families to take their young daughters out of school. This issue highlights the pervasive discrimination against women in Jordan, which is reflected in a lack of appreciation for the critical role that girls play in building a society that is equal to men. Such discrimination is rooted in traditional beliefs that grant men an unfair advantage over women in terms of educational and economic opportunities, perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes that limit the potential of girls and women alike. For example, a report published on *Roya News*, families prefer to educate sons over daughters and enroll them in universities, believing that girls do not require further education. As a result of these discriminatory practices, girls are marginalized and stereotyped as only capable of marriage and childbearing. It is therefore

impossible for them to participate in work and economic activities to the full extent of their rights (Roya News 2020t).<sup>124</sup>

In connection with frame #3 (negative effects of child marriage), the websites tackled the effects of this form of gender violence based on the views of human rights activists and sociologists, which include: deprivation of education, exposure to physical violence, exposure to sexual violence, divorce, death during childbirth, exposure to depression, physical and mental health, untimely pregnancy, and restriction of girls from job/employment and economic empowerment, untimely pregnancy, and restriction of girls from job/employment, and economic empowerment. There were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing deprivation of education ( $p = 0.05$ ), and *Alrai* mostly tackled this effect. There were no significant differences in addressing exposure to physical violence, exposure to sexual violence among the three websites.

Overall, my data indicate that frame #3 of child marriage was covered the most frequently (58.7%) on the *Alrai* website. These results are compatible with those from the study by Boujarian et al. (2016), which assured that underage marriage causes mental health problems and maternal deaths due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Meanwhile the studies by Shahin (et al.), Fry et al. (2019), and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, (2021) assured that marrying at an age below 18 deprives a girl of continuing their education and exposes them to violence, as exactly what were confirmed by the three websites. Ahmed (2015) also pointed out that girls who married at a young age would be exposed to depression and be restricted from job/employment and economic empowerment; all findings in line with the results of the news analysis in the present study.

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<sup>124</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/221751> (Roya News2020t).

Regarding divorce, according to the SIGI as reported by *Roya News*, interference by parents in the daily life of families where both spouses are under 18 years old is one of the primary causes of early divorce. Although spouses are entitled to full rights and responsibilities pertaining to marriage and separation, they do not possess the capacity to exercise civil and political rights, such as opening bank accounts, voting, borrowing, owning property, obtaining a driver's license, registering births, obtaining a passport, registering companies, practicing liberal professions or filing civil lawsuits. Furthermore, families in such situations cannot rent marital homes or fulfil financial obligations without a guardian present for one or both spouses. Spouses are also prohibited from applying for public jobs or working in the private sector. This can cause family disintegration and problems, posing a threat to the family entity and leading to its collapse (*Roya News 2020s*).<sup>125</sup>

In terms of frame #4 of child marriage, the three news outlets presented these solutions based on the proposal of human rights activists, which include: launching an awareness program to end early marriage, launching a media campaign to end child marriage, providing solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education, and claiming for amendment of the law (raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years old). In this case, there were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in addressing awareness programs to end early marriage and providing solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education ( $p = 0.05$ ). The variance was in favor of *Alrai's* website. In terms of addressing media campaigns to end child marriage and claiming for amendment of the law (i.e., raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years), no significant differences were identified among *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*.

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<sup>125</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/216705> (*Roya News 2020s*).



The fact that *Alrai* deals with the most solutions to child marriage (64%) can be attributed to several reasons. To start with, the *Alrai* newspaper is one of the most popular newspapers in Jordan. Their social media account on Facebook has amassed 800,000 followers, making it a prime target for civil society organizations and advocates of women's and children's rights. Some of these include the Solidarity Institute, the Higher Population Council, and the National Council for Family Affairs. Through media activity, these organizations use digital newspapers, particularly *Alrai*, to communicate their achievements, plans, and opinions to educate families about issues related to violence against women. This is especially important in light of the recent increase in early marriage cases in Jordan, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic in 2020. In 2023, Jovita stated that the media has a vital role to play in fighting against child marriage and protecting young girls from the negative impacts of early marriage. By increasing public awareness of these issues through news articles, the media can inform people about the negative effects of early marriage and act as a catalyst for change (Jovita 2023, 22–23).

Jordanian digital journalism platforms such as *Alrai* have participated in addressing several solutions to eliminate the practice of early marriage. The news report published by *Alrai* reported on the statement by the National Council for Family Affairs, which emphasized the importance of developing an awareness program to end early marriage by changing societal attitudes towards the concepts associated with this type of marriage and its implications (Alrai 2020q).<sup>126</sup> Additionally, *Alrai* has supported the campaign Learning for People, Planet Prosperity, and Peace launched by the United Nations on the occasion of World Education Day in 2020.<sup>127</sup> The campaign aimed to achieve gender equality, provide learning opportunities for all, and break the cycle of poverty. As part of this ongoing campaign, the participating organizations have provided financial and material

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<sup>126</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10508348/> (Alrai 2020q). محليات/إطلاق-خطة-تنفيذية-لتوصيات-زواج-القاصرات

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/learning-people-planet-prosperity-and-peace>

assistance to minors to support their education. The hope is that by providing this support, these organizations could help these children achieve their full potential and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities (Alrai 2020r).<sup>128</sup>

The feminist movement in Jordan has made significant strides in advocating for gender equality and empowering women and girls in the workforce and education, placing them on par with men. Since the 1970s, women have been able to assume leadership positions in all sectors of Jordan, coinciding with the second wave of the women's freedom movement and continuing to the present day.<sup>129</sup> It is common to find Jordanian women in roles beyond the home, such as productive workers, political figures, or creative university students (Rsheidat 2023, 39). Nevertheless, the Arab News website confirmed that the practice of marrying minors is still socially acceptable to many people in Jordan, and it will require significant efforts from civil society and the law to reduce it (Alarab 2023). The rate of underage marriages in 2020 exceeded 7,000 cases, posing a threat to the status of Jordanian women and hindering their progress. This is due to inherited ideas that force girls to marry, as they are considered a financial burden that must be eliminated (Alarab 2023). The United Nations also indicated that child marriage is a discriminatory practice based on stereotypical views regarding women's roles, which exposes them to domestic violence (OHCHR n.d.b) and deprives them of continuing their education, freedom of choice, independence, work, and economic participation as active members of society (OHCHR n.d.c). Here, the role of civil society organizations in Jordan is crucial in combating these practices and ending child and forced marriage at the international, regional, and national levels. According to a statement by the SIGI, the organization's efforts have been successful in reducing

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<sup>128</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10520743/> -محلّيات/انخفاض-عدد-زواج-القاصرات-يعزز-فرصهن-باستكمال (Alrai 2020r).

<sup>129</sup> Refer to Chapter Two.

the number of underage marriages in Jordan (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2023).<sup>130</sup> As per a news report published on the *Alrai* website, the Chief Justice Department's report for the year 2022 confirmed a decrease in the number of marriage contracts for minors (those under the age of eighteen) compared to 2021. The piece indicated that the number of contracts reached 5,824 in 2022, accounting for 9.1% of the total regular and duplicate marriage contracts. In contrast, the number of marriage contracts for minors was 8,039 in 2021 (Alrai 2023).

