



A qualitative study to investigate male victims' experiences of female-perpetrated domestic abuse in Jordan

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Accepted: 21 May 2021

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Abstract

Battered husband syndrome has not been investigated in an Arab context, despite evidence of a significant increase in violence against men by women. This study investigated male victims' experiences of female-perpetrated domestic abuse in Jordan using a qualitative exploratory descriptive approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 33 married men from Amman and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Five themes were identified: 1. causes of domestic abuse against men; 2. types of domestic abuse against men; 3. effects of domestic abuse against men; 4. men's perception of reducing or stopping abuse by their wives; and 5. abusive wives' characteristics. Participants experienced psychological, emotional and verbal abuse, coercive control, emotional neglect, and physical violence with varying degrees of severity, which affected both them and their families. Abusive wives used numerous tactics, including sex, children, isolation, and money to enable abuse. Moreover, clan and traditional thinking, societal structures, and norms led participants to divorce, stay in an abusive relationship, or use violence against their wives. The leading causes of abuse against the husband were wives' neglecting the house, children, appearance, and personal hygiene; wasting money; wives' family interfering in the couple's private marital affairs; the wife's betrayal; and traditional thinking. New perspectives toward domestic abuse in Jordan need to be developed to help us better understand the nature of abuse against men, provide resources and support for them, reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and protect Jordanian families.

Keywords Domestic abuse · Family violence · Intimate partner abuse · Abusive wives · Male victims · Jordan

Introduction

From a gender stereotypes perspective of domestic abuse, men are the primary offenders of violence against women, and intimate partner abuse is an extension of patriarchal dominance (Dutton & White, 2013; Fleming et al., 2015; Myhill, 2017; Perryman & Appleton, 2016; Walker et al., 2020). Evidence confirms that men perpetrate abuse more frequently than women, and women face higher rates of repeated severe abuse, such as murder, assault, or rape (Fleming et al., 2015; Lysova et al., 2019; Swan et al., 2008; Walby & Towers, 2017). However, men also experience violence and abuse by women (Myhill, 2015; Myhill, 2017). The prevalence of domestic abuse perpetrated by women is difficult to ignore (Joseph-Edwards & Wallace, 2020) and is related to abuse, control, power, escaping dangerous situations, and getting

help (Walby & Towers, 2018). Domestic abuse severity, seriousness, and frequency vary between genders (Walby & Towers, 2018).

Researchers' perspectives differ regarding the primary factors they assign to explain causes of intimate partner violence (IPV) for both wives and husbands. Gautam and Jeong (2019) found that IPV against women was associated with husband-related factors more than women's empowerment indicators. Husbands engaged in violent behavior against their wives because of: husbands' frequent drunkenness, women's frequent fear of their husbands, and husbands exhibiting marital control behavior. Moreover, the sociocultural differences in family backgrounds, financial problems, lack of harmony and understanding between spouses, jealousy, and mental disorders can escalate violence between spouses (Abd Aziz et al., 2018). Although Deshpande (2019) found that socioeconomic status and caste were not significantly associated with violence against men, risk factors for bidirectional physical violence included an earning spouse with a higher level of education, and risk factors for violence against husbands included lower income, nuclear family setup, and alcohol

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use. Also, Deshpande (2019) asserted that financial constraints related to the husband's poor income and/or the wife having a higher income, combined with a lack of anger management skills, workplace stress, and frustration and anger related to expectations left unfulfilled, can lead individuals to indulge in violent behavior.

Research has shown that most female perpetrators of IPV were victims themselves (Tower & Fernandez, 2008; Walker, 1984); therefore, revenge against past abuse, anger, and self-defense are common reasons for their violence (Bair-Merritt et al., 2010; Dasgupta, 2002; Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999; Lupri & Grandin, 2009; Stuart et al., 2006; Swan et al., 2008). They use physical aggression to escape, stop the abuse (Miller, 2001), or secure temporary command over an immediate situation. However, women cannot control violence against themselves by being violent. Moreover, if they fail to achieve their goals, they are faced with further violence from their partner (Dasgupta, 2002). The common motivators of women's violent behavior in intimate relationships are fear, defense of children, control, and retribution for real or perceived wrongdoing (Swan et al., 2008). Additionally, poor emotional regulation, provocation by their partner (Stuart et al., 2006), or their partners' insensitivity to their needs (Fiebert & Gonzalez, 1997) may also lead to violent behavior. Some common characteristics among abusive wives are childhood trauma, emotional abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, physical neglect, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Myhill, 2015).

Men use violence to achieve long-term authority over their wives (Dasgupta, 2002). Their abusive characteristics may be related to personality disorders, alcoholism, depressive symptoms, antisocial personality characteristics, and financial stress (Peek-Asa et al., 2005). Additionally, masculinity norms and social constructions are the root cause of most physical violence perpetrated by men against women and other men (Fleming et al., 2015).

Prior literature suggests that male victims experience physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal forms of IPV (Walker et al., 2020). They also experience coercive control and manipulative behaviors through gendered stereotypes of abuse, use of children, and isolation (Morgan & Wells, 2016). Husbands of abusive wives have a distinct behavioral and emotional reaction to their violent marriages. They feel embarrassed (Steinmetz, 1977), emasculated, and marginalized, and they tend to hide their abuse, or refrain from asking for support. A lack of awareness regarding men as victims of domestic abuse discourages them from asking for support (Wright, 2016). In addition, support is either nonexistent or of poor quality (Lambert, 2014). Furthermore, men do not report their victimization because they face disbelief, surprise, doubt (Migliaccio, 2001), mockery, ridicule, and indifference; they may also face arrest (Hogan, 2016; Walker et al., 2020). These responses, especially from the police, courts, and other

support services, expose abused men to secondary abusive experiences related to being treated like perpetrators (Corbally, 2015; Hogan, 2016; McCarrick et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2020).

Abused men's reactions often lead to prolonged abuse (Migliaccio, 2001), and denial leads them to redefine the situation to disparage the pain, hurt, and ordeal they experience. In the long run, abuse has significant detrimental effects on men's health and well-being (Allen-Collinson, 2011). According to the battered husband syndrome, many men cannot disclose the abuse or they deny being abused because of the pressure on them to assert control over women (Wright, 2016). This pressure arises from their perceived lack of masculinity; therefore, they struggle to maintain a standard of ideal masculinity and socially-constructed characteristics. Society expects men to be self-reliant, independent, leaders, and stronger and more assertive than women (Lupri & Grandin, 2009; Migliaccio, 2001; Shehan, 2018; Wright, 2016). Therefore, men do not react to the abuse because of the social stigma of hitting a woman and other denigrations of their masculinity. Men beat their wives to make the wives feel guilty (Steinmetz, 1977), but they stay in an abusive relationship because of their financial responsibility toward the family, to retain the comforts of home, and because they realize that the abusive wife may get custody of the children (Steinmetz, 1977). In this context, Lupri and Grandin (2009) discussed IPV's direct and indirect consequences on male victims, which include physical injuries that require medical attention and treatment. Moreover, they often feel confused, frustrated, or hurt and manifest psychological symptoms, such as suicidal ideation and depression (Randle & Graham, 2011). While Hines and Douglas (2011) pointed out symptoms of PTSD in men who sustained IPV, Lysova et al. (2019) found no significant difference between men and women in the long-term effects of spousal trauma, such as PTSD-related symptoms.

