Digital Violence Against Women in Jordan: Psychosocial Impacts

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Acknowledgments

About the author

Rania Sarayreh is a journalist and human rights activist from Jordan. With a master's degree in human rights and human development, she has more than 20 years of experience in the media field. Currently, she is also the coordinator of the Jordanian Network to Combat Violence Against Female Journalists. As a member of the Jordanian Journalists Association, she has received national awards for her Hamour investigative research reports. Rania is also an ILO certified trainer, working to promote gender equality and the rights of marginalized groups.

This study was originally written in Arabic. You can find the original version here.

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Executive Summary

The increasing number of cases of digital violence (DV) in Jordan, particularly against women, as demonstrated by the statistics issued by the Cybercrime Unit of the Public Security Directorate, has resulted in an increase in the number of cybercrime cases registered in Jordan, with 2000 additional cases in 2020 compared to the previous year. The total number of cybercrime cases in 2020 was 9,500, while 7,500 cases were recorded in 2019. Given these circumstances, this study aimed to examine the psychological and social impact of digital violence against women (DVAW) in Jordan.

This study primarily utilized the findings of a questionnaire designed and administered by this research team that surveyed the opinions and experiences of 525 women residing in Jordan. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions distributed on Facebook's popular social media platform. It was posted online for 22 days, from October 18, 2021, to November 8, 2021. Furthermore, the link to the questionnaire was also published on the "Salamat" program page of the SecDev Foundation, and it was circulated through WhatsApp groups and individually via Facebook Messenger to increase sample size.

The findings of this study revealed that 28% of the survey participants (144 women) had experienced DV. In contrast, 59% of the respondents denied any exposure to violence, amounting to 312 individuals. Moreover, 9% of the participants (49 individuals) responded that they "may" have been exposed to DV. Twenty respondents, representing 4% of the sample, chose not to answer the question asking if they had been exposed to violence, digital bullying, or any type of violation online.

Regarding the marital status of respondents, married women demonstrated the highest level of responsiveness, with 52% (273 women) being married. The percentage of single women who responded was 41% (213 women), while divorced and widowed women accounted for only 8% (39 women).

When analyzing the correlation between the extent of exposure to digital violence (DV) and marital status, the results indicated that divorced women were the most susceptible to violence. In other words, 53% confirmed that they had been exposed to DV, 6% may have been exposed, and 41% stated that they had not been exposed to DV. Widows were closely followed in terms of exposure to DV, with 43% reporting that they had been exposed to DV. Single women were also at risk, with 31% confirming that they had been exposed to DV, 12% indicating that they might have been exposed to violence, and 21% stating that married women were the least exposed to DV. Notably, only 8% of the married women answered that they may have been exposed to DV.

The results of the study revealed that the educational level of females, regardless of their academic attainment, does not afford them exemption from the risk of digital violence. On the contrary, it was observed that the most educated females, who are typically the most active on social media platforms, are often the most vulnerable to such cyber-attacks because of their virtual independence, knowledge, and cultural awareness. Consequently, they may participate in online groups related to their work or studies, thereby exposing themselves to potential harm.

Our analysis confirmed a positive correlation between educational attainment and exposure to digital violence, with 38% of women holding doctorate and master's degrees reporting such exposure, 27% of those holding bachelor's degrees and diplomas reporting the same, and 13% of those with a high school diploma or lower reporting such exposure.

This study revealed that the curricula at all levels of education in Jordan, ranging from primary schools to universities and postgraduate programs, lack lessons that emphasize the significance of digital safety and security. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that the higher the level of education attained, the more likely individuals are to acknowledge their exposure to digital violence.

Regarding the level of knowledge held by the participants regarding strategies and methods for safeguarding their accounts on social media, 52% of the females claimed to be familiar with such measures, 13% responded that they were not knowledgeable, 32% indicated that they likely knew how to protect their accounts, and only 3% refused to answer. However, subsequent questions in the questionnaire revealed a lack of comprehensive awareness among females about account protection, which was highlighted by the following question: "Do you experience difficulties in safeguarding your personal data on the internet?" The responses to this question, when examined in relation to the previous inquiry regarding account protection, revealed inconsistencies:9% of the respondents indicated that they encountered difficulties in protecting their accounts, 34% stated that they occasionally encountered such difficulties, 4% did not answer this question, and 53% reported that they did not experience any difficulties in protecting their accounts.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that a substantial percentage of respondents (81 %) did not receive any training on digital safety from any entity, either government or civil. Furthermore, only 15% of respondents reported having received training on digital safety. It is noteworthy that digital safety classes are not included in the local curricula of educational institutions, either in schools or universities, which is reflected in the community's disregard of the significance of digital safety.

Based on the correlation analysis between the receipt of training on digital safety and exposure to violence, 112 of the 144 respondents who experienced digital violence did not receive any training on digital safety. Conversely, 31 women reported receiving training on digital safety and emphasized the need to expand the reach of workshops and training programs to a wider audience. They also recommended that such programs should be developed to address female interactions on social media.

Based on our findings, it was determined that women who experience digital violence may not take action to confront it for social reasons. The primary factor appears to be the fear of being blamed, facing additional problems, or enduring a social stigma that holds females responsible for the violence they have encountered. Furthermore, women may believe that reporting violence will not lead to resolution or prevention and thus remain silent.

The results of the survey indicate that the culture of not reporting violence is prevalent, as the majority of respondents (43%) stated that they would report the incident to the social media platform where the violation occurred, whereas only 12% believed that taking action was unnecessary. Furthermore, 9% did not pay attention to the matter, 10% requested the violator to stop or threatened to file a complaint, and only 4% filed a complaint with the Cybercrime Unit of the Public Security Directorate.

When those surveyed regarding their experience with DV were asked about the perpetrator, the majority (64%) indicated that they were unknown, while 22% acknowledged knowing only the individual through social media and not in person. The remaining respondents were divided among colleagues at work or school (5%), close family members (5%), and friends (4 %).

This statement affirms that social media has provided perpetrators with increased courage to commit acts of violence, particularly against individuals who are not known to them, given that committing violence behind a screen appears to be a safer and more empowering option. Consequently, online harassment is more prevalent and severe when more obscene or cruel images or words are used. If the victim was present in front of the perpetrator, it is likely that he would hesitate before committing the act of violence.

It is imperative to investigate perpetrators' fear or reaction in the event that their actions are revealed, as this aspect has not been addressed in previous studies, news reports, or official documents. This underscores the importance of conducting research to address this critical aspect.

Part of the results of this study focused on the way females behave after being exposed to violence, especially psychologically. The respondents were asked how they behaved after being exposed to violence. The analysis showed that 45% of the females said that they had become more careful when using social media and had begun to change their passwords for their accounts and pay attention to whom they were talking to. Only 33% of the respondents said that they did not change anything and continued to behave in the same way online.

The study's findings encompassed the behavior of females after exposure to violence, particularly in a psychological context. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents to gauge their reactions. The results showed that 45% of the females reported adapting a more cautious approach to using social media by changing their passwords and being more selective when engaging with online contacts. Conversely, only 33% of the respondents declared that their behavior remained unchanged.

Regarding those who had experienced violence, 6% of individuals reported that they deleted their online accounts following exposure to digital violence. Additionally, 6% of individuals refrained from communicating with others outside their immediate family and friends on social media. Furthermore, 5% of individuals disclosed the incident to their friends and acquaintances as a means of cautioning them about online safety, whereas 3% chose to publicize the event on their social media accounts as a means of warning and advising other women.

The findings of this study indicate that a more in-depth examination of the correlations between questionnaire responses is warranted. This analysis revealed that the prevalence of digital violence against women in Jordan may be higher than previously thought. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is necessary to formulate effective plans and policies to address this issue.

When asked about their feelings following an episode of violence, 34% disclosed that they were afflicted with sleep disorders, 15% expressed fear, and 7% reported symptoms of depression. The remaining respondents expressed a range of sentiments, including the desire to avoid social media, feelings of isolation, and anger.

In Jordanian society, there is a prevailing lack of interest in addressing psychological issues, and the impact of these problems is often minimized, despite their significant nature. This also reflects the social norms of Jordanian culture, which generally frown upon seeking psychiatric help and stigmatizing those who do so. This attitude can contribute to suicide, including in women who have experienced digital violence.

Therefore, it is imperative to offer appropriate psychological support to those who have experienced digital violence, as a considerable proportion tend to hold themselves responsible, which could potentially result in self-harm.

By analyzing the local legal environment to confront DV, the study concluded that the ongoing amendments to the Cybercrime Law did not tighten penalties for pornographic acts related to children, women, and people with disabilities or their exploitation. On the other hand, the amendments focused remarkably on hate speech and its criminalization, which would have been better if they had their own laws. In addition, amendments tightened the articles related to obvious cybercrimes, extortion, fraud, and DV in such a way that international and local civil society organizations interpreted the amendments to the law as primarily restricting freedoms and not confronting DV.

The study observed that ongoing revisions to the Cybercrime Law did not result in enhanced penalties for offenses related to the exploitation of children, women, and individuals with disabilities in pornographic content. Instead, the revisions placed significant emphasis on the criminalization of hate speech, which would have been better addressed through dedicated legislation. Furthermore, amendments to the law were deemed by local and international civil society organizations to primarily restrict freedoms rather than confront the issue of digital violence.

This study stresses the importance of digital safety awareness programs and courses and enhances their quality to ensure considerable benefits, particularly for women. Furthermore, in-depth studies are required to shed light on the legal, social, and psychological dimensions of digital violence in Jordan, with a particular focus on digital violence against women. This should be accompanied by raising awareness of government and civil agencies' services regarding the psychological impact of digital violence against women. It is also essential to combat the culture of self-blame by providing additional psychological support and expanding the culture of seeking psychological treatment if necessary. Skilled specialists should deliver these services at reasonable financial costs.