The SIGI confirmed on its official website that this decrease came as a result of implementing recommendations from studies on the harms of underage marriage in cooperation with partner institutions, including both official and unofficial government institutions, civil society, and humanitarian organizations, such as CEDAW (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2023). In addition to the importance of launching awareness campaigns in all regions that positively affect the choices of women and their families regarding the choice to marry minors, these campaigns have also had a positive impact on reducing the percentage and number of marriage contracts for minors in the year 2022 (Solidarity Is Global Institute 2023). For example, the Jordanian National Committee for Women launched the Still Too Young for Marriage campaign to confront gender-based violence, especially underage marriage, and to empower men and youth to combat violence related to the increasing phenomenon of underage marriage at the national level (The Jordanian National Commission for Women 2017, 3). The Girl of 15 Years Old campaign was launched at Yarmouk University to reduce the prevalence of underage and early marriage in Jordan. The campaign also seeks to raise awareness about the justifications, risks, and negative impacts of this phenomenon (Alghad 2018).

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<sup>130</sup> <https://www.sigi-jordan.org/article/td-mn-nk-54>

According to the results of frame #1 of digital violence, there were statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers regarding the identification of the forms of digital violence ( $p = 0.05$ ), where *Alghad* website was the source that more widely covered the forms of digital violence. Regarding identifying the penal code of digital violence, the index, and demography of spreading of such issue, there were no statistically significant differences among the three websites ( $p > 0.05$ ). Generally, *Alghad* was the most frequently covered frame one of digital violence (53.3%).

The news websites that I am discussing here reported on Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law, which stipulates punishment for the individual who intentionally sends, re-sends, or publishes data or information via the Internet or any information system that includes defamation, slander, or humiliation of any person. The law contemplates imprisonment for no less than three months, and a fine of no less than 100 and no more than 2,000 dinars. However, the late President of the Solidarity Institute, Asma Khader, stated on the *Alghad* website that the penal code for cybercrime is deficient because it does not currently include an accurate definition of harassment. Instead, it is described as an act contrary to public modesty, stressing that the penalties are not a deterrent, as the lawyer can qualify any harassment as an act contrary to public modesty. “I believe that if the law and definitions are clearer and more comprehensive, there will be a greater level of prosecution and a reduction of sexual harassment online”, Khader stated (Alghad 2020v).<sup>131</sup> This is in line with the coverage by *Roya News*, which addressed the shortcomings in the laws penalizing sexual crimes because the term sexual harassment does not exist in the Jordanian legal system, as mentioned previously (Roya News 2020g).<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/799661> (Alghad 2020v).

<sup>132</sup> <https://royanews.tv/news/195715> (Roya News 2020g).

According to the SIGI, *Alghad* indicated that violence and electronic harassment threaten 2.7 million females who use the Internet in Jordan. The *Alghad* website reported on a study conducted by the Al-Hayat Center, “Rased”,<sup>133</sup> which showed that 60.4% of female political activists felt harmed by cyberbullying, compared to 42% of them who were exposed to cyberbullying while using social networking sites. The study sample included 205 women, 47.8% of whom were elected to Parliament and provincial, municipal, and local councils, compared to 52.2% of women active in the field of political work. According to *Alghad*, 73.8% of the respondents believed that women are more vulnerable to cyberbullying, while 54.7% stated that males are the perpetrators compared to 17.6% of females. Additionally, 27.6% reported not knowing who was responsible for the bullying (Alghad 2020f).<sup>134</sup>

By analyzing the news treatment of websites, especially the *Alghad* website, I have found that they tend to cover digital violence directed at female political activists, who are among the groups most exposed to such violence. This may be because these women are public figures and are highlighted in the media due to the nature of their work, which exposes them to bullying. *Alghad* also proved that the parliamentary elections for the 19th House of Representatives in Jordan heavily relied on social media for electoral propaganda. This was due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on gatherings, and the weekend curfew. The question arises about the possibility of an increase in cases of electronic violence against female political candidates and female voters.

In terms of frame #2 of digital violence, the three websites addressed the causes of this type of violence in Jordan according to sociologists’ view, which include: exposure to emotional neglect and psychological trauma since childhood, symptoms of grandiosity, narcissism, insecurity about

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<sup>133</sup> In English, *rased* means “monitor”.

<sup>134</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/805350> (Alghad 2020f).

the perpetrator's part, family disputes, inflicting physical or moral harm to the victim, lack of control over electronic harassment, ease of use of the Internet, discrimination against women due to poor cultural awareness and ignorance, and COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The result assured that there were no significant differences in covering the above causes of digital violence ( $p = 0.05$ ) except for this cause: discrimination against women due to poor cultural awareness and ignorance. There were significant differences among the three websites in covering discrimination against women due to cultural ignorance as a reason for digital violence ( $p = 0.05$ ), and *Alghad* covered this reason more frequently than other platforms. Moreover, the results showed that symptoms of grandiosity, narcissism, and insecurity on the perpetrator's part were the most reasons of digital violence tackled through online news (26.4%). Generally, compared to the other websites, *Alghad* addressed frame #2 the most (60.4%).

On this point, my findings are consistent with those from the study conducted by Alsawalqa (2021), where it was stated that the causes of digital violence are linked to family conflicts and discrimination against women. This idea was supported by the three websites in 2020. According to the Mecanismo de Seguimiento de la Convención de Belém do Pará (MESECVI), violence against women is caused by stereotypes and prejudices about the traits and characteristics of men and women. These stereotypes often lead to expectations about traditional social roles, such as the belief that women are responsible for all household chores and lack authority. These cultural and social patterns place women in an inferior or subordinate position compared to men, leading to discrimination against them. This discrimination is the main driving force behind violence directed against women. In addition, violence and gender inequality are closely intertwined and are utilized as social mechanisms to keep women in a disadvantaged position. In other words, violence is frequently employed to “punish” or “correct” women whose behavior or actions are deemed

inconsistent with society's expectations by men (MESECVI 2017, 36–37). The International Center for Research on Women defines technology-enabled gender-based violence as acts of harm perpetrated by one or more people based on their sexual identity or gender norms. By using the Internet or mobile technology, these actions may involve harassment, intimidation, sexual harassment, defamation, hate speech, or exploitation (Hinson et al. 2018, 1).

Thus, digital violence against women, online sexism, and misogyny can emerge in cyberspace. In the virtual world, like in reality, women are frequently coerced and abused in order to control, limit, or restrict their lives, status, and opportunities, as well as to facilitate and secure men's privileges (Morales n.d.). The *TRT Arabic* news website confirmed that women in the Arab world are among the groups most exposed to digital violence, especially receiving unwanted images and comments that constitute sexual harassment. This is due to socialization, reactionary mentality, and male hegemony that contribute to diminishing women's value and reducing them to their bodies (TRT Arabic 2020b).