Domestic Violence against Men: Theoretical Framework

There are multiple broad theoretical approaches to interpreting the nature and causes of domestic violence, which implicitly overlap in their essential assumptions. The most appropriate of these approaches include feminist theory and gender symmetry, Johnson and Leone (2005) perspective on male violence, and observational learning.

According to the feminist perspective, patriarchal societies socialize boys to adopt behaviors that reflect being male and a real man, and teach them that they are innately socially superior to females. Boys thereby learn the ideals of masculinity, which assert that they should be violent, cruel, fearless, and emotionless, and should make the decisions at home, assert power and authority, be the primary breadwinners, and

exercise control over women. Conversely, girls are socialized to be submissive and obedient to men, to accept that they are inferior to and weaker than men, and that violent behavior does not correspond to the feminine nature, which asserts that women be totally dependent on men for decision-making and spending (Henslin, 1999; Light, 2017; Ram et al., 2014). These gender stereotypes produce prejudices and gendered asymmetries, and establish men's coercive control practices, which foster cultural acceptance of violence that permits abuse of women. These are significant factors that contribute to an environment conducive to domestic violence (Abd Aziz et al., 2018; Kurz, 1989; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1993; Stark, 2010). Coercive control is considered an essential aspect of Johnson's intimate terrorism perspective, where intimate (or patriarchal) terrorism refers to domestic violence and spousal abuse that employs physical and/or sexual violence with diverse control strategies (e.g., emotional abuse, humiliation) used by the perpetrator to exert general control over his partner (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Lien and Lorentzen (2019) argued that mutual violent control and resistance in intimate relationships may hinder acceptance of women perpetrating violence against men. Men may use violence and physical superiority against their partners, not to control them, but to avoid being exposed to violence; however, this may be interpreted as violent resistance, leading to decisions that favor women.

The socially dominant gender construction that subordinates women and imposes masculinity ideals on men (e.g., expectations, perceptions, and behaviors that are considered "manly") victimize both women and men. When men do not adhere to masculine ideals, they are socially stigmatized and demeaned (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Greene, 2018). Thus, male gender stereotypes related to cruelty and physical strength emerge in the form of violent reactions toward their partners when their masculinity is threatened by changing gender roles, emotional suppression, and domination. Similarly, women are characterized by physical weakness, emotions, and sensitivity, and are not allowed to respond violently; therefore, they perceive their abusive behaviors as violating the socially-prescribed gender role and readily confess their transgressions (Dasgupta, 2002). This may facilitate the court, police, and society disbelief regarding men as victims of female-perpetrated domestic abuse, allowing women to exploit gendered stereotypes of violence to justify their use of violence toward men (Morgan & Wells, 2016). It is important to consider the relational contexts in which violence takes place, and avoid viewing behaviors as separate from the circumstances because that leads to a false understanding (Dasgupta, 2002). Violence in marital relationships is a result of couples' dynamics; both husband and wife can contribute to domestic violence through argumentation, humiliation, manipulation, and blackmail (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019; Walby & Towers, 2018).

Observational learning theory interprets people's imitation of violent behaviors as a modeling process that includes attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Modeling is related to violent behavior because it drives mimicry of the observed behavior in the surrounding environment. The learner observes the behavior, internalizes it, stores it in memory along with the motor-skills required to mimic the behavior, and then retrieves it when engaging in similar behavior, thereby converting the mental representation into a physical task (Swanson, 2015). American psychologist Albert Bandura confirmed that individuals can learn behavior by observing it in a social model, such as a parent or friends, learning both desirable and undesirable behavior and acquiring new responses through observational learning of poor or good behavior (Shettleworth, 2010). Adult males engaged in aggressive acts were more likely to be modeled by children (Rakovec-Felser, 2014), who repeated the violent acts, reflecting a "cycle of violence," which refers to violent behavior learned as a child and then repeated as an adult in a perceived cycle (Fagan, 2005). Children who witness or experience domestic violence are more likely to imitate violent behaviors and believe that violent behavior is acceptable, thereby becoming a perpetrator or a victim (Reiss et al., 1993). Violence provokes more violence and can be passed down through generations. Rakovec-Felser (2014) indicated that when a father achieves his goals through violent behavior toward his wife and sons, the sons are more likely to repeat this violent behavior with their siblings, and with their partners in the future.

Study Problem

In Jordan, violence against women has markedly increased, including economic, psychological, emotional, and physical abuse and harassment (Alsawalqa, 2020), which has led to increasing demands to amend legislation related to women's rights. The *Sisterhood Is Global Institute* (SIGI-Jordan) highlighted that 17 women were murdered in 2020—nearly reaching the number of crimes in the previous year (2019) and double the number of crimes in 2018. Moreover, 26% of wives experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by their husbands (Amman Net, and Sigi-Jordan Net, 2020). In contrast, the Jordan Population and Family Health Survey (2017–2018) found that 1.4% of husbands (age 15–59 years) experienced physical violence from their wives (Department of Statistics, 2018). The Sharia's Lawyers Association/Jordan indicated that some husbands are reluctant to disclose that they are victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, lawyer Abdel Halim Al-Ashoush, President of the Sharia's Lawyers Association, reported cases of discord and dispute before the Sharia courts, where husbands experiencing violence from their wives demanded separation (Kamal, 2020).