It is recommended that the curricula in Jordan across all educational levels, including middle school, high school, and university, incorporate courses on digital safety. Furthermore, psychological and legal support should be provided to victims of DV by strengthening existing support services and expanding their reach.

This study also proposes the implementation of widespread media campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of digital violence, provide educational materials on how to prevent it, and establish a national network comprising all relevant stakeholders with the primary objective of collaboration to minimize the prevalence of digital violence.

Introduction

This study addresses the social and psychological effects of digital violence against women (DVAW) in Jordan, where it is considered a serious problem, and its negative effects are increasing day after day, especially with the increasing use of technology. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of awareness of digital safety methods. It increases because of the weakness of legislation and laws prohibiting this type of violence as well as the weakness of reporting it as a result of a societal culture that tolerates digital violence (DV), especially against women. Equally important, females fear reporting such violence because they are usually blamed and held responsible for digital harassment.

It is worth noting that the sustainable development goals emphasize the necessity and importance of expanding the use of information and communications technology, including universal access to the Internet. In addition, the use of the Internet may contribute to addressing the problem of gender inequality, which is one of the reasons that encouraged countries to expand the provision of the Internet and increase access to it. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic also contributed to expansion of the use of the Internet not only in the field of entertainment but also in the field of conducting work in light of the quarantine imposed on the majority of countries, including Jordan. However, adequate measures have not been taken to protect women, specifically from digital gender-based violence.

The issue of digital security, especially for the most vulnerable groups, must be considered a human rights issue and an important indicator of the extent to which society seeks to bridge the gender gap in an effort to achieve equality.

Reviewing previous studies, UN Women announced, in a report issued at the end of 2021, entitled "Violence against women in the digital space: Insights from a multi-country study in Arab countries,"[1] in which they surveyed more than 11,500 male and female users over the age of 18 in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen, to gain an understanding of the extent of cyber violence in the Arab region, its consequences and impact on women, and the obstacles that prevent survivors from accessing and providing services. The report indicated that 49% of female Internet users in the Arab region expressed that they did not feel safe because of electronic harassment, 36% of women who had been exposed to DV last year were advised to ignore the incident, 23% were blamed, and 21% were told to delete their social media accounts.

According to a report, more than one in three men aged between 18 and 24 years surveyed in the region admitted that they had committed some form of DVAW. When asked about the reasons for committing online violence against women, the first reason was "because it is their right" (26%) whereas 23% said they committed acts of DV "for entertainment."

The study also revealed that the most common form of DVAW in the region is receiving "unwanted images or symbols with sexual content" (43%), followed by "nuisance phone calls, inappropriate or unwelcome communication attempts" (38%), and "receiving insulting and/or hateful messages" (35%). In addition, 22% of women who experienced DV experienced "direct sexual blackmail." The largest percentage of women who experienced DV reported that they had experienced it on Facebook (43%), Instagram (16%), or WhatsApp (11%). Among women who had experienced violence in the past year, 44% reported that the incident went beyond the virtual realm.

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[1] https://2u.pw/FRC30

Another study published by the Jordanian National Commission for Women's Affairs, entitled 'Violence against women in the public and political spheres in Jordan,' showed that psychological and moral violence was the most common form of violence among women: 90% of respondents admitted that they had been exposed to violence, followed by abuse. Verbal bullying also occurred at a rate of 69%, whereas cyber violence and cyberbullying occurred at a rate of 63%. The percentage of participants who reported being exposed to sexual violence or harassment was 18%.

In terms of the means of violence practiced, the results of the study showed that DV and bullying using Internet communication technologies and social media platforms were the most common; that is, 55% of the respondents who were exposed to violence confirmed that this method was used against them, while 48% of them reported that they had been exposed to offline violence.

Violence through traditional media constituted the lowest percentage with only 22% of respondents reporting that they had been exposed to violence through this medium. Female respondents who hold elected positions accounted for the highest percentages in terms of exposure to DV, at a rate of 62%, followed by female respondents who hold positions in the voluntary sector, at a rate of 51%. Female respondents who held government positions constituted the group most exposed to DV, constituting 37% of all respondents who were exposed to DV.

Definitions

Digital violence:[2] This is an online behavior that constitutes or leads to an attack on the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of an individual or group. What distinguishes DV from traditional offline forms of violence is that DV largely occurs online, even though it may then become offline violence. Thus, DV may have a physical component, and much of the harm caused by DV is psychological and/or emotional. Cyberviolence can target individuals or groups.

Gender-Based Violence: UNFPA defines this as "any act of physical, psychological, or social violence, including sexual violence, that is committed or threatened (such as violence, threats, coercion, exploitation, deception, manipulation of cultural concepts, use of weapons, and exploitation of economic conditions).[3] Gender-based violence originates from the social imbalance in roles between men and women, and is supported by patriarchal and authoritarian social concepts in any society. Its severity increases in times of conflict, armed conflict, or natural disasters. Major challenges include the lack of reports and data on cases exposed to gender-based violence in times of conflict; the lack of reports of crimes committed, and services and support provided to victims/survivors.

Digital gender-based violence:[4] This is targeted harassment and bias through technology against people, primarily women, based on their gender. The term is similar to cyber harassment, cyberbullying, and cyber discrimination, but the latter terms are not gender-based. Gender-based violence differs from these previous forms because it specifically targets women based on gender. Online gender-based violence can include unwanted sexual remarks, threats, deception, stalking, online harassment, and gender-based discriminatory posts. Gender-based violence may occur online in different ways. These include impersonation, hacking, spam, tracking, surveillance, and malicious sharing of intimate messages and images.

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[2] https://2u.pw/Gdaco
[3] https://2u.pw/VbjmE
[4] https://2u.pw/IreCB

Problem of the Study

In recent years, with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people on social media networks has increased. Rather, their purpose has gone beyond just social communication to using them more in study and work because of the expansion of the culture of working remotely.

This was accompanied by an increase in all forms of DV, with women being the most vulnerable to this violence. The local Jordanian media circulated many reports that shed light on the issues that women face online.

While female politicians, media figures, and human rights defenders had the lion's share of this violence because they were under the spotlight, other groups of women were not spared from it either, which created new problems in Jordanian society as a result of weak awareness in general about digital safety for all, as well as the lack of legal knowledge in this regard.

Aim of the Study

This study examined the dimensions and forms of DV and the extent of its social and psychological effects on women in Jordan. In addition, it was designed to study the legal environment in Jordan, whether DV is criminalized, and whether there is a legal and social system that provides a safe digital environment for marginalized women in Jordan.

Significance of the Study

This study derived its importance from the scarcity or absence of previous local or international studies that specifically addressed the social and psychological impact of DVAW in Jordan. Accordingly, there is a gap that needs to be filled to provide a research reference that provides an initial base for those interested in this issue, especially civil society organizations such as women's organizations in Jordan.

Methodology

The present study reviewed previous international and local studies that dealt with DVAW and conducted an analysis of the Jordanian legal environment with regard to crimes and DV. A questionnaire was also designed that included a set of questions to identify the social and psychological conditions of women online. In-depth interviews were conducted with female activists who had been exposed to DV.

Jordanian Legal Environment of Digital Violence

The widespread use of the internet and computer technology in Jordan has led to an increase in criminal activity committed via social media platforms, including drug trafficking, hacking, sexual harassment, and extortion. Because the Internet and social media platforms have become a large part of our daily lives for multiple purposes, including work or entertainment, and even recently for school and university education, this has become a new way of life, and as a result, cybercrimes have increased.

Statistics issued by the Cybercrime Unit of the Public Security Directorate showed an increase in cybercrime cases in Jordan of two thousand cases compared to those in 2019 and 2020, as the number of cybercrime cases in 2020 reached 9,500 cases, while 7,500 cases were recorded in 2019.[5]

It should be noted here that these numbers reflect the number of females who filed complaints and had cases reported and registered, while the real number of crimes is unknown because women usually do not report such crimes.

The Cybercrime Unit of the Public Security Directorate recorded 7, 500 cybercrime cases and 3, 750 bullying crimes in 2019, while 9,500 cybercrime cases and 4,000 bullying cases, including 2,800 incidents involving women, were recorded in 2020.

It is worth noting that 80% of the victims of digital crimes in Jordan are women, who often face blackmail attempts after criminals hack their social media accounts and steal their personal photos. There are other women who decided to share their personal photos with the person who blackmailed them later using her photos.

The Cybercrime Unit was established in 2008 as a Cybercrime Department, and in 2015, it was developed to become a Cybercrime Combat Unit. In the same year, the Cybercrime Law No. (27) was issued to address electronic cases within its articles that outlined the crime and its punishment.

The legal framework includes the following laws: Electronic Crime Law No. (27) in 2015, Communications Law No. (13) of 1995 and Electronic Transactions Law No. (85) of 2001, and Penal Code No. (16) in 1960, and all laws were observed. The procedure in the Kingdom is in accordance with Article 15 of Cybercrime Law No. 27 of 2015 AD.

Article 15 of the Cybercrimes Law stipulates: "Anyone who commits any crime punishable under any applicable legislation using the information network or any information system or website, or participates in, intervenes in, or incites to commit it, shall be punished with the penalty stipulated in that legislation."[6]

The law defines cybercrime as "every act criminalized by laws that assaults material or/and moral conditions and is a (in)direct result of the intervention of information technology, every act or failure to act using a technological means is punishable by law."

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[5] https://2u.pw/qwvIo

[6] https://2u.pw/PjxXC

Analyzing the amendments to the Cybercrime Law, it is useful to point out that the first law was issued in 2010, and it was the first Jordanian law specializing in cybercrimes, crimes committed by computers, and crimes committed using electronic devices.