In Jordan, journalist Hassan Al-Zaben confirmed in his opinion piece published on the *Jordan Zad* news website and entitled "Digital Violence on Gender" that the phenomenon of digital violence is a result of patriarchal culture in society. It is largely linked to the strength of male culture and the privilege granted to men, enabling them to justify oppressing women and practicing digital violence against them. This is often done under the pretext of correcting a woman's behavior through means such as bad comments, insults, threats, bullying, and even death threats when she shares her images or beliefs online. As many women and girls utilize social media networks to express their opinions, share private photos, seek fame, or establish relationships, they inadvertently expose themselves to privacy violations. This makes them vulnerable to sexual harassment, bullying, and attacks by other users (Al-Zaben 2021). Al-Zaben's article emphasized

the idea of male privilege, which is seen as benefiting men at the expense of women. This concept led to the emergence of the third wave of feminism in 1992, spearheaded by writer Rebecca Walker. The movement was sparked by the case of lawyer Anita Hill, who lost her sexual harassment case against Judicial Council candidate Clarence Thomas. This outcome revealed the court's preference for men over women and highlighted the intersection of race and gender in the legal system. Walker described male privilege as a form of discrimination that silences women's voices and obstructs their demands for social justice in a society dominated by men, leading to the deprivation of women's rights, as mentioned in Chapter Three. Al-Zaben's work draws attention to the pervasive and enduring nature of male privilege in contemporary societies, particularly in the digital age. The impact of this privilege is evident in the negative attitudes of men toward women, as manifested in criticisms, disparaging remarks, insults, threats, bullying, and doubts about their abilities, which are frequently expressed through social media platforms. Such behaviors reflect an attempt to impose male-centered perspectives and expectations on women and to correct them when their attitudes and behaviors deviate from those deemed appropriate by the male-dominated society. It is, therefore, crucial to raise awareness about this issue and strive to create a more equitable and inclusive social environment through media platforms.

On the other hand, the digital press in Jordan has addressed this phenomenon by highlighting the experiences of women candidates in the parliamentary elections who have been digitally harassed, threatened, and bullied based on their appearance, clothing, and incitement to not vote for them. This is a result of Jordanian inherited stereotypes that depict women only as wives and mothers, while men have the right to hold leadership positions, as previously mentioned on the *Alghad* website (Alghad 2020b). The news coverage of the digital press in Jordan has also expanded to include highlighting female candidates for the parliamentary elections, as described



by journalists as “disabling.” For example, *Alghad* reported a news article titled “Cyberbullying and Violence Haunt Female Candidates for Parliamentary Elections.” It discussed the experiences of a blind political candidate who faced cyberbullying, including harsh comments criticizing her appearance and the way she dressed because of her disability. The report also cited the statement of SIGI, which confirmed that the phenomenon of female candidates being exposed to violence is attributed to cultural traditions that allow male heads of families to restrict women’s independence to participate equally as voters and candidates in the democratic process. The Institute also called for the protection of female political candidates and individuals involved in public life, especially those with special needs, from any infringement on their rights, safety, reputation, or morals in the face of what they are exposed to, because women seek to contribute effectively to building a modern, democratic, and productive civil state, just like men (Alghad 2020b).<sup>135</sup>

Here, it is evident that *Alghad* has incorporated the perspective of intersectionality theory by highlighting the stories of female candidates, especially those with disabilities. The coverage conveys the challenges they have faced through digital media, considering their dual identities as women and disabled individuals. It also highlights the factors that make them vulnerable to bullying and insults, making each experience distinct from the others. Intersectionality theory refers to the intersection of factors of oppression and discrimination based on race, gender, and social class, as well as discrimination related to gender identity, language, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, educational level, and immigration. Factors such as status, socio-economic status, sect, lineage, and health are considered (United Nations Declaration on Minorities Rights 2022, 3).<sup>136</sup> The spread of this type of media treatment could be attributed to the desire of feminists and politicians to change the prevailing stereotypical media images of women with special needs

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<sup>135</sup> Visit the news article in Arabic: <https://alghad.com/story/912308>

<sup>136</sup> For more details of intersectionality please refer to Chapter Two.

and their awareness of the need to reflect a more diverse reality. This understanding is necessary for organizations and media outlets when designing programs or projects targeting marginalized or less fortunate women. Their needs and aspirations are not the same, so these organizations and media outlets must prioritize them on their agendas.

In connection with frame #3 (negative effects of digital violence), the three news sites discussed the negative consequences of practicing such violence such as spreading rumors and social chaos, the prevalence of crime and violence in society, restricting victims from performing their role at the workplace, destruction of interpersonal relationships, psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety, physical disturbances such as headache, stomach, and colon pain, and suicide. The results pointed out that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers in tackling these negative effects psychological disturbances ( $p > 0.05$ ): *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* showed homogeneous interest in treating the negative effects of digital violence in 2020. Meanwhile, there were significant differences in tackling psychological disturbances such as depression and anxiety ( $p = 0.05$ ), where *Alghad's* website tackled this reason the most, compared to other websites. In addition, it was the most reason circulated via online news (33.3%). Meanwhile, the results revealed that *Alghad* was the website that tackled frame #3 most frequently, i.e., 57.6%, and these results appear to be in line with those from the study by Alsawalqa (2021), where the author assured that some victims of digital violence experience several physical health consequences and attempt suicide as a result. For instance, an article published by *Alghad* highlights the experiences of Arab and Jordanian women who have been victims of digital threats and bullying, which has caused them to feel fear, limit their freedom of expression, and withdraw from public events and political activities. This has ultimately prevented

them from running for political positions or engaging in political action (Alghad 2020b).<sup>137</sup> Another news report by *Alghad* sheds light on the experience of Canadian actress Maitreyi Ramakrishnan, who played the lead role in the TV series *Never Have I Ever* (Netflix 2020-present). After gaining fame, Ramakrishnan has been exposed to various forms of digital violence, including insults, threats, and even murder. She believes that these acts are a manifestation of sexism online, which has prompted her to take a break from social media and stay away from the spotlight to avoid negative experiences. The prevalence of digital violence and its impact on public figures highlights the need for greater control and regulation of social media platforms. It also underlines the importance of creating safe and secure online communities that promote respect, tolerance, and inclusion such as Plan International<sup>138</sup> (Alghad 2020w).<sup>139</sup>

In connection with frame #4 (the solutions to eliminate digital violence), the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three electronic newspapers ( $p = 0.05$ ) in addressing the following solutions to eliminate digital violence: providing psychological and counseling services, creating awareness media campaigns to end such violence, legally prosecuting perpetrators of electronic violence, educating individuals about its seriousness and how to confront it, encouraging women to report violence and break the culture of silence, and promoting a culture of dialogue to mitigate cyberbullying. Generally, compared to other websites, *Alghad's* website addressed frame #4 the most (58.4%). Among the campaigns presented by the *Alghad* and *Alrai* websites is the National Digital Safety Campaign launched by the Digital Safety Program for Women in the Middle East and North Africa (Salamat)<sup>140</sup> in cooperation with the

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<sup>137</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/912308> (Alghad 2020b).

<sup>138</sup> <https://plan-international.org/about/> Plan International is a non-profit organization that promotes children's rights and gender equality.

<sup>139</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/910237> (Alghad 2020w).

<sup>140</sup> <https://alghad.com/story/794910> (Alghad 2020x).

Jordanian Open Source Association and the SIGI. As part of the campaign's activities, digital clinics have been launched to protect women from electronic violence. These clinics aim to provide psychological, moral, and legal support by professional volunteers to victims who are exposed to harassment, hacking of their accounts, and theft of their photos for blackmail. These clinics not only guide the safe usage of mobile phones and personal computers to protect against hacking, but also offer advice and solutions to address various challenges and risks that women may face. By doing so, they can protect women before they need to resort to law enforcement or the judiciary.