According to Al-Ashoush, violence against husbands is not limited to physical harm, but includes other harm, such as withholding a husband's salary and restricting his spending. In some cases, husbands are defrauded and forced to give up house or apartment ownership to their wives, who then file an incapability (in Arabic: "Koleaa") case against him. Al-Ashoush reported that he was a plaintiff lawyer in cases where husbands filed lawsuits against their wives who engaged in assault, aggravation, and violence against them. These cases included beating the husband with an ashtray, broom, or makeup tools, and some included biting or beating with a shoe, leaving wounds and scars on the victim's body. Al-Ashoush emphasized that the Jordanian legislature suffers from deficiencies regarding the rules of proof because of men's and women's different legal positions. According to the Jordanian Penal Code, husbands must present more evidence when their wives are the abusers. The Jordanian Penal Code does not equate a husband's violence against his wife with the wife's violence against her husband; the laws are stricter in the case of the husband's violence (Kamal, 2020). Therefore, this study endeavors to draw readers' attention to the causative factors and types of domestic violence wives perpetrate on their husbands. The study further explains the phenomenon's effects on male victims and their families and male victims' perceptions regarding stopping the abuse to improve their marriages.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory descriptive design to facilitate a detailed and deep understanding of male victims' experience of female-perpetrated domestic abuse (McCarrick et al., 2016; Morgan & Wells, 2016; Wallace et al., 2019). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), used in this study, provided insight into the reasons for and types of domestic abuse against men, which allowed researchers to understand participants' real-life experiences. IPA focuses on understanding research participants' lived experience and perception of a particular object or event (Eatough & Smith, 1991), allowing participants to tell their stories how they see fit, without misrepresentation and fear (Alase, 2017).

Participants and Data Collection

A purposive sampling technique was used to select male participants exposed to domestic violence by their wives in Amman City, Jordan. It was challenging to find willing participants from our target group because of their fear of social stigma, shame, and shyness. Nevertheless, participants

showed great admiration for the study subject and thanked the researchers, because they usually suffer in silence without anyone hearing them out or believing them. We recruited 33 participants age 29 to 60 years who were abused by their wives. They indicated their willingness to participate, provided that their privacy was preserved and there were no audio recordings of their interviews. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide formulated by the researcher, which was based on recent studies of IPV and domestic violence against men. Additionally, information obtained from husbands during a study on marriage burnout and violence against women (S1 Appendix) was used to create the guide.

We pretested the interview guide through initial interviews with 15 married men from our target group to check its reliability, make the questions clearer, and reduce ambiguity. Furthermore, the pretest sought to identify and eliminate embarrassing questions that may cause participants to terminate the interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Arabic, transcribed, translated into English, then presented to a translation professor to ensure that participants' meanings were conveyed without distortion. Sample interview questions included: 1. Can you describe the abuse you face from your wife?; 2. Can you perceive the reasons for abuse?; 3. Describe how this abuse affects you; 4. Describe ways you think you could stop the abuse and improve your marital life; 5. Can you describe how you feel during and after the abuse?

Data were collected from January to February, 2021. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, the venue and time were selected based on participants' availability, and each interview lasted between one and two hours. Considering the subject's sensitive nature, we employed a flexible research design that allowed for changes during the research and prolonged interactions. This design allowed us to conduct confidential phone interviews with 21 participants, as requested. However, participants refused audio recording or handwritten responses; therefore, we manually transcribed the interviews, which the participants reviewed for accuracy. We used data coding to facilitate transcript reading and sorting. The researcher's strong background in domestic abuse against men and their long history of studying emotional burnout, marriage burnout, and violence/abuse in married women, coupled with their experience in qualitative research in clinical sociology, helped to support the reliability and accuracy of this study and allowed primary data collection on problems faced by husbands, which they reported of their own free will (S2 Appendix).

Data Analysis

Based on IPA, this study employed an iterative process that was cyclically distilled and refined for data collection and analysis, keeping with the grounded approach to qualitative content analysis. We used secondary coding to enhance the

study's rigor and better understand the parts and the whole and how they were connected. To assess the findings' credibility, we employed the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research to analyze the qualitative research process in terms of familiarization with the data, generating and assessing the coding process, selecting significant sections from participant statements, deductively deriving and identifying themes on the basis of theoretical constructs, using an interview guide and theory-derived categories for the initial list of a priori themes for data coding, and applying constant comparison methods to texts (Lapadat, 2010). To ensure reliability and a transparent research process, substantial discussion was conducted among researchers and participants. Also, to reach agreement among two sociology professors and a psychology professor regarding the results of the analysis process (McDonald & Forte, 2019), we obtained participant feedback regarding the information from the handwritten interviews and the research findings. This method adds validity to our interpretations by ensuring that participants' meanings and perspectives are represented without being influenced by our agenda and knowledge (Tong et al., 2007). We used direct quotes from the transcripts to support the findings; the themes were discussed and illustrated using these quotes.

Ethical Considerations

The [blinded for review] Institutional Review Board granted ethical approval for this study. Participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential and there would be no adverse consequences if they chose to withdraw from the study. All participants provided verbal informed consent during the interview; written informed consent was not obtained to protect participants' privacy, given the sensitivity of the study topic. Moreover, participants were identified with codes to ensure anonymity. A psychologist screened questions that might cause any form of trauma, pressure, or exhaustion in participants.

Results

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

As shown in Table 1, most participants were between 40 and 54 years old and BA graduates, and 69.7% were employed full-time. The duration of their marital relationships ranged from 11 to 24 years and 66.7% reported a traditional marriage. About 49% of participants' wives completed a bachelor's degree; 27.3% of wives were employed full-time; 33.3% (11) of wives' ranged from age 40 to 44; and 33.3% reported that they had four children.

Table 1 Participant demographic characteristics $N = 33$

Variables	Frequency/percentage
Age (years)	N. (%)
29	1 (3.0%)
34	1 (3.0%)
35–39	4 (12.1%)
40–44	10 (30.3%)
45–49	7 (21.2%)
50–54	7 (21.2%)
55–60	3 (9.1%)
Marriage Motivations	
Love marriage	11 (33.3%)
Traditional marriage	22 (66.7%)
Marriage Length	
11–14	7 (21.2%)
15–19	8 (24.2%)
20–24	9 (27.3%)
Education/Husband	
Part of high school	1 (3.0%)
High school	10 (30.3%)
College diploma	2 (6.1%)
BA	15 (6.7%)
Postgraduate	5 (15.2)
Marital Status	
Married	26 (78.8%)
Divorced	4 (12.1%)
Widow/widower	2 (6.1%)
Separated	1 (3.0%)
Employment	
Unemployed	3 (9.1%)
Employed part-time	7 (21.2%)
Employed full-time	23 (69.7%)
Number of Children	
One	1 (3.0%)
Two	8 (24.2%)
Three	7 (21.2%)
Four	11 (33.3%)
Six	6 (18.2%)
Age (years)/Wife	
21	1 (3.0%)
25–29	3 (9.1%)
30–34	2 (6.1%)
35–39	10 (30.3%)
40–44	11 (33.3%)
45–49	5 (15.2)
55–60	1 (3.0%)
Education/Wife	
Part of high school	1 (3.0%)
High school	10 (30.3%)
College diploma	4 (12.1%)
BA	16 (48.5)
Postgraduate	2 (6.1)
Employment/Wife	
Unemployed	20 (60.6)
Employed part-time	3 (9.1)
Employed full-time	9 (27.3)
Retired	1 (3.0%)

Themes

The results were divided according to the five research questions, which concerned the men's accounts of their experiences of abuse by their wives. Five themes

emerged from the analysis: 1. causes of domestic abuse against men; 2. types of domestic abuse against men; 3. effects of domestic abuse against men; 4. men's perception of reducing or stopping abuse by their wives; and 5. characteristics of abusive wives/unexpected results. As shown in Table 2, each main theme included a set of subthemes.