The 2010 version of the law[7] contained 17 articles that defined substantive and procedural rules and focused on major digital crimes but did not cover all known computer-related crimes.

The primary criticism of this law was that it was adopted by the government as a temporary law and was therefore not subject to any kind of parliamentary review or debate. As a result, much criticism has been directed toward its vague and confusing provisions.

In 2015, Cybercrime Law No. 27 of 2015 was adopted. The law included 18 articles dealing with a wide range of cybercrimes, such as extortion, fraud, hate speech, and identity theft. This version of the law clearly unified the penalties for various cybercrimes (for example, identity theft is punishable with imprisonment of a period of not less than three months and no more than one year and a fine ranging from 200 to 1,000 dinars (USD 282-1410).

One of the law articles criminalizes hate speech and spreading of rumors and defines hate speech as "every statement or action that would incite religious, sectarian, ethnic, or regional strife, call for and justify violence, or spread rumors against people with the aim of causing physical harm or ruin their assets or reputation." Civil society described this definition of "hate speech" as "very broad" and opens the door to interpretations, noting that it would lead to restricting media freedoms and limiting freedom of expression.

The law stipulates a penalty of imprisonment for a period of no less than one year and no more than three years, and a fine ranging between 5,000 and 10,000 dinars (USD 7044-1488) for anyone who publishes or shares what can be described as hate speech on social media, websites, or any other platform. It also stipulates imprisonment for a period of not less than three months and not more than three years, and a fine ranging between 1,000 and 3,000 dinars (USD 1408-4226) for those who use the Internet and online means to blackmail others into doing things or refraining from doing things against their will.

In 2017, the government published a draft amending Crime Laws, which included a number of amendments. However, these amendments lacked any clear vision regarding the law yet aimed to reduce its negative effects, especially those left by the application of Article 11 of the law.

Article 11 states: "Anyone who intentionally sends, retransmits, or publishes data or information via the computer network, website, or any information system that includes defamation, slander, or humiliation of any person shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than three months and a fine." Not less than (100) one hundred dinars (USD 140) and not more than (2000) two thousand dinars (USD 2817)."[8]

The government clarified that the reason for amending the law was the spread of electronic crimes affecting money and people, and some users' misuse of means of communication as a result of the expansion of the use of social media platforms.

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[7] https://2u.pw/ObWNN
[8] https://2u.pw/JBuJv

However, international and local civil society organizations, including Human Rights Watch,[9] questioned these amendments, indicating that they target public freedoms and limit the right to freedom of opinion and expression. For example, the definition of hatred included in draft law should be more precise, especially with regard to communication programs and applications.

They explained that everything mentioned in the amendments to the draft law were already criminal acts in the Penal Code, but the difference was that the cybercrime amendments increased the punishment and created a special description for it, including Article 11 of the law, which increased the punishment for slander and slander crimes.

Thus, the definition of hate crimes is broad and expands the scope of criminalization to the extent that it confiscates freedom of opinion and expression, which constitutes a clear and serious violation of the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution and the relevant international covenants that Jordan has ratified, and which have become part of our legislative system and transcended laws.

It is noteworthy that the Penal Code, in Article 150[10], deals with crimes that undermine national unity or disturb the peace between the members of the nation, and stipulates the punishment of "every writing and every speech or action that intends or results in inciting sectarian or racist strife or inciting conflict between sects and the various elements of the nation," which is the same penalty in the draft cybercrime law, with the difference that "the Penal Code was satisfied with a fine not exceeding 200 dinars (USD 282), and this was subject to review, amendment, and approval in 2017. Accordingly, what is the justification for creating another text and increasing fines in the electronic crimes project to reach a maximum of 1,000 dinars (USD 1408)?

The presence of this definition in the Penal Code is sufficient for the existence of a provision in the Cybercrimes Law that stipulates: "Anyone who commits any crime punishable under any applicable legislation by using the information network or any information system or website, or participates in, intervenes in, or incites to commit it shall be punished with the penalty stipulated in the Penal Code."

It is noteworthy that none of the amendments to the Cybercrimes Law tightened the penalties for pornographic acts related to children, women, and people with disabilities or their exploitation. On the other hand, they focused on hate speech and its criminalization, which would have been better to have its own law and to focus on the Crimes Law and improve articles related to clear digital crimes, blackmail, fraud, and DV.

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[9] https://2u.pw/jYk6x
[10] htttps://2u.pw/Zrfwb

Questionnaire for the Study

Data Collection

An appropriate sampling method was used to survey the opinions and experiences of 525 Jordanian women. A questionnaire containing 28 questions was distributed on Facebook. Facebook was selected as it is the most widely used application in Jordan. The questionnaire was published on Facebook for 22 days, starting from October 18, 2021, until November 8, 2021. During this period, a questionnaire link was sent to 36 female groups in Jordan. The link to the questionnaire was also published on the "Salamat" program page of the SecDev Foundation and was sent to WhatsApp groups and individually to some women using Facebook Messenger to collect the largest possible number of answers.

Data Collection Tool

An electronic form of the questionnaire was designed in Arabic and tested by presenting it to five experts before publishing it online, to ensure that it included the necessary questions that could provide answers and results consistent with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire included two sections: the first included five social and demographic questions about (age, educational level, marital status, the governorate in which you live, and the field in which you work), while the second section included 23 closed and open questions as follows:

6. Do you use the Internet?
   a. Yes.
   b. no.

7. Do you currently have social media accounts?
   a. Yes.
   b. no.

8. Do you use your real names or pseudonyms on social media?
   a. My real name.
   b. nickname.

9. Why?

10. What applications do you frequently use?
   a. Facebook.
   b. Instagram.
   c. Snapchat.
   d. Twitter.
   e. Tik Tok.
   f. LinkedIn.
   g. WhatsApp.
   h. Other.

11. How do you secure your data?
   a. I choose strong passwords for my accounts.
   b. I activated two-step verification.
   c. I do not share information about myself on social media.
   d. I do not add people I do not know to my personal accounts.
   e. I do not think there is a reason to protect personal data and to not publish it.
   f. I make sure to obtain information on how to protect my accounts from reliable sources.
   g. I do not know how to protect my personal information and accounts.

12. Do you have difficulty protecting your personal data online?
   a. Yes.
   b. no.

13. Have you been exposed to digital violence, bullying, or any online violation?
   a. Yes.
   b. no.

14. How many times have you been exposed to digital violence or bullying?

15. What was the form of this violence?
   a. A comment or message that contains insults to you.
   b. Sending pictures or symbols that contain sexual symbols or indications.
   c. Sending links containing malicious programs to steal accounts.
   d. Sending violent or insulting women's image.
   e. Posting your photos without your consent.
   f. Stalking you on social media.
   g. Offering sexual relationships.
   h. Unwanted contact via social media.
   i. Direct threat.
   j. Direct blackmail.
   k. I was not exposed to any of the above.
   l. Other.

16. On which social media platform did the violation occur?

17. How did you behave if you were exposed to the aforementioned forms of violence?
    a. I reported the account on the app itself.
    b. I visited the nearest security agency and filed an official complaint.
    c. I contacted the criminal himself and asked him to stop or threaten filing a complaint.
    d. I told my mom.
    e. I told my father.
    f. I told my sister.
    g. I told my brother.
    h. I told my aunt/aunt.
    i. I told my aunt/uncle.
    j. I told my relatives (cousins/uncles).
    k. I told my relatives (cousins/aunts).
    l. I told my friends.
    m. I did not act out of fear of the consequences.
    n. I did not take any action, because I saw no reason.
    o. I disregarded the issue.
    p. I did not know what to do.

18. Who committed this violation?
    a. A male colleague.
    b. A female colleague.
    c. Manager at work.
    d. Director at work.
    e. A male classmate.
    f. A female classmate.
    g. A family male relative.
    h. A family female relative.
    i. A friend.
    j. Someone I know on social media.
    k. someone I do not know.

19. What did you do after you were exposed to digital violence?
    a. I have deleted all my social media accounts.
    b. I stopped contacting everyone who was not a family member.
    c. I continued to use social media, but with caution (I changed passwords, became more attentive to whom I talk, etc.).
    d. I have not changed any of my personal practices regarding technology or social media.
    e. I told my friends about the situation so they would be careful.
    f. I posted the situation publicly, so that other women would be aware of such incidents.
    g. Other.

20. If you were exposed to one of the previous violations, how would you describe your feelings at the time of the exposure?
    a. Sleep disorders.
    b. Fear.
    c. Fatigue and eating disorders.
    d. Depression.
    e. Isolation.
    f. Avoid social media.
    g. Self-harm thoughts.
    h. I did not feel anything.
    i. Other.

21. How do you describe your experience? What was the form of the violence? How did it continue? How did you feel during this period? We invite you to share the details with us for the purposes of this research.

22. Have you thought about seeking help regarding your digital violence experience?
    a. Yes.
    b. no.

23. In your opinion, why was the violence directed against you?
    a. Because my political and social opinions were expressed on social media.
    b. Because of the nature of my work.
    c. Because of my religion.
    d. Just because I am a woman.

24. In your opinion, what was the motive of those who violated you?
    a. Harassment.
    b. Defamation.
    c. Blackmail (financial or sexual).
    d. Revenge.
    e. Hate.
    f. Entertainment.

25. Have you been blamed for what happened?
    a. Yes.
    b. no.

26. Who was the person who blamed you?
    a. Father.
    b. Mother.
    c. Brother.
    d. Sister.
    e. Uncle/uncle.
    f. Aunt/aunt.
    g. Friends.
    h. The organization you contacted.
    i. I blamed myself.
    j. No one blamed me.