On other hand, *Alrai* recently published an article highlighting the vital role that the media can play in safeguarding female political candidates and journalists. The article specifically quoted Princess Basma bint Talal at the 16th Conference of the Arabic Journalists Center. She emphasized the importance of female journalists and TV presenters in establishing standards to combat obstacles that hinder women's participation in positive promotion and boost their role in the political arena. This can be achieved by strengthening women's access to decision-making positions and promoting collaborative Arab efforts with civil society organizations to combat gender discrimination. These efforts aim to provide women with equal opportunities and allow them to play a more significant role in politics and media (Alrai 2020s).<sup>141</sup>

Based on the above, it is evident that some of the items in my sample played a pivotal role in endorsing female politicians and journalists to navigate the perils of digital bullying by conveying their experiences and challenges. This has, in turn, contributed to the fight against gender-based violence and helped educate the public about the negative impact of such practices. Despite the challenges they faced, these women remained undeterred and continued their efforts. One example is Nujoud Al-Qasim, who faced digital bullying but persevered in her role as a

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<sup>141</sup> <https://alrai.com/article/10558223/> محليات/الأميرة-بسمة-تدعو-للحد-من-التنمر-الالكتروني-ضد-المرأة (Alrai 2020s).

presenter. To combat violence against women in politics through media and social media, the non-profit Maharat Foundation urged decision-makers in Lebanon to strengthen complaint mechanisms for violence against women by involving various levels of judicial institutions. The Foundation also calls on the media to ensure comprehensive and balanced coverage of the issue of violence against women in politics. Additionally, it encourages civil society to build a feminist platform to empower women in politics and create a common agenda to combat violence against women. This collaborative effort is crucial in addressing the issue of violence against women in politics, and it requires the involvement of various stakeholders, including the government, media, civil society, and the general public (Maharat Foundation 2022).

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This chapter presents the results of a quantitative data analysis regarding news coverage on six forms of violence against women as reported by *Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News* in the year 2020. My findings in the quantitative research have been meticulously examined in conjunction with gender and media theories that form the basis of this thesis. In particular, Framing Theory was used here to analyze media frames to explain the results of the quantitative analysis of news according to Robert Entman's methodology, by identifying four frames of violence against women: identifying the issue, diagnosing the causes of the violence, the negative effects of the violence, and providing solutions to eliminate violence against women.

My findings have revealed a correlation between the issue of violence against women in Jordanian society and the underlying patriarchal mentality that pervades in Jordan. This mentality has contributed to the development of a culture of silence which has discouraged women and girls

from speaking out against injustices such as physical violence, torture, beatings, humiliation, and discrimination. As a result, many women in Jordan are unable to demand their rights or challenge the norms that perpetuate this cycle of violence and oppression. The discussion of my data suggests an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to addressing violence against women in Jordan, which should include measures to promote gender equality, female empowerment, and the protection of women's rights.

In addition, my work for this thesis has shed light on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the prevalence of violence within Jordanian households. The issue has been exacerbated by home quarantine measures, economic struggles, food insecurity, and psychological distress. The result has been a surge in divorce rates, violence, family breakdowns, and many adverse outcomes for women and girls of all ages.

The news analysed here presented a range of solutions to address the issue of violence against women, with a particular emphasis on the role of the feminist movement and the need to alter societal perceptions that are dominated by males. Besides this, the matter of addressing the gaps in laws that protect women from violence has been incorporated into the news through the inclusion of the voices of female legal practitioners and women's rights advocates. They have called for the abolition of discriminatory legislation and the establishment of laws that promote gender equality, as well as the eradication of all forms of violence. The Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 15, the penal code of Sexual Violence Crimes, and the penal code of Honor Crimes No. 340 are among the laws that have been scrutinized from this perspective. Moreover, the news items reflected the media campaigns organized by feminists aimed to encourage girls to stand up against violence. These campaigns also challenge the stereotype that casts girls in

subservient roles to men, which restricts their freedom. These stereotypes hinder their path and struggle to live with dignity like men in a society free of violent practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the impact of digital journalism in Jordan on addressing the issue of violence against women in 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of the media in raising awareness around women's issues, particularly violence and discrimination, is widely recognized. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the problem, with reports indicating a 33% increase in such incidents in 2020 compared to the previous year. Given this alarming situation, this study aimed to investigate how the media can more effectively address and combat violence against women. It also wanted to evaluate the media's ability to generate awareness and drive social change. For this study, a purposive sample of 192 news items was selected from three online news outlets (*Alrai*, *Alghad*, and *Roya News*) that discussed violence against women during the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020. This time period was chosen due to the high prevalence of cases of violence that occurred then.

A quantitative research method was employed, which utilized a content analysis tool to assess online news articles that discussed violence against women. The quantitative results were analyzed and discussed in the context of gender discrimination, women's rights, feminist movements in the media, and violence against women, as outlined in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. Besides this, two media analysis theories were selected to guide the study. The first theory, Agenda-Setting, with levels 1 and 2, was chosen to determine the priority given by the agenda of digital newspapers for covering issues related to violence against women, in terms of the volume and attributes of the news coverage. Level 1, which incorporates the quantitative analysis of the volume of news, tackled the violence in terms of these categories: type of violence, its forms, forms of journalistic treatment, the purpose of news coverage, and geographical coverage. Level 2 included the analysis of the attributes of news coverage in terms of these categories: attributes



of the perpetrators, attributes of the victims, blaming the offenders or the victims of violence against women, and position of the news coverage of violence against women. In addition, Framing Theory has been utilized to analyze the media frames that explain the results of the quantitative news analysis via Robert Entman's methodology. This has led to the identification of four distinct frames of violence against women. These frames include identifying the issue, diagnosing the causes of violence, highlighting the negative effects of violence, and proposing solutions to eliminate violence against women.

As mentioned before, there is a significant dearth of academic research on digital journalism in Jordan that addresses the issue of violence against women. Therefore, I dare say that my study can be considered to be the first of its kind in the region, as it comprehensively investigates six types of violence that women face. These include physical, emotional, sexual, honor killings, child marriage, and digital violence. It is worth noting that these different types of violence have not been previously studied together in any of the research works mentioned in Chapter Four. Hence, my work is a pioneering effort that offers a unique perspective on the subject matter.

This thesis stands out particularly for its use of Agenda-Setting theories at the first and second levels, as well as Framing Theory through Robert Entman's methodology to quantitatively analyze journalistic content about violence against women in all forms. The scarce previous studies of Jordanian media did not utilize these two perspectives to scrutinize the content of digital newspapers on women's issues in detail. Therefore, this thesis is a valuable addition to the existing scientific research on the subject of newspapers in Jordan and their impact on addressing and eliminating violence against women.

My research findings indicated that child marriage was the most prevalent type of violence across three online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, digital violence was the least reported. Among physical violence, hitting was the most commonly covered form of news, while insulting was the most frequent form of emotional violence. Rape was the most highlighted type of sexual violence addressed through online news. Furthermore, honor killing was the most common type of honor crime reported through digital newspapers. Insulting and bullying were the most forms of digital violence treated through websites. In addition, the analysis results found that media coverage of violence against women aims to inform more than just raise awareness, educate, or entertain. Also, digital newspapers have been more likely to cover local cases of violence against women compared to international or Arab cases due to the high rate of violence incidence in Jordan during the pandemic. The study also found that the three sites analyzed took a neutral stance on blaming victims or perpetrators, but had a negative stance on six different types of violence against women.

The news websites addressed the issue of how the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the rise of physical, emotional, and sexual violence, as well as digital harassment via the Internet, particularly during the lockdown period. The prolonged period of isolation and confinement in the home has prevented individuals from engaging in their daily activities, resulting in significant psychological stress, anxiety, and tension. This has culminated in domestic disputes due to the economic hardships faced by families, resulting in disruptions to their livelihoods. The entire economic situation has led to physical, humiliation, exposure to blackmail, and sexual blackmail, especially among Syrian refugees.