Theme 1. Causes of Domestic Abuse against Husbands

Most participants stated that economic problems (poverty, insufficient salary, wives' wasting money, not considering the negative economic effects of COVID-19 on their husbands' work, and unnecessary requirements from blind imitation of

Table 2 Theme summary

Theme	Subthemes	Participant quotes
Causes of domestic abuse against men	poverty, insufficient salary	... I cannot pay for that ... [AP 12]. ... I do not understand how she dared to withdraw the last 50 dinars meant for home budget expenses... [AP 20].
	unnecessary requirements due to the blind imitation of others	... I do not have enough money for my son's school fees, and she is still demanding that he should be transferred to a new, expensive school to match her friend's status, whose husband is financially able ... [AP 16].
	wives' wasting money	... She chose our living room chairs, I bought it despite financial pressure ... After two months, she got rid of them because she no longer liked them ... They were expensive ... [AP 31].
	asking their wives not to neglect the house and children	... To care for me and pay attention to home and children care... [AP 24].
	wives' poor personal hygiene	... Her body odors are disgusting, we have water and shampoo... [AP 15].
	asking their wives to care for their appearance	... I have always requested her to try to improve her appearance; makeup, do her hair, use perfume.... oh my God... [AP 30].
	marital infidelity	It is unreasonable... An unfaithful woman... [AP 14].
	wife's parents interfering in their married life	... I have to obtain permission from my mother-in-law to have sexual intercourse with my wife. [AP 11].
Types of domestic abuse against men by their wives	to dominate and control via money and sex	...I know that she does this intentionally... So as not to have sexual intercourse ... To prove that she is in control ... [AP 25]. ... She always reminds me that she can live without me, and I cannot live without her ... "I have a salary," she said... [AP 6].
	psychological and emotional abuse	.. she said with a sarcastic smile, "Did you lose it again? You deserve that. You do not learn nor understand..." [AP 12]. ... She tries to catch me out with inconsistencies to show that I am lying... [AP 10]. ... She told me that I am sexually unattractive... [AP 18].
	verbal abuse	... Verbally attacks my personality ... [AP 17]. ... abusive language ... skeptical ... [AP 9].
	emotional neglect	... No commiseration or empathy when I am sad or worried. She did not relieve me when I was in a financial crisis ... She was not interested ... Apathy ... On the contrary, she made the matter worse ... [AP 16].
	physical violence	She beat me with a hairbrush. It is painful ... Left a redness on my shoulder ... As hard as a sting ... [AP 30]. ... I am... Death is more merciful... [AP 33].
Effects of domestic abuse on men	effects on the male victims' physical, psychological, mental, and emotional health	... Depressed, it is the despair of my life ... [AP 25]. ... It was painful ... I had a tantrum ... I still have tantrums ... [AP 12]. ... I felt a lot of pain and heat in my eyes ... [AP 30].
	effects on the family and children	... My 14-year-old son is also depressed ... [AP 25]. ...My family is homeless ... It destroyed my children's future ... [AP 14].
Men's perception of reducing/or stopping the abuse	This theme assessed the attitudes of men toward domestic abuse and factors affecting abuse-supportive attitudes	... I do not mean that all clan beliefs are false; but, it makes a massive difference if my belief goes against the dominant thinking of my clan [AP, 29]. ... You know our society's view of the divorced ... [AP 5]. ... We put clan considerations ahead of logical thought... clan thinking before truth ... [AP 8].
Characteristics of abusive wives/unexpected results	Interesting results: Men seemed to rationalize their wives' abuse with different characteristics and incidents that may have contributed to their violent behavior	...tell me that her mother used to beat her a lot and torment her by burning her with a match... She was living a miserable life ... [AP 14]. ... Her father ... Always drunk ... He hit her with his belt ... [AP 29].

others), asking their wives not to neglect the house and children, or to care for their appearance were the leading causes of their abusive behavior. Some participants attributed their unfulfilled sexual needs to their wives' neglect, refusing sex because they lacked emotions, or as a dominant behavior to achieve their goals. A few participants reported that their wives' poor personal hygiene prevented them from having sexual intercourse. One of the participants reported that his wife's infidelity and lack of loyalty were the reason for escalating violence between them. Furthermore, wives who earned more than their husbands persistently disrespected and disobeyed their husbands, making them feel worthless and dominating them through money and sex. The following quotes illustrate the causes of abuse:

... Do not tell me this is self-defense. Please Dr. ... It is unreasonable... An unfaithful woman ... She does not deserve to be a mother or wife ... She is full of pride and insolence, and my aggression is repelled by her more violent aggression... [AP 14].

... I do not have enough money for my son's school fees, and she is still demanding that he should be transferred to a new, expensive school to match her friend's status, whose husband is financially able ... [AP 16].

... She chose our living room chairs, I bought it despite financial pressure ... After two months, she got rid of them because she no longer liked them ... They were expensive ... [AP 31].

... I have always requested her to try to improve her appearance; makeup, do her hair, use perfume. Really, I like that.... She does not care. One day, I was surprised that she gave the makeup box that I bought for her to her sister. She said she did not need a makeup box, but I was the one in need, oh my God... [AP 30].

... I am married to her mother, not to her (cynicism) [AP 23].

... Are you serious? How? ... Her body odors are disgusting; I can no longer stand it ... By the way, we have water and shampoo... [AP 15].

... I have to obtain permission from my mother-in-law to have sexual intercourse with my wife ... (Jeer, indicates the instigation of his mother-in-law). [AP 11].

...She was wearing it to sleep ... My special military underwear ("Al-Harari" in Arabic: Men's underwear, designed to keep warm in winter). Oh my God (He hits his hand on his face). I really live with a man. Dr. please ... What allurements and longings are you talking about ... This is pure fabrication against men ... The usual clichés for women ... she can be the most beautiful woman with clothes that are worth 5 JD (he meant cost) ... Then, she begins the argument and conflict. [AP 10].

... She always reminds me that she can live without me, and I cannot live without her ... "I have a salary," she said ... (In Arabic: ratbi Ganani Anak) ... [AP 6].

... She is temperamental, arrogant, does not admit that she is wrong. Her opinion is the one that must always be correct ... She does not accept advice... [AP 8].