27. Do you know the penalties for digital violations in Jordanian law?
    a. Yes.
    b. no.

28. Do you know the authority you can turn to if you are exposed to digital violence?

The clarity of the primary data collection form—that is, the questionnaire—was tested by five females to ensure its credibility and the time required to answer the questionnaire. No phrases or words were deleted.

Questionnaire Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed on the selected samples using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22.0 IBM). Data were summarized and converted into numbers using percentages and number of cases as qualitative variables. Comparisons between groups and variables, whether binary or tripartite, were performed to determine the relationship between these variables using cross tables.

Ethical Considerations

All the data collection steps were performed with complete confidentiality. In addition, a paragraph was included in the questionnaire to explain the purpose and how their answers would be used in this study. This paragraph reads: "Digital violence against women is an emerging global problem that has a serious impact on individuals and societies. While any individual may be vulnerable to or a victim of digital violence, women are usually the most vulnerable. Despite the expansion and increase in this type of violence, it is noted that there is a severe lack of knowledge and initiatives to address this issue effectively. It can be said that digital safety is not only a technical or legal problem, but it has become a public health issue because it affects all families. To study the social and psychological effects of digital violence on women in Jordan, the "Salamat" program conducted by the SecDev Foundation invites you to fill out this questionnaire. We want to thank you for your cooperation and assure you that any information shared through this questionnaire will be treated with complete confidentiality and only for research purposes. This questionnaire is directed to women and the form does not request any information that indicates your identity."

Questionnaire Results

As noted earlier, 525 women completed the questionnaire, with those aged 18-30 years being more responsive, as the number of respondents from this age group was 178 (34%), followed by the age group ranging from 31-40 years with 168 women at a rate of 32%, and then the age group of 41-60 with 153 women at a rate of 29%. Thus, minors and older women over 60 years old were the least in terms of responding to the questionnaire; the percentage for these two categories was 5% (26 women).

From these results, it can be concluded that women between the ages of 18 and 60 years are most vulnerable to DV. This is because young girls under the age of 18 usually have accounts under the supervision of their parents, which makes them safer online. In addition, a large segment of Jordanian society does not allow children to have social media accounts. As noted earlier, the questionnaire was published in some groups frequented by male and female school students, but the responses from these groups were almost non-existent, which calls for conducting more studies and in-depth research on DV female minors using different data collection methods that may not be more popular and attractive to this age group.

As for women over 60, the reason why there was not a large percentage who responded to the questionnaire may be the socially restrictive manner that tends not to attack or harass older women, and thus, they are somewhat not exposed to this type of violence and harassment. However, this is not applicable when women in this age group have a major social or political position, such as ministers, activists, human rights defenders, or journalists. In this case, they may be exposed to gender-based violence, which will be discussed later in this study.

The age group from 18 to 40 years is the most active online, which explains why they were the main group who completed the questionnaire. In addition, this age group is most exposed to DV because this age is socially viewed as the peak of youth attractiveness and beauty.

Table 1: Age Groups of Respondents

Age Group	13-17	18-30	31-40	41-60	60+
Number	19	178	168	153	7
Percentage	4%	34%	32%	29%	1%

From Table 2, 28% of the respondents (144) reported that they had been exposed to DV, 59% of respondents (312) indicated that they had not been exposed to any violence, and only 9% of the respondents (49) said that they "may" have been exposed to DV. However, 4% (20 women) of the participants preferred not to answer this question.

Table 2: Frequency of DV and Bullying

DV & Bullying	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered
Number	144	312	49	20
Percentage	28%	59%	9%	4%

Regarding the marital status of the participants, married women were the most responsive, with 52% (273 women), followed by single women (213 women) at a rate of 41%, and then 39 divorced and widowed women, constituting 8%.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Married	Single	Divorced	Widow
Number	273	213	32	752%
Percentage	52%	41%	6%	1%

However, when analyzing the correlation between the extent of exposure to digital violence and marital status, the results showed that divorced women were the most vulnerable to violence, as 53% of them confirmed that they had been exposed to digital violence, 6% answered that they may have been exposed to digital violence, and 41% said that they had not been exposed to violence. Widows were second in terms of exposure to digital violence; 43% of them reported that they had been exposed to violence. As for single women, 31% said that they had been exposed to digital violence and 12% of them might have been exposed to violence. Married women were the least exposed to digital violence, at 21%, and 8% of married women indicated that they might have been exposed to violence.

Table 4: Correlation between Marital Status and Exposure to DV

Marital Status	Frequency	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered	Total
Single	No	66	118	26	3	213
	%	31%	55.4%	12.2%	1.4%	100%
Married	No	57	178	22	16	273
	%	20.9%	65.2%	8.1%	5.9%	100%
Divorced	No	17	13	2	0	32
	%	53.1%	40.6%	6.3%	0%	100%
Widow	No	3	3	0	1	7
	%	42.9%	42.9%	0%	14.3%	100%
Total	No	143	312	50	20	525
	%	27.2%	59.4%	9.5%	3.8%	100%

By analyzing these results, it is possible to confirm the social hypothesis that the marital status of women plays an important role in the extent of their exposure to violence. While married women were the most responsive to the questionnaire, they were not the most exposed to violence, which indicates that marriage may be a type of social protection from exposure to violence, as the abuser, whether in the real or virtual world, usually prefers unmarried women. Divorced women and widows are usually viewed as socially vulnerable. This makes them "easy prey" for many. This also reinforces an incorrect

social stereotype that indicates that divorced women and widows would more frequently accept violence and remain silent about it compared to married women or even single women. This could also be linked to another incorrect social stereotype that women are always blamed for their exposure to violence, specifically divorced women and widows. This result is confirmed in Table 5, which analyzed three factors included in the questionnaire: marital status, exposure to DV, and blaming women for being exposed to violence as the cause.

Table 5: Correlation between Marital Status and Being Blamed

Were you blamed?	Marital Status	Frequency	Yes	No	Total
Yes	Single	No	28	7	35
		%	80%	20%	100%
	Married	No	19	5	24
		%	79.2%	20.5%	100%
	Divorced	No	4	0	4
		%	100%	0%	100%
	Total	No	51	12	63
		%	81%	19%	100%
No	Single	No	36	19	55
		%	65.5%	34.5%	100%
	Married	No	37	17	54
		%	68.5%	34.5%	100%
	Divorced	No	13	2	15
		%	86.7%	13.3%	100%
	Widow	No	3	0	3
		%	100%	0%	100%
	Total	No	89	38	127
		%	70.1%	29.9%	100%
Total	Single	No	64	26	90
		%	71.1%	28.9%	100%
	Married	No	56	22	78
		%	71.8%	28.2%	100%
	Divorced	No	17	2	19
		%	89.5%	10.5	100%
	Widow	No	3	0	3
		%	100%	0%	100%
	Total	No	140	50	190
		%	73.7%	26.3%	100%

Regarding the educational qualifications of the respondents to the questionnaire, 60% (313 respondents) from the sample had diploma and bachelor's degrees, constituting the largest percentage, followed by 121 women who had master's and doctorate degrees, accounting for 23%; women who had a high school diploma or less had the smallest percentage with a rate of 17% and a total of 91 women. This provided several indicators. The most important of which is the great importance of female education, as Jordanian families usually insist on encouraging females to pursue academic education due to social convictions that "A girl's weapon is her certificate." This fact does not reflect the presence of women in the labor market, where the percentage of women does not exceed 18% according to the latest official statistics, which is the lowest in the Arab region.

Table 6: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational level	High School Diploma	BA/Higher Diploma	MA/PhD
Number	91	313	121
Percentage	17%	60%	23%

In the field of DV and harassment, these results indicate that women's educational levels often do not protect them from being vulnerable to DV. Rather, they may be the most exposed to it, since the most educated are the ones most involved in using social media accounts for reasons related to them being viewed as the most independent and educated. They are also viewed as having knowledge that enables them to engage in virtual discussions. Sometimes, their online presence is part of their work or school. It is important to point out here that Jordanian curricula at all levels of education, from primary to university and postgraduate studies, do not have any courses concerning the importance of digital safety and security. As such, the issue is not one of the priorities of those in charge of developing local curricula. It is worth noting that the higher the educational level of women, the more likely they were to acknowledge their exposure to DV.

This is confirmed by an analysis of the correlation between educational qualifications and exposure to DV, as 38% of women holding doctorates and master's degrees, 27% of women holding bachelor's degrees and diplomas reported being exposed to violence, and only 13% of those who held high school diplomas acknowledged that they experienced DV.

Table 7: Correlation between Education Level and Exposure to DV

Educational Level	Frequency	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered	Total
High School Diploma	No	12	62	6	11	91
	%	13.2%	68.1%	6.6%	12.1%	100%
BA/Higher Diploma	No	85	189	32	7	313
	%	27.2%	60.4%	10.2%	2.2%	100%
MA/PhD	No	46	61	12	2	121
	%	38%	50.4%	9.9%	1.7%	100%
Total	No	143	312	50	20	525
	%	27.2%	59.4%	9.5%	3.8%	100%

The largest percentage of those who responded to the questionnaire was unemployed (22%), while 19 who were employed in civil society organizations, followed by women working in the academic field. The remaining percentages were divided among women working in the academic, media, and medical fields, with the lowest percentage among female workers in the political field.

A preliminary analysis of these results indicates that unemployed women are more exposed to violence because they spend more time on social media, making them more vulnerable to violence. This was confirmed by the analysis of the correlation between employment status and violence, which is explained in the following table.

On the other hand, female workers in civil society organizations ranked second in terms of responses to the questionnaire. This may be due to the nature of their work in organizations that usually demand the protection of human rights, which makes their male and female employees more aware of these demands, including the protection of women's rights when they are online.