In addition, it has been shown that websites lack in addressing the consequences of honor killings against women due to the conservative customs and traditions that govern Jordanian

families, which leads to ambiguity and cover-up of the facts in the news. The news articles discussed the factors that contribute to child marriage in Jordan, including poverty and the difficult economy, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the coverage was mainly on the less fortunate communities in society, particularly among Syrian refugees. This proves that child marriage is spreading among poor people.

Additionally, the three websites have brought attention to legislation that fosters violence and obstructs women's rights, including the Domestic Violence Law No.15, and Article 340 of the penal code, which pertains to honor crimes. The news websites addressed discriminatory laws that are deemed harmful to women, including the penal code applied to sexual crimes. The online news highlighted the importance of promoting gender equality in Jordanian households, and they handled the importance of empowering women and treating them as equals can help eradicate the patriarchal attitude that perpetuates violence against them. By taking a stand against violent practices such as honor killings, physical violence, cyberbullying, and early marriage, we can work towards creating a safer and more just society for everyone.

The three news sites discussed here highlighted the issue of digital bullying against women, particularly female politicians in Jordan. This problem is attributed to the patriarchal mindset prevalent in the society, which endows men with privileges and restricts women's roles to traditional ones. The exposure of women to such harassment has become a growing concern that requires immediate attention from feminist advocates and society as a whole. The news outlets confirmed that this issue would require a concerted effort from all stakeholders including the Jordanian parliament, media institutions, civil society, and the general public to combat gender discrimination and create a safe and inclusive environment for women to participate in public life without fear of intimidation or harassment.

The three websites that I dissect throughout this thesis have demonstrated their support for women who have been victims of abuse by expressing their solidarity towards them, condemning violence, and aligning themselves with civil society organizations and advocates of women's rights. They have disseminated statements, viewpoints, and solutions to reinforce the feminist movement. They have also appealed for the abrogation of discriminatory laws and the creation of statutes that promote gender parity and eradicate all forms of violence. The news sample under consideration highlighted the pivotal role played by feminist campaigns in lending support to the victims of violent acts and encouraging them to speak out against such atrocities. These campaigns, in essence, served as a bulwark against the culture of silence that often shrouds instances of gender-based violence. By empowering victims to take a stand, feminist campaigns played a crucial role in fostering a culture of advancing the cause of women's rights and safeguarding their safety.

In the end, after these years of work on the theories and the sample, I conclude that more specialized research needs to be conducted to address the role of the Jordanian media in addressing issues of violence, especially that the causes of violence, its negative consequences, and the solutions offered to eliminate violence be identified due to their scarcity in the academic field in Jordan, especially since my thesis is the first academic study to apply Robert Entman's methodology in detail to investigate journalistic treatment of violence in Jordan. Furthermore, I identify the need for news websites to address honor killings in more detail, a move away from stereotypes and patriarchal society that hinder investigation in presenting facts, as well as the need to conduct more academic research to verify the extent of progress of the Jordanian media in addressing this type of issue.

Inspired by the UN Women's file "10 Essentials to Address Violence against Women and Girls in and through Media" (UN Women n.d.h), this thesis presents some recommendations to

expand the scope of the Jordanian press's treatment of issues related to violence against women. First, journalists and media outlets could collaborate with networks and institutions that aim to tackle the issues of gender-based violence against women and girls. By sharing information and experiences, participating in projects, and advocating for change, they can contribute to bringing about positive changes where they are needed. This recommendation is a continuation of the process of eliminating violence against women, following the repeal of Law 308 in Jordan in 2017. This repeal was the result of a collaborative campaign with women's rights advocates and the Jordanian media. The campaign achieved a great sensation that contributed to justice for raped victims through the trial and punishment of the perpetrators.

To achieve gender equality within the Jordanian media sector, it is essential to ensure that female journalists and TV presenters are allowed to hold important positions, especially in editorial policies focusing on women's violence, discrimination laws, and sexual harassment issues. This includes pointing out the shortcomings in laws that protect women from such violence, particularly in the workplace. According to a recent study, the representation of Jordanian women in the media sector does not exceed 9% compared to men, which constitutes a real dilemma. Meanwhile, the *Addustour* news website (2010) highlighted in a paper that the percentage of female media professionals in the union council and leadership positions does not exceed 1%. In light of this, it has become necessary to include female journalists on the board of directors as well as planning and programming committees in the media sector, particularly when addressing feminist issues aimed at empowering women and supporting them in standing up to violent acts such as harassment, honor killings, beatings, humiliation, threats, digital bullying, and forced early marriage. Especially now that exposure to electronic media has become an urgent necessity, with a high percentage of women being exposed to it (Almoussa 2012, 197).

Additionally, it is crucial for media makers to show unwavering support for the digital press and journalistic gatekeepers in their efforts to amplify the voices of female survivors of violence from diverse backgrounds. This should also include encouraging these survivors to come forward and share their stories of violence in public, empowering them to effectively communicate their experiences and messages, and providing them with the necessary psychological support from organizations and media sector workers. This also happened during the presentation of sexual violence victim Nujoud Al-Qasim, who shared her experience on the *Roya News* platform in cooperation with the Solidarity Organization. She recounted the violence she endured from her family and her brother's preferential treatment, highlighting the deeply ingrained gender discrimination and differential treatment of male and female children.

Therefore, it is necessary to intensify the presentation of stories related to discrimination against women and their experiences with domestic violence across all segments of society. This will help consolidate the idea that violence is a deep-rooted phenomenon that must be eliminated based on sharing the real experiences of victimized women with the public. Although the girls were reluctant to express their voices and refused to share their experiences with violence, especially sexual violence and digital harassment, which are sensitive issues in public opinion, organizations, and the media sector can continue to launch ongoing awareness campaigns to encourage girls to speak out. This initiative follows in the footsteps of the Everyday Sexism Project campaign, which British writer Laura Bates initiated online in 2012, and others that circulate informally on social media, like #MeToo and its myriad of native variants.

It is also important to enhance the design of an educational strategy through the media that focuses on challenging gender stereotypes, discrimination, inequality, and harmful masculinity. This will highlight the role of social norms in committing and accepting violence against women

and girls, as is happening in Jordan with honor killings. These practices are governed by mentalities inherited from the patriarchal society that was imposed on families a long time ago. Addressing the role of the law in preventing such cases and the problem of leniency in handling files at police stations is especially problematic because the penal law in cases of violence justifies the criminal's actions by reducing the punishment, which is considered discriminatory against women.

