A Phenomenological Study Exploring Saudi Married Women's Experience of

Emotional/Psychological Intimate Partner Violence

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Department of Community Care and Counseling, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

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Abstract

This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored the meaning of experiencing emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) for Saudi married women in Riyadh before and after Vision 2030. Nine Saudi women who married before 2015 were selected based on the Composite Abuse Scale results. The study's central question was: How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030? The guiding two questions were: 1) How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence? 2) How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reaction to emotional/psychological violence? The theories guiding this study were feminist and social constructivism theories. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, online reflection journals, and online focus group. Data analysis utilized the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. Eight themes and ten subthemes emerged, revealing their sense of powerlessness before the Vision and sense of empowerment after it. Influenced by different national, social, and relational factors, their coping mechanisms included doing nothing, seeking formal or informal support, and being more independent. The study's findings supported social constructivism and feminism theories on IPV risk factors, attitudes, and women's reactions and highlighted Vision's positive impacts on improving supportive resources and empowering Saudi women.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030, phenomenology, qualitative research, feminist theory, social constructivism theory, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my participants, whose courage to share their experiences formed the basis of this study. Also, I dedicate this dissertation to all women worldwide, especially those in Saudi Arabia who suffer from any form of violence. I hope this dissertation will empower them by providing information and support in any way that makes them feel connected and not alone.

Acknowledgments

First, an enormous amount of gratitude and acknowledgment is due to Allah for granting me many blessings throughout my life and the dissertation journey. With His guidance and support, I managed to move forward when I thought I could not. Secondly, I owe the completion of this dissertation to my loving and supportive family, the central pillars of my life. Genuine gratitude goes out to my husband, Mohammed, who was my primary source of support and encouragement throughout this challenging endeavor. I sincerely thank him for his continuous unconditional motivation, understanding, and tolerance. A special thanks to my children, Ahmed, Munna, and Nasser (Allah's gifts to me), for their lovely and encouraging words that made all my struggles disappear. I truly treasure the times when they express their pride in having a hardworking mother who inspires them and how they accept and adjust to my absence and busy schedule. I am grateful to my parents and siblings, who taught me the true meaning of family and unconditional love and never forgot to include me in their prayers and wishes.

Special thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. Schultz, for his guidance, recommendations, and encouragement that are beyond description. He made the most challenging moments throughout this journey seem much more tolerable and manageable. I have a great deal of respect for him and will be eternally grateful for his influence on my life during this time. My gratitude is extended to Dr. MacKenzie, who instilled in me a newfound love for qualitative research; many thanks for her willingness to be part of my dissertation journey. My sincere thanks to my editor, Ms. Chelsea Breiholz, for her meticulous work on my manuscript. My final thanks go to all my classmates for their constructive feedback and support during this challenging process.

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List of Abbreviations

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Domestic violence (DV)

General Recommendation No. 19 (GR19)

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

National Family Safety Program (NFSP)

National Transformation Program (NTP)

New Model of Care (MOC)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

The Composite Abuse Scale (CAS)

The Health Sector Transformation Program (HSTP)

Vision Realization Programs (VRPs)

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread concern that spans various regions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds, profoundly impacting individuals, families, and communities alike. An in-depth exploration of the multifaceted aspects of IPV holds the potential to enrich discussions on prevention and intervention strategies. Ultimately, such endeavors aim to cultivate a societal ethos where intimate relationships are characterized by mutual respect, equality, and non-violence. Comprehending the complexities of IPV and its impacts on individuals and society necessitates a comprehensive examination of its historical, social, and theoretical foundations. With an emphasis on emotional/psychological (IPV), the background section of chapter one covers the theoretical, social, and historical context of violence against women. The historical section explains how perceptions of this phenomenon shifted from normal to a major health concern in Saudi Arabia. It covers the legal efforts of government and non-government entities and the progress in studying it. The social section explains Saudi culture, attitudes, and religious beliefs regarding IPV. The feminist perspectives, an ecological model, and social constructivism theory are briefly explained in the theoretical section to provide a better understanding of IPV. The chapter also introduces my personal motivation and philosophical assumptions for conducting this research. An overview of the study, including the problem and purpose statements, the significance of the study, research questions, and definitions of key terms, is provided at the end of the chapter.

Background

Historical

In the early 1980s, intimate partner violence (IPV) was not considered a crime in Arab or

Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia (Al-Faris et al., 2013; Douki et al., 2003; Koenig et al.,

2014). Therefore, there were no efforts to intervene at that time (Koenig et al., 2014). Even in the

1990s, exploring violence against women was taboo in Saudi Arabia, resulting in limited

research with inconsistent and limited findings (Alquaiz et al., 2017). In 2000, the Convention on

the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) became part of Saudi national law,

allowing women's rights advocates and non-governmental organizations to demand social

change to meet the government's commitments against human rights violations (Alosaimi, 2019).

Their demands resulted in the establishment of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to

protect human rights according to Islamic law and international human rights principles—the

National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) and the Saudi Human Rights Commission (SHRC).

The NGOs relied on the media to fight violence in Saudi Arabia. The first effective campaign

addressing IPV was launched in 2004 (Alosaimi, 2019). In addition, a few studies started to

explore IPV targeting women in the early 2000s (Afifi et al., 2011). The government also started

its collective efforts between the Ministry of Labor and Social Development (MLSD), the

National Family Safety Program (NFSP), and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in 2004 by

establishing the General Department of Social Protection and the NFSP in 2005. However, there

is a disconnect between the NFSP and the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, the

agency responsible for implementing the law (Alosaimi, 2019).

Over the past few years, several studies have reported the high prevalence of intimate

partner violence (IPV) in Saudi Arabia, with emotional/psychological IPV being the most

common type (Alquaiz et al., 2017). Emotional/psychological IPV includes verbal, social,

economic, or threat abuse, neglect, and controlling behaviors (Elghossain et al., 2019). However,

these studies used different definitions for IPV and measures that were not adequately evaluated

for reliability and validity, making it difficult to interpret the results (Alhalal, 2016). Some of

these studies reported general IPV prevalence in Saudi Arabia (AlDosary, 2016; Kazzaz et al.,

2019). Others were conducted in specific regions or cities such as Al-hasa (Afifi et al., 2011),

Medina (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009), Jeddah (Fageeh, 2014; Wali et al., 2020), Arar (Abo-

Elfetoh & Abd El-Mawgod, 2015), Aljouf (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022), Riyadh (Abolfotouh &

Almuneef, 2019; Alquaiz et al., 2017; Barnawi, 2017). Due to its high reported prevalence and

serious consequences, IPV has become a major public health problem (Afifi et al., 2011;

AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). Most studies have examined the risk factors for IPV, but none have

examined the change in the risk factors (Wali et al., 2020) or the actual link between religion and

violence (Alosaimi, 2019).

In 2013, the NGOs launched another campaign addressing domestic violence called "No

More Abuse" (Alosaimi, 2019; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). This campaign, among others that

addressed different types of violence, challenged the cultural norms of Saudi Arabia and raised

many questions about the government's efforts to address this issue (Alosaimi, 2019). In 2013,

the government finally issued a law for Protection from Abuse drafted in 2009 (Alhabdan, 2015).

It provides help, shelter, and social, psychological, and healthcare services to ensure safety from

all forms of abuse. Aside from providing the necessary legal procedures for bringing abusers to

justice, the law promotes community awareness of abuse and its consequences, identifies

undesirable social behaviors that indicate a violence tolerance environment, and develops

scientific and practical strategies to deal with violence (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). However,

this act fails to recognize the location of the crime, where the public may be more inclined to

believe that homes and families are private affairs in which even the government is not entitled

to interfere (Alhabdan, 2015). Furthermore, it provides a broad definition of violence that fails to

recognize that domestic violence is a pattern of ongoing behavior to gain power and control, resulting in limited types of abuse that the law covers (Alhabdan, 2015; Alosaimi, 2019). Even the definition of psychological abuse was limited to mistreatment that harms the person's dignity and moral right, ignoring economic and financial abuses as well as controlling behaviors such as limiting women's mobility and interaction that are common in Saudi Arabia (Alhabdan, 2015). This ambiguity in the definition could jeopardize potential legal actions against the abuser, especially since it does not distinguish punishments for different forms of abuse (Alhabdan, 2015; Alosaimi, 2019). It should consider penalties that empower women, such as victim compensation rather than fines or treatment programs for the abusers, that can change the abusers' behaviors, promote family equality, and grant women more respect (Alhabdan, 2015). The Saudi Vision 2030 aims to empower women by increasing their financial independence and their participation in leadership positions in different sectors. However, the process seems slow, and Saudi Arabia still needs to reform more effective laws to overcome many social, legal, and religious barriers (Alhabdan, 2015; Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Alosaimi, 2019; Wali et al., 2020).

Social

In Saudi Arabia, tribal culture and Islamic perspectives influence people's beliefs, norms, and way of life (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). Saudi Arabia is a patriarchal culture that advocates for men's authority over women. Therefore, some controlling behaviors are normalized (Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). Saudi women's abilities to be fully independent are underestimated, and they have specific roles that are shaped by society (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021). They are expected and required to seek their husbands' approval even for personal activities such as social interaction and traveling (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). This belief led

Saudi women to justify the husband's abusive behaviors if the wife disobeyed her husband or left

the house without his permission (Al-Faris et al., 2013). They also believe this abusive behavior

is a private, personal, and familial issue that does not require intervention (Alsehaimi & Helal,

2021; Douki et al., 2003; Eldoseri, 2012). Consequently, women are hesitant to report any form

of IPV because they are concerned about social isolation for undermining family stability and

social stigma for not obeying their husbands or for embracing a Western lifestyle (Alsehaimi &

Helal, 2021; Douki et al., 2003). Moreover, most Saudi women do not know their legal rights nor

where to seek assistance (Al-Faris et al., 2013). They face several obstacles when seeking help,

such as a gender-biased legal system that does not take proper or immediate action due to

cultural norms and misinterpretation of Islamic beliefs (Al-Faris et al., 2013; Alhabdan, 2015;

Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

Recently, IPV and gender inequality issues have been addressed in Saudi Arabia due to

globalization and international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health

Organization (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia made significant efforts

and improvements in empowering women and ensuring their rights, needs, and autonomy

(Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Wali et al., 2020). However, the Saudi family structure remains

conservative and unaffected by globalization or lifestyle development (Alsehaimi & Helal,

2021). Their cultural norms, gender inequality attitudes, and distorted Islamic beliefs still support

some violent behaviors as a form of discipline and encourage an accepting attitude toward IPV

(Al-Faris et al., 2013; Alhabdan, 2015).

Theoretical

Feminist perspectives encompass various principles and strategies for addressing gender

inequality or patriarchy to explain male superiority over females as the core cause of most IPV

(Becker et al., 2022). Feminists view intimate partner violence as a result of historical and current power imbalances that maintain women's inferiority by using power and control, including physical, sexual, economic, and psychological abuse, as well as isolation and intimidation (McPhail et al., 2007). According to Becker et al. (2022) women's perspectives constantly develop primarily as social movements addressing gender inequality, including IPV. Several feminist movement waves have challenged patriarchy by highlighting issues such as IPV and questioning men's institutional power in society and the private sphere.

The first wave started in the 1830s through the 1900s to raise public awareness of women's restrictive social roles in the home and grant them fundamental rights in the public sphere. While IPV was not a central topic of the first wave, it became a public and social justice topic in the second wave from the 1960s to the 1980s. During the second wave, domestic violence expanded to include emotional, psychological, and financial violence. In the late 1960s and 1970s, criminalizing IPV was a significant achievement for second-wave feminists (Becker et al., 2022). Before feminists identified violence against women as a public policy problem during the first and second waves of the women's movement and called for legal and social change, society had previously normalized and marginalized violence against women. It has been a dominant theoretical framework in the field of domestic violence since the 1970s, serving as the foundation for numerous initiatives, programs, interventions, and advocacy and legislation campaigns. However, it has encountered difficulties since its establishment (McPhail et al., 2007). From the 1990s to the present day, the third wave started to discuss more complex topics about understanding and intervening in IPV for diverse populations and in different social situations. In 2012, fourth-wave feminism began to explain the connection between gender and power without considering the gender of the IPV victim or perpetrator (Becker et al., 2022).

In 1998, Heise adopted the ecological model to study intimate partner violence (IPV) against women (Heise, 1998). This model was initially developed by Belskey (1980) to explain the complexity of child abuse and neglect, and it consisted of four factors. First, the individual/ontogenetic factors refer to the personal history and characteristics that shape the person's behaviors and relationships. Second, the microsystem factors (situational) represent the immediate context in which the abuse occurs. Third, exosystem factors represent the informal and formal institutional and social structures that embed the microsystem. Fourth, the macrosystem factors (cultural) are the attitudes, views, and beliefs that permeate society as a whole. The model can be applied at an individual level to identify men who are likely to be violent or at a community level to comprehend why abuse rates vary depending on the setting. It is crucial to note that these levels are interconnected (Heise, 1998). She stated that most feminists focused on the macrosystem factors such as patriarchy and did not acknowledge other personal and social factors (Heise, 1998). However, the feminist perspective includes several frameworks that consider IPV's social, legal, individual, financial, interpersonal, and cultural levels and the socially constructed set of meanings, values, attitudes, and behaviors related to gender (Becker et al., 2022). According to the social constructivism theory people interpret their experiences in light of their complex backgrounds and cultural perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This theory focuses on the meaning attributed to their experiences that change due to many factors, such as their social interactions with others and their environment, education, or maturation (Heppner et al., 2015).

Situation to Self

My motivation to conduct a study exploring emotional/psychological IPV was from my experience with the same phenomenon. About 21 years ago, I experienced

emotional/psychological IPV. Although my experience lasted no longer than ten months, its impact lasted long. I did not receive professional support until about five years later because it did not exist then, and I was concerned about social stigmatization. My experience motivated me to become a family and couple therapist focusing on trauma therapy to enhance the services provided in this area. While studying abroad, I received my education in the United States, which exposed me to potential responses and approaches to cases of IPV that Saudi Arabia lacks. The healthcare system in Saudi Arabia, especially mental health services, has been improving since I returned in 2018. However, there are many gaps and barriers in the services provided and research conducted. Therefore, I was motivated to explore the story behind different married women's experiences with the same phenomenon in depth, hoping to add to the available research and improve support services.

As an IPV survivor, I acknowledge that I approached this study with preconceived thoughts and biases, but I also know that I am equipped with the necessary skills and support to put those ideas and thoughts aside. My primary goal in this study was to genuinely listen to the voices of the women interviewed and fully comprehend their experiences with this phenomenon to discover and learn more about it. Reviewing and reading the transcripts multiple times helped me interpret the various realities the participants experienced, which met the standards for the first philosophical assumption used in qualitative research. The ontological assumption interprets different experiences into meaningful themes of Saudi married women's collective experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The second philosophical assumption is epistemological, which involves the relationship between the researcher and the topic researched (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I achieved this by personally interviewing the participants and becoming familiar with their first-hand stories and situations. Third is the axiological assumption, which was performed

by the transparent reporting and interpretation of the participants' experiences, acknowledging my social position as a woman, my personal experience as a survivor of emotional/psychological IPV, and my professional beliefs as a therapist (Creswell & Poth, 2017). These philosophical assumptions are fundamental elements of qualitative research because they guide research objectives, anticipate outcomes, and evaluate decisions made throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Problem Statement

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious, sensitive, fast-spreading, and preventable health concern with substantial effects that has become a topic of interest worldwide and nationally in Saudi Arabia (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). IPV is the most common type of violence against women in Arab countries, with emotional/psychological violence being the most common type of IPV (Elghossain et al., 2019; Hawcroft et al., 2019). Despite the Saudi Vision 2030's efforts to empower women and achieve gender equality to improve the quality of life, intimate partner violence (IPV) remains a hot topic in Saudi Arabia due to its high prevalence (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.; Wali et al., 2020). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia remains a male-dominated and conservative society that normalizes some abusive acts by males due to cultural and religious misconceptions (Aldosari, 2017).