Table 8: Employment Fields of Respondents

Employment Field	Number	Percentage
Civil society organizations	101	19.2%
Human rights activist	12	2.3%
Legal	18	3.4%
The medical field	21	4.0%
Engineering field	19	3.6%
Academic field	81	15.4%
Media	44	8.4%
Business	22	4.2%
I do not work	115	21.9%
Student	52	9.9%
Other	36	6.9%
Politician	4	0.8%

The above discussion is confirmed by the following table, which analyzed the correlation between exposure to DV and the field of work. When the largest response to the questionnaire was from those who were unemployed, it turned out that women working in civil society organizations who were exposed to DV had the largest number. That is, 38 out of 101 women, seven of whom said that they might have been exposed to violence, 52 denied that they had been exposed to violence, while four chose not to answer this question.

Table 9: Correlation between Employment Fields and DV Exposure

Employment Field	Frequency	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered	Total
Civil society organizations	No	38	52	7	4	101
	%	7.2%	9.9%	1.3%	0.8%	19.2%
Human rights activist	No	9	2	1	0	12
	%	1.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	2.3%
Legal	No	4	12	0	2	18
	%	0.8%	2.3%	0.0%	0.4%	3.4%
Medical	No	5	11	5	0	21
	%	1.0%	2.1%	1.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Engineering	No	8	7	3	1	19
	%	1.5%	1.3%	0.6%	0.2%	3.6%
Academic	No	14	57	8	2	81
	%	2.7%	10.9%	1.5%	0.4%	15.4%
Media	No	18	20	6	0	44
	%	3.4%	3.8%	1.1%	0.0%	8.4%
Business	No	6	15	1	0	22
	%	1.1%	2.9%	0.2%	0.0%	4.2%
Unemployed	No	17	80	9	9	115
	%	3.2%	15.2%	1.7%	1.7%	21.9%
Student	No	10	35	6	1	52
	%	1.9%	6.7%	1.1%	0.2%	9.9%
Other	No	12	20	3	1	36
	%	2.3%	3.8%	0.6%	0.2%	6.9%
Politics	No	2	1	1	0	4
	%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.8%
Total	No	143	312	50	20	525
	%	27.2%	59.4%	9.5%	3.8%	100.0%

On the other hand, 17 of the 115 unemployed women acknowledged that they were exposed to DV, 9 said that they might have been exposed to DV, and 80 indicated that they had not been exposed to such experience.

It can be said that these results may be misleading and do not actually reflect reality, as a preliminary analysis of the societal culture in Jordan confirms the reluctance of women to report or acknowledge that they have been exposed to violence, regardless of their educational level or field of work. Thus, some women who took the questionnaire may not have acknowledged being exposed to DV, even when confidentiality of the answers was assured. Women usually consider this matter sensitive and not disclosable. However, women may not recognize acts such as receiving offensive comments or being stalked as DV. Accordingly, some may indicate that they have not been exposed to DV. This may explain why the percentage of female employees in civil society organizations who acknowledge their exposure to DV is the largest. As mentioned earlier, the nature of their jobs may qualify them to form a greater awareness of the meaning and forms of DV.

This leads to the conclusion that the actual number or percentages that reflect the actual reality of the extent of women exposure to DV in Jordan may be much greater than what was revealed, and thus there is a need to study this issue extensively and develop plans and policies to combat it.

Regarding the place of residence of the respondents, those who were residing in Amman were the most responsive, with a rate of 62%, followed by Zarqa Governorate, with a rate of 13%, and Irbid, at a rate of 6%. This may indicate that in the large cities in Jordan, that is, Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid, women are more active on social media platforms and have greater freedom compared to smaller cities and towns. This may reflect the unwillingness of many Jordanian families in governorates and villages concerning women's online presence to protect them from DV. Nevertheless, this is considered a limitation to the freedom of these women.

Table 10: Governorate Residency of the Respondents

Governorates	Number	Percentage
Amman	327	62%
Irbid	30	6%
Zarqa	68	13%
Karak	25	5%
Tafila	5	1%
Ma'an	2	0%
Aqaba	8	2%
Jerash	14	3%
Mafraq	7	1%
Balqa	27	5%
Madaba	7	1%
Ajloun	5	1%

Regarding the use of real names or pseudonyms, the questionnaire revealed that the majority of women used their real names on social media, with 92% using their real names, while only 4% used pseudonyms. It is worth mentioning that 4% of the respondents refused to answer this question.

Table 11: The Username of the Respondents

Type	Real Name	Pseudonyms	Unanswered
Number	481	24	20
Percentage	92%	4%	4%

The decline in the use of pseudonyms indicates the spread of a social media culture that began to accept the presence of women. It is worth noting that the first years of the spread of social media witnessed the presence of women using pseudonyms for several reasons, including family rejection of their online presence. In addition, such fake names give them the freedom to express themselves.

The questionnaire included a question asking the reasons for using pseudonyms, and these were their answers:

The customs and traditions of my family do not allow me to create social media accounts under my real name.

I use my pseudo name.

At the husband's request.

Privacy.

To avoid exposure to others.

So that no one follows me.

When I used my real name, female relatives started problem concerning who liked or did not my posts, and so on.

To avoid problems from relatives.

Under my real name, many people started sending me a friend request, and I was embarrassed not to accept them.

So that I can express my opinions more freely and comfortably without threats from my family or those in my circle. In addition, I can avoid harassment from males on social media platforms.

My family is conservative and does not like women having social media accounts.

It was my husband's decision.

Because my account was hacked.

It is pleasant and part of my personality.

The questionnaire also measured women's digital awareness. One question was about their knowledge of how to protect their social media accounts. As Table 12 shows, 52% of respondents knew how to protect their accounts, 13% said that they did not know, and 32% indicated that they probably knew how to protect their accounts. Only 3% of the participants did not answer this question.

Table 12: Knowledge of Security Measure of Social Media Accounts

I know the measure	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered
Number	272	67	166	20
Percentage	52%	13%	32%	3%

The findings indicate that respondents knew how to protect their accounts. However, subsequent questions in the questionnaire revealed a lack of sufficient awareness and knowledge of how to protect their accounts. This was revealed by the following question, "Do you face difficulty in protecting your personal online data?" The answer showed conflicting answers when it was linked to answers to the previous question, as 9% of the respondents said that they faced difficulty, 34% said that they "Sometimes they face difficulty," and 53% said that they did not face any difficulty in protecting their accounts. Only 4% of the participants did not answer this question.

Table 13: Facing Difficulties Securing Social Media Accounts

Facing Problems	Yes	No	Sometimes	Unanswered
Number	48	276	181	20
Percentage	9%	53%	34%	4%

Another question, which can be considered an extension of the previous two questions, delves into women's actual knowledge. It inquired about the method of protecting data. The majority (63%) considered setting strong passwords to be the only way to protect their accounts. This is another indicator that confirms the previous hypothesis. This study highlights the lack of awareness of digital security in Jordanian society, especially among women.

Very few respondents knew about other methods, such as two-step verification, at a rate of 12%, while 8% said that they did not share information about themselves on social media and 6% said that they did not add people they did not know.

Table 14: Measure of Securing Social Media Accounts

Measure	Number	Percentage
I set strong passwords for accounts	343	63%
I activate two-step verification	63	12%
I don't share information about myself on social media	40	8%
I do not add people I do not know to my personal accounts	32	6%
I do not think there is a reason to protect personal data and not publish it	4	1%
I use information to protect my accounts from reliable sources	13	2%
I don't know how to protect my social media accounts	19	4%
No answer	20	4%

The local curricula in schools and universities are devoid of digital safety courses, and community members are unaware of the seriousness of this issue. Therefore, A question in the questionnaire, i.e., "Have you received any training on digital safety?" revealed that the vast majority of respondents did not undergo any training or workshops on digital safety, as 81% of respondents indicated that they had not received any training, 15% had received training, and 4% did not answer this question.

Table 15: Digital Security Training Workshops

Available Digital Security Workshops	Yes	No	Unanswered
Number	80	425	20
Percentage	15%	81%	4%

Analyzing the correlation between the respondents receiving training on digital safety and their exposure to violence, 112 respondents who were exposed to DV did not receive any training on digital safety, while 31 women said that they had received training on digital safety, indicating the importance of increasing the number of those who took such workshops and training programs on digital safety. On the other hand, it is necessary to develop such programs to achieve the goals that can be witnessed in women's digital practices, especially on social media platforms.

Table 16: Correlations between Digital Training Workshops and DV Exposure

Educational Level	Frequency	Yes	No	Maybe
Yes	No	31	40	9
Yes	%	38.8%	50%	11.3%
No	No	112	272	41
No	%	26.4%	64%	9.6%
Unanswered	No	0	0	0
Unanswered	%	0%	0%	0%
Total	No	143	312	50
Total	%	27.2%	59.4%	9.5%

Another question attempting to form a bigger picture of the digital reality of women's use of social media in Jordan concerned the most frequently used applications, of which 58% answered that it is Facebook, 17% said Instagram, 15% used WhatsApp, and the rest were Twitter, Snapchat, and other applications.

This result is consistent with the general trend in Jordan regarding the frequent use of Facebook, as statistics issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority indicate that the number of Internet users in Jordan in 2020 reached 11.2 million users, indicating that Internet users in Jordan reached about 102 percent, compared to a population of 11 million.

Statistics show that Facebook users in Jordan constitute more than 62% of the Kingdom's total population, estimated at more than 10.2 million people.

However, the numbers show that the number of Facebook users in Jordan now constitutes 73% of the total number of Internet users, which has reached more than 8.7 million users.

Thus, among dozens of social media platforms and messaging applications, it is possible to consider Facebook as the most popular and widely used platform in Jordan.