... Very spiteful ... She got angry because I invited my sister and her husband to lunch ... They were returning from Saudi Arabia ... It was not planned ... The blame (in Arabic: Nag) and comparisons started ... The dispute intensified ... Her voice rose during the discussion My wife's jealousy is a killer (description of intensity) ... [AP 29].

...When I ask her not to post seductive photos of herself on social media pages, and that this is unacceptable ... Blind imitation of her friends ... Her behavior is reckless... [AP 33].

...When I disconnected the Internet from home ... I wanted her to care for me and pay attention ... to care for the home and children...Social media is her life ... [AP 24].

"Alliance*" she wore it for 24 hours, in the street, at home, and while shopping, transfer the kids to school and visiting relatives and friends ... She is careless... Claims that it is a process without considering what others will say about me if she goes out like this ... Stigmatized because of it ... And comments poured in on us. The mockery of my family and friends [AP 17].

*Alliance is a simple, bright-colored dress that a Muslim woman wears to perform prayers in her home. It must remain pure and clean, and it is not appropriate to wear it outside the home. However, many women wear it outside while performing some of their daily activities.

Theme 2. Types of Domestic Abuse against Men by their Wives

All participants experienced some form of *psychological/emotional and verbal abuse*, including ridicule, coercion, insults, sarcasm, slander, negative critical comments, rebuking, labeling, harassment, excessive yelling, harsh words, verbal threats, frequent unfair blame, and abuse of their masculinity; these words affected their self-confidence, fostering feelings of helplessness and frustration. These abuses were persistent, repetitive, and severe.

Some participants experienced *emotional neglect*, where their wives were intentionally less attentive and responsive to their emotional needs. The wives did not notice or attend to their husbands' feelings, nor did they care, appreciate, sympathize, or empathize with them. In contrast, participants reported that the emotional neglect by their wives was inadvertent. While they tried to get their wives' attention, explicitly or

indirectly, their wives either dismissed their concerns or blamed and rebuked them because they considered that the husbands were responsible for their neglect. A few wives justified their behavior as spontaneous or a joke that will not be repeated; unfortunately, it was repeated. A few participants faced *physical violence*. They were beaten with ashtrays, brooms, screwdrivers, makeup tools, hairbrushes, and shoes. Some husbands were also spat at, kicked, and scratched, causing physical injuries. The following quotes illustrate these types of abuse:

... *She beat me with a hairbrush. It is painful ... Left a redness on my shoulder ... As hard as a sting ...* [AP 30].

... *I tried to compensate for the loss of money. She did not stop blaming and rebuking me (in Arabic: Radeh, Nag) ... I borrowed some money ... To start a small project as a fresh, new start ... She did not stop ... Underestimated the project ... The project's merchandise was delayed for a month due to public safety instructions ... Oh, you do not know Dr., what she said with a sarcastic smile, "Did you lose it again? You deserve that. You do not learn nor understand." (In Arabic: tesatahil karjak) ...* [AP 12].

She insults my family ... She always compared our families' class; they are higher than my family (in Arabic: eilatak nawar, sharashih, alhaqu eali' iili tanazalat limustawak (... [AP 5].

... *She tries to catch me out with inconsistencies to show that I am lying...* [AP 10].

... *She told me that I am sexually unattractive...* [AP 18].

... *She talks me into doing things that make me feel bad ...* [AP 33].

... *She says things to hurt me out of spite ...* [AP 2].

... *She has insulted me by telling me that I am incompetent ...* [AP 20].

... *She threatens me verbally ... Warns me that if I keep doing something, violence will follow ... (In Arabic: basitah, bawirjika, wallah litashawfa, wallah 'la'aqalibalak albayt jahanum, wallah 'li'asam biadanak)...* [AP 1].

... *Really, that is enough. She always compares me unfavorably to other spouses ...* [AP 13].

... *I prevented her from visiting her neighbor ... She spat on my face. She is always outside the house ... Always with her neighbors. The house, I, and the children are her last concern. (In Arabic: Beit Sheqaa to Beit Reqaa)* [AP 33].

... *She beat me with a screwdriver. Look Dr., ... She caused that ...* [AP 29]

... *Not sensitive to me during sex ...* [AP 31].

... *Damages things in our home ... TV, mobile, vacuum cleaner... Does it intentionally ... Not only that, she threatens to break things that are valuable to me ...* [AP 4].

... *I am pressured to have sex when I do not want to ...* [AP 15].

... *Verbally attacks my personality ...* [AP 17].

... *She always harasses me over the telephone ... Checks up on me ...* [AP 3].

... *I have to do things so that she does not get jealous ... Acts jealous ... Acts like a detective ... She swears at me ...* [AP 25].

... *Tries to control when I spend my time with my friends ...* [AP 18].

... *Keeps me from spending time doing the things I enjoy ...* [AP 6]

... *Her father was very conservative. Everything was forbidden ... He was cruel ... He hit her for no reason ... Pulling her hair ... Spitting ... abusive language ... Skeptical ...* [AP 9].

... *Threatens to break things that are valuable to me. She intentionally burns food ...* [AP 8].

... *Neglects the cleanliness of her home... And what is even stranger is that she helps her neighbor clean their house* [AP 24].

... *She hit me from behind with a broom. Twice, she kicked me on my leg while I was sitting...* [AP 14].

... *She yells excessively, even for the most trivial reasons... You cannot argue with her without shouting ... Pessimistic ... It always frustrates me ... Moody ... Her nails are sharp; she scratched my hand ...* [AP 11].

... *No commiseration or empathy when I am sad or worried. She did not relieve me when I was in a financial crisis ... She was not interested ... Apathy ... On the contrary, she made the matter worse ...* [AP 16].

... *I noticed her repeat comments and some words that I remember saying to some other people. After the controversy, I discovered that she had put in place a program to record and transfer all my WhatsApp messages and phone calls to her phone. She linked her phone to my phone ... Can you imagine Dr.?...* [AP 9].

Theme 3. Effects of Domestic Abuse on Men

This theme has two subthemes: effects on male victims' physical, psychological, mental, and emotional health, and effects on the family and children.

Effects on Male Victims' Physical, Psychological, Mental, and Emotional Health According to most participants, injuries from physical violence were minor and rarely severe,

but they stated that physical violence caused severe pain and left scars, wounds, abrasions, bruising, and redness. A few participants required medical attention and treatment for minor head trauma or a swollen finger. Regardless of the severity of the injury, all participants indicated that physical abuse by a woman had severe adverse psychological effects because they regarded it as an abuse of their identity, masculinity, and dignity. Psychological symptoms included confusion, disappointment, feelings of hurt, depression, anxiety, loneliness, isolation, marginalization and exclusion, anger, shame, and inferiority. They also had insomnia, weight loss, loss of appetite, breathlessness, and severe headaches; some became smokers (particularly shisha/hookah; *in Arabic: al'arqila*), or chain smokers. Three of the participants indicated that they needed medical advice and treatment for symptoms of paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea, which occurred after a few hours of sleep, and nine participants complained of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Moreover, one participant was diagnosed with PTSD, and reported recovering within nine months. In addition, a few participants stated that they resorted to drinking to deal with their psychological pain.