The Saudi government and non-governmental organizations are working to better understand and analyze IPV from a social and medical perspective (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). However, research about IPV in Saudi Arabia does not go into detail regarding Saudi married women's experience with emotional/psychological IPV and does not consider the changes brought on by the country's quick modernization and transition (Alhalal, 2016; Wali et al., 2020). There has been little comprehensive research into married women's experiences with

emotional/psychological IPV. Most existing research is informative and does not explore the whole experience of Saudi married women who have experienced emotional/psychological IPV (Alhalal, 2016). Moreover, there is a lack of public awareness about the Saudi Vision 2030, which can enhance people's quality of life, understanding of their rights, especially women's rights, and knowledge of what resources are accessible. According to AlDosary (2016) raising public awareness about IPV will inspire abused women to seek professional help (AlDosary, 2016). The healthcare system, which is the most critical setting for identifying, managing, and supporting IPV victims, lacks the necessary training or screening/measurement tools to detect, prevent, and address IPV (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). However, there is a significant lack of reliable, valid, and culturally applicable assessment tools (Alhalal, 2016); therefore, more screening programs are needed (Wali et al., 2020). Consequently, developing and implementing new local policies and guidelines that integrate multisectoral services is recommended (Alquaiz et al., 2017; Kazzaz et al., 2019). The professionals in the healthcare system also lack the necessary training to recognize, respond to, and prevent IPV, as well as access to other agencies to help the Saudi government implement its initiatives (AlDosary, 2016; Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Alquaiz et al., 2017; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020). Therefore, training them to respond to IPV cases or utilize the new policies will help them identify and respond effectively to women who experience IPV (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020).

Unfortunately Saudi Arabia, like many other Arab countries, continues to be a patriarchal and violence-tolerant culture that has limited community awareness, social services, and IPV screening or assessment instruments, resulting in women's passive response to IPV (Aldosari, 2017; AlDosary, 2016; Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Alquaiz et al., 2017; Barnawi, 2017; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Obeid et al., 2010; Wali et al., 2020). Therefore, more research is

needed to give Saudi married women the voice to explain their lived experiences with emotional/psychological IPV. Through a semi-structured interview, an online reflection journal, and an online focus group discussion, this study aimed to provide valuable information to increase public awareness, improve healthcare system services, and enhance women's responses to emotional/psychological IPV.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) for Saudi married women in Riyadh before and after the change brought about by Vision 2030. Emotional/psychological IPV is generally defined as any "behavior that threatens, intimidates, or undermines the victim's self-worth or self-esteem or controls the victim's freedom" (Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2019, P.c206). The theories guiding this study were feminist and social constructivism theories (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The feminist theory focuses on understanding the role of gender and society in shaping women's social position, self-perception, and power. It raises the consciousness and understanding of women to be able to change their place in society and reject traditional roles (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). The core idea of social constructivism, also known as interpretivism, is that people construct their own meanings of the world by thinking back on their genuine, individual experiences, which are shaped by the complexity of their histories and cultural perspectives rather than the events themselves (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015).

Significance of the Study

To date, limited research has explored the whole experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) among Saudi married women or reported the actual extent of this problem (Al-Faris et al.,

2013; Eldoseri, 2012). The current study aimed to explore how Vision 2030 objectives impacted

Saudi married women's experience with emotional/psychological IPV because no similar study

had been conducted. The few studies that had explored the impact of Vision 2030 did not address

IPV. Little research has examined the change in IPV risk factors resulting from the rapid

transformation and modernization in Saudi Arabia (Wali et al., 2020). One qualitative study

explored Saudi Arabia's challenges in empowering women after Vision 2030 (Alnufaie &

Beghum, 2021) but did not directly address violence issues. Another study measured different

factors to empower Saudi women financially (Ali et al., 2021). Although the study pointed out

that one of the benefits of financially empowering women is reducing economic abuse, which is

a type of emotional/psychological IPV (Ali et al., 2021), it was not the focus of the study. A

recent study reported how the Saudi government's collaborative efforts with other organizations

to develop guidelines, laws, and initiatives to reduce domestic violence and provide appropriate

support were limited to economic and social empowerment and did not address IPV issues

(Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

　　　　Studying the risk factors and attitudes toward IPV in Saudi Arabia is challenging because

it is still a conservative and religious culture. Many studies have avoided exploring religion due

to its sensitivity. However, there is a critical need to examine the religious factor because its

connection to violence is still unclear in Saudi Arabia (Alosaimi, 2019). Religion is one of the

major factors hindering women's empowerment due to a misunderstanding of religious teachings

and principles (Alhabdan, 2015; Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Wali et al., 2020). Moreover,

religion is a significant element in shaping Saudis' attitudes and values regarding IPV and their

behaviors, especially since it has unique risk factors such as polygamy that many men use to

threaten their wives (Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2019; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009). Therefore,

giving married women who have experienced emotional/psychological IPV a voice to tell the meaning behind their experience can enhance the general understanding of IPV and how they cope or respond to it. Interpreting the participants' experiences from the feminist perspective and social constructivism theory can improve women's understanding of how gender and society have a significant role in creating their self-perceptions, social positions, and roles. They will be able to construct new meanings for these experiences and end their suffering and underestimation (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015).

A recent conference, "Mental Health Services Between Reality and Hope and Psychiatry Research Day," addressed the need for more qualitative research exploring the taboo and avoided topics in Saudi Arabia (Alosaimi, 2022), including IPV. Consequently, this study's qualitative design and aim can add to the body of literature about IPV and its severe consequences in Saudi Arabia. The hope is that this study's results can enhance health, legal responses, and interventions to meet abused married women's needs and increase public awareness about IPV.

Research Questions

This study explored Saudi married women's experiences with emotional/psychological IPV in light of the changes brought by Vision 2030. The following question guided this hermeneutic phenomenological study.

Central Research Question:

How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030? The central question aimed to understand the meaning of the emotional/psychological IPV experiences of Saudi women who were married before 2015. The central question combined feminist and social constructivism perspectives to examine how participants' perceptions of gender roles and social

norms affect their consciousness and social position (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). It also added in-depth research to the existing informative level research on IPV and considered the changes in IPV risk variables after Saudi Arabia's rapid modernization and transformation (Alhalal, 2016; Wali, 2020). Finally, it aimed to understand the historical, cultural, religious, and organizational factors hindering and complicating women's empowerment as part of Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021).

Two Guiding Questions

1) How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence? 2) How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reaction to emotional/psychological violence? Based on the constructivism theory, these two guiding questions explained how each participant uses language, cultural and historical specificity, power, and individual and social position to construct a set of meanings to make sense of their experience, which influence their reactions. This theory was used to interpret each participant's perception of identity drawn from her response to emotional/psychological IPV (Burr & Dick, 2017). It helped in understanding the different factors contributing to their coping with their experience in a conservative, religious, and patriarchal culture that is violence-tolerant and lacks effective social services (Barnawi, 2017).

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Definitions

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1. *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)* - any act inside an intimate relationship that results in physical, psychological, or sexual harm to the individuals involved (WHO, 2012).

2. *Emotional/psychological IPV* - any "behavior that threatens, intimidates, or undermines the victim's self-worth or self-esteem or controls the victim's freedom" (Abolfotouh &

Almuneef, 2019, P.c206), including verbal, social, economic, or threat abuse, as well as controlling behaviors (Elghossain et al., 2019).

3. *Intimate* - the word "intimate" refers to being engaged or married; otherwise, it can be offensive or insulting to Muslim women because it is religiously prohibited to have an intimate relationship outside of marriage (Alhabib et al., 2013).

4. *Saudi Vision 2030* - using Saudi Arabia's geographical, cultural, social, demographical, and economic advantages, Vision 2030 is a governmental vision built on three main pillars: a vital society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation to create a great future for the Kingdom (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.).

5. *The National Transformation Program (NTP)* - is the first program of the Vision Realization Programs (VRPs) developed to achieve the goals of Vision 2030. It has the highest number of strategic objectives to achieve government operational excellence, establish the necessary infrastructure to improve economic enablers, and raise living standards, including transforming healthcare, women's empowerment, and enhancing the quality of justice services (National Transformation Program, n.d.).

6. *The Health Sector Transformation Program (HSTP)* - is one of the Vision Realization Programs (VRPs). It aims to restructure and enhance the Saudi health system by facilitating access to health services, improving the quality and efficiency of healthcare services, promoting the prevention of health risks, and improving traffic safety. It also has four strategic cornerstones: better health, care, sustainability, and workforce (Health Sector Transformation Program, 2021).

Summary

Emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common type of IPV in Saudi Arabia, which includes verbal, social, economic, or threat abuse, neglect, and controlling behaviors (Alquaiz et al., 2017; Elghossain et al., 2019). It was not until 2004 that some remarkable efforts were made to address IPV issues (Alosaimi, 2019). Few studies started to examine violence against women at that time (Afifi et al., 2011). The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) launched a few campaigns to combat violence that challenged Saudi norms and urged the government to take a step forward (Alosaimi, 2019). In 2013, the government finally issued a law for Protection from Abuse. However, there is still much to do to improve this law and make it more effective (Alhabdan, 2015). Saudi Arabia is a patriarchal and conservative culture that normalizes some abusive behaviors (Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). Despite all the changes in Saudi Arabia that aim to empower women, Saudi married women still believe in obeying their husbands, seeking their permission, and keeping family unity (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

According to the feminist perspectives, women's perspectives are shaped by the gender inequality and patriarchal system that allow men to use power and control over women and abuse them (McPhail et al., 2007). Their self-perception and behaviors are shaped by social and cultural background and gender norms (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). The ecological model has a broader view of understanding IPV that encompasses individual, situational, social, and cultural factors to understand IPV (Heise, 1998). This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored the experiences of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) for Saudi married women in Riyadh before and after Vision 2030 based on

feminism and social constructivism theories. The research questions encouraged married women

to interpret their experiences in light of Vision 2030 development.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a phenomenon of interest worldwide and nationally in Saudi Arabia because it is a serious, sensitive, rapidly expanding, and avoidable health concern with significant consequences (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). In Arab countries, IPV is the most prevalent form of violence against women, with one out of every two women experiencing emotional/psychological violence, one out of every three women experiencing physical violence, and one out of every five women experiencing sexual abuse from an intimate partner at a certain time in life (Hawcroft et al., 2019). The most common form of IPV in Arab countries is emotional/psychological violence, including verbal, social, economic, or threat abuse, as well as controlling behaviors (Elghossain et al., 2019). About 22-36% of women in Saudi Arabia have been subjected to emotional/psychological abuse (Kazzaz et al., 2019). Government and non-government organizations in Saudi Arabia are working to better comprehend and analyze IPV from a social and medical standpoint (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020).

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework guiding this study, followed by an extensive review of related literature about intimate partner violence, its risk factors, and victims' reactions. Lastly, the chapter summarizes how literature contributes to the current study's context.

Theoretical Framework

This study was built on the ontological philosophical assumption that there are multiple realities which the study's participants experience differently (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The two main theories that provided a theoretical framework for understanding the study's purpose and insight into its interpretation were feminist and constructivism theories.

Feminist Theory

According to Lather (1991), a key scholar in this field, the goal of feminist theory is to correct the invisibility and distortion of women's experiences in ways that contribute to ending their unequal social position (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The feminist theory seeks to raise women's consciousness to understand how gender and society have a significant role in creating women's consciousness, social position, and traditional roles. Consequently, women then will be able to reject these traditional roles to change their social position, correct their distorted experiences, and end their powerlessness and devaluation (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). This theory is based on gender inequality and social constructivism, representing a set of actions, attitudes, and expectations related to each gender (Becker et al., 2022). Concerning IPV, the focus of feminist theory is on the perpetrators, more likely to be men, who are misusing and abusing power and authority in their intimate relationships (Becker et al., 2022). Therefore, studying how power relationships and people's social positions impact women is recommended by Stewart (1994), another leading scholar of this theory. Moreover, patriarchy, rooted in many social settings, is an essential aspect of feminist theory in understanding, explaining, and ameliorating violence against women (Becker et al., 2022).

According to Becker et al. (2022) feminist theory comprises several frameworks to understand IPV. Radical feminism views patriarchy as the cause of women's oppression and promotes separatism. Liberal feminism aims to reach political, social, legal, and economic gender equality. Marxist and socialist feminism focuses on the financial aspect of women's oppression. Postmodern feminism analyzes IPV's individual, interactional, and structural levels and rejects the concept of one truth to explain IPV by seeking equality for all genders. In 2012, the fourth wave of feminism started to give voice to marginalized voices. Cultural feminism, a

new approach of this wave, has the same ideas as other feminist frameworks, especially radical

feminism, due to the separatism beliefs. However, it recognizes the inherited disparities between

males and females that society must address instead of absorbing a patriarchal society. In

general, all feminist frameworks view patriarchy as the source of violence and gender inequality.

The expression and consequences of patriarchy and responses to IPV have varied significantly

though from one perspective to another (Becker et al., 2022).

Social Constructivism

This theory emphasizes that concepts about the world and realities are constructed in the

person's cognition based on the complexity of their backgrounds and cultural perceptions

(Creswell & Poth, 2017). The complexity of the meaning changes based on the person's social

interaction with others and their surroundings, education, or maturation (Heppner et al., 2015).

According to Burr and Dick (2017) the social constructivism approach has several key features.

First, language refers to how people represent their perceptions of the world and people using

language. Second, cultural and historical specificity refers to the variation of world

classifications based on location and time. Third, discourse and disciplinary power refer to the

set of meanings that people use to make sense of the world and their experiences and position

themselves in a way that influences their reactions to follow the norms of a society. Fourth,

power relations refer to the individual and societal position of some people that allows them to

have more power or authority and set the norms that others are expected to follow. Fifth,

relativism means there is no definitive true interpretation of the world or people. However, there

is a constructed interpretation of the experiences and identities (Burr & Dick, 2017). According

to Charmaz the constructivism grounded theory suggests the relativism of multiple social

realities, acknowledges mutual knowledge creation by the viewer and the viewed, and aims to

interpret the meaning the person conveys (Allen, 2010). It is about the meaning associated with the experience, not the experience itself (Heppner et al., 2015).

Using this theory in a phenomenological design allows one to comprehend and interpret the constructed internal experience of the participants through the process of interpreting all forms of the collected data rather than just collecting data (Heppner et al., 2015; Nichols, 2018). It includes the researcher's effort and interaction with the participants, understanding their process of making sense of their personal and social world, to present perceptions that bring the readers into a more direct connection to their world (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015; Nichols, 2018). Instead of assuming that all women experience IPV in the same way, using social constructivism to understand the participants' experiences helped in exploring and understanding the unique meaning of each participant's experience. In addition, this approach could relate to the variety of women's intersectional differences in experiences and identities (Baird et al., 2021). The constructivism approach is not a linear process that provides a non-hierarchical paradigm; it incorporates and recognizes each participant's unique voice, inherent values, and different standpoints (Leisey, 2007).

A qualitative research method that explores the experiences of abused women as they interpret them is best explored by feminist methodology (Allen, 2010). Dr. Allen assembled the criteria for research from a feminist standpoint approach from other works of literature. According to her feminist research aims to improve women's lives in some way or another by considering women's needs, interests, and experiences. Exploring women's experiences should be interpreted based on feminist conceptions of gender relations according to women's interpretations. Feminist research methods are used in research projects by people identifying themselves as feminists or as part of the women's movement. Researchers who identify as

feminists or members of the women's movement use the feminist method in their research. Feminist researchers begin with the various experiences of women and process them in a way that leads to liberating learning. The research must emphasize the importance of studying personal and private aspects of women's lives. It creates relationships within research that are not exploitative. Reflectivity and emotion are valued as sources of insight and fundamental parts of research, and researchers must figure out how to present the complexity of social and cultural lives in a meaningful way (Allen, 2010).

This study aimed to use these criteria to hear and interpret the women's narratives, allowing them to influence professional practice development by increasing professionals' understanding of the personal and cultural complexities underlying women's decision-making in the face of severe intimate abuse (Allen, 2010). The feminist perspective was strengthened by incorporating constructivism theory, which could account for the structural elements of women's lives that affect their freedom of action and their constructions of meaning and responses to IPV. Additionally, it enabled the exploration of the feminist analysis of intimate partner violence, situating it within each woman's unique meaning-making process as she reacts in her own unique way, influenced by her social and cultural context. Combining constructivism theory and the feminist approach in studying IPV provided an interpretive characterization of the world of abused women rather than an exact representation of it. Moreover, this approach can be used to explore the shifting interactions between various realities and learn about people's behaviors, their interactions with their surroundings, their values, the meaning of these values, and the discourses they use to interpret their surroundings. The challenge was to represent these experiences and their constructed meanings as faithfully as possible within a framework that other people, who did not directly hear these voices, could comprehend and use (Allen, 2010).