In addition to the necessity of polling the opinion of the audience and sharing their views on honor-killing practices via media platforms, it is important to submit these opinions to the Jordanian government and parliament. They can play a role in amending laws and enacting strict sanctions that are compatible with the victims' interests and protect them from such crimes. There is a lack of coverage on this issue compared to other types of violence due to the prevailing intellectual norms in the conservative tribal society in Jordan, which prevent investigation into it. Adding to the media's focus on the occurrence of domestic violence, specifically the physical violence that is widespread in Jordan due to the mentality of some men in Jordanian society, which justifies a man hitting his wife to discipline her if she goes against his will, and for other reasons, as mentioned in the study by Nasser, Belbeisi, and Atiyat (1999). Unfortunately, this mentality is still widespread today, as evidenced by the analysis of the underlying reasons for practicing physical violence. Therefore, these initiatives contribute to strengthening digital journalism and mass communication by raising awareness among the Jordanian public and encouraging them to take action to stop these unjust practices against women. Just like the Jerash crime story, where Fatima was the victim of physical violence, this incident constituted a different shift in digital newspapers in mobilizing Jordanian public opinion and designing solidarity marches for her. The online news treatment highlighted the social consequences of women's reluctance to report

incidents of abuse and oppression by their husbands to the authorities. They fear losing custody of their children and lack a possible economic support system for themselves and their children. The victim's family has a negative attitude toward her exposure to violence, and she feels she must remain silent out of fear of divorce and losing her children. Despite the powerful journalistic treatment of this case regarding harmful masculinity leading to domestic violence and its causes and consequences, there is a lack of coverage of true stories that could ignite public opinion and inspire them to demand an end to violence, break the silence, and eliminate racial discrimination against women, which hinders their freedom and combats violence.

Moreover, as mentioned above, the rise of online abuse and harassment has become a pressing issue for women in journalism and politics. This problem not only affects their mental wellbeing but also hinders their ability to work and voice their opinions freely. To address this problem, media platforms need to take proactive measures to ensure the online safety of these women. One effective way to do this is by implementing awareness programs and media campaigns that provide comprehensive information on how to identify and monitor different types of harassment and abuse. These initiatives should also educate victims about the methods they can use to report such incidents and receive the necessary support. By doing so, media platforms can create a safer and more inclusive online environment for women in the media industry. In addition, more research is required to comprehend the possible influence of media coverage on the way people view digital violence. By examining the impact of media coverage on public perception, interested parties can devise efficient approaches to tackle digital violence and create secure online environments.

In today's world, it is of utmost importance for the media to provide a platform for people to speak up and express their views on media content that pertains to violence against women. This



is because it can serve as a catalyst for creating awareness and knowledge about this critical issue. By offering a secure and comprehensive digital platform, the mass media of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can create a safe environment where women, girls, and men can engage in meaningful conversations and share their opinions without fear of violating the boundaries of women's rights. This can ultimately lead to the development of a more informed and educated society where individuals are aware of the impact of violence against women and are equipped with the necessary knowledge to prevent it.

## CONCLUSIONES

El propósito de esta tesis era examinar el impacto del periodismo digital en Jordania al abordar el tema de la violencia contra las mujeres en 2020, en el contexto de la pandemia de COVID-19. Está ampliamente reconocido el papel de los medios de comunicación a la hora de crear conciencia sobre los problemas de las mujeres, particularmente la violencia y la discriminación. Sin embargo, la pandemia actual de COVID-19 ha exacerbado aún más el problema, con informes que indican un aumento del 33% en este tipo de incidentes en 2020 en comparación con el año anterior. Ante esta alarmante situación, este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar cómo los medios de comunicación pueden abordar y combatir más eficazmente la violencia contra las mujeres. También quería evaluar la capacidad de los medios para generar conciencia e impulsar el cambio social. Para este estudio, se seleccionó una muestra intencional de 192 noticias de tres medios de noticias en línea (*Alrai*, *Alghad* y *Roya News*) que trataron la violencia contra las mujeres durante el brote de COVID-19 en 2020. Este período de tiempo se eligió debido a la alta prevalencia de casos de violencia entonces.

Se empleó una metodología de investigación cuantitativa, que utilizó una herramienta de análisis de contenido para evaluar artículos de noticias en línea que abordaban la violencia contra las mujeres. Los resultados cuantitativos fueron analizados y discutidos en el contexto de la discriminación de género, los derechos de las mujeres, los movimientos feministas en los medios de comunicación y la violencia contra las mujeres, como se describe en los Capítulos Dos, Tres y Cuatro. Además de esto, se seleccionaron dos teorías de análisis de medios para guiar el estudio. Se eligió la primera teoría, el Establecimiento de Agenda (*Agenda-Setting*), con niveles 1 y 2, para determinar la prioridad que otorga la agenda de los periódicos digitales para cubrir temas relacionados con la violencia contra las mujeres, en términos del volumen y atributos de la

cobertura informativa. El Nivel 1, que incorpora el análisis cuantitativo del volumen de noticias, abordó la violencia en términos de estas categorías: tipo de violencia, sus formas, formas de tratamiento periodístico, propósito de la cobertura informativa y cobertura geográfica. El Nivel 2 incluyó el análisis de los atributos de la cobertura noticiosa en términos de estas categorías: atributos de los perpetradores, atributos de las víctimas, culpar a los agresores o a las víctimas de la violencia contra las mujeres y posición de la cobertura noticiosa de la violencia contra las mujeres. Además, se ha utilizado la Teoría del Encuadre (*Framing*) para analizar los encuadres mediáticos que explican los resultados del análisis cuantitativo de noticias mediante la metodología de Robert Entman. Esto ha llevado a la identificación de cuatro marcos distintos de violencia contra las mujeres. Estos marcos incluyen identificar el problema, diagnosticar las causas de la violencia, resaltar los efectos negativos de la violencia y proponer soluciones para eliminar la violencia contra las mujeres.

Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, hay una escasez significativa de investigación académica sobre periodismo digital en Jordania que aborde el tema de la violencia contra las mujeres. Por lo tanto, me atrevo a decir que mi estudio puede considerarse el primero de su tipo en la región, ya que investiga de manera integral seis tipos de violencia que enfrentan las mujeres. Estos incluyen crímenes físicos, emocionales, sexuales, de honor, matrimonio infantil y violencia digital. Vale la pena señalar que estos diferentes tipos de violencia no han sido estudiados juntos previamente en ninguno de los trabajos de investigación mencionados en el Capítulo Cuatro. Por lo tanto, mi trabajo es un esfuerzo pionero que ofrece una perspectiva única sobre el tema.

Esta tesis destaca particularmente por el uso de las teorías el Establecimiento de Agenda en el primer y segundo nivel, así como la Teoría del Encuadre a través de la metodología de Robert Entman para analizar cuantitativamente contenidos periodísticos sobre la violencia contra las

mujeres en todas sus formas. Los escasos estudios previos sobre los medios jordanos no utilizaron estas dos perspectivas para examinar en detalle el contenido de los periódicos digitales sobre temas de mujeres. Por lo tanto, esta tesis es una adición valiosa a la investigación científica existente sobre el tema de los periódicos en Jordania y su impacto para abordar y eliminar la violencia contra las mujeres.

Los resultados de mi investigación indicaron que el matrimonio infantil fue el tipo de violencia más frecuente en tres plataformas en línea durante la pandemia de COVID-19. Por otro lado, la violencia digital fue la menos denunciada. Entre la violencia física, los golpes fueron la forma de noticia más comúnmente cubierta, mientras que los insultos fueron la forma más frecuente de violencia emocional. La violación fue el tipo de violencia sexual más destacado abordado en las noticias en línea. Además, los asesinatos por honor fueron el tipo de crimen de honor más común denunciado en los periódicos digitales. Los insultos y el acoso fueron las formas más frecuentes de violencia digital tratadas a través de sitios web. Además, los resultados del análisis encontraron que la cobertura mediática de la violencia contra las mujeres tiene como objetivo informar más que simplemente crear conciencia, educar o entretener. Además, es más probable que los periódicos digitales cubran casos locales de violencia contra las mujeres en comparación con casos internacionales o árabes debido a la alta tasa de incidencia de violencia en Jordania durante la pandemia. También el estudio encontró que los tres sitios analizados adoptaron una postura neutral a la hora de culpar a las víctimas o a los perpetradores, pero tenían una postura negativa ante seis tipos diferentes de violencia contra las mujeres.