... I feel lonely... [AP 18].

... Frankly, it is a despicable feeling ... I hoped to die instead of feeling it ... Death is more merciful... [AP 33].

... I am depressed, it is the despair of my life ... [AP 25].

... I tried a lot to go to restaurants and order various kinds of delicious food ... I was not able to eat ... [AP 31].

...I felt suffocated ... As if I was drowning ... [AP 33].

...I wanted to scream at the top of my voice ... My eyes filled with tears ... I could not cry. Believe me, Dr., I was in desperate need, but I could not... [AP 20].

... Do not underestimate it ... It was painful ... I had a tantrum ... I still have tantrums ... [AP 12].

...I stay in bed, awake, until the hours of dawn ... I turn a lot ... I depend a lot on the hypnotist... [AP 11].

...I no longer go to smoke the shisha/nargileh in the cafés (coffeehouse) ... It is expensive ... I bought a special shisha to smoke at home ... [AP 17].

...Very frustrated ... Hopeless case ... [AP 15].

... I felt inferior and humiliated ... [AP 5].

... I'm a fool ... An idiot ... (In Arabic: *humaar baeid ean dukturh*) ... [AP 9].

... At some point in time, I had many nightmares ... I could not continue daily activities without visiting the psychiatrist ... [AP 14].

... A constant feeling of bloating is a stressful thing ... Painful ... And it often tones me down, and I lose my focus or feelings of joy... [AP 18].

... I still have severe bruises on my back ... My finger remained bandaged for a month, and I could not move it ... [AP 14].

... I felt a lot of pain and heat in my eyes ... [AP 30].

... My prestige ... dignity... My manhood is lost ... Look here (he pointed to the left side of his head) ... The wound is still present ... [AP 29].

Effects on the Family and Children Most participants indicated that their wives' abuse and violence destroyed their family environment, left them homeless, and affected their children. Most also reported that the abuse against them caused their children to suffer from physical, psychological, and emotional symptoms, including headaches, diarrhea, onychophagia, anxiety, depression, fear, self-blame, shame, isolation, low self-esteem, aggression, and lack of empathy for others. Moreover, some participants reported that their children experienced feelings of helplessness, changes in appetite, bed-wetting, and sleep disturbances.

... *My children started to think that they were the reason ... They apologized a lot ... They started having thoughts that I would leave them alone and in need ... It is unfortunate ...* [AP 16].

... *My child is becoming more aggressive. She understands only the language of violence ... She learned bad words from her mother...* [AP 29].

... *My son's teacher complained to me telephonically of his bullying of the boys in school ...* [AP 20].

... *My little daughter has not yet given up biting her nails ... She sits alone in her room ...* [AP 24].

... *He has changed ... Is violent with his brothers ...* [AP 18].

... *My 14-year-old son is also depressed ...* [AP 25].

... *Yes ... I often woke up to him screaming in his sleep ...* [AP 15].

... *He came back from school crying; he was feeling shy ... The neighbors' children bullied him ... They know the dispute between me and his mother, they knew that his mother insulted me ... They heard her screams* [AP 33]. *My family is homeless ... It destroyed my children's future ...* [AP 14].

... *My house has become cold ... Dead ... There is no joy or safety in it ...* [AP 5].

... *She was not like that before ... She no longer likes school ... Her grades decreased gradually ... She used to excel in studies ...* [AP 17].

Theme 4. Men's Perception of Reducing/Stopping the Abuse

This theme assessed the attitudes of men toward domestic abuse and factors affecting abuse-supportive attitudes. Most participants reported that their abuse was not justified and that women need more awareness about how they treat their husbands and children. The wives' education did not significantly affect their behavior and ideas; they were still thinking traditionally (or what they called reactionary thinking: in Arabic: *qalilat eaql*). Most participants also believed that wives greatly influence the family's welfare; therefore, they must be more responsible, wise, and conscious. The husbands had to live far from their in-laws' homes, because the closer they lived, the greater the interference in their marital life. Furthermore, all participants emphasized that preventing their abuse depended on the nature of their response and the severity of the abuse. Most participants stated that their wives' abuse was a response to her emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse. Abuse against the wife, whether severe or minor, was an effective response to deter her, make her feel guilty and responsible, and realize the seriousness of the situation. A few participants indicated that divorce or separation is the only solution to end the physical abuse, emotional neglect, and psychological abuse they experience. Moreover, most of the participants hoped that their wives would change over time, especially if they faced equal abuse from their husbands, which would make them feel guilty and remorseful and realize the harm that they caused.

Physical abuse exposed participants to social stigma, insults, and humiliation, and distorted their perception of themselves as men. When husbands remained silent about their wives' abuse, the wives continued to persecute, dominate, and control them. Participants reported that the emotional neglect and psychological abuse made them feel useless, impotent, weak, and in despair; however, they felt that they were deserving of a good life. Consequently, they considered divorce, freeing them to find a better wife that makes them feel human and manly. According to all participants, preserving and protecting their children and avoiding social stigma were the main reasons for staying in an abusive relationship.

Moreover, they emphasized that the clan/traditional thinking and stereotype of women as the fairer sex, physically weak, and always the victim, allowed them to abuse men. This further prevented men from reporting abuse, because they would not be believed, but would be held accountable despite the woman's slander against them. Even if there is evidence of the woman abusing them, society refutes this evidence, and assumes that the woman merely responded violently to stop the man's abuse of her. Participants rejected the idea that women are unable to abuse men; rather, they showed evidence that women are capable of varying degrees of physical abuse. Women are also capable of manipulation and

control, because they know how to provoke men and take undue advantage of the laws in their favor. Participants also mentioned that women exploit children to tighten control over their husbands because they know that the children are their husbands' point of weakness:

... Sorry, Dr. ... With due respect ... Our women are stupid ... Her way of thinking, I do not know, is strange, silly ... [AP 17].

... Her interests are still naive ... She has not yet realized that she is a mother and a wife ... [AP 33].

... She thinks like her mother ... Although the injury is visible on my head ... They told me, "It seems from the severity of your injury that you did something awfully bad to her." ... I divorced her immediately... [AP 29].

... I do not mean that all clan beliefs are false; but, it makes a massive difference if my belief goes against the dominant thinking of my clan [AP 29].

... She acts as if she has never heard or known about this before ... Nor has had any education ... Her certificate is just ink on paper [AP 8].