Related Literature

Overview of the Saudi Vision 2030

In April 2016, the Saudi government launched the Saudi Vision 2030 (National Transformation Program, n.d.). Vision 2030 is constructed based on three themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. Concerning this study, the focus was to understand the first theme, vibrant society, which is built around the idea that

> members of this society live in accordance with the Islamic principle of moderation, are proud of their national identity and their ancient cultural heritage, enjoy a good life in a beautiful environment, are protected by caring families and are supported by an empowering social and health care system. (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d., p. 13)

A vibrant society with fulfilling lives focuses on "the happiness and fulfillment of citizens and residents" that "can only be achieved through promoting physical, psychological, and social well-being. At the heart of our Vision is a society in which all enjoy a good quality of life, a healthy lifestyle, and an attractive living environment" (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d., p. 22-23). Moreover, the goal of a vibrant society with strong foundations is "to promote and reinvigorate social development in order to build a strong and productive society. We will strengthen our families, provide the education that builds our children's fundamental characters, and establish empowering health and social care systems" (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d., p. 28-29).

To translate Vision 2030 into action, the government launched several initiatives called Vision Realization Programs (VRPs) (Chowdhury et al., 2021). The National Transformation Program (NTP) was the first program of the VRPs with many initiatives and strategies aiming to increase government operational excellence, establish economic enabler infrastructure, and improve living standards (National Transformation Program, n.d.). The NTP encouraged

collaborative work between various entities from diverse governmental, private, and non-governmental sectors to achieve these goals (Chowdhury et al., 2021; National Transformation Program, n.d.). NTP has two phases, and each phase lasts for five years. The NTP's first phase (2016-2021) had major achievements in its 37 objectives across eight themes. Among these achievements were transforming healthcare services, empowering women by increasing their participation in the labor market, and improving the quality of justice services. The second phase (2021-2025) has seven themes with 34 objectives. Besides continuing to increase women's participation in the labor market at all levels and provide services that ease their participation, NTP will collaborate with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development to enhance services and protections for women and children. An initiative in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice aims to improve the notary services to ensure accessibility and promptness of notary services and maintain women's and children's rights. NTP has collaborated with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development through a few initiatives that explicitly address domestic violence. Among these initiatives were operating and developing the Center for Reporting Domestic Abuse and Child Protection, developing Awareness campaigns to protect the community from domestic abuse, increasing public awareness about the services provided to abuse victims, developing an integrated package of preventive and remedial developmental programs for the victims and rehabilitation programs for the aggressors, and developing mechanisms of cooperation between all sectors concerned with domestic violence (National Transformation Program, n.d.). However, none of these initiatives actually address intimate partner violence, even though it is the most common type of violence against women in Arab countries (Hawcroft et al., 2019).

Several NTPs' objectives and initiatives were transferred into existing and new Vision Realization Programs (VRPs), such as improving healthcare services and living standards (National Transformation Program, n.d.). The Quality of Life Program's primary objective is to enhance individuals' and families' living standards and quality of life. The program aims to achieve its strategic objectives in six sectors: sports, culture and heritage, entertainment, tourism, urban design, and security. The only sector that specifically and directly addresses the quality of women's lives is the sports sector, encouraging more women's participation in professional sports (Quality of Life Program, n.d.). The objectives of healthcare services were transferred from NTP to the Health Sector Transformation Program (HSTP) to facilitate access to health services, improve the quality and efficiency of services, promote the prevention of health risks, and enhance traffic safety (Health Sector Transformation Program, 2021). The main four strategic cornerstones are better health, care, sustainability, and workforce. One of the goals of achieving better health is to focus on prevention rather than just treatment to address critical health challenges and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases, including common mental illnesses. Among the improvements that better care and a better workforce focus on are increasing the number of healthcare providers and the quality of services (Health Sector Transformation Program, 2021). The HSTP has seven themes: the new model of care (MOC), provider reforms, financing reforms, governance growth, private and third sector engagement, workforce development, and eHealth development (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Ministry of Health, 2019).

The new model of care (MOC) aims to support people with their health needs and physical, mental, and social well-being (Ministry of Health, 2019.). It focuses on improving treatments and care modalities for individuals by emphasizing prevention and health awareness

in society (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Ministry of Health, 2019). The five principles that guide the

MOC are empowering people and their families, providing knowledge as part of the treatment,

integrating the health system from people's perspectives, taking a preventive approach instead of

focusing on a curative approach, providing treatment that focuses on the curative outcomes, and

having a patient-friendly environment (Health Sector Transformation Program, 2021; Ministry of

Health, 2019). Based on these principles, the MOC developed forty-two interventions across six

systems of care, placing patients' needs at the center of the whole system (Ministry of Health,

2019). The system of care is the layout or configuration of all services available to a patient to

meet a need: keeping well, planned care, safe birth, urgent care, chronic conditions, and the last

phase of life (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Ministry of Health, 2019). The core aim of MOC is

activating people, emphasizing that individuals and their families play a role in staying well and

caring for their health by practicing self-care, raising awareness, and empowering each other.

Healthy communities encourage people to take a more active role in living a healthy lifestyle,

provide them with relevant information, and give them access to community care and wellness

resources (Chowdhury et al., 2021). Even though the MOC outlines a comprehensive care

system to address health needs, six essential enablers must be present for implementation: the

workforce, eHealth, corporatization, governance, healthcare financing, and private sector

involvement (Chowdhury et al., 2021).

Any strategy must first identify the possible risks that affect its design, implementation,

and operation to mitigate them. The Health Sector Transformation Program faces some risks,

including current and future gaps in workforce capacity and abilities, difficulties in obtaining

timely and proportionate investments in the strategy, such as the low investment in mental health

services in the model of care, and uncertainty regarding the timing and nature of integrating other

governmental services into the transformation strategy (Ministry of Health, 2019). According to

Dr. AlHadi, Chair of SABIC Psychological Health Research and Applications, the major

challenge for the Health Sector Transformation is the disconnection between different healthcare

centers and the executives or supervisors who are not complying with these programs' initiatives

(AlHadi, 2022). When addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) in the healthcare system, it is

crucial to have healthcare settings and professionals capable of utilizing skills and knowledge,

along with screening or measurement tools or other resources, to respond effectively to IPV

cases (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). Although the Health Sector Transformation aims to ensure

the physical, mental, and social well-being of everyone, including women, through the new

model of care, there is still a need to determine how mental health needs should be given priority

because these services are relatively underdeveloped (Ministry of Health, 2019). Dr. AlHadi

asserted during the conference, "Mental Health Services Between Reality and Hope and

Psychiatry Research Day," that the reality of mental health services in Saudi Arabia has not yet

met the hopes of Vision 2030 (AlHadi, 2022).

According to Alnufaie and Beghum (2021) Saudi Arabia has long been regarded as one

of the world's most restrictive countries. Therefore, as part of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has

made significant improvements to empower women and secure their rights, needs, and

autonomy, as well as their participation and leadership in society in various disciplines such as

education, health care, law, and politics. However, due to historical, cultural, religious, and

organizational factors such as a lack of public knowledge of the necessity of women's

participation, gender bias, and misconceptions about Islam, women's empowerment in Saudi

Arabia remains complex and problematic (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021). Ali et al. (2021)

explained that, as intended in Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia aims to improve women's financial

self-efficacy and financial coping skills. Financial empowerment is critical for Saudi women, who are frequently excluded from financial obligations and decision-making, making them more prone to economic abuse, which is one of the most harmful and overlooked forms of violence. Therefore, the Saudi government intends to improve women's financial literacy, financial knowledge, management skills, personal finance confidence, and financial empowerment through well-planned public policy initiatives to increase their active participation in Saudi's socio-economic development. They are, however, insufficient due to the size of the population and the geographical location of Saudi Arabia (Ali et al., 2021). In addition, Alsehaimi and Helal (2021) stated that the Saudi government has started to develop policies, regulations, programs, and campaigns, as well as collaborate with other organizations, to combat domestic violence and provide support for victims of violence. Although Vision 2030 objectives have recently had a significant influence on preventing domestic violence, these programs and efforts aim to economically and socially empower women so that their legal independence benefits the entire country. However, the country has always been controlled by Islamic religion and cultural conventions, resulting in many limitations, particularly in ratifying new laws and policies. Most Saudis adhere to cultural and religious views that advocate for physical punishment as a form of discipline and regard domestic violence as an internal problem that should remain within the family structure. As a result, Saudi views about these programs must change. In addition, the government and judiciary system should adopt rigorous legal frameworks to respond to violence and train employees to deal with and administer these policies and programs (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines intimate partner violence (IPV) as any act inside an intimate relationship that results in physical, psychological, or sexual harm to the individuals involved in the relationship (WHO, 2012). In Arab Islamic cultures, such as Saudi, the word "intimate" refers to being engaged or married; otherwise, it can be offensive or insulting to Muslim women because it is prohibited to have an intimate relationship outside of marriage (Alhabib et al., 2013).

Prevalence of IPV in Islamic Countries

In Arab countries, the median prevalence of lifetime exposure to any form of IPV was 61%, with controlling behaviors being the highest (88.4%), followed by emotional/psychological (48.8%%), then economic IPV (36.9%). For exposure to violence within the last year, the median prevalence of any type of violence was 41.6%, emotional/psychological was the highest (37.4%), then controlling behavior (28.4%). Emotional/psychological violence was also the highest during pregnancy (median 28.1%). One out of every two women experienced emotional/psychological violence, one out of every three experienced physical violence, and one out of every five experienced sexual abuse from an intimate partner at a certain time in life (Hawcroft et al., 2019). The prevalence of emotional/psychological violence ranged from 5 to 91% (Elghossain et al., 2019).

In Egypt, a study conducted by Sayed et al. (2014) found that about 75.9% of the women were exposed to domestic violence (DV), with psychological abuse being the highest form of DV, specifically exposed to shouting (69.5%). Financial abuse was also reported as psychological abuse, with 32.6% (Sayed et al., 2014). In North Africa (NA) and the Middle Eastern (ME) countries, the highest prevalence of lifetime violence was in Turkey (89.3%), and

the highest violence prevalence over the last year was in Jordan (98%). The lowest rate of

lifetime violence was in Lebanon (35%), Jordan (50%), and Yemen (54.5%). Turkey had the

highest rate of physical, psychological, and economic abuse (95%, 87.7%, and 78.3%,

respectively), and Iran had the highest sexual violence (81.5%) (Kisa et al., 2021).

Prevalence of IPV in Saudi Arabia

An analysis of several studies conducted in Saudi Arabia between 2009 and 2017

revealed that about 39.3-44.5% of women experienced violence, with emotional/psychological

IPV being the highest (22-36 %), followed by physical IPV (9-29%), then sexual IPV (4.8–6.9%)

(Kazzaz et al., 2019). Between 2013 and 2014, a study by AlDosary (2016) found that about

75.1% of Saudi women experienced emotional/psychological abuse, 57% physical abuse, and

34.4% sexual abuse (AlDosary, 2016). A major analysis of the studies between 1970 and 2018

found that emotional/psychological abuse was the highest in Saudi Arabia (75.1%), followed by

physical abuse (57%), then sexual abuse (12.7%), and only one study measured economic

violence (26%) (Kisa et al., 2021). During COVID-19, most women experienced multiple types

of abuse (95.6%), followed by emotional/psychological abuse (87.7%) (Alharbi et al., 2021).

The Western Region of Saudi Arabia. In the holy city of Medina, about 57.8% of

women experienced physical and/or emotional abuse, while 30.9% experienced emotional abuse

alone (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009). In Jeddah, between 2011 and 2012, about 34% of the

participants experienced violence. Emotional/psychological abuse was the highest (29%),

followed by physical abuse (11.6%), then sexual abuse (4.8%) (Fageeh, 2014). In Jeddah, Taif,

and the holy city of Makkah, about 48.47% of women experienced emotional abuse between

2017 and 2018 (Wali et al., 2020).

The Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. In Alhsa, in 2010, about 39.3% of women experienced IPV. About 35.9% experienced emotional/psychological IPV, with 18.9% experiencing it alone, 11% with physical violence, 4.5% with all types of violence, and 1.5% with sexual IPV. The most common types of emotional/psychological IPV were insulting (73.1%), belittling (60.8%), intimidation (54%), and neglect (47.4%) (Afifi et al., 2011).

The Northern Region of Saudi Arabia. In Aljouf city, in 2021, about 92.6% of women experienced emotional/psychological IPV, with 39.3% of them experiencing all types of IPV; 25.4% experienced emotional/psychological IPV alone, 24.6% experienced emotional/psychological and physical IPV, and 4.1% experienced emotional/psychological and sexual IPV (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022). In Arar City, in 2014, all the participants experienced emotional/psychological IPV, and 80.7% experienced physical IPV (Abo-Elfetoh & Abd El-Mawgod, 2015).

The Central Region of Saudi Arabia. In Riyadh, the capital city, a study conducted in 2011 found that emotional abuse was the most common type of domestic violence (DV) (69.4%), followed by social isolation (34%) and then economic abuse (26%) (Barnawi, 2017). Between 2014 and 2015, the highest form of abuse was controlling behaviors (almost 37%); 70% experienced severe controlling behaviors, while about 30% had moderate severity. Emotional IPV was the second highest (22%), with about 20% severe abuse and 80% moderate (Alquaiz et al., 2017). In 2015 and 2016, about 25.5% of women experienced emotional abuse, and 25.3% experienced economic abuse (Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2019).

Risk Factors and Attitudes Toward IPV

Many risk factors for IPV occur at different levels: individual, family or relational, social or community, and societal or national (Alosaimi, 2019). At different levels, it is critical to

understand how these risk factors shape the person's attitude toward violence against women in different situations. In other words, understanding the person's attitude toward violence against women can be predicted by measuring individual-level factors such as marital status, educational level, working status, place of residence, age, and power imbalance between the spouses, along with the national level factors such as gender inequality, patriarchal culture, and policies (Hayes & Boyd, 2017).

Individual Level Risk Factors. Previous childhood abuse, the abuser's substance abuse or smoking, the husband's or wife's chronic diseases, male masculine or aggressive tendencies in men, younger or increased age of the wife, and the educational level of both the husband and the wife are all risk factors for IPV at the individual level (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Alhalal, 2016; Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020; Zakar et al., 2013). In a study conducted in Arar, university-educated husbands were less likely to abuse their wives (Abo-Elfetoh & Abd El-Mawgod, 2015). Interestingly, more educated women were more likely to be abused due to the nature of the Saudi patriarchal culture and the educated women's inclination to challenge men's authority (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Barnawi, 2017). In Lebanon, students with more years of education were more hostile toward women. Moreover, female students were more likely to hold equality attitudes about women's roles, to be more compassionate toward women, to not accept wife beating, to believe that help should be provided, and to believe that husbands should be responsible and punished (Obeid et al., 2010). In Spain, about 33% of the people with victim-blaming attitudes were older, had less education, perceived themselves with low social status, viewed violence as a common issue in society, and knew a victim of violence (Gracia & Tomás, 2014).

The person's religious belief, which is an individual-level factor that has a significant role in shaping the person's attitude toward violence, cannot be examined without looking at national-level factors such as predominant religion, religious rituals attendance, percentage of religious group population, religious diversity, aggregated gender inequality, and the presence of domestic violence legislation (Chon, 2021). For example, although identification with Islam is associated with a higher level of acceptability of wife-beating, a person living in a primarily Muslim country or a country with a high percentage of Muslims does not necessarily display this attitude. Also, a Muslim with a high level of belief religiosity has a lower acceptance of wife-beating than a Muslim with a low level of belief religiosity (Chon, 2021). Yang (2021) highlighted the same concept in his findings that people from different religions have different attitudes about violence against women shaped by their religious beliefs, not by their religious services attendance (Yang, 2021). Golriz and Miner (2021) also found no significant association between Islam and individual attitudes toward accepting wife-beating. Their findings oppose the idea that being Muslim means having more conservative beliefs regarding wife-beating because most people in Egypt (65.45%) were under the liberal class, indicating that the majority did not justify wife-beating (Golriz & Miner, 2021).