Los sitios web de noticias abordaron la cuestión de cómo la pandemia de COVID-19 ha contribuido al aumento de la violencia física, emocional y sexual, así como al acoso digital a través de internet, particularmente durante el período de confinamiento. El período prolongado de

aislamiento y confinamiento en el hogar ha impedido que las personas realicen sus actividades diarias, lo que genera estrés psicológico, ansiedad y tensión importantes. Esto ha culminado en disputas internas debido a las dificultades económicas que enfrentan las familias, lo que ha resultado en perturbaciones en sus medios de vida. Toda la situación económica ha llevado a humillaciones físicas, exposición al chantaje y chantaje sexual, especialmente entre la población refugiada siria.

Además, se ha demostrado que los sitios web no abordan las consecuencias de los asesinatos por honor contra las mujeres debido a las costumbres y tradiciones conservadoras que rigen a las familias jordanas, lo que genera ambigüedad y encubrimiento de los hechos en las noticias. Los artículos de noticias discutieron los factores que contribuyen al matrimonio infantil en Jordania, incluida la pobreza y la difícil economía, que se han visto exacerbadas por la pandemia de COVID-19. La cobertura se centró principalmente en las comunidades menos afortunadas de la sociedad, particularmente entre las personas refugiadas de Siria. Esto demuestra que el matrimonio infantil se está extendiendo entre los pobres.

Además, los tres sitios web han llamado la atención sobre la legislación que fomenta la violencia y obstruye los derechos de las mujeres, incluida la Ley de Violencia Doméstica N° 15 y el artículo 340 del Código Penal, que se refiere a los delitos de honor. Los sitios web de noticias abordaron leyes discriminatorias que se consideran perjudiciales para las mujeres, incluido el código penal aplicado a los delitos sexuales. Las noticias en línea resaltaron la importancia de promover la igualdad de género en los hogares jordanos, y abordaron la importancia de empoderar a las mujeres y tratarlas como iguales puede ayudar a erradicar la actitud patriarcal que perpetúa la violencia contra ellas. Al adoptar una postura contra prácticas violentas como los asesinatos por

honor, la violencia física, el acoso cibernético y el matrimonio precoz, podemos trabajar para crear una sociedad más segura y justa para todos.

Los tres sitios de noticias analizados aquí destacaron la cuestión del acoso digital contra las mujeres, en particular las políticas en Jordania. Este problema se atribuye a la mentalidad patriarcal prevaleciente en la sociedad, que otorga privilegios a los hombres y restringe los roles de las mujeres a los tradicionales. La exposición de las mujeres a ese tipo de acoso se ha convertido en una preocupación creciente que requiere atención inmediata por parte de los defensores feministas y de la sociedad en su conjunto. Los medios de comunicación confirmaron que esta cuestión requeriría un esfuerzo concertado de todas las partes interesadas, incluido el parlamento jordano, las instituciones de medios, la sociedad civil y en general el público, para combatir la discriminación de género y crear un entorno seguro e inclusivo para que las mujeres participen en la vida pública sin miedo de intimidación o acoso.

Los tres sitios web que yo analizo a lo largo de esta tesis han demostrado su apoyo a las mujeres que han sido víctimas de abuso al expresarles su solidaridad, condenar la violencia y alinearse con organizaciones de la sociedad civil y defensores de los derechos de las mujeres. Han difundido declaraciones, puntos de vista y soluciones para reforzar el movimiento feminista. También han pedido la derogación de leyes discriminatorias y la creación de estatutos que promuevan la paridad de género y erradiquen todas las formas de violencia. La muestra de noticias bajo consideración destacó el papel fundamental que desempeñan las campañas feministas a la hora de brindar apoyo a las víctimas de actos violentos y alentarlas a denunciar tales atrocidades. Estas campañas, en esencia, sirvieron como baluarte contra la cultura del silencio que a menudo envuelve los casos de violencia de género. Al empoderar a las víctimas para que adoptaran una

postura, las campañas feministas desempeñaron un papel crucial en el fomento de una cultura de promoción de la causa de los derechos de las mujeres y salvaguarda de su seguridad.

Al final, después de estos años de trabajo sobre las teorías y la muestra, concluyo que es necesario realizar más investigaciones especializadas para abordar el papel de los medios jordanos a la hora de abordar cuestiones de violencia, especialmente las causas de la violencia, sus consecuencias negativas, y las soluciones ofrecidas para eliminar la violencia deben identificarse debido a su escasez en el campo académico en Jordania, especialmente porque mi tesis es el primer estudio académico que aplica en detalle la metodología de Robert Entman para investigar el tratamiento periodístico de la violencia en Jordania. Además, identifiqué la necesidad de que los sitios web de noticias aborden los asesinatos por honor con más detalle, un alejamiento de los estereotipos y la sociedad patriarcal que obstaculizan la investigación al presentar los hechos, así como la necesidad de realizar más investigaciones académicas para verificar el grado de progreso de los medios jordanos a la hora de abordar este tipo de cuestiones.

Inspirándose en el archivo de ONU Mujeres “10 elementos esenciales para abordar la violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas en y a través de los medios” (ONU Mujeres n.d.h), esta tesis presenta algunas recomendaciones para ampliar el alcance del tratamiento de la prensa jordana sobre temas relacionados con la violencia contra las mujeres. En primer lugar, los periodistas y los medios de comunicación podrían colaborar con redes e instituciones que tengan como objetivo abordar los problemas de la violencia de género contra las mujeres y las niñas. Al compartir información y experiencias, participar en proyectos y abogar por el cambio, pueden contribuir a lograr cambios positivos donde sean necesarios. Esta recomendación es una continuación del proceso de eliminación de la violencia contra las mujeres, tras la derogación de la Ley 308 en Jordania en 2017. Esta derogación fue el resultado de una campaña de colaboración

con defensoras de los derechos de las mujeres y los medios de comunicación jordanos. La campaña logró una gran sensación que contribuyó a la justicia para las víctimas de violación a través del juicio y castigo de los perpetradores.

Para lograr la igualdad de género dentro del sector de los medios de comunicación jordano, es esencial garantizar que a las periodistas y presentadoras de televisión se les permita ocupar puestos importantes, especialmente en políticas editoriales centradas en la violencia de las mujeres, las leyes de discriminación y las cuestiones de acoso sexual. Esto incluye señalar las deficiencias de las leyes que protegen a las mujeres de dicha violencia, particularmente en el lugar de trabajo. Según un estudio reciente, la representación de las mujeres jordanas en el sector de los medios de comunicación no supera el 9% en comparación con los hombres, lo que constituye un verdadero dilema. Mientras tanto, el sitio web de noticias *Addustour* (2010) destacó en un artículo que el porcentaje de mujeres profesionales de los medios de comunicación en el consejo sindical y en puestos de liderazgo no supera el 1%. En vista de esto, se ha vuelto necesario incluir a mujeres periodistas en las juntas directivas, así como en los comités de planificación y programación del sector de los medios, particularmente cuando se abordan temas feministas destinados a empoderar a las mujeres y apoyarlas para enfrentar actos violentos como acoso, asesinatos por honor, palizas, humillaciones, amenazas, acoso digital y matrimonio precoz forzado. Especialmente ahora que la exposición a los medios electrónicos se ha convertido en una necesidad urgente, con un alto porcentaje de mujeres expuestas a ellos (Almoussa 2012, 197).