Table 17: The Most Frequently Used Applications

Applications	Number	Percentage
Facebook	291	58%
Instagram	88	17%
SnapChat	9	2%
Twitter	30	6%
Tick tock	6	1%
LinkedIn	4	1%
WhatsApp	74	15%
YouTube	2	0%

Regarding the number of hours that female respondents spent on social media platforms, the majority preferred not to answer this question at a rate of 64%, but 19% of the respondents said that they spent from one to three hours on social media platforms, while 12% said that they spent from three to six hours, and 5% of them said that they spent more than six hours.

Table 18: Number of Hours Spent Using Social Media Accounts

Time Spent	1-3 Hours	3-6 Hours	6+ Hours	Unanswered
Number	100	64	28	333
Percentage	19%	12%	5%	64%

Most questionnaire items were designed to identify the extent of the spread of DVAW culture in Jordan and the social and psychological factors that hinder it. As mentioned earlier, 525 women answered the questionnaire questions, and 28% of the respondents (144 women) acknowledged that they were exposed to DV, while 312 respondents, representing 59%, indicated that they have never been exposed to any violence, and only 9% (49) respondents "may" have been exposed to DV. Additionally, 20 respondents (4 %) preferred not to answer this question.

Regarding those who were exposed to DV, what striking is that 28% of those who said they had been exposed to DV indicated that they had been exposed to one form of DV more than four times, while the same percentage did not answer any question in the questionnaire. In addition, 23% reported that they were exposed to DV once, 13% indicated that they were exposed to violence twice, and 8% were exposed to DV three times.

Women are generally exposed to DV more than once. However, victims may not take action to confront and combat this violence for social reasons. The most important factor is the fear of receiving blame, being exposed to greater problems, or facing social stigma that usually holds women responsible for their exposure to violence. Likewise, women may believe that reporting violence or confronting it will not bring about results or prevent it. Thus, they chose to remain silent. This hypothesis was addressed by using other questions in the questionnaire.

Table 19: Frequency of DV Exposure

Frequency of Exposure	Once	Twice	Thrice	4+ times	Unanswered
Number	44	24	15	55	55
Percentage	23%	13%	8%	28%	28%

Regarding the form of the violation, 62% indicated that the violence was a comment or message containing insults, 17% received pictures or sexual content, 3% indicated that they were stalked online and received unwanted contact via social media, and 2% acknowledged that their photos or personal data were posted online without their consent. One woman received an offer of a sexual relationship, while the other received violent or insulting content for women. Thus, offensive comments accounted for the largest proportion of DV forms experienced by women.

Table 20: Digital Violence Forms

Violation Forms	Number	Percentage
A comment or message that contains insults or insults to you	119	62%
Pictures or symbols that contain sexual symbols or indications	33	17%
Links containing malicious programs to steal accounts	14	7%
Violent or insulting images or symbols to women	1	0%
Posting your photos or personal data without your consent	3	2%
Stalking on all social media accounts	6	3%
Offering a sexual relationship	1	0%
Continuous unwanted contact you via social media	5	3%
Direct blackmail	1	0%
Direct threat	3	2%
I was not exposed to any of the above	4	2%
Other	3	2%

When those who were exposed to DV were asked about the person who committed it, the majority of respondents (64 %) said that they were unknown, 22% said that they only knew him through social media and did not know him in the real world, 5% reported it was from a male colleague at work or school, and 4% said that he was a male friend.

This confirms the hypothesis that social media has given perpetrators more courage to commit violence, especially with victims they do not know. In other words, they consider their presence behind the screen safer and empowering; hence, they increase their ability to commit violence. Indeed, the act of harassment is greater and more severe when images or words that are more obscene or cruel are used. Perpetrators would have thought twice before doing so if the victim was directly in front of them.

On the other hand, perpetrators usually believe that they will escape punishment in a non-deterrent social and legislative environment. In addition, both parties, perpetrators and victims, usually do not know that there is a law that criminalizes this act.

Table 21: The Violators' Identity

Violators' Identity	Number	Percentage
Work or school male/female colleague	9	5%
Male/female friend	7	4%
Male/female relative	9	5%
Unknown	125	64%
Known through social media	43	22%

The respondents' answers to the question concerning how they act when exposed to DV confirm the dominance of the culture of silence and not reporting violence. Of those exposed to DV, 43% reported accounting for the social media platform. This confirms the importance of these applications, paying greater attention to the process of facilitating reporting, as well as setting guidelines. Clear and easy instructions on how to report such incidents are required. In addition, it is encouraged that these social media platforms create new ways to follow up with victims to help them protect their accounts better, providing general advice to overcome the effects of DV. It is worth noting that12% of them said that they did not take any action because they thought there was no need, and 9% did not pay any attention to what happened. However, 10% asked the perpetrators to stop otherwise they filed a complaint, while 4% actually did.

The remaining percentage was distributed among those who told a friend or family member, while only 1% sought psychological support.

Table 22: Actions Taken after Being Exposed to DV

Action taken	Number	Percentage
I reported the account on the app itself	84	43%
I went to the nearest security agency and filed an official complaint	8	4%
I contacted the criminal himself and asked him to stop or threatened to file a complaint	20	10%
I told my mom	6	3%
I told my father	0	0%
I told my sister	6	3%
I told my brother	0	0%
I told my aunt/aunt	0	0%
I told my aunt/uncle	1	1%
I told my male relatives	3	2%
I told my female relatives	2	1%
I told my friends	10	5%
I did not act out of fear of the consequences	4	2%
I did not take any action because there was not necessary	23	12%
I didn't pay any attention to the topic	18	9%
I didn't know what to do	7	4%
I went to seek psychological support	1	1%

The questionnaire also surveyed those who sought help and support following the incident. It was found that 68% of those who were exposed to DV did not seek any help, meaning that they either dealt with the person who committed the violence by themselves or did not do anything. This confirms that most women are afraid to report it primarily for social reasons, the most important of which is their fear of being blamed for what has happened.

Table 23: Seeking Help and Support

Seeking Help	Yes	No	Unanswered
Number	57	132	4
Percentage	30%	68%	2%

When respondents were asked whether they were blamed for their exposure to violence, 70% indicated that they were not, while 30% said that they were blamed. It is worth noting that the number of women who were exposed to DV was small, so this indicator may not be accurate, especially when linked to other indicators that confirm that the main reason for not acknowledging such incidents is the fear of being held responsible, even though they are victims.

Table 24: Victims Blamed for Being Exposed to DV

Were you blamed?	Yes	No
Number	37	88
Percentage	30%	70%

When those who were blamed for DV were asked who blamed them, 16% indicated that they blamed themselves. This indicates the extent to which the victims themselves are affected by this social culture, which directs blame to the victim and does not punish or blame perpetrators. Surprisingly, 4% said that they were blamed for the entities they turned to for help. Apparently, these agencies employ individuals who may not have received adequate training to deal with these cases, and they themselves are affected by this dominant culture.

Table 25: The One Who Blamed the Victims

Person who blamed the victims	Number	Percentage
Father	5	3%
Mother	8	4%
Brother	3	2%
Sister	6	3%
Uncle	0	0%
Aunt	1	0%
Friend	12	6%
Entities they turned to	7	4%
I blamed myself	30	16%
No one blamed me	121	62%

This was followed by a question to investigate their knowledge concerning the entities they can contact when seeking help and support. As Table 26 shows, 66% of respondents knew whom to contact when they were exposed to DV, indicating that these women knew about the Combating Cybercrime Unit. However, they were not encouraged to turn to it: only 4% had actually contacted them.

Table 26: Respondents' Knowledge the Entities to Contact When Exposed to DV

I know the entities	Yes	No
Number	348	177
Percentage	66%	34%

The answers to the previous question were consistent with another question investigating women's knowledge of Jordanian law concerning the punishment of cybercrimes. As shown in Table 27, 92% knew about the law, and confirming the conclusion reached by the earlier question concerning women's knowledge, even though a small number of those sought help and contacted the unit.

Table 27: The Knowledge of Respondents of Jordanian Laws of Digital Crimes

I know the laws	Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered
Number	485	14	23	3
Percentage	92%	3%	4%	1%

The last part of the questionnaire focused on how women behaved after being exposed to violence, especially psychologically. It was found that 45% had become more cautious when using social media, changed the passwords of their accounts, and paid attention to whom they were talking to. However, 33% of respondents did not change anything and continued using their social media accounts as usual.

Of those who were exposed to DV, 6% deleted their accounts after being exposed to DV, 6% stopped communicating with people on social media outside their circle of family and friends, 5% told their friends as a form of warning to them, and 3% published what happened to them on their accounts as a form of warning to other women.

Table 28: Behaviors After Being Exposed to DV

Behavior	Number	Percentage
I have deleted all my social media accounts.	12	6%
I stopped contacting people outside my family circle.	11	6%
I continued to use social media platforms with more caution (I changed passwords, became more attentive to whom I talk to, etc.). I warned others.	86	45%
I have not changed anything.	62	33%
I told my friends about the incident so they would be careful.	9	5%
I posted the incident publicly so other women would be more careful.	5	3%
Other	4	2%

When respondents were asked about their feelings after being violated, 34% suffered from sleep disorders, 15% said that they were afraid, 7% felt symptoms of depression, and the remaining percentages ranged from wanting to avoid social media, feeling isolated, and being angry.

In Jordanian society in general, there is no interest in treating psychological problems, and their effects are usually minimized despite their seriousness. This is also linked to a social aspect that does not welcome turning to psychiatry and stigmatizes those who do so. This may lead to suicide, and also applies to cases in which women are exposed to DV.

Hence, more attention must be paid to providing the necessary psychological support to victims of DV, especially since a significant percentage blame themselves for what happened, which may lead them to harm themselves.