Family or Relational Level Risk Factors. This level refers to the supportive framework in which the male dominates the decision-making process and the relationship quality (Alosaimi, 2019). The main risk factors at this level are marriage without the wife's approval, the age gap between the spouses, living in a controlling relationship, divorce restrictions, and polygamy (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Alhalal, 2016; Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020). Although polygamy is acceptable in Islam, it is a significant risk factor for IPV because many men use it to threaten their wives (Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2019; Tashkandi

& Rasheed, 2009). Some women in polygamous marriages felt overwhelmingly jealous or trapped in their marriages where their rights were denied or rejected by their husbands, who have narrow views about women's rights and roles. Therefore, they felt that committing violence against their husbands, who are their guardians, was their last option to save their lives and reclaim their freedom (Khadhar, 2022). Men in Arab countries, and Saudi Arabia, are generally viewed as the head of the house. It is difficult for them to accept that a woman can make her own decisions without his interference in her life. They view a woman's role as primarily limited to that of a housewife and mother, keeping the morals of obedience and self-sacrifice, maintaining the family's status, and supporting other family members (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Obeid et al., 2010). About 49% of Saudi women believe that obeying their husbands is a character trait of a good wife, 80.5% believe that conflicts should be discussed only within the family structure, and 59% believe that the husband is the family's boss (Eldoseri, 2012). Suspicion of the wife's fidelity was one of the most common risk factors for emotional/psychological IPV in Arar, a city in the northern region of Saudi Arabia (21%) (Abo-Elfetoh & Abd El-Mawgod, 2015). In the southern region of Saudi Arabia, about 51.7% of the participants justified wife-beating in at least one of the situations presented in the study, and 48.3% rejected wife-beating in all situations. 43% support using violence if the wife insulted her husband, 32.5% if she disobeyed the husband, 19.9% if she neglected the husband or her children, 12.6% if she went out without her husband's permission, 9.9% if she argued with him, and 0.7% if she burned the food (Dhaher, 2020).

The family function significantly shapes people's attitudes toward violence against women (Alzoubi & Ali, 2021). Having an accepting attitude toward violence can negatively affect the parents' functioning and involvement with their children by reinforcing these

traditional gender norms and roles and negatively impeding the child's development. To be more specific, fathers' justifying attitudes toward violence against women decrease the fathers' functioning and involvement in childcare. In comparison, mothers' justifying attitudes toward violence against women decrease the level of both fathers' and mothers' involvement and functioning in childcare (Turunç & Kisbu-Sakarya, 2022). Consequently, this will shape adolescents' attitudes toward violence. For example, Jordanian adolescents justify wife-beating if the wife was unfaithful (50.5%), continually disobeyed him (22.1%), insulted him in front of his friends (21.4%), disrespected his family (17.7%) or relatives (10.7%), and did not meet his expectations (7.3%). In examining the predictors for their attitudes, cultural beliefs about controlling female sexuality, moral neutralization of violence, and harsh parental discipline were predictors of accepting attitudes. At the same time, religiosity was not a significant predictor (Schuster et al., 2021). In Lebanon, a study exploring university students' beliefs about violence against women found that more than 50% of the students did not justify wife beating. However, about 26% thought a sexually unfaithful wife should be beaten, and 10-14% were ambivalent about situations where a wife can be beaten, such as disrespecting the family or relatives and insulting in front of friends. Younger university students were more likely to have non-justification beliefs, to believe in helping victims, to be more compassionate toward women, and to practice their religion (Obeid et al., 2010). A study by Copp et al. (2019) conducted in the United States found that although most adolescents (86%) showed a rejecting attitude toward violence, their acceptance of violence was relatively high in some situations involving violent actions or harm to a child, a family member, or a loved one (Copp et al., 2019).

Social or Community Level Risk Factors. This level refers to formal or informal social group participation (Alosaimi, 2019). Employment, financial dependency, low income, social

stigma, and socio-cultural influence are all significant factors at this level (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Alhalal, 2016; Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020). Because unemployed women experience a higher level of violence, the Saudi government is trying to protect Saudi women from violence by empowering them through education and employment to increase their income, economic power, and social status (Shiraz, 2016). To empower women economically and socially, the Saudi government developed policies, laws, public policies, and initiatives to enhance women's financial literacy, financial knowledge, management skills, and confidence in personal finances so that they can be legally and financially independent, benefiting the entire nation (Ali et al., 2021; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

Although men and women in Jordan generally had less justifying attitudes toward violence, men and people living with extended family or in rural areas were more likely to accept violence against women, particularly physical and emotional/psychological violence. Based on the situations, men and women demonstrated their attitudes about violence differently (Alzoubi & Ali, 2021). In Lebanon, college students with wealthy parents were less hostile toward women (Obeid et al., 2010). European American/White college students seemed to have a less accepting attitude toward violence than African American/Black and Asian American students. On the other hand, Latinx/Hispanic students were not different from European American/White students. However, they had more tolerance for violence, which reflects cultural values (Zark & Satyen, 2022).

Societal or National Level Risk Factors. These factors are drawn from the cultural norms, values, and beliefs that foster the dominance of males over females (Alosaimi, 2019). Gender inequality, cultural norms, and religious beliefs that normalize various violent behaviors against women are among the national risk factors (Aldosari, 2017; AlDosary, 2016; Alhalal,

2016). Although most Saudis (69.5%) showed a rejecting attitude toward violence against women and just about 11.6% showed acceptability of it, most of the participants who had a rejecting attitude were females (85.3%) with a higher educational level (70%) and living in low living standards (70%) (Selim et al., 2022). Many Saudis still hold to their cultural and religious beliefs that advocate for physical punishment as a form of discipline and view violence as an internal problem that should remain within the family structure (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). About 44% of Saudi women believed that people outside the family should not intervene if the husband mistreats the wife (Eldoseri, 2012). Saudi Arabia is a masculine society that underestimates women's ability to work, negotiate, or make decisions, as well as a society that has particular views of women's roles, which makes empowering women in Saudi very challenging and difficult (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021). Although some Saudis justify their violence by religion, Islam never promotes or condones family abuse. However, most studies seemed to avoid exploring the role of Islamic teaching in producing the circle of family abuse because it is a sensitive topic in a conservative culture (Alosaimi, 2019).

Religion and religious teaching have a major role in shaping many people's living standards, regulations, and beliefs, guided by their interpretation and teaching of religious texts and traditions (Alsufyyan, 2016). Unfortunately, some Muslim males are misinterpreting and misapplying the Quranic verses and religious texts that deal with the wife's disobedience to justify their violent behaviors, resulting in more tolerance for couple or family violence (Alhabdan, 2015). They are referring to the Quranic verse of the Al-Nisa chapter that states:

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But

those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance [first] advise them; [then if they persist],

forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them [lightly]. But if they obey you [once more],

seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand (The Holy Quran,

4:34).

According to Ammar (2007), the interpretation of this verse has four schools (Ammar, 2007).

According to the strictest patriarchal interpretation, wife-beating is acceptable if the wife

does not obey her husband, which is the interpretation pursued by many leading Islamic scholars.

The second interpretation allowed wife-beating within specific parameters of behaviors such as

disloyalty. This school views wife-beating as a last resort and must consider the wife's safety. It

is meant to avoid divorce, but should be the last option and must not be inflicted with anything

larger than a toothbrush. The third interpretation indicates that although wife-beating is allowed,

it is not desirable and is inconsistent with the general principles of other verses in the Quran. The

fourth interpretation uses the linguistic rules to show that the word "idribuhunna" does not mean

beat, hit, or strike them, even slightly, because it does not adhere to the logical sequence of this

verse and the general spirit of the Quran that offers to bring harmony to the marriage (Ammar,

2007). The Quran has many verses that promote gender equality for all its believers. However,

time and context have permitted people who desire to advocate for male power and domination

to distort religious interpretations in order to disempower, suppress, and neglect Muslim women.

In the early days of Islam, Muslim women were regarded for their capacity to provide insight

into Islam as a religion. The Prophet Muhammad's wife, Aisha, was a great source of knowledge

about Islam. In the last fourteen hundred years, Muslim women were eliminated from

interpreting Quranic verses due to patriarchy. Therefore, rather than holding to these distorted

representations asserted by males who want to preserve control over women's lives, it is crucial

to acknowledge Islam as a religion of equality (Galloway, 2014). According to Alosaimi (2019)

the primary source of law in Saudi Arabia is the Quran and the Sunnah, the prophet's sayings.

However, Saudi law failed to meet Islamic principles and international standards in preventing

domestic violence (DV). The issue of DV must not be simplified by only being examined

through religious interpretations. The real problem in Saudi Arabia is the lack of the principles of

equality. Despite all the considerable progress toward gender equality and the advancement of

women's standing in Saudi Arabia, women still do not have legal equality or actual equality with

men in the current Saudi laws. The employed policies related to women in Saudi are plagued by

a guardianship system that affects women throughout their lives, which contradicts Islam's

viewpoint (Alosaimi, 2019).

Gracia et al. (2020) stated that violence against women is a broad and complex

phenomenon deeply embedded in social and cultural norms. In their systematic review of studies

about the attitudes toward IPV against women in eleven European Union countries, they found

20 different labels to define attitudes about IPV against women and grouped them into four sets.

The first set is legitimation, including terms such as victim-blaming, justification, or

legitimation. The second set is acceptability, including terms such as acceptability, tolerance, or

approval. The third set is attitudes toward intervention, including terms such as willingness to

help, attitudes toward reporting, or propensity to intervene. The fourth set is perceived severity,

including terms such as perceived severity, seriousness, or minimization. They also found that

gender has a significant role in shaping these attitudes (Gracia et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, a conservative and patriarchal culture, a qualitative study by Zakar et al.

(2013) found that most participants believed women have a different nature than men, which

justifies and allows for male supremacy in gender relations. Also, the desirable cultural role of

Pakistani men to be dominant and commanding and not to be a wife's subordinate makes some men pretend to have this role, especially in front of relatives. Some participants believed that women must be treated as unique creatures of God. Women are believed to be emotional, short-tempered, and short-sighted. Therefore, men should be responsible for decision-making, wisely analyze women's behaviors, and not fall into the traps of women's talk. However, some participants disagreed with this and viewed women as wise as men. Moreover, many Pakistani women devote their whole lives to caring for their families, which is their culturally-defined primary role. Some of the participants were concerned about the westernization of Pakistani women and the possible consequences on the family, while others were in favor of empowering women but imposed conditions and restrictions on working women, such as giving her salary to her husband, not spending it on unnecessary things, or taking good care of the children. Furthermore, Pakistani men are responsible for ensuring that their wives live up to the women's ideal roles: to be submissive, patient, sacrificing, less talkative, shy, and protector of the family's honor. Therefore, they misuse culture and religion to justify their violent actions to correct the women's behaviors if they damage the family honor by violating these ideal roles. The participants agreed that women should be respected if they behave correctly according to the cultural norms and religious values that place responsibility on women to ensure their husbands' happiness and honor. However, one participant thought that violence against women is against religion that gives women great respect and rights. Finally, most participants did not think that IPV is a serious issue in Pakistan and that more serious issues need to be studied instead of IPV (Zakar et al., 2013). A study comparing public attitudes toward violence in China and Spain by Yang et al. (2021) found that people in China also had less awareness of the existence of violence, less understanding of the victim's situation, and less consideration of the seriousness of

violent behaviors than Spanish people. Women had more awareness about issues related to violence against women, had more understanding of the victim's situation, had less tolerance for violence, and rated violence against women as more serious than men did. Younger people had less conservative attitudes (Yang et al., 2021).

A multilevel cross-sectional study to examine the role of an individual and country or national risk factors and their influence on attitudes justifying violence against women by Serrano-Montilla et al. (2020) stated that the individual-level predictors of attitudes justifying violence against women (sociodemographic, sexism, self-transcendence, and conservation values) were higher in countries with higher gender inequality (national-level predictors). Their findings suggested that the most significant variation in attitudes toward violence against women can be found within countries and depends on belonging to specific groups. Moreover, individual factors that led to a higher rate of justifying violence against women were gender (men), age (older), higher level of education, marriage, and sexism. In contrast, self-transcendence had less justification for violence against women. The country-level factors showed that having low country and regional gender inequality reduced individual attitudes toward violence against women. In other words, a country's level or regional gender inequality moderated the relations between individual-level factors (Serrano-Montilla et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the lack of social and professional support or resources, the absence of validated and reliable screening or measurement tools, and the lack of adequate training for professionals working with IPV victims are all risk factors at the societal or country level (Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Wali et al., 2020). How organizations respond to IPV cases impacts how victims resist or react to violence (Osborn & Rajah, 2020), especially in the healthcare system because it is the most critical setting to identify, manage, and support victims

of IPV (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020). The use of screening, by any method, is a fundamental first step in identifying and responding to IPV cases with its own barriers and challenges at an individual professional level, clinical level, and political level (O'Doherty et al., 2015). In Saudi Arabia, there is a major lack of reliable, valid, and culturally applicable assessment tools (Alhalal, 2016), and the need for more screening programs is crucial (Wali et al., 2020). Therefore, a multilayered approach designed based on the needs of patients, clinicians, and institutions is required to implement screening procedures and improve patient-provider communication effectively (Beynon et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2016).

Professionals working with IPV victims, particularly in the health care system, must develop a broad understanding of the complexity of IPV and the possible practical, medical, individual, and psychological challenges (Husso et al., 2012). Most doctors in Australia believe that they are ready and prepared to deal with IPV cases. With their understanding of IPV issues and good communication skills, they believe they have the ability and the emotional, motivational, and attitudinal ability to identify and deal with IPV cases (Po-Yan Leung et al., 2017). On the other hand, many barriers were found in Canada and the United States, such as lack of time, training, clear guidance or procedure, and patient-provider communication (Beynon et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2016). According to Ibrahim et al. (2021) healthcare professionals in Egypt, a more conservative culture, were less confident in their ability to deal with IPV cases due to the lack of training, limited system support and referral management, ethical issues, the professionals' attitudes, and perceived victim-related issues. None of the healthcare professionals received any training on how to screen or respond to IPV cases. The majority of them (75.1%) did not want to interfere with the couples' ways of solving their conflicts, 53.5% were afraid that IPV screening would irritate the non-abused patients, 59.7% thought that investigating the causes

of IPV was not part of their medical practice, 48% reported not having enough time to ask about

IPV, 62.1% were not confident about referring the abused patients, and 65.4% believed that

social workers do not have the guidance or training to help victims of IPV (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

In Pakistan, doctors were also concerned about the lack of time with their patients, considered

IPV a private issue, and worried about their personal safety when dealing with IPV cases.

Moreover, while most of the doctors in this study by McCauley et al. (2017) were confident that

they had enough knowledge about IPV and had acquired the skills to build a rapport and trust

with IPV victims, wanted to have more training, and knew the referral procedure, policymakers

were still concerned about the doctors' ability to identify and respond to IPV cases (McCauley et

al., 2017).

Similarly, in Riyadh city in Saudi Arabia, most of the doctors lacked the knowledge,

skills, or training, were unaware of their role, had an unclear organizational system, had limited

time with their patients, and had no access to other agencies (Almujadidi et al., 2022). In

addition, professionals working with IPV issues in Saudi Arabia did not understand the

implications of the law, and the majority did not know the definition of DV, which hindered the

progress of change in the country. Unfortunately, there was no documentation about the process

of dealing with violent cases due to the bureaucratic barriers and the absence of a unified strategy

to deal with violence (Alosaimi, 2019). There is also a lack of resources to help women living

independently, forcing women to return to their abusive relationships (Ali et al., 2021). There is

still a need for a proper implication of the policies and collaboration between the multisectoral

systems (Kazzaz et al., 2019).

The Saudi government has devoted so much effort since 2004 to combat domestic

violence, and the victim's right to report any type of abuse has become legally guaranteed.

However, the judicial implementation of the laws is still a problem. One of the successful governmental efforts was the development of the National Family Safety Program (NFSP). Nevertheless, NFSP focuses mainly on child maltreatment but not domestic violence. This requires the government to allow NFSP to take more leading powers to fight violence, especially since they have qualified staff, a coherent strategy, and many resources to deal with DV issues more effectively. The Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that evolved throughout the last decades is another successful effort by the Saudi government that became the foundation to combat DV in Saudi Arabia, especially General Recommendation No. 19 (GR19). It declares that gender violence is a form of discrimination against women and aims to combat DV against women. Although GR19 was fundamental and most suitable to The International Human Rights Law regime (IHRL), the Saudi law failed to completely prohibit DV due to a flawed definition and insufficient protection against the local forms of abuse that must be prohibited. Moreover, the absence of family law, which may further strengthen the compatibility between the two legal regimes, is another crucial aspect that increases the prevalence of some sort of abuse. It is worth noting that the discrepancies between international human rights laws and the Islamic perspective on combating domestic abuse are minor. At the same time, there are some differences in their perspectives on some women's rights. As a result, with careful analysis, the Saudi domestic violence statute can be changed to meet international human rights standards (Alosaimi, 2019).

Alosaimi (2019) continued by explaining that the Saudi domestic violence law recognizes violence as a serious threat to the safety of all people within the family sphere, including family members, domestic workers, and other people under the abuser's legal responsibility. However, while it included all forms of abuse, it did not include economic abuse and had a vague definition

of guardianship. Furthermore, there were some gaps in the provision of law relating to the

mandatory reporting by workers and identity protection of the people who report cases of abuse.

The law did not provide protection orders for violence victims or suitable criminal remedies

similar to international standards (Alosaimi, 2019).

Women's Reaction to IPV

The various reactions of women to violence can be attributed to many factors, such as the

complexity of the situation, denial, fear of social stigmatization, concern for their children,

economic dependence on the abuser, fear of divorce, desire for change in the abuser's attitude,

and lack of supportive resources (Alosaimi, 2019). According to Fleming and Resick (2017) the

age of the women, level of depression, psychological hostility, PTSD-related symptoms,

perceived usefulness of supportive resources, and perceived controllability of the abuse are

significant predictors of help-seeking behaviors (Fleming & Resick, 2017). Friends and family,

particularly female members, are the most common source of informal support for IPV victims,

especially if they provide positive reactions. These positive reactions include emotional support,

validation of the victims' feelings and experiences, advice, and practical support, which have a

major positive impact on the victim's mental health and well-being (Sylaska & Edwards, 2014).

In Canada, although the primary source of support is informal sources, women's decision

to seek help is shaped by their education, age, employment, level of income, social support from

family and friends, mental health, length of the marriage, and the availability of social support

(Kaukinen et al., 2013). In the United States, Flicker et al. (2011) found that women with a

higher level of education and more severe abuse sought help from more than one source, while

older women were less likely to seek help from family. The authors found that ethnicity had a

role in specific help-seeking behaviors. Although Latinas were like white women in seeking help

from family, they were less likely to seek help from friends than white women. Moreover, African American women were less likely to seek mental health professionals' help than white women, and Latinas and African American women were more likely to seek police assistance than white women (Flicker et al., 2011). Cho et al. (2020) found that Black victims and older women used more informal sources for support. They also found that victims of emotional/psychological and physical IPV were less inclined to seek help than victims of emotional/psychological IPV alone. Women with more social life hindrances and mental or physical health impacts sought help more often than women who had mental health consequences only (Cho et al., 2020). Thomas et al. (2015) stated that the assistance provided by many formal services emphasizing safety for abused women could cause many negative consequences for them. About 62% of the women who sought help from formal services in three states in the Northern region of the United States reported that they had to sacrifice too much to remain safe. Moreover, 55% reported that safety caused new problems for them and their loved ones, and 50% reported that these problems were often unanticipated (Thomas et al., 2015).

In Spain, the women's reactions depend on the severity of the violence, especially when it comes to seeking formal help. Abused women disclose violence and seek help. Women with less severe abuse are more likely to underestimate their experience and not seek formal help. The most common type of informal help was talking to someone within their social circle. Women who receive a positive and supportive reaction to disclosing the abuse are more likely to leave the abusive relationship (Domenech del Rio & Sirvent Garcia del Valle, 2019). In a study by Goodson and Hayes (2021) conducted in 31 developing countries, about 63.10% of the women sought help from their family, 30.5% from their in-laws, 9.3% from friends, and 9.3% from formal organizations. The participants' attitudes toward violence, the severity of the abuse,

cultural expectations, working status, level of education, history of childhood maltreatment, and the existence of laws against violence are factors that influence the women's reactions to their experience of abuse (Goodson & Hayes, 2021).

In their systematic review, Afrouz et al. (2020) found that Muslim women in Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority countries face several barriers to disclosing IPV and seeking help. Among these barriers are maintaining family harmony, family honor, reputation, and the safety of their children, along with feeling hopeless about changing their lives after seeking help, the drawbacks of divorce, financial hardships, and religious obligations to accept abuse to be rewarded by God are just some of the barriers they face. Their help-seeking behavior is also connected to their perception of the services that the formal sources can provide to them. Older Muslim women were more likely to remain silent about their abuse and forgive their abusers than younger Muslim women (Afrouz et al., 2020).

In Egypt, 30.2% of the women reacted to the abuse by talking with their husbands, 28.8% by talking with neighbors, 21.1% by praying and reciting the Quran, 17.6% by doing nothing, 3.5% by going to the doctor, and 2.1% by taking sedatives without consultation (Sayed et al., 2014). In Turkey, the participants religiously believed that men and women were equally created and that they must act together to be the representatives of God. Women exposed to violence lacked self-awareness, had low self-regard, and felt rageful. However, they did not report the situation, did not ask for help, and accepted the violence to sustain their marriage as expected by tradition and customs in their society (Kaptan et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the highest percentage of women who did not react to the abuse was found in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (Kisa et al., 2021).

Most women in Riyadh (56%) asked for a divorce after the abuse, and 41% did nothing about it. This passive reaction could be explained by the violence-tolerant culture and the lack of adequate social services (Barnawi, 2017). Some women in Riyadh felt helpless and hopeless and reacted by committing violence against their abusers (Khadhar, 2022). In Alhasa, abused women frequently visited primary health care centers to take medications. However, 41.4% tolerated the violence and did not react or seek support (Afifi et al., 2011). In Aljouf, most women did not react to the violence (36.8%), while about 32.8% left their homes, 18.9% requested a divorce, 7.4% went to the doctor, and 4.1% called the police (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022). Some women seek help from family, friends, or religious leaders (Alosaimi, 2019). In the western region of Saudi Arabia, most abused women (65.7%) did not try to find help. While about 37.6% of abused women decided not to tell anyone about the abuse, only 2.8% actually contacted formal or informal sources for support, and 0.2% disclosed the whole abusive event. About 33.6% of abused women knew the available resources for support and only 28.4% of them went to formal sources. Unfortunately, of those women, about 36.6% reported that nothing was done to support them, 16.6% of the cases were closed, and 13.3% were judged; both ways, nothing was really done for them (Wali, 2021).

The literature and governmental reports clearly indicate that the Saudi Vision 2030 has many initiatives and strategic objectives under the Vision Realization Program to contribute to its three main pillars, especially a vibrant society. The National Transformation Program (NTP) achieved many goals during its first phase, such as empowering women in the labor force and improving justice services (National Transformation Program, n.d.). However, empowering women in Saudi Arabia still faces many cultural, historical, religious, legal, and organizational barriers that hinder the implementation of these initiatives (Alosaimi, 2019; Alnufaie & Beghum,

2021). With the collaboration of other governmental entities, NTP continues its efforts to achieve the second phase's goals, including improving legal services that address domestic violence, especially against women and children, and increasing community awareness (National Transformation Program, n.d.). However, Saudi women still do not have their legal rights because Saudi law lacks the concept of equality and does not meet either Islamic principles or international standards (Alosaimi, 2019).

The Quality of Life Program is an initiative aiming to increase the quality of living standards for families and individuals (Quality of Life Program, n.d.). Improving the access and quality of health services is part of the Health Sector Transformation Program (HSTP) (Health Sector Transformation Program, 2021). Both programs still need to directly address issues related to intimate partner violence (IPV) and its serious consequences, such as mental health problems. Vision 2030 initiatives made significant changes at the national and social level to ensure women's rights, gender equality, economic empowerment, and legal independence (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). However, Saudi Arabia and the Saudi family structure are still conservative and controlled by distorted religious and cultural beliefs that tolerate some abusive behaviors against women (Aldosari, 2017; Al-Faris et al., 2013; Alhabdan, 2015; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). All these are risk factors that contribute to the high prevalence of IPV and women's reactions to it. Therefore, this study aimed to uncover how Vision 2030's contribution to national and social factors has constructed Saudi married women's meanings of their experience and how these factors influence their reactions and coping mechanisms with IPV, particularly emotional/psychological IPV. By interpreting the meaning of Saudi married women's experiences, the aim was to contribute to achieving Vision 2030's objectives.

Summary

The literature review revealed the evolving theoretical foundation of feminism and social constructivism in understanding the impact of intimate partner violence on women within Saudi culture. Most of the current research is at an informative level that does not explore Saudi women's whole experience with IPV, especially emotional/psychological IPV (Alhalal, 2016). In addition, none of the available research accounts for the changes in these risk factors that result from the rapid changes and modernization in Saudi Arabia (Wali et al., 2020). According to feminist theory, women's experiences of abuse are shaped by gender inequality, cultural expectations, religious beliefs, traditional roles, and patriarchy (Becker et al., 2022). The way they interpret their experiences and react or assign meaning to them has a major influence on how they shape their reality and identity, as well as how they uniquely view the world and themselves, which is what the social constructivism theory aims to clarify (Baird et al., 2021; Burr & Dick, 2017).

Despite the Saudi government's efforts, as part of Vision 2030, to empower and protect women and promote gender equality, the prevalence of IPV in Saudi Arabia is still high (Wali et al., 2020). Saudi Arabia is still a conservative patriarchal society with a gendered system that justifies and normalizes some violent acts toward women for various reasons, including cultural practices, religious beliefs, and gender standards (Aldosari, 2017; AlDosary, 2016). Many cultural, historical, religious, and organizational challenges hinder the implementation of Vision 2030 objectives (Ali et al., 2021; Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021).

Many risk factors contribute to the prevalence of IPV in Saudi Arabia and shape public and professional attitudes toward violence against women (Alosaimi, 2019). Saudi Arabia has a few unique risk factors, such as polygamy (Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2019; Khadhar, 2022;

Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009), a religious belief that physical punishment is a form of discipline (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021) due to misinterpretation of Quranic verses by men who want to preserve their domination over women (Alhabdan, 2015; Ammar, 2007; Galloway, 2014), and the guardianship system that prohibits women from obtaining the principle of equality, which is opposing the Quran and the Sunnah, the primary sources of law in Saudi Arabia (Alosaimi, 2019).

To better understand the complexity of IPV and its challenges, raise public awareness, and improve healthcare and other agencies' services, there is a need for more training for professionals working with IPV victims. There must also be an appropriate implementation of policies and programs that allow more collaboration between organizations to improve communication with IPV victims and meet international human rights standards (Alosaimi, 2019; Beynon et al., 2012; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2016). To achieve that, an exploration of the lived experiences of abused women can provide a better understanding of this phenomenon and its changed risk factors, particularly concerning the rapid development of Saudi Arabia, human rights, and religious perspectives (AlDosary, 2016; Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Selim et al., 2022; Wali et al., 2020). This study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the unique meaning constructed by each woman's experience through a semi-structured interview, an online reflection journal, and an online focus group. The goal was to address the gap in the literature and guide future research and interventions.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

The issue of violence against women is widespread, complicated, and deeply embedded in social and cultural norms (Gracia et al., 2020). Saudi married women who suffer from such violence, particularly intimate partner violence, have different experiences due to their various backgrounds, cultural perceptions, and interactions with their surroundings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). However, little in-depth or qualitative research has explored the meaning of their experience of IPV, mainly emotional/psychological (Alhalal, 2016). Therefore, a qualitative research design was chosen to explore the meaning of Saudi married women's experiences with emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) in Riyadh City in light of Vision 2030. This chapter describes the research design, the research questions, the study's setting, and the participants' selection. It also describes the data collection methods and data analysis procedure used to draw meaning from the first-hand accounts of abused Saudi women married before 2015. Finally, the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of this study are discussed.

Design

A qualitative design was selected for this study due to the lack of extensive or qualitative research that explores the subjective meaning of experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Saudi Arabia (Alhalal, 2016; Alosaimi, 2022). In addition, a qualitative design gives the participants a voice, through compiling experience descriptions from first-person reports, and the ability to understand how they interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and give meaning to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since this study aimed to explore a shared phenomenon, a phenomenological approach was chosen to

explore and understand the meaning or essence of emotional/psychological IPV that Saudi

married women are experiencing.

The purpose of phenomenological studies is to explore the shared experiences of a

specific phenomenon among a group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It can be a valuable

resource for concepts on how to analyze and understand lived experiences (Smith et al., 2022).

Phenomenology seeks to capture the fundamental structure or essence of experience (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2015). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used in qualitative studies to

explore how people make sense or meanings of their major life experiences (Smith et al., 2022),

and was used in this study. The work of the four leading phenomenological philosophers,

Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, guided IPA researchers to focus on interpreting

the participants' experience and their process of reflection to find the essence or meaning of it,

which is shaped by their relationships, languages, and cultures (Smith et al., 2022).

Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on interpreting the meaning of life experience

instead of recalling or describing facts about the experience (Van Manen, 2014). Heidegger and

Gadamer, hermeneutic philosophers, explained how a phenomenon could be ascribed both a

visible and hidden meaning, and the researcher's fore-understanding can influence the

interpretation process. Therefore, a hermeneutic phenomenologist must understand this fore-

understanding while interpreting the text as new meanings emerge (Smith et al., 2022). This

process of interpretation captures the meaning of lived experiences as the participants and

researcher understand them (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). It is a double hermeneutic where the

researcher has a dual role of being like and unlike the participants. In a successful IPA, a

researcher can have a center-ground position by combining the hermeneutics of empathy with

the hermeneutics of questioning (Smith et al., 2022). In one position, the researcher is like the

participant, a human trying to make sense of the world. Therefore, the researcher can adopt an insider perspective and understand being in the participant's shoes. At the same time, the researcher is different from the participant, being a researcher and using an experientially informed lens to ask questions and explore different angles of the situation (Smith et al., 2022).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

1. How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030?

Guiding Questions

1. How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence?

2. How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reaction to emotional/psychological violence?

Setting

Since this study had a phenomenological design, it did not require a physical location (Durdella, 2020). Therefore, a private clinic in Riyadh City, where I work, was chosen for two reasons. First, having a private office at the clinic gave me access to data collection and relationships with gatekeepers and receptionists (Durdella, 2020). Second, the private office ensured the participants' privacy and confidentiality. This clinic is located in Riyadh and specializes in diagnosing and treating mental and behavioral disorders, marital and family issues, and speech and language problems. The sampling strategies for this study focused on directly recruiting participants via social media because it did not have an actual location to recruit participants and collect data (Durdella, 2020). The study used mixed or combinations of

sampling, including criterion, network, and chain or snowball sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2017;

Durdella, 2020).

Participants

In a phenomenological study, the number of participants usually ranges from 5 to 25

individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A small sample size provides more concentrated data on

the participants' stories (Nichols, 2018). Nine Saudi married women were selected to ensure data

saturation. Since this study aimed to explore the impact of Vision 2030 on women's experience

with IPV, all selected participants must have been married before 2015, the year before the

launch of the Vision. Potential participants were invited through social media or text messages in

English and Arabic. The recruitment or invitation (Appendices A and B) served as a criterion

sampling that sets specific criteria for the participant's eligibility for the study (Durdella, 2020).

All participants must be female, Saudi, married before 2015, and older than 18.

During the initial interview with the participants, the Composite Abuse Scale (CAS)

(Appendices C and D) was utilized to guarantee that all participants shared the same

phenomenon, which is the most critical element in phenomenological studies (Creswell & Poth,

2017). The CAS was available in English and Arabic versions (Alhabib et al., 2013; Hegarty et

al., 2005) and distributed based on the participant's language preference. The CAS consists of

four sections: severe combined abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and harassment (Hegarty

et al., 2005). It was translated into Arabic and adapted to the Saudi culture, specifically for

women (Alhabib et al., 2013). The reliability and validity of the Arabic version of CAS were

tested again with 229 Saudi women in 2019 (Alhalal et al., 2019). Completing the CAS takes 10-

15 minutes (Alhabib et al., 2013).

In addition to criterion sampling, sequential sampling, and emergence-driven sampling

strategies were utilized (Durdella, 2020). The three main strategies are snowball or chain,

network or respondent-driven, and opportunistic sampling (Durdella, 2020). This study used

snowball and network sampling. While snowball or chain sampling identifies possible

participants from people aware of cases with valuable and relevant information, network or

respondent-driven sampling recruits new participants through the current participants (Creswell

& Poth, 2017; Durdella, 2020).

Procedures

The study's procedures included writing a proposal to receive approval from the

department chair and the reader at my university. Their approval was followed by applying for

approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once the IRB approval was received,

eliciting participants started, using mixed or combination sampling strategies of criterion,

network, and chain or snowball sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Durdella, 2020). Potential

participants were selected using an eligibility or recruitment form in an invitation message via

social media. If the participant was eligible for the study, an initial interview was scheduled to

complete the Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) (Alhabib et al., 2013; Hegarty et al., 2005) and

discuss the consent form (Appendices E and F). The consent form explained the nature and

procedures of the study, possible risks and benefits, and confidentiality issues, as well as

provided the researcher's contact information.

Once the participants signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study, each

participant was notified in advance of their interview date and time. The interview was audio-

recorded and transcribed verbatim. Through member checks, participants could review the

transcript and provide feedback on its accuracy. If the participant did not speak English, forward

translation and backward translation was used to guarantee the accuracy of the translation in the

follow-up interview. The collected data were stored in locked storage at my private office, which

only I can access. After the individual interview, the participant received a link to the reflection

journal prompts using SurveyMonkey. The journals generated more data for interpretation.