... It will remain in her perception that I am not a man, and she will deal with me accordingly ... [AP 20].

... She let go of her priorities and only thinks about the silly things ... [AP 16].

... Absolutely unmindful ... Still acting like a child ... I wish I had no children ... She threatens me with them, they are still young and need a mother ... [AP 24].

... I have the right to feel like a human being ... To live a better life ... My life does not depend on my wife ... [AP 23].

... She thinks that she will win this way, and she does not know that every time, she proves that she is not worth anything ... there are better alternatives ... [AP 23].

... Let her go to hell, she believes she is a "real" female ... She knows nothing ... [AP 15].

... She does not deserve me ... I regret marrying her... I will start over ... life is short, and I can no longer tolerate it ... I want to live like others. A man, a person, a father, a husband.... Is that exceedingly difficult. Tell me Dr.? ... [AP 5].

... I gather my strength only for my children ... I will not make them victims ... [AP 10]

... Oh Dr. ... You know that I will not get rid of people's talk, mockery, and humiliating comments ... Dr. [AP 11].

... I only think about my daughter's future, her chances of getting married would be less if her mother was divorced ... You know our society's view of the divorced ... [AP 5].

... I will not make my children pay for their mother's mistakes ... What is their fault? ... God will not forgive her, and he will avenge me... We put clan

considerations ahead of logical thought, whether consciously or subconsciously ... [AP 14].

... She often said to me, "If you go to the police, you know what will happen to you. You know that I am a woman and I always win, you will regret..." [AP 17].

... She told me that no one would believe me ... And, of course, she is right ... [AP 15].

...They told me you are not merciful to her. She is a female; is it reasonable that she did that? ... [AP 30].

... They accused me of lying ... My kids told the truth, and yet no one believed me ... clan thinking before truth ... [AP 8].

... Strange contradictions, just as women claim that customs and traditions bind them, they also bind us ... Patriarchal domination does not always put us in control, as it has enabled women to offend us and justify their abuse ... [AP 17].

Theme 5. Characteristics of Abusive Wives/Unexpected Results

While discussing the previous themes with the study participants, some seemed to rationalize their wives' abuse with different characteristics and incidents that may have contributed to their violent behavior. These characteristics are listed in this theme. They stated that their wives were exposed to childhood trauma by their parents, including physical, psychological, and emotional abuse and neglect. Additionally, suffering from bad parenting led to their negative self-perception, low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, and deprivation. A few others stated that their wives witnessed violence in childhood and adulthood, which reflected on their attitudes, goals, values, roles, and priorities in their marital life:

... I pity her ... She used to often tell me that her mother used to beat her a lot and torment her by burning her with a match, and her older brother treated her as a servant in the house ... She was living a miserable life ... [AP 14].

... Her mother had been in an abusive, on-and-off relationship for years ... [AP 18].

... She saw her father beat and insult her mother ... It took hours to get over ... [AP 12].

... She saw her father threatening her mother with a knife when she was seven years old ... [AP 11].

... Her father ... Always drunk ... He hit her with his belt ... And burned her with a clothing iron ... Her mother would lay awake at night, listening to his steps ... She looked at the door, frightened ... Afraid that he was coming back. She got divorced from him after trouble ... She had a recurring dream that he was chasing her

around, and she was looking for a place to hide ... [AP 29].

Discussion

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), violence against women is highly prevalent. Globally, one in three women has experienced physical and or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Domestic abuse cases have been increasing since the COVID-19 outbreak, and an estimated 137 women are killed by their intimate partner or a family member every day (WHO, 2020). Research and policies that focus on women victims of domestic abuse (Deshpande, 2019; Kolbe & Büttner, 2020; Perryman & Appleton, 2016; Randle & Graham, 2011) are based on the idea that men are more likely than women to perpetrate nearly all types of interpersonal violence, including IPV, murder, assault, rape, and domestic abuse (Fleming et al., 2015). The World's Women, 2020: Trends and Statistics report defined domestic abuse or IPV as "the most common" form of abuse, and reported that approximately 18% of women have experienced IPV in the last 12 months.

Today, men are also abused. Female-perpetrated domestic abuse against men has become more prevalent (Joseph-Edwards & Wallace, 2020). However, few men are willing to report verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse by their partners (Deshpande, 2019; Huntley et al., 2019; Joseph-Edwards et al., 2020; Wright, 2016). This study found that men in Arab culture, Jordanian society in particular, may be victims of domestic abuse by their wives. Theme two indicated that married men have experienced some form of psychological and verbal abuse, emotional neglect, and physical violence. The evidence suggests that women appear to experience violent/abusive behavior in different ways (Hester, 2013) and perpetrate psychological abuse toward male partners (Randle & Graham, 2011). Archer (2000) concluded that women engage in slightly more physical aggression than men in intimate relationships, and at a more frequent rate, but sustain more injuries.

Theme one identified reasons for women's abuse against men, which contradicted the common reasons for female-perpetrated violence, including revenge for past abuse, anger, self-defense, attempt to escape from or stop their own abuse, fear, defense of children, and getting a partner's attention (Bair-Merritt et al., 2010; Dasgupta, 2002; Lupri & Grandin, 2009; Stuart et al., 2006; Swan et al., 2008). These reasons cannot be considered widespread for man's authority long term. Rather, their availability is the core of marriage: independence, integration, sexual and human love, and care are rights for both spouses. Marriage is a personal, legal, and spiritual relationship that does not endure interference from

others. It unifies a man and a woman to form a family, which is the basic unit of society (Keller, 2013). However, sexual dissatisfaction can predict marital problems. A satisfying sexual life and warm interpersonal relationship are significantly associated with marital satisfaction (Bilal & Rasool, 2020; Schoenfeld et al., 2017; Ziaee et al., 2014).

Tower and Kasl (1996) listed three aspects of marital closeness: having a confidant, perceived emotional support, and reciprocity. They found that husbands have the fewest depressive symptoms when they have emotionally independent wives, and wives have low levels of depression when they feel important or emotionally close to their husbands. Marital closeness includes love and commitment, where “commitment” suggests “loyalty,” “responsibility,” and “supporting the other in good and bad times” (Tower & Kasl, 1996). However, love and commitment were not available for all participants in this study. Additionally, economic stress and hardship may increase the risk of domestic violence; domestic abuse may also cause financial problems, entrapping men in poverty and an abusive relationship (Renzetti, 2009).

Theme three results confirmed that all study participants experienced significant psychological and physical symptoms related to abuse. This result is in line with the literature on domestic abuse against men. Male victims feel embarrassed, emasculated, depressed, lonely, isolated, ashamed, confused, frustrated, hurt, and useless. They experience insomnia, weight loss, loss of appetite, PTSD symptoms, and IBS (Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011; Steinmetz, 1977; Wright, 2016). Furthermore, wives proved that they could engage in physical violence causing minor or severe injuries (Randle & Graham, 2011).