Table 29: Impacts after Being Exposed to DV

Impacts	Number	Percentage
Sleep disorder	66	34%
Fear	28	15%
Fatigue and eating disorders	2	1%
Depression	13	7%
Isolation	3	1%
Avoid social media	9	5%
Self-harm thoughts	0	0%
I didn't feel anything	57	30%
Anger	4	2%
Other	10	5%

When females were asked why they were exposed to violence, 64% explained that they were women. This result is consistent with the results of the majority of research in this field but conflicts with the idea that they hold themselves responsible and blame themselves and their society. This shows societal contradictions, particularly in the Middle East.

A significant percentage of female respondents (approximately 20 %) said that DV was directed against them because of the nature of their work. It is worth noting that 28% of the respondents worked in the field of media and civil society organizations, and this group of women is usually exposed to DV because of their human rights stances on delicate issues. Nevertheless, women in other sectors, such as the academic, medical, and engineering fields, may be exposed to DV because of the nature of their jobs.

Table 30: Reasons for Being Exposed to DV

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Nature of my job	36	20%
My religion	3	2%
The color of my skin	3	2%
Because I'm a woman	113	64%
I don't know	5	3%
Other	17	9%

Cross Tabulations

The following tables show the correlations between the perpetrators and the victims' feelings after being exposed to DV, showing that when the perpetrator is known and has a relationship with the victim, the more negative the feelings the victims will have.

The person who committed the violation * The feeling after being violated

Perpetrator	Frequency	Sleep Disorder	Fear
Work/school male/female colleague	No	4	0
	%	44.4%	0%
Male/female friend	No	5	0
	%	71.4%	0%
Male/female relative	No	4	0
	%	44.4%	0%
Unknown	No	36	21
	%	28.8%	16.8%
Known from social media	No	17	5
	%	40.5%	11.9%
Total	No	66	28
	%	34.4%	14.6%

The person who committed the violation * The feeling after being violated

Perpetrator	Frequency	Fatigue & Eating Disorder	Depression
Work/school male/female colleague	No	0	0
	%	0%	0%
Male/female friend	No	0	0
	%	0%	0%
Male/female relative	No	0	1
	%	0%	11.1%
Unknown	No	2	9
	%	1.6%	7.2%
Known from social media	No	0	3
	%	0%	7.1%
Total	No	2	13
	%	1%	6.8%

The person who committed the violation * The feeling after being violated

Perpetrator	Frequency	Isolation	Not using social media
Work/school male/female colleague	No	0	0
	%	0%	0%
Male/female friend	No	0	0
	%	0%	0%
Male/female relative	No	0	0
	%	0%	0%
Unknown	No	3	5
	%	4%	2.4%
Known from social media	No	0	4
	%	0%	9.5%
Total	No	3	9
	%	1.6%	4.7%

The person who committed the violation * The feeling after being violated

Perpetrator	Frequency	Feeling nothing	Anger
Work/school male/female colleague	No	5	0
	%	55.6%	0%
Male/female friend	No	2	0
	%	28.6%	0%
Male/female relative	No	1	0
	%	11.1%	0%
Unknown	No	41	3
	%	32.8%	2.4%
Known from social media	No	1	8
	%	2.4%	19%
Total	No	57	4
	%	29.7%	2.1%

The person who committed the violation * The feeling after being violated

Perpetrator	Frequency	Other	Total
Work/school male/female colleague	No	0	9
	%	0%	100%
Male/female friend	No	0	7
	%	0%	100%
Male/female relative	No	1	9
	%	11.1%	100%
Unknown	No	5	125
	%	4%	100%
Known from social media	No	4	42
	%	9.5%	100%
Total	No	10	192
	%	5.2%	100%

How to act when exposed to DV * The person who blamed you

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim			
		Father	Mother	Brother	Sister
Report the account to social media platform	No	2	1	1	2
	%	2.4%	1.2%	1.2%	2.4%
File complaint to an agency	No	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	1	2	1	3
	%	0.5%	10%	5%	15%
Told my mother	No	0	1	0	0
	%	0%	16.7%	0%	0%
Told my sister	No	0	1	0	0
	%	0%	16.7%	0%	0%
Told my uncle	No	1	0	0	0
	%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Told my male relative	No	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Told my female relative	No	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Told my friend	No	0	0	1	1
	%	0%	0%	10%	10%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	0	2	0	0
	%	0%	50%	0%	0%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	1	0	0	0
	%	4.3%	0%	0%	0%
I did not care about it	No	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I did not know what to do	No	0	1	0	0
	%	0%	14.3%	0%	0%
I sought help	No	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	No	5	8	3	6
	%	2.6%	4.1%	1.6%	3.1%

How to act when exposed to DV * The person who blamed you

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim		
		Aunt	Friend	Official agencies
Report the account to social media platform	No	0	5	3
	%	0%	6%	3.6%
File complaint to an agency	No	0	0	2
	%	0%	0%	25%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	0	1	0
	%	0%	5%	0%
Told my mother	No	0	1	0
	%	0%	16.7%	0%
Told my sister	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my uncle	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my male relative	No	0	1	0
	%	0%	33.3%	0%
Told my female relative	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my friend	No	1	1	1
	%	10%	10%	10%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	0	1	1
	%	0%	4.3%	4.3%
I did not care about it	No	0	1	0
	%	0%	5.6%	0%
I did not know what to do	No	0	1	0
	%	0%	14.3%	0%
I sought help	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Total	No	1	12	7
	%	0.5%	6.2%	3.6%

How to act when you are abused * The person who blamed you

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim		
		I blamed myself	No one blamed me	Total
Report the account to social media platform	No	17	53	84
	%	20.2%	63.1%	100%
File complaint to an agency	No	2	4	8
	%	25%	50%	100%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	4	8	20
	%	20%	40%	100%
Told my mother	No	0	4	60%
	%	0%	66.7%	100%
Told my sister	No	0	5	6
	%	6%	83.3%	100%
Told my uncle	No	0	0	1
	%	0%	0%	100%
Told my male relative	No	0	2	3
	%	0%	66.7%	100%
Told my female relative	No	0	2	2
	%	0%	100%	100%
Told my friend	No	0	5	10
	%	0%	50%	100%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	0	2	4
	%	0%	50%	100%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	3	17	23
	%	13%	73.9%	100%
I did not care about it	No	1	16	18
	%	5.%	88.9%	100%
I did not know what to do	No	3	2	7
	%	42.9%	28.6%	100%
I sought help	No	0	1	1
	%	0%	100%	100%
Total	No	30	121	193
	%	15.5%	62.7%	100%

How to act when exposed to violation * Feeling after being violated

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim		
		Sleep disorder	Fear	Fatigue and Eating disorder
Report the account to social media platform	No	28	11	2
	%	33.3%	13.1%	2.4%
File complaint to an agency	No	6	0	0
	%	75%	0%	0%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	10	2	0
	%	50%	10%	0%
Told my mother	No	2	2	0
	%	33.3%	33.3%	0%
Told my sister	No	1	0	0
	%	16.7%	0%	0%
Told my uncle	No	1	0	0
	%	100%	0%	0%
Told my male relative	No	2	0	0
	%	66.7%	0%	0%
Told my female relative	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my friend	No	3	2	0
	%	33.3%	22.2%	0%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	3	2	0
	%	75%	25%	0%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	4	6	0
	%	17.4%	26.1%	0%
I did not care about it	No	2	3	0
	%	11.1%	16.7%	0%
I did not know what to do	No	4	1	0
	%	57.1%	14.3%	0%
I sought help	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Total	No	66	28	2
	%	34.4%	14.6%	1%

How to act when exposed to violation * Feeling after being violated

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim		
		Depression	Isolation	Avoiding social media
Report the account to social media platform	No	5	1	5
	%	6%	1.2%	6%
File complaint to an agency	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	2	0	1
	%	10%	0%	5%
Told my mother	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my sister	No	0	0	2
	%	0%	0%	33.3%
Told my uncle	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my male relative	No	1	0	0
	%	33.3%	0%	0%
Told my female relative	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Told my friend	No	1	0	0
	%	11.1%	0%	0%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	1	2	1
	%	4.3%	8.7%	4.3%
I did not care about it	No	1	0	0
	%	5.6%	0%	0%
I did not know what to do	No	2	0	0
	%	28.6%	0%	0%
I sought help	No	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%
Total	No	13	3	9
	%	6.8%	1.6%	4.7%

How to act when exposed to violation * Feeling after being violated

Actions	Frequency	The Person who Blamed the Victim			
		I felt nothing	Anger	Other	Total
Report the account to social media platform	No	25	3	4	84
	%	29.8%	3.6%	4.8%	100%
File complaint to an agency	No	1	0	1	8
	%	12.5%	0%	12.5%	100%
Contact the perpetrator to stop or to file a complaint	No	5	0	0	20
	%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Told my mother	No	2	0	0	6
	%	33.3%	0%	0%	100%
Told my sister	No	3	0	0	6
	%	50%	0%	0%	100%
Told my uncle	No	0	0	0	1
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Told my male relative	No	0	0	0	3
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Told my female relative	No	2	0	0	2
	%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Told my friend	No	1	0	2	0
	%	11.1%	0%	22.2%	100%
I did nothing because of fear of consequences	No	0	0	0	4
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I did nothing because it was not necessary	No	7	0	2	23
	%	30.4%	0%	8.7%	100%
I did not care about it	No	10	1	1	18
	%	55.6%	5.6%	5.6%	100%
I did not know what to do	No	0	0	0	7
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I sought help	No	1	0	0	1
	%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Total	No	57	4	10	192
	%	29.7%	2.1%	5.2%	100%

Digital Violence Against Female Activists and Journalists

To achieve a more in-depth analysis of the social and psychological effects of DVAW in Jordan, this section of the study was devoted to shedding light on the DV experienced by female Jordanian activists and journalists, the main cause of which is the nature of their human rights or media activism.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with three Jordanian women: Hala Ahed, a human rights activist, Rawan Barakat, a disability rights activist, and Nadine Al-Nimri, a journalist specialized in human rights issues. All of them confirmed that the majority of the DV they were exposed to was due to their human rights or professional positions.