Moreover, once the interviews were completed, an online focus group was conducted using

Microsoft Teams to create more data and allow the participants to provide feedback. All

precautions were considered to ensure the participants' confidentiality and safety. The data

analysis using hermeneutic IPA started instantly after each data collection method.

The Researcher's Role

Research inquiry in a hermeneutic approach usually starts with the researcher's

experience with the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014). I personally experienced

emotional/psychological IPV and have been professionally working with many IPV survivors.

Consequently, and with my experience, I was aware of possible biases and preconceptions I

bring into the research process. I continuously engaged in self-reflection to make sure that I was

accurately interpreting the participants' experiences with emotional/psychological IPV. This

process of epoché, or reflexive practice of bracketing, was to set aside and balance, as much as

possible, any pre-existing beliefs, biases, and ideas about the phenomenon, participants, and

research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Durdella, 2020; Smith et al., 2022). I wrote reflection

journals after reading the participants' transcripts to bracket my thoughts and feelings, allowing

me to engage in the process of phenomenological reduction. Going back to the participant's data

content or textual descriptions of the experience to understand their views and meaningful

statements about their experiences, and moving away from the diversion and misdirection of my

own assumptions and preconceptions, is called a phenomenological reduction process (Durdella,

2020; Smith et al., 2022; Van Manen, 2014). Moreover, my reflection journals helped me

understand my dual role, a double hermeneutic—as a researcher trying to question and understand the essence of their experience and as a human trying to make sense of the world (Smith et al., 2022). Finally, I acknowledged that with the participants, I am a researcher, not a therapist. Therefore, the participants were provided with a list of trustworthy therapists if they needed therapeutic support.

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Data Collection

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Data collection for this study involved a semi-structured interview, an online reflection journal, and one online focus group discussion. Data collection was sequenced to gradually develop rapport with participants and to foster a safe sharing environment to reduce emotional distress when addressing a sensitive topic (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008). Each participant participated in one individual 60-90-minute semi-structured interview consisting of questions generated from the research questions. In addition to the interview, each participant completed three reflection journal prompts after the interview to access different layers of conscious reflections. Finally, one online focus group discussion, 60-90 minutes, was utilized after completing all interviews to generate in-depth information and clarify prior responses (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The reflection journal and focus group discussion provided me with materials for deliberate controlled reflection (Smith et al., 2022).

Interviews

Interviewing is a method used to gather information that cannot be observed and to enter into the participant's perspective (Patton, 2015). Therefore, each participant's interview is different and must be treated as a new opportunity to learn more about the phenomenon and not be compared with others (Vagle, 2018). Qualitative interviewing considers the participant's perspective meaningful and knowable and can address issues explicitly (Patton, 2015).

Phenomenological interviewing was used to gather experiential materials, such as narratives, stories, or anecdotes, that serve as rich resources for interpretation, reflection, and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014). This rich understanding of the phenomenon is one of the purposes of hermeneutic interviews, along with ongoing conversations about the participant's meaning of the experience (Lauterbach, 2018; Van Manen, 2014). Conversational interviewing is more flexible and relies more on the participant's memories and reflections to revisit their experiences, also referred to as semi-structured interviewing (Lauterbach, 2018). All structured, unstructured, or semi-structured interviews need an interview protocol or schedule (Taylor & Søndergaard, 2017). The interview protocol provided me with the fundamental questions that initially prompted the need for the interview, assisted in maintaining the clarity of the phenomenological intent, and gathered concrete accounts of specific incidents or stories (Vagle, 2018; Van Manen, 2014). All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed as soon as possible (Patton, 2015; Taylor & Søndergaard, 2017).

Since qualitative interviewing aims to capture the complexity of the participants' views of their world and learn the meanings of their experiences based on their perceptions, terminologies, and judgments, the interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions (Patton, 2015). Although the study had an interview protocol that consisted of three sets of questions, a balance between the interview questions and the interview dynamic was considered to incorporate follow-up or probing questions (Durdella, 2020). The interview protocol was as follows (see Appendix G for the Arabic translation of the questions).

Icebreaker and Background Questions:

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.

2. How old are you and your husband?

3. How did you meet/marry your husband?

4. How long have you been married?

5. What is the educational background of you and your husband?

6. How many children do you have?

7. How do you and your family usually spend your time together?

Questions Related to Central Research Question:

8. What is your opinion about the nature of your marriage?

9. How does your partner view your marriage?

10. How do you explain your general understanding of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

11. What do you know about emotional/psychological IPV?

12. What can you tell me about your experience with IPV?

     12a. What about your experience specifically with emotional/psychological IPV?

13. We have been talking about your personal life and marriage. Now, I want to turn our attention to a broader phenomenon that we are all experiencing in the country and in our lives, and then I want to ask you some questions about how it affects your life. We are all witnessing the rapid development and transformation in the country in different aspects, which are part of Vision 2030. What is your understanding of this Vision?

14. How do you feel about Vision 2030 and its impact on the country and people's lives?

15. What aspects of Vision 2030 do you think are significant to you personally in your life and relationships?

16. How do you think your experience with IPV has changed in light of Vision 2030?

Questions Related to Guiding Research Questions:

17. How did you respond or cope with your experience?

18. What are the reasons behind your reactions?

19. Since we are still, to some extent, a conservative culture, how do you describe the impact of your family and friends on your reactions to IPV?

20. How do you see culture in general and religion in particular shape your reactions?

21. What is your knowledge and opinion about the available professional support or resources that support women who experienced IPV?

22. How do you think Vision 2030 enhanced or changed these resources?

23. As you might know, one of the main objectives of Vision 2030 is to empower women. How do you see this impacting your experience with IPV?

24. What would you like to see the Vision or the Kingdom do to provide practical and adequate support for women who experience IPV?

25. Reflecting on all that we shared today, what advice do you have for other married women?

26. I appreciate the time you have given to this interview and study. One final question: what else is essential for me to know that I did not ask you about?

Questions one through seven are a mix of background and experience questions to gather information about the participants' characteristics and observable behaviors (Patton, 2015). These types of questions require straightforward descriptions and minimal interpretation (Patton, 2015) and build rapport with the participants.

Questions eight through sixteen are related to the central research question. Questions eight and nine are opinion and value questions, types of questions that aim to gather information about people's cognition and interpretation of an experience (Patton, 2015). The two types of questions allow for a description and comparison (Smith et al., 2022) between the participant's

views on marriage and her husband. Questions ten and eleven are knowledge questions, which

serve to gather the participant's factual information about the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Question twelve is both an opinion and value question and a feeling question that explores the

participant's opinions and feelings about their experience with the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Question 12a is a probing details-oriented question used to deepen the participant's responses

and provide the details needed to understand the experience (Patton, 2015). Because question 12

and its probing sub-question are narrative questions (Smith et al., 2022) that can be threatening if

asked at the beginning of the interview, they were asked after building rapport with the

participant. Moreover, they were asked using the present tense because it is easier for

participants to answer questions about the present (Patton, 2015). They were used as a baseline

for the same activity in the past as needed (Patton, 2015). Question 13 begins with a prefatory

statement to directly announce the transition to a set of questions that will address a new topic

and make the interview more conversational (Patton, 2015). Question 13 is a sensory and

knowledge question (Patton, 2015) that encourages the participants to describe their knowledge

about what they see as a result of Vision 2030. Question 14 is a feeling question (Patton, 2015)

asking the participants to share their feelings about Vision 2030. Question 15 is an opinion

question (Patton, 2015) asking about their opinion about the impact of Vision 2030. The final

question in this set of questions, question 16, is an opinion (Patton, 2015) and a comparative

question (Smith et al., 2022) that can provide an in-depth description of the answer to the central

research question.

Questions 17 through 24 are related to the two guiding research questions. Question 17 is

an experience (Patton, 2015) and a narrative (Smith et al., 2022) question asking about the

participant's coping strategies with the phenomenon. Question 18 is an opinion and value

question addressing the participant's intentions and objectives behind their reactions (Patton, 2015). Question 19 uses a transition to soften the harshness of this question and the following question (Patton, 2015). Question 19 explores the relational and social risk factors of IPV, and question 20 explores the national risk factors. Question 21 is a knowledge and opinion question (Patton, 2015) asking about the participant's factual knowledge and opinion about available supportive resources (Patton, 2015). Question 22 is evaluative (Smith et al., 2022), asking the participant to evaluate the impact of Vision 2030 on supporting women who experienced IPV. Question 23 uses a transition to direct the participant's attention to a specific topic, women empowerment, and allow them to organize their thoughts (Patton, 2015). Question 24 is an opinion question (Patton, 2015) asking the participants to explain their desires and expectations of Vision 2030's efforts to combat IPV and support women. Question 25 is also an opinion question (Patton, 2015) asking them to provide advice or information to other women who share the same experience. Question 26 is a one-shot question that allows the participant to add valuable information (Patton, 2015).

Online Reflection Journal

Participants wrote an online reflection journal after the interview describing their significant thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon (Nichols, 2018). Writing a reflective journal aims to access the layers of reflection (Smith et al., 2022). According to Smith et al. (2022) there are four layers of reflection: pre-reflective reflexivity, the reflective "glancing at" a pre-reflective experience, attentive reflection on the pre-reflective, and deliberate controlled reflection. The first layer involves a minimal level of awareness that does not interfere with the flow of the experience. The second layer involves intuitive and undirected reflection on the pre-reflective, which involves memory and imagination. The third layer is when the experience

becomes significant and requires attention. The fourth layer is the phenomenological reflection which most people do not engage in. The natural reflection of everyday life is present in the first three layers at different levels. During the interview, the researcher usually uncovers some of these reflections and additional reflections that may be unselfconscious from layers two and three and others from layer four (Smith et al., 2022). The reflection journal invited participants to reflect on their previous unconscious reflections to generate material for their own conscious reflection and the researcher's formal reflective phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2022).

Utilizing writing journals in research has many challenges, such as poor participation, participants feeling exposed, and difficulty for participants in staying on track (Hayman et al., 2012). The researcher must discuss these challenges and provide different strategies to deal with them. The reflection journal prompts were emailed to the participants after completing their interviews using SurveyMonkey, where they could privately write their journals. Participants completed the three journal prompts within two weeks after the interview at one session or in different sessions. The prompts provided clear direction about the information they should provide in their journals and were available in English and Arabic (Appendix H is for the Arabic translation of the questions). Forward translation and backward translation were utilized if the participant chose Arabic.

Online Reflection Journal Prompts:

1. Share your most difficult recollection of experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV); how did you react then, and what affected your reaction?

2. From the time you first learned about intimate partner violence (IPV) until now:

   a. What feelings have you experienced, and how have they changed over time?

      b. How have you changed the most; what did you see now that you did not see before?

3. If you had a chance, what would you tell your husband?

Online Focus Group

Because discussing such a sensitive topic in a group has some challenges and participants may be hesitant to participate, a computer-based focus group was utilized through the chat feature in Microsoft Teams. Participants could use usernames instead of their real names to protect their identities (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Providing any identifying information was not required. The web-based focus group used a real-time format, synchronous, to maximize participant interactions and allow emotional expression and phatic communication (Stewart & Williams, 2005). This type of focus group not only reduces participants' anxiety and eases the sharing of information but also can generate high-quality data. While participants read each other's responses, they added to their initial comments because they considered their views in the context of the other participants' views (Patton, 2015). It is essential to realize that synchronous online communication creates a complex set of interactions due to the possibility of multiple overlapping and intertwining conversations. Therefore, the researcher must acquire traditional and technological mediating skills (Stewart & Williams, 2005). The researcher should maintain an ethical and reasonable environment when facilitating and monitoring the discussion (Smith et al., 2022). The focus group was an informal discussion, not centered on problem-solving or decision-making (Patton, 2015). Seven out of the nine participants joined the online focus group. The focus group discussion was held in Arabic due to the participants' agreement on the selected language. Therefore, forward and backward translation was utilized to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

As recommended by IPA, the focus group was held following the completion of all interviews and at least two analyses of the transcripts in order to gain insights into patterns and dynamics that enhanced the focus group discussion (Smith et al., 2022). The goal of this online focus group was to generate more in-depth information, create an opportunity for more clarification of previous responses or follow-up questions, identify connections or differences in responses, allow the participants to reflect on the accuracy of the information, and provide feedback (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The duration of the focus group discussion was about 90 minutes. Driven by the research question, the focus group questions were carefully planned and formulated to obtain perspectives on specific topics in a permissive and safe environment (Patton, 2015). (Appendix I is for the Arabic translation of the questions).

Focus Group Questions:

1. What is your opinion about intimate partner violence (IPV) in Riyadh?

2. What do you think are the reasons for intimate partner violence (IPV) in Riyadh?

3. In your opinion, what is the general awareness and perception of emotional/psychological IPV in Riyadh?

4. How can you describe the available resources to support women who experience IPV?

5. What are your thoughts and feelings regarding the Vision's efforts to address or combat issues related to IPV?

6. What did you wish the government or other systems had done differently to impact how you felt about or reacted to your experience?

7. What would you like other women to know about IPV?

8. What would you like to add?

Data Analysis

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) does not have a single or fixed method for data analysis. It is characterized by its flexibility and the focus of directing the analytic attention toward the participants' attempts to make meaning of their experiences (Smith et al., 2022). However, even though IPA focuses on the participants' lived experiences and their constructed meanings, the final result always depends on the researcher's analytical intellect and style, which is called double hermeneutic (Patton, 2015; Smith et al., 2022). Therefore, I must fully and accurately monitor and report their analytical approach and process (Patton, 2015). This study followed a structured process for data analysis.

Managing and Organizing Data

The challenge of qualitative analysis is to translate a massive amount of data into communicable results (Patton, 2015). The analysis process is not linear but complex, challenging, and multidirectional (Smith et al., 2022). Therefore, data analysis occurs simultaneously with data collection and report writing throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The first step in data analysis was to store and organize the voluminous data, at an early stage, into an organized file naming system that eases future access (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This data included the transcripts of the interviews, online focus group discussion, and the participants' reflection journals. Transcribing the interviews verbatim myself allowed me to engage with the data. It served as a transition point between data collection and the first step of data analysis, managing and organizing data (Patton, 2015). Because the reflection journal and the focus group used text-based programs, gathering or transcribing data was easy and practical. Some data included forward and backward translation from Arabic to English.

Reading and Memoing

Multiple readings of the interview and the reflection journal transcripts allowed me to be immersed in the details and obtain a sense of the data before breaking it into parts (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This active engagement with the data initiated the process of entering the participants' worlds, especially through reading their reflection journals that contained deliberate controlled reflection (Smith et al., 2022). By this time, I had developed a sense of the interview and reflection journal transcripts and planned the focus group for more in-depth information, clarification, and member checks (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). I wrote notes or short phrases, ideas, and central concepts, known as memos, in the margins of the data transcripts and journals as a step toward a higher level of analytic meaning and an initial formation of codes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). As I kept reading and got familiar with the data, my notes and comments started to develop at an exploratory level (Smith et al., 2022).

Initial Noting and Developing a List of Significant Statements

This step was the most detailed and lengthy step of data analysis (Smith et al., 2022). I read through the transcripts and journals to highlight significant statements or quotes explaining how participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). To avoid simplistic reading, I used de-contextualization techniques to emphasize the participants' words and meanings and to understand the connections between various experiences (Smith et al., 2022). This process was enhanced by active engagement with the reflection journal and focus group transcripts, which helped me understand each participant's interview context. For each highlighted significant statement, comprehensive and detailed comments were written to explain this significance (Smith et al., 2022). These exploratory comments were descriptive to explain things that structured the participants' experiences and thoughts. They were also linguistic,

investigating the use of language to represent content and meaning. Finally, they were

conceptual, emphasizing a shift in my focus to more interpretive engagement at a more

interrogative and conceptual level (Smith et al., 2022). After listing these significant statements,

known as the horizonalization of the data, I treated each statement with equal worth to develop a

list of nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping significant statements (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Using in

vivo coding advanced the development of the list of significant statements because it allowed

words, paragraphs, texts, and recorded data to be organized into patterns. In vivo coding uses the

exact word or phrase in the collected data (Jugessur, 2022). Coding was executed manually by

writing notes on the texts while analyzing or using highlighters to indicate potential patterns

(Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Developing Emergent Themes

When all data were collected and coded, and the list of significant statements was

formulated, I started to identify emergent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In qualitative

research, themes are broad information units comprising multiple codes which are clustered to

produce a common idea (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Focusing on specific transcript and journal

segments and remembering what was learned during the initial noting phase were necessary for

me to identify these emergent themes (Smith et al., 2022). It is crucial to remember that themes

reflect both my interpretation and the participants' actual words and ideas (Smith et al., 2022). It

might be challenging for some researchers to leap from codes to themes and to shift from a

participant-oriented process to take the central role of organizing and interpreting the data

(Creswell & Poth, 2017; Smith et al., 2022)

Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes

At this stage, I looked for patterns and connections between emergent themes (Smith et al., 2022). By finding these connections, I realized that some emergent themes were not really themes, some needed to be divided into more than one theme, and some needed to be joined as one theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This assessment was done by abstraction, subsumption, polarization, contextualization, numeration, function, and bringing all of those together (Smith et al., 2022).