Además, es crucial que los/as creadores/as de medios muestren un apoyo inquebrantable a la prensa digital y a los/as guardianes/as periodísticos/as en sus esfuerzos por amplificar las voces de las mujeres sobrevivientes de violencia de diversos orígenes. Esto también debería incluir alentar a estas supervivientes a que se presenten y compartan sus historias de violencia en público,



empoderándolas para comunicar efectivamente sus experiencias y mensajes, y brindándoles el apoyo psicológico necesario por parte de organizaciones y trabajadores del sector de los medios. Esto también sucedió durante la presentación de la víctima de violencia sexual Nujoud Al-Qasim, quien compartió su experiencia en la plataforma Roya News en cooperación con la Organización de Solidaridad. Ella relató la violencia que sufrió por parte de su familia y el trato preferencial de su hermano, destacando la discriminación de género profundamente arraigada y el trato diferenciado entre niños y niñas.

Por lo tanto, es necesario intensificar la presentación de historias relacionadas con la discriminación contra las mujeres y sus experiencias con la violencia doméstica en todos los segmentos de la sociedad. Esto ayudará a consolidar la idea de que la violencia es un fenómeno arraigado que debe ser eliminado a partir de compartir con la ciudadanía las experiencias reales de las mujeres victimizadas. Aunque las niñas se mostraron reacias a expresar sus voces y se negaron a compartir sus experiencias con la violencia, especialmente la violencia sexual y el acoso digital, que son temas delicados en la opinión pública, las organizaciones y el sector de los medios pueden continuar lanzando campañas de concientización continuas para alentar a las chicas a hablar claro. Esta iniciativa sigue los pasos de la Campaña del Proyecto Sexismo Cotidiano, que la escritora británica Laura Bates inició en línea en 2012, y otras que circulan informalmente en las redes sociales, como #MeToo y sus innumerables variantes nativas.

También es importante mejorar el diseño de una estrategia educativa a través de los medios de comunicación que se centre en desafiar los estereotipos de género, la discriminación, la desigualdad y la masculinidad nociva. Esto resaltará el papel de las normas sociales a la hora de cometer y aceptar la violencia contra mujeres y niñas, como está sucediendo en Jordania con los asesinatos por honor. Estas prácticas se rigen por mentalidades heredadas de la sociedad patriarcal

que se impuso a las familias hace mucho tiempo. Abordar el papel de la ley en la prevención de tales casos y el problema de la indulgencia en el manejo de expedientes en las comisarías es especialmente problemático porque el derecho penal en casos de violencia justifica las acciones del delincuente reduciendo el castigo, que se considera discriminatorio contra las mujeres.

Además de la necesidad de sondear la opinión de la audiencia y compartir sus puntos de vista sobre las prácticas de asesinato por honor a través de plataformas de medios, es importante presentar estas opiniones al gobierno y al parlamento jordano. Pueden desempeñar un papel en la modificación de las leyes y la promulgación de sanciones estrictas que sean compatibles con los intereses de las víctimas y las protejan de tales crímenes. Hay una falta de cobertura sobre este tema en comparación con otros tipos de violencia debido a las normas intelectuales predominantes en la sociedad tribal conservadora de Jordania, que impiden investigarlo. Sumándose a la atención de los medios de comunicación sobre la violencia doméstica, específicamente la violencia física que está muy extendida en Jordania debido a la mentalidad de algunos hombres en la sociedad jordana, que justifica que un hombre golpee a su esposa para disciplinarla si ella va en contra de su voluntad, y por otras razones, como se menciona en el estudio de Nasser, Belbeisi y Atiyat (1999). Lamentablemente, esta mentalidad sigue estando muy extendida hoy en día, como lo demuestra el análisis de las razones subyacentes para practicar la violencia física. Por lo tanto, estas iniciativas contribuyen a fortalecer el periodismo digital y la comunicación de masas al sensibilizar al público jordano y alentarlos a tomar medidas para detener estas prácticas injustas contra las mujeres. Al igual que la historia del crimen de Jerash, donde Fátima fue víctima de violencia física, este incidente constituyó un cambio diferente en los periódicos digitales a la hora de movilizar a la opinión pública jordana y diseñar marchas de solidaridad para ella. El tratamiento noticioso en línea destacó las consecuencias sociales de la renuencia de las mujeres a denunciar a

las autoridades incidentes de abuso y opresión por parte de sus maridos. Temen perder la custodia de sus hijos/as y carecen de un posible sistema de apoyo económico para ellas y sus criaturas. La familia de la víctima tiene una actitud negativa hacia su exposición a la violencia y ella siente que debe permanecer en silencio por miedo al divorcio y a perder a sus hijos/as. A pesar del poderoso tratamiento periodístico de este caso sobre la masculinidad dañina que conduce a la violencia doméstica y sus causas y consecuencias, falta cobertura de historias reales que puedan encender a la opinión pública e inspirarla a exigir el fin de la violencia, romper el silencio y eliminar la discriminación racial contra las mujeres, que obstaculiza su libertad y combatir la violencia.

Además, como se mencionó anteriormente, el aumento del abuso y el acoso en línea se ha convertido en un problema apremiante para las mujeres en el periodismo y la política. Este problema no afecta solamente a su bienestar mental, sino que también dificulta su capacidad para trabajar y expresar sus opiniones libremente. Para abordar este problema, las plataformas de medios deben tomar medidas proactivas para garantizar la seguridad en línea de estas mujeres. Una forma eficaz de hacerlo es implementar programas de concientización y campañas en los medios que brinden información integral sobre cómo identificar y monitorear diferentes tipos de acoso y abuso. Estas iniciativas también deberían educar a las víctimas sobre los métodos que pueden utilizar para denunciar tales incidentes y recibir el apoyo necesario. Al hacerlo, las plataformas de medios pueden crear un entorno en línea más seguro e inclusivo para las mujeres en la industria de los medios. Además, se requiere más investigación para comprender la posible influencia de la cobertura de los medios en la forma en que las personas ven la violencia digital. Al examinar el impacto de la cobertura de los medios en la percepción pública, las partes interesadas pueden idear enfoques eficientes para abordar la violencia digital y crear entornos en línea seguros.

En el mundo actual, es de suma importancia que los medios proporcionen una plataforma para que las personas hablen y expresen sus puntos de vista sobre el contenido de los medios relacionado con la violencia contra las mujeres. Esto se debe a que puede servir como catalizador para crear conciencia y conocimiento sobre este tema crítico. Al ofrecer una plataforma digital segura e integral, los medios de comunicación del siglo XXI pueden crear un entorno seguro donde las mujeres, las niñas y los hombres puedan entablar conversaciones significativas y compartir sus opiniones sin temor a violar los límites de los derechos de las mujeres. En última instancia, esto puede conducir al desarrollo de una sociedad más informada y educada, donde las personas sean conscientes del impacto de la violencia contra las mujeres y estén equipadas con los conocimientos necesarios para prevenirla.



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<sup>303</sup> Reference in Arabic translated into English.

<sup>304</sup> Reference in Arabic translated into English.

[%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A9-3531050](#)

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