Themes 2, 3, and 4 indicate that women use coercive control to abuse men through sex, children, isolation, money, and emotional neglect (Morgan & Wells, 2016). All study participants confirmed that their experience of abuse contradicted their role expectations, patriarchal dominance, and masculinity. Society expects men to be self-reliant, independent, leaders, strong, and more assertive than women (Lupri & Grandin, 2009; Migliaccio, 2001; Shehan, 2018; Steinmetz, 1977; Wright, 2016); therefore, men hide their abuse, and refrain from reporting their victimization or seeking support (Wright, 2016). In most cultures, women are socialized to be subservient and inferior to men, which prevents them from resisting men’s violence. They not only accept and tolerate this violence but even rationalize it and remain silent about it (Agostino, 2015; Dasgupta, 2002). However, attitudes are changing, and women’s acceptance of being beaten by their partners has decreased in nearly 75% of countries (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020), where women’s economic and educational empowerment, as well as cultural and ethnic differences, allowed them to use violence against their partners (Dasgupta, 2002), and use

manipulative behaviors through gendered stereotypes of abuse (Morgan & Wells, 2016).

Despite the growing acceptance that both men and women may be victims of IPV, women’s violence toward their intimate partners is seen as ambivalent to their gender role (Gilbert, 2002). Domestic abuse is always discussed in relation to men being the perpetrators (Deshpande, 2019). In this study, all participants stated that clan thinking and sociocultural stereotypes in the Arab context enable women to abuse men. Additionally, the gendered stereotype of abuse exposes men to secondary abusive experiences when they are treated as perpetrators and liars who lack machismo (Corbally, 2015; Hogan, 2016; Lupri & Grandin, 2009; McCarrick et al., 2016; Migliaccio, 2001; Shehan, 2018; Walker et al., 2020).

Participants realized that the abusive wife might get custody of the children; therefore, they chose to stay in an abusive relationship to protect their family and children from becoming homeless. This aligns with Arab societal structures and norms that compel men to stay in an abusive relationship to meet ideal masculinity standards and socially-constructed characteristics to avoid social stigma associated with denigration of their masculinity (Steinmetz, 1977). In severe injury cases, Fontes (2007) confirmed that men suppress their fear and pain and find it difficult to report their abuse because they are socialized to be physically and emotionally strong providers for women and children. Moreover, they realize that the patriarchal society refuses to view men as victims of abuse, and the police would not take their allegations seriously even if they made a formal complaint.

Additionally, participants’ knowledge that the abusive wife could get custody of the children because of social norms that benefit the mother led them to avoid allowing domestic abuse to negatively affect their children and family. They feared fracturing the children’s safe haven during their developing years and wanted to prevent their children being labeled as coming from a broken home and having to live with the stigma of being ridiculed because their parents are divorced. In this context, the second subtheme of theme three showed that the children experienced physical, psychological, and emotional symptoms related to the abuse against their fathers. The trauma associated with witnessing domestic violence in the home plays a major role in children’s growth and physical development, resulting in them lacking confidence in others, isolating themselves from their close friends and family, refusing to speak, and becoming more anxious and depressed. They may exhibit regressive behaviors such as parasitism, signs of fatigue due to lack of sleep, bad eating habits, and poor personal hygiene. They may also develop a tendency to participate in risky play activities and become aggressors in their future relationships. These children are likely to lie to gain attention and care and to have nightmares and bed-wetting problems. Moreover, they show poor school

performance and are more disobedient at home and school (Stiles, 2002; Volpe, 1996).

This study also yielded unexpected results. Theme five showed that abusive wives experienced childhood trauma, bad parenting, and witnessed violence in childhood and adolescence. This result is consistent with Swan et al.'s (2008) findings that abusive women experienced childhood trauma, emotional abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, physical neglect, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and PTSD. Fulu et al. (2017) found that childhood trauma is associated with all forms of IPV perpetration. Studying women serving a federal sentence in the Correctional Service of Canada, Stewart et al. (2014) found that most female IPV perpetrators had been victims of severe abuse during their youth and adulthood. Additionally, theme five contributed to understanding the causes of violence against women; when women are violent against men, it provokes men to respond violently to maintain the expectations of their socially-constructed roles. It also suggests that domestic abuse against men is one of the main reasons for divorce.

Based on participants' responses, we suggest that practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and organizations supporting women's rights and combating violence against women in Jordan should conduct more courses and seminars, and develop manuals, electronic publications, and videos. These resources would increase rural and urban Jordanian women's awareness of marital life issues and problems, especially small, neglected details that participants mentioned, and how to handle them. Furthermore, being aware of the forms of abuse against husbands would help women avoid perpetrating abuse, thereby preventing their exposure to more violence by their husbands. Moreover, Jordanian wives need to understand the consequences of exploiting gender stereotypes and tribal thinking to abuse their husbands. This abuse often results in the destruction of the family environment, displacement of children, and exposure to severe psychological and physical symptoms in the short and long term. These institutions and organizations must redefine marriage within the necessary natural and human context to express human love, sexual love, commitment, emotional support, trust, and respect. This redefinition would remind others that men are also humans, with rights and emotions, and may also be victims of domestic abuse, just as women are.

Conclusion

Men being battered or abused by wives is not a myth. Men in the Arab-Jordanian cultural context are victims of female-perpetrated domestic abuse. They experience coercive control, psychological and verbal abuse, emotional neglect, and physical violence by their wives. This study recognizes that the societal structures and norms for gender and masculinity

under clan thinking are important factors in abuse against men and that domestic abuse is not only a female-centric issue. Understanding men's abuse by women is an important key to understanding violence against women and some reasons for divorce. Policymakers and organizations supporting women's rights and combating violence against women should develop new perspectives of domestic abuse in Jordan. They should also find new frameworks to assimilate the full scope of men abused by women and provide resources and support for male victims to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, protect Jordanian families, and support marriages. Research has shown that it is necessary to understand violence in relationships within cultural and social contexts to develop theoretical models of intimate abuse (Dutton, 1996; Edleson & Tolman, 1992).

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01905-2>.

Funding The author received no specific funding for this work. This study was conducted in cooperation with the "Zaha Cultural Center/ Greater Amman Municipality."

Data Availability The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article or its supplementary materials.

Declarations

Declaration of Conflicting Interests The author declares no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Ethical Considerations The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Jordan, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (reference number IRB/19/2021/85).

Consent to Participate To protect their identity, all participants provided informed verbal consent during the interview rather than written consent.

Consent for Publication Not applicable.

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