Moving to the Next Case

Next, I replicated the prior procedures with the data collected from the following participants. However, engaging with each participant according to their account is crucial. I was mindful of any potential effects from the initial analysis that could alter their fore-structures. Thus, maintaining the same procedures minimized this risk (Smith et al., 2022).

Looking for Patterns Across Cases and Representing the Data

In this stage, I looked for patterns across different cases to find connections, similarities, or differences. This broad analysis required modifying, reconfiguring, or relabeling the themes. Most IPA researchers represent their final result in a table of themes for the group (Smith et al., 2022). Other researchers use a hierarchical tree diagram to show various levels of abstraction (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In phenomenological research, researchers develop textural and structural descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The textural description included verbatim examples of what the participants experienced. The structural description included my reflection on all possible meanings, different perspectives, and varying frames of reference about the phenomenon to explain how the experience happened (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Incorporating these two descriptions together resulted in a long paragraph of composite description, also called

essential or essence, representing what the participants experienced and how. It is the experience's essence that represents the culminating aspects of a phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Trustworthiness

Credibility

This refers to how credible and realistic the data presented in the study is (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, credibility was achieved by member checks and triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Member checks included each member reviewing the information and transcripts of the data to ensure accuracy and provide feedback (Durdella, 2020). Guba (1981, as cited in Scherling, 2013) stated that a member check is the most significant action a researcher can take because it is the heart of the credibility criterion (Scherling, 2013). Triangulation is when the researcher uses multiple data collection sources and theories to provide supporting evidence that validates the study's accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This study used three data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, an online written reflection journal, and one online focus group discussion. Triangulation strengthens the study's credibility and results (Scherling, 2013).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability are terms used to describe how the study's findings are reliable, repeatable, and influenced by participants' experiences rather than the researcher's (Scherling, 2013). This was achieved by reflexivity, which means that I was aware of the biases, values, and experiences I brought to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Reflexivity was executed by writing journals and reflections about personal assumptions and preconceptions to focus on the content of the collected data throughout the research process (Durdella, 2020; Smith

et al., 2022). Intentionally practicing reflexivity can assist readers in comprehending the underlying assumptions and thinking that lead to the researcher's conclusions (Scherling, 2013).

Transferability

Transferability provides rich, detailed, and thick descriptions of the participants and settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The reader can evaluate if the study is transferable to other contexts with similar characteristics based on the author's detailed description and precise contextualized analysis of the participant's data (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Smith et al., 2022). Van Manen (1997, as cited in Nichols, 2018) stated that a "good phenomenological description is something that we can nod to, recognizing it as an experience that we have had or could have had." (Nichols, 2018, p. 95).

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Ethical Considerations

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All participants were respected and not placed at risk (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The participants' anonymity was protected by not disclosing their names and utilizing pseudonyms to avoid indirect identification (Durdella, 2020). The data storage used pseudonyms (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The study's purpose and methodology were explained to the participants at the beginning of the study, along with their right to withdraw at any time without consequence (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Nichols, 2018). Each participant signed informed consent forms. Moreover, all participants were treated equally to avoid siding with any of them or disclosing positive results. This was achieved by reporting multiple perspectives, re-reading the data, and honestly reporting all the results (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, some participants may relive their distressing feelings and memories. To reduce this risk, I monitored the participants' processing of thoughts and provided referral information for counseling services in case the participants' distress was

too much to handle. Moreover, the participants' husbands or community members may discover their participation in the study. This risk was mitigated by the clinic system, which separates the waiting rooms (women from men), and the calling system that does not use the clients' names. Also, each participant had the option to wear a burqa (face covering) to conceal their identity at the clinic and leave their signed consent form in their file if they worried their husband might find it. I reassured the participants that they were supported with various resources during the study. All collected data were locked in a file cabinet at my private clinic, which no one else could access. The digital files had password-protected backup copies (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Summary

A hermeneutic phenomenological study design was used to explore the meaning of Saudi married women's experiences with emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) before and after Vision 2030. After receiving the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, nine women older than 18 who were married before 2015 were selected based on a criterion sampling determined by the eligibility form included in the invitation message sent via social media or text message. The Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) results were utilized with potential participants to ensure that they shared the same phenomenon of IPV. The study used snowball or chain and network sampling to recruit participants with rich and valuable information. Three data collection methods were used to generate rich data: an individual semi-structured interview, an online reflective journal, and an online focus group. All the methods used to collect data were available in English and Arabic to meet the participants' language preferences. The data analysis process followed the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore and interpret the meaning or essence of the participants' experiences. The study's process included several procedures to achieve trustworthiness, such as member checks, triangulation, reflexivity, and

transferability. It also included other ethical considerations that ensured the participants'

confidentiality and anonymity.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

Chapter four presents the results of this study, which explored the experiences of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) among Saudi married women before and after Vision 2030. The results were obtained through interviews, online reflection journals, and an online focus group. This chapter begins with an introduction that briefly summarizes the data analysis process. It also outlines the various measures taken to ensure the ethical and trustworthy nature of the results obtained through all the data collection methods. Second, there is an introduction that provides the demographic information of all the participants, followed by a portrait of each participant using their assigned pseudonyms. Next, the results section presents the themes extracted from the participants' narratives about their experiences with IPV based on the three research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter's main points.

Introduction

This study used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyze data (Smith et al., 2022). Each data collection method was transcribed and organized into files as soon as it was completed. Five interviews, the reflection journals, and the focus group were translated into English and then back to Arabic, and the participants conducted member checks to verify the accuracy of the newly translated transcripts (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Durdella, 2020). After multiple readings of the transcripts, memoing, and highlighting the significant statements, in vivo coding was formulated (Jugessur, 2022). The emergent themes or categories were identified based on the in vivo coding of the interviews, reflection journals, and focus group. They were then translated into themes based on their connections that answered the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith et al., 2022). This process was repeated with each participant,

with consideration of the potential risk of the previous analysis (Smith et al., 2022). This risk was mitigated by writing reflection journals, which helped the process of phenomenological reduction and buffered the double hermeneutic (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Durdella, 2020; Smith et al., 2022; Van Manen, 2014).

The use of multiple data collection methods—triangulation—was executed in this study to ensure and enhance the accuracy and credibility of the results (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The semi-structured interview method was chosen for participants to freely narrate their experiences and meaning-making efforts from their own perspectives (Lauterbach, 2018; Van Manen, 2014). The online reflection journal was chosen to obtain more in-depth information about the participants' experiences with IPV, which they might not have been comfortable sharing during the interviews (Smith et al., 2022). While the reflection journals allowed participants to express their thoughts and emotions about their internal experiences, the focus group was more regulated or influenced by the interaction between participants and their responses (Heppner et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). This point of social influence was illustrated by one participant's responses during the focus group, which were conservative and differed from her responses during the interview and reflection journal.

Participants

The data of this study were collected from nine Saudi married women living in Riyadh who shared the same phenomenon of emotional/psychological IPV but had various demographic characteristics, which are presented in the table below.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Age range	Length of Marriage	# of Children	Educational Level	Employment Status	Type of IPV	Special Note
Amal	40-50	20	3	Doctorate	Employed	Emotional, Controlling	Previous divorce (different marriage)
Faten	30-40	9 (2 separated)	1	Master	Unemployed	Emotional, Financial	Second wife (first wife alive)
Doaa	40-50	25	4	Bachelor	Unemployed, soon a business owner	Emotional, Controlling	
Hiba	50-60	32	6	Bachelor	Retired	Emotional, Physical, Financial, Controlling	Second wife (first wife deceased)- Husband married another wife
Lena	40-50	21	4	Bachelor	Employed	Emotional, Aggressive	Divorced twice (same marriage)
Hana	30-40	18	3	Bachelor	Employed & Business owner	Emotional, Controlling	
Fai	40-50	23	6	Bachelor	Employed	Emotional, Physical, Controlling, Aggressive	Divorced once (same marriage)- Husband is still married to another wife
Samar	30-40	14	2	Bachelor	Work from home	Emotional, Financial, Aggressive	Husband married another wife
Noha	50-60	33	7	Master	Retired	Emotional, Controlling	

Each participant had unique circumstances, identities, and values that constructed the meaning and interpretation of their experiences (Baird et al., 2021; Leisey, 2007). The following section provides a portrait of each participant's unique experience.

Amal

Amal is in her mid-40s, works in the mental health field, and holds a doctorate in family therapy. She was married in her early twenties, but her first marriage ended in divorce after a few months. Shortly after her divorce, she married her current husband, who is also in his mid-40s, and they have been married for about 20 years. They have three children together and consider their family as close and content. They enjoy spending their free time together doing various activities. Even though they share a close friendship, understand each other well, and enjoy each other's company, Amal and her husband are incompatible as a married couple. It all started when her husband discovered things from her past that he did not accept. He thought that their marriage was built on a lie, and the emotional abuse and controlling behaviors started.

Although her husband told her that she was a good wife that any man would be lucky to have, he repeatedly belittled her character through name-calling and insults typically used to describe immoral women. He also imposed strict limitations on how she could express her feelings and interact with him, forbidding her from expressing any negative emotions such as anger or frustration. She was expected always to appear content and satisfied with whatever he said or did. Her career development was also restricted as she was only allowed to meet with clients and was not permitted to participate in any other professional activities that could advance her career. Despite all of this, she chose to endure it for the sake of her children and because she did not want to return to her family's home if she decided to get divorced.

While her current marriage is not what she hoped for or wished for others, she decided to continue in her marriage because, as she described, it was too complicated to leave. Their children, who do not know about the abuse, her social and marital status, and the unique dynamic

of their relationship, were her reasons to stay. Her sister, friends, and job supported her learning to cope and live with her decision to stay.

Faten

Faten is a woman in her late thirties who is currently unemployed. She was married in her early twenties but was divorced after a couple of years. Her current husband is a professor in the mental health department and is much older than her, almost 60 years old. Faten and her husband have one daughter, but he has five children with his first wife. His oldest son is around Faten's age. When she married him, Faten thought he had divorced his first wife, whom he claimed was abusive. However, four years after their marriage, when Faten was pregnant, she discovered that her husband was still married to his first wife, and they returned together. She became a second wife, which she did not mind because a divorced woman was culturally expected to be a second wife or marry an older divorced or widowed man. What she did not accept was her husband's deception about his first marriage, which was followed by mistreatment, absence, and financial neglect.

Faten did her best to adhere to the cultural norms by demonstrating patience and acceptance towards her difficult living circumstances. However, her husband's emotional manipulation, financial neglect, and constant criticisms became increasingly unbearable, especially since he knew she lacked a support system. Faten came from a very conservative family where men had more privileges than women and that encouraged women's submission to men. She was thinking about ways to leave the marriage but had not taken any concrete steps until her husband neglected their daughter when she needed surgery, both financially and emotionally. After her daughter returned home, Faten told her husband that he needed to leave.

She eventually moved back to her mother's house with her daughter after leaving the house because there were no other options.

Two years ago, Faten learned about the new laws and procedures to support women in similar situations through a conversation with her friends. She learned about the new guardianship law and child custody and support. Therefore, she took control over her life by renting an apartment with her divorced sister and filed for child support and custody. Although her husband tried to use his reputation as a highly educated and religious individual to gain support, the new laws and legal system supported her. She is now more empowered and living independently a decent and dignified life. Despite her empowerment and personal reaction, Faten still finds it challenging to express her thoughts about her experience when interacting with others. In responding to other women with similar experiences, she offered general comments and recommendations, such as urging them to remain patient, knowing that this is what marriage entails, and all Saudi women go through this. She also encouraged them to set their priorities so they would not be adversely affected.

Doaa

Doaa is a woman in her early forties who is currently unemployed but will soon become a business owner. She has been married to her husband for 25 years, and they have four children together. Both Doaa and her husband share a love for cooking, which led them to open a chain of restaurants. Due to her husband's busy schedule with his business, she spends most of her time with her children, especially her daughters. Although their marriage may seem ideal to outsiders and envied for their social and financial privileges, Doaa describes it as merely a partnership. They spend most of their time discussing work, and she hardly remembers a time when they were a couple. They reached an unspoken agreement that staying together is more convenient

than divorce, which is complicated due to their needs. Her husband needs her for advice about every detail of the work and to raise the children. She needs him for financial support. They both need each other for social status. Despite their needs for each other, he treated her in a way that preserves his control over her.

In her description of her husband, Doaa characterized him as a narcissist, a competitive and controlling individual. He insists on always being correct, more powerful, and better than everyone else, including her. If she advised him or recommended something, she had to always say what he wanted to hear. If she went out with her friends, he restricted her salary to control her outings and ensure she was always available and close to him. Doaa wanted to leave but could not because she came from a family with an abusive alcoholic father, so leaving her husband's house was not an option. She isolated herself from her social circle and made sure to learn how to respond and act with her husband, which was exhausting and emotionally draining. She felt weak, vulnerable, and alone until she decided to live up to her basic rights of having a life.

Due to the changes in the country, Doaa has been able to redirect her focus towards a more constructive direction. Although she cannot pinpoint the exact reason for her change, she is aware that the new developments in the country have brought equal opportunities for both men and women, thus empowering her to pursue her dreams and goals. As a result, she has become more powerful and has a voice. She is now more mindful of her situation and the causes of her husband's behavior. While she still does not accept his actions, her mindful acknowledgment has given her peace and enabled her to manage and deal with it, reducing its impact on her. Doaa has become more independent and dedicates her time to her children, business, and new social circle. She is living up to her standards, ensuring that her rights and needs are met, and not allowing

anyone to control her. She mentioned that her husband is now less controlling because he is concerned about the consequences of such behaviors with the new laws in place.

Hiba

Hiba is a retired woman in her mid-fifties. She married her husband after his wife died, leaving two children, whom she considers hers. She has been married for about 32 years and has had three more children with her husband. Four of their children are married with their own children. Hiba enjoys her close relationship with her children, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. In fact, she considers her older son her main support since the first onset of physical abuse, and later his wife played a significant role in her healing process.

Hiba had to live abroad after she married her husband because he was continuing his higher education. In the beginning, her husband used to beat her severely. Her only support was his older son. She could not even report him to the authorities, although they explicitly asked her for clarification and confirmation of the abuse. She was terrified of being alone in a foreign country with no one to support her. He knew that having support could empower her, so he controlled her social interactions and relationships. Later, when they came back to Saudi Arabia, the frequency of physical abuse decreased because his older son grew up and defended his mother more firmly. However, verbal abuse and financial restrictions started. Hiba's husband wanted to live with high living standards that she did not endorse. Therefore, he controlled her spending and called her names when she did not follow his orders. He also blamed her for not being as fun as his deceased wife and decided to marry another woman to have the fun and high standards he wanted.

When he married his second wife, Hiba's older son and his wife played a central role in her response, especially her daughter-in-law. She did not only stand up for Hiba and ensured that

her rights were met but also took her to therapy and encouraged her to start a social life. Her support was aided by some of the country's new laws and opportunities. However, Hiba was always concerned that such changes in the country could change people's religious beliefs and cultural norms.

Lena

Lena is in her late forties and employed. During her mid-twenties, she married a man who was a year older than her. They have four children. There are not many things that Lena and her husband have in common, and they have poor communication quality. Their only good quality is their intimate relationship. Her husband does not spend much time at home with them as a family because he is studying for a master's degree. She and her children prefer it that way due to her husband's short temper and aggressive nature. She decided to keep her distance from him for her safety from his aggressive or impulsive reactions. He demonstrated aggressive behavior in several incidents, two of which led to Lena's divorce.

In the incident of her first divorce, Lena could not endure her husband's anger and told him it was enough. His reaction was impulsive, and he divorced her. She went to her family's house, which was not easy. Therefore, when he apologized, she accepted and returned to him with some conditions that he followed for a few days. The second divorce happened because she was at her parent's house after her father's death, and he could not tolerate her absence. Again, he apologized, and she accepted. To avoid the third and final divorce, she learned that being submissive and apologizing to him, even if she did not do anything wrong, was her only option. After attending the couple's therapy and realizing Lena was withdrawing from him, Lena's husband made conscious efforts to improve his attitude and their relationship.

Lena's husband started to initiate activities with her as a couple and go out with other couples. She liked going out with her friend and her friend's husband because Lena thinks he positively influences her own husband's attitudes and behaviors. Although she knew her husband was trying to change, she explained that she was not ready yet to forgive him. She wanted to live peacefully and focus on the good aspects of her life, where she is most loved and respected. Whether it was the country's new legislation or the support she received from therapy and friends, Lena admitted that coping with the nature of her marriage, which did not change, had improved. Her determination to have a peaceful life and change was also strengthened by her belief that she would be rewarded.

Hana

Hana is a mother of three in her mid-thirties. She is employed and owns a business. As a result, she has an extremely full schedule. About 18 years ago, she married the only and youngest son in a wealthy family. His father died while he was a child, and his mother controlled every aspect of his life, including his marriage. After her mother and father were separated, Hana was raised by her loving father. She is very close to him and spends most of her time at his house with her children. Her father is her source of power and protection, although she has never told him what she is going through. Her happy marriage was short-lived, as Hana's husband started to treat her with silence.

Relentlessly, she pushed him to collaborate with her to improve their ability to communicate during conflicts. However, after listening to his mother's advice, his attitude toward Hana had changed. He started by telling her that she should be thankful that he had married her and that it was a favor for her. He then accused her of wanting to sabotage his relationship with his family because she did not know what a healthy family meant since she

came from a divorced parents' household. To maintain his dominance over her, she was not allowed to go anywhere without his permission, and she was allowed to visit her father once a week. He also criticized her and everything she did and limited her financial spending. She realized that all her efforts in talking to him were pointless because he did not want to change. Therefore, she focused on her children and work and learned how to save and invest her money to be more independent before asking for a divorce.

Once Hana's husband was no longer her guardian, she was free to start her business, buy a car, and be independent. Her husband, as well as his family, are less involved in her life. She is now living according to her values and beliefs, not his authority. She has learned to disregard him and his remarks, even if he continually criticizes her. With her high empathy for him, she is not considering divorce. She still remembers how he broke down the last time she asked for a divorce. As she struggles, remains sad, and takes antidepressants, Hana acknowledges that her experience is still ongoing and impacts her hopes for the future. However, she can now focus on the blessings in her life and express her gratitude for them because her experience has given her new values and perspective on life.

Fai

Fai is a mother of six children and has recently become a grandmother. She is in her mid-forties and has been married for about 23 years to a man from a region with different cultural norms. Initially, her father did not approve of this marriage and asked her to reconsider, but she eventually convinced him to approve. Her married life consisted of many instances of mistreatment since the wedding day. She initially attributed it to the stress of the big wedding, but she later discovered it was her husband's habitual behavior.

Her husband was very verbally aggressive toward her and called her names that describe immoral people. She could not tell her father because she was concerned about his reaction since he disapproved of this marriage and was afraid of her husband. Her husband's abuse escalated to become more physical. He used his massive physical features to threaten her and, in some cases, severely beat her, hurled objects at her, kicked her while pregnant, dragged her by her hair, and locked her in the house. Her children's attempts to protect her always ended up with them suffering violent treatment as well. She was once hospitalized after a severe beating. Despite the involvement of the police, her brother-in-law was able to close the investigation through his connections. Following that incident, she was divorced. Her father advised her not to return to him, but she disregarded his advice once more. When her father died, her husband somehow became less physically abusive but still verbally aggressive and controlling. Fai's husband wanted to seize her inheritance, but her brothers prevented him. They tried to convince her to leave this marriage multiple times before giving up since she always disregarded their advice due to her fear of being stigmatized by society, which she endured during her first divorce.

For a few months, he treated her well, and she thought he had finally changed. However, he married another woman. Although his marriage was initially devastating for her, she realized it was the best thing that happened to her marriage. She could finally feel some peace when he was at his second house. Later, when the country underwent reforms and new laws, she gained the power and confidence to confront him and defend her rights. It was terrifying at first, but it gave her back her power and confidence. She knew he, or his brother, could not use their connections against her anymore. In addition to becoming more independent, she also secured her financial situation by buying some assets. He is no longer abusing or controlling her. Instead, he treats her more respectfully. Fai sympathizes with him because his change was noticeable,

especially when his mother died, and he is now physically weaker than previously. As a result, she feels compelled to care for him and is not considering divorce.

Samar

Samar is in her late thirties, works from home, is a mother of two children, and has been married for about 14 years. She had known her husband for two years before marrying through family members. He proposed to her multiple times before her father agreed to their marriage because his family was more liberal than her moderate family. They had a very successful and healthy marital dynamic until her husband started his own business and suffered from work stressors that he did not manage very well. Despite her efforts to support him, he was always angry, and how he talked with her changed. He became more aggressive and offensive, which was followed by an impulsive marriage to another woman.

Samar's husband could not separate between work and family. He always talked and complained about work, which was frustrating for Samar. She kept up with his stress and offered support. However, he blamed and criticized her when she could not follow up with him or understand some work aspects. She had other obligations in her life. So, whenever she was unavailable, he would criticize her for being unsupportive and boring. He imposed some spending limitations on her to ensure she was always available and close to him. However, she understood they had a very luxurious lifestyle, and whatever she had was plenty to not ask him for more. When he realized that financial restrictions were not working, he followed his friends' advice of marrying another woman who would be more available and more fun to ease his pressure. Although he divorced her after a few months, Samar was heartbroken and did not accept it. To her, he was not the same man she married anymore. Through her support from

family and friends and her confidant characteristics, Samar was able to deal with her situation

more rationally.

Her father was her ultimate support. He guided her through what to say, how, and when.

Her friends were the silver lining, as she described, of her experience because, besides their

infinite support, they became closer and more connected. Samar was also a wise woman who did

not reply immediately after her husband told her about his marriage. She wanted to investigate

her options since she was unwilling to give up what they had financially and socially achieved.

Samar educated herself about the new laws and rights, asked him to leave her room, and ensured

her financial stability through a lawyer. When she was ready, she explained to him how he hurt

her, that he was not a priority in her life anymore, and that she would never be the same person.

He apologized numerous times and attempted to make amends by purchasing expensive gifts for

her, which Samar found offensive. Although she knows that her husband regrets what he did,

Samar still wants him to work harder by going to therapy and changing his attitudes and

behaviors.

Noha

Noha is a woman in her late fifties who is now retired. She has been married to her

husband for about 33 years, and they have seven children together. Five of their children are

married and have children of their own. Noha and her husband have master's degrees, and their

marriage has always been a great example of a healthy relationship. Throughout the years, Noha

has learned how to deal with her husband's anger and maintain a peaceful home. Despite his

anger, her husband has always been kind, generous, caring, and supportive, so she has always

felt that his good qualities outweighed his anger issues. However, ten years ago, his anger

became more intense and frequent. Noha believes that his fear of the changes happening in the country has led him to project his anger onto her.

Noha's husband came from a moderate to conservative family with certain norms and values. He was genuinely concerned that Noha would adopt the new norms in light of the country's developments and become liberal. Instead of discussing his concerns with her, Noha's husband restricted her from going to certain places that he thought would have more liberal and Westernized people. He refused to go out with her if she did not wear the traditional colors of clothing, which made Noha feel like he was limiting her. She tried to talk to him and explain that their relationship was above these restrictions, but he responded fiercely and spoke to her as if he was disciplining her. He aggressively told her to leave the house if she did not obey him. He also began recounting all the good things he had done for her over the years as if they were favors. She did not know why he reacted so harshly towards her, which left her feeling shattered and deeply hurt. Noha was unsure of what to do or whom to confide in, as she came from a generation that did not express their emotions and had a conservative background. She remained silent, which she believed empowered him more because he used the same behavior more often and in different situations. Her children noticed the change in their parents' dynamic and Noha's actions.

Noha gradually became less involved with her family and started spending most of her time in her room or with her friends. She found comfort in her friends and felt they provided her with the support and acceptance she lacked at home. One of her daughters eventually encouraged her to take a healthier approach to dealing with the hardships in her life instead of avoiding them. As a result, Noha decided to go to therapy and focused on improving her well-being and lifestyle. However, despite her efforts, her husband's anger outbursts continued to be constant in

their marriage. She never considered confronting him or getting a divorce because she felt that she lacked the necessary skills. She eventually realized that by seeking extra resources and support, she could concentrate on other areas of her life, deal with her current situation, and improve her quality of life without necessarily trying to change her husband, whom she believed was a good man at heart.

Results

After a separate analysis of each participant, the data were combined and transformed into shared themes that addressed each research question and reflected the participants' interpretation of their experiences. This study was guided by one central question—How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030?—and two guiding questions: (a) How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence? (b) How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reactions to emotional/psychological violence?

Themes for Central Research Question

To better understand the central research question, the themes were divided into two main sections: before and after Vision 2030. All participants unanimously shared a common theme before Vision 2030, which was their feeling of powerlessness. This sense of powerlessness incapacitated them from dealing with their experiences of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) effectively due to their distressing feelings, distorted thoughts, and impaired self-image. After the implementation of Vision 2030, the theme that all participants shared was their sense of empowerment. They all felt, directly or indirectly, empowered and

gained new perspectives and meanings that improved their ability to deal with their husbands and marital dynamics, which uniquely transformed their interpretation of their experiences.

Theme One Before Vision 2030: Sense of Powerlessness

Before Vision 2030, each participant explicitly and distinctively expressed their sense of powerlessness, which left them with no other choice but to endure and accept the emotionally/psychologically abusive dynamic in the marriage. Their powerlessness, resulting from their distressing feelings, affected how they perceived themselves and how they justified or rationalized their husbands' behaviors.

Subtheme One: Self-Perception

The participants shared how their experiences with emotional/psychological IPV significantly affected their self-perception, which was interpreted from their narratives of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When Amal's husband discovered some aspects of her life before marrying him that he refused to accept despite her efforts to explain her situation, he blamed her for ruining their marriage. He started to call her names, which are used to describe "immoral women, whom everyone criticizes for not having religious or cultural morals." She believed him for a while and believed that she was "a bad person." She mentioned: "I struggled a lot at the beginning. I could not focus on my work. I truly believed that I ruined our marriage and that I was a bad person. I could not think or function very well." Although Amal shared, "I know I am wise and know what to do in so many situations," she felt she did not have these qualities in this situation. She sadly thought: "Maybe I am supposed to go through this to correct all my previous mistakes… like a redemption or repent from what I did in my past." Amal interpreted her experiences by saying:

It is something that once you experience, you just can't be the same anymore. You can't

feel your feelings the same way you used to, even if you still have them. It is like decay

eating you alive, and you have no choice but to change, hopefully for the better. (Amal)

Faten's experience also shared the same interpretation of powerlessness and not

recognizing oneself anymore. She said:

I understand that there are things that men can do to destroy a woman's confidence and

dignity, not only words. I'm talking about even the gestures that say and do more than

words. It is even more harmful when it comes from a clever man, a manipulative one,

who makes you question everything you do or say, and in some cases even what you

think…. I didn't know how much psychological or emotional abuse was hidden. It is

more dangerous than physical abuse if I can say that…. It is not easy. It makes you

question yourself and doubt your qualities. You just don't recognize who you are

anymore. (Faten)

Faten felt powerless, "weak, scared, vulnerable, and a victim" as her husband expertly

manipulated her using his reputation as a well-known religious man and psychologist who hosted

many "workshops about marriage and family." Faten was afraid that if people knew she was his

wife, they would "stand by him, believe him," and blame her. Her husband did not only blame

her for the change in their marriage after she discovered he was deceiving her about divorcing

his first wife, but he also neglected her and became "aggressive and angry most of the time." She

felt that her husband failed her and did not stand by her when things got tough, as she explained:

He didn't take care of me, especially during the two miscarriages I had and my

pregnancy. I barely remember that he went to any of the appointments with me or even

considered checking on my health status…. I was alone, he was never involved in any

major things in my life. He never discussed anything with me, even if I talked, I was

talking to myself; he never answered or discussed anything with me. I was alone and sad

and of course, deeply broken. (Faten)

Doaa, who describes her husband as a "business partner" rather than a husband,

explained that because her husband is "narcissistic and very competitive," when she advises him

"about something that he didn't think about or a new idea, he criticizes" her first, "not the idea."

He talks with her in a disrespectful tone that she thinks is his way to "make sure that he is better,

more knowledgeable, more open, whatever it was, he must be better" because he "can't be wrong

or anyone better than him." Although Doaa "learned over the years how to deliver" her advice or

ideas and talk to him, she felt emotionally exhausted, and she believed his criticism. She shared:

"The sad part was that I believed him for a while. I believed that I didn't know how to talk or

provide support." She explained her struggle regarding how her husband's behaviors affected her

by saying:

> The words, the looks, the gestures, even the way of talking; the tone and attitude. All
>
> these things that make the other partner wonder what happened. Why did it happen?
>
> What did I do? Do I deserve this? These questions that make one very vulnerable and
>
> quiet over time. (Doaa)

Similarly, Lena was forced to be quiet as she did not know how to deal with her

husband's short temper. Her fear of what he might do when he is angry left her powerless and

vulnerable, especially since he divorced her twice and had only one divorce left. Islamically

speaking, there are two revocable divorces before the third and irrevocable divorce. Lena became

quiet, avoidant, and apologetic even if she did not do anything wrong in an effort to protect not

only her marriage but also herself. She mentioned:

I was not like this at all, I was a fun and social person, but I could not do it anymore. He took that away from me. He left me with this broken, fragile, frightened, and humiliated soul. My self-confidence was zero, I had none. I lost everything I knew about myself and the new me was so weak and I hated everything about this change. (Lena)

Hana's experience had a significant impact on her and how she perceived herself. It was impressive how well she was able to articulate her experience without any need for further explanation. Her words were precise and meaningful, conveying just how deeply she was affected by the experience:

What I've been through, what his words and actions did to me, left me weak and helpless. They made me emotionless and numb; nothing matters anymore. I was not myself anymore, I was emotionally and cognitively detached from my usual self, from everyone, and from the whole world. He did all the things that make you lifeless; nothing has meaning in life anymore, and you don't have hopes for the future or trust in anyone. You just hopelessly do what you are supposed to do. (Hana)

While Hana acknowledged she was emotionally abused, Samar and Noha refused to interpret their experiences as emotional IPV. Samar expressed: "I am just not considering it abuse for my own sanity and emotional balance." Noha explained:

Emotional abuse is subjective. Some women may consider an action or a word emotional abuse, while others think it's normal. It depends on the relationship, the characteristics, and most importantly, the intention. I do not like to think that I am emotionally abused, but I know other women, maybe younger, could think that. I think if I see it as abuse, it will hurt more. (Noha)

Despite the subjective nature of her interpretation, it is undeniable that her experience had a significant impact on her. Noha expressed feelings of being "alone, hurt, and confused" in response to the apparent change in her husband's behavior. She was also powerless and did not know how to deal with that change in her marriage. She even started to question: "Was it because of me? Or something I did?" The same question was raised by Hiba, whose husband used to compare her to his deceased wife, who was more "enthusiastic and energetic." When their oldest son married, Hiba's husband started to compare Hiba to their daughter-in-law because she was "very wise and mature." The overwhelming and distressing feelings that her husband's comparison caused led Hiba to be aggressive, especially toward her daughter-in-law. Hiba thought she would never be good enough for her husband and would never do the right thing. This self-perception was increased when her husband married another woman "to find the happiness he was looking for." Although his second marriage was for a brief period, Hiba felt hopeless, helpless, and unfortunately, more aggressive. She believed her husband did "all the bad things that send a message that you are not equal, not a human."

What intensified Hiba's distressing emotions and low self-perception was the physical abuse she experienced at the beginning of her marriage, as she shared: "He used to hit me at the beginning of our marriage and his older son would always defend me. I remember I went to the hospital one time and had stitches." Fai shared the same experience of going to the hospital after a big physical fight with her husband. Fai was always afraid of her husband and what he might do to her. She expressed how her life with her husband "is an action movie… I barely remember a peaceful time with him." Even when the physical abuse stopped, the threat of using it continued, which was enough to make her fearful. Besides her husband's aggressive tendencies, "hitting, cursing, pushing, neglecting," Fai mentioned that he also did all "the disrespectful

things that made me feel powerless and weak…maybe controlling things is more accurate than

disrespectful." Whether it was a controlling or disrespectful interaction, it was evident that it

negatively impacted how she viewed herself. She described his interactions with her