Lawyer Hala Ahed says, "The reason for the DV that I was exposed to was because of the nature of my work. It is a result of the societal issues that I defend, and some are related to the rights that pertain to women's issues that do not receive societal acceptance. In addition, some activists and I have used social media to express our opinions and defend their rights. I noticed that there was an attack by some groups of society on us because of some of the campaigns that we organized. There is another category of attacks related to official matters, which are from groups driven and directed by the state, especially on the issue of freedom and rights."

Ahed explained that DV resulting from social media might be in the form of insults, accusations, attacks on honor, and accusations of issues related to finance and funds. This violence occurs through public comments on Twitter or "on Facebook, and even though I do not have a Facebook account, when news about me is reported, I received some comments containing insults."

Nadine Al-Nimri, a journalist, spoke about several situations in which she was exposed to DV while stressing that this was primarily due to the nature of her work, as well as her public activities and ideas.

Al-Nimri says, "The first case of digital bullying I received was via email, about a news story I published in the newspaper I work for. The news content stated that there was a vacancy in the position of acting director in the National Aid Fund. I received many emails from the tribe of the acting director, who holds a position that contains insults and vulgar language. I informed the management of the newspaper I worked for, and here I would like to point out the idea that even though we work in this field, I did not know that I could file a complaint at that time. Although I informed newspaper management, they were not willing to listen to me. I was not able to communicate with the acting director or restore my dignity. I personally was not bothered by bullying in general. Usually, it is because of one of the reports that I published, the way I am dressed, and sometimes because of religious reasons. I am not the only one who experiences DV, there are many people, that's why it was not a psychological or social impact on me."

Al-Nimri adds, "I remember that one time there was an issue related to women's rights, and I had written my opinion on this subject. One person hacked my Facebook page and took some private photos from my page and posted them in a comment within a public group, describing me using vulgar words. However, these instances of DV did not stop me from expressing my opinion. I have two accounts on Facebook, one for my private personal life, and the other is public for expressing my ideas, work, and press reports."

Al-Nimri also says, "There is another situation where there was a news item on one of the websites regarding the Fatwa Department, which prohibits workers in restaurants from serving food during the fasting period. Among the comments, there was one that explains that the Fatwa Department is issuing unnecessary fatwas because there is no work." Based on my journalistic experience, I responded to this comment by saying that this news is not a press release from the Fatwa Department, but rather a response to a question submitted by one of the people to the Fatwa Department. I was surprised by the owner of the website that he posted on Facebook with my first and last names accusing me of fighting the Fatwa Department. Many comments from other users containing insults have been added. My newspaper management contacted the owner of the website, who was known for my newspaper management. Post- and offensive comments have been removed. This situation made me feel a little afraid."

As for Rawan Barakat, she said, "I experienced digital violence many times because of my opinions and ideas regarding freedom, religious rituals, and worshiping practices. One time, I posted on my Facebook page, "Why do we, Muslims, only care about the poor during the month of Ramadan?" One page shared this post, and there were many comments accusing me of infidelity, focusing on me as a non-veiled woman. There was a lot of insults, and I had to create a privacy policy for posts on my page and limit them to friends only."

Barakat points out that she was exposed to two stages of DV. The first stage was when she announced her intention to run elections on Twitter, where one person commented, saying, "You are not fit for this. Do not you see yourself?" referring to her visual disability, as she was blind.

Rawan says, "I took a screenshot and posted it on Facebook to appeal to people's emotions. I was surprised by the volume of comments, especially from women who saw nothing in me except my disability and did not even bother to read about me or my achievements."

Concerning the other stage of DV that Rawan was exposed to, she says, "I was participating in a debate, and a question was asked about teaching sexual education in schools. I have presented my point of view as someone who works in the education sector. I was exposed to a new wave of digital violence, which was not limited to profanity. There were some hurtful comments about my character, such as: "What do you think of making us films?" and "God knew what you would do, so He punished you." This is double DV as a woman with disabilities.

Rawan comments on this incident by saying, "Despite the ugliness of what I was exposed to, I did not resort to the law, because I see that cybercrime law in its current form restricts freedoms. I also believe that whoever commented did it out of ignorance, and not a desire to be violent. When some women started being violent, I knew that their goal was to hurt me personally, so I ignored them. My response emphasized my eligibility and competence in running elections. I conducted television interviews, presented a different electoral program, and conducted all the debates. I do not deny that I was stressed by digital violence. Unfortunately, to this day I'm known as the woman who was bullied during the election period, and never stopped using social media because of digital violence."

The female activists agreed that social media has given some DV perpetrators the courage to insult and curse from behind screens. They pointed out that when they express the same ideas in public seminars that they express through social media and are exposed to DV, they do not have courage for this violence.

They pointed out that before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, all the seminars were in person, and they discussed the same ideas and defended the same rights, but they were never subjected to these insults, although there may be some objections, discussions, and opposing opinions expressed in a respectful and appropriate manner.

Regarding the psychological and social impact of DV, Ahed says that she does not deny the impact of these comments and accusations, but because she has become accustomed to engaging in these rights-related issues, she now possesses the mental fortitude to confront them. "There are certainly psychological effects, but not to the point that prevents me from writing and defending. Regarding these issues, I have begun to avoid reading comments on news that are shared under my name to avoid disturbing myself. At the beginning of my use of social media, I used to Read comments and engage in discussions with some followers and commentators, but due to the scarcity of people who can argue appropriately, I have started to avoid them."

As for the social aspect, Ahed recounted two situations that had a great impact on her, "As I mentioned previously, I do not have a Facebook account as most of my relatives who have accounts there. Once I was subjected to insults and my young son responded to that commentator and insulted him, I told him that he could not do this. I also had to block my young son on Twitter so that he would not see the violence to which I was subjected. Another incident occurred when a female child was killed and the killer was a juvenile. In one of the interviews, I explained that this juvenile should not be executed, but rather try to understand the reason for his actions. Because of the popularity of my opinion, I was subjected to insults, threats, and obscene words from Arab countries, not just from Jordan. People started calling my family and were heaping insults and threats to me and my children. During this period, my father was in constant contact with me because he was afraid of threats to me. This situation bothered me so much because my parents do not have social media accounts, yet they were subjected to psychological abuse, anxiety, and fear because of my opinions."

Regarding the solution to this type of violence, Hala explains that although she believes that the law is a tool for social change, she believes that what we need is the presence of morals and upbringing accordingly. We must have these morals on social media platforms. Therefore, there must be a culture of respecting each other and other opinions, instead of resorting to the law, especially cybercrime law, which is misused in some cases. I do not want to use the law I criticize.

Ahed continued, "On the contrary, I want to encourage those who insulted me to understand my opinions and ideas and to apologize for insulting me, and this is enough for me. Many of the accounts that were attacking me at the beginning were affiliated with a security agency, and they encouraged others to attack me. Therefore, I stress the importance of education on human rights concepts, how to use the internet, how to avoid offending others, and make people aware of the existence of a law for such digital violence."

As for Nadine Al-Nimri, she has never thought about resorting to cybercrime law and usually avoids reading comments and when reads them, she reads them while laughing. "Therefore, I believe that digital violence is a moral problem. Most cases of bullying I experienced were from elites and people who spoke constantly about freedom of expression. How do we expect ordinary people who do not know the basics and principles of using social media to behave?"

Ahed commented on this point by saying, "It is unfortunate that some colleagues and those demanding rights and freedoms are the ones asking you to stop, or not to speak on these issues. In one of the interviews, my young son begged me not to appear on television and not to talk about this or that issue

in order not to be exposed to bullying and obscene comments. Pressure from family and loved ones is considered an extension of the psychological impact of digital violence. Yet, this did not prevent me from continuing to present my opinions and ideas."

Rawan Barakat, who works currently in the educational field, believes that one of the solutions to combat DV is the empowerment and training of teachers, and providing content for children that encourages values and morals. She believes that the solution lies in raising awareness before establishing laws, respecting other opinions, and teaching people how to use social media. Unfortunately, we notice a huge number of jokes that violate women shared on social media by both women and men.

Regarding the question about the change in the rate of violence in recent years due to some activities carried out by organizations that are trying to raise awareness concerning how to act in the event of exposure to such violence, Rawan says that, unfortunately, DV is increasing daily.

In this regard, Hala says that with respect to all the efforts made by some organizations on the issue of digital bullying, it is too early to talk about a significant, tangible impact. It is worth noting that women rights defenders and those who reject DV are more frequently exposed to it. Therefore, not all previous campaigns to eliminate violence against women in general have succeeded. Violence against women exists in workplaces, streets, and social media platforms. Thus, I believe that it is important to provide privacy protection to social media accounts to reduce the extent of DV.

Nadine agrees that the number of cases of DV is increasing and that we need awareness programs to protect against DV and its impacts and consequences, and online discussion and conversation should follow the same rules as those offline.

Recommendations

1. Increase digital safety awareness programs and courses and improve their quality to ensure greater benefits from them, especially those directed to women.

2. Conduct in-depth studies that shed more light on the legal, social, and psychological dimensions of DV in Jordan, especially those directed against women.

3. Design Jordanian curricula for middle school, high school, or university students, includes courses that address digital safety.

4. Provide psychological and legal support to DV victims by offering more support to the few entities that provide this type of service.

5. Implement large-scale media campaigns that highlight the dangers and negative effects of digital violence and provide information on how to protect against it.

6. Build a national network that includes all stakeholders, whose primary goal is cooperation to reduce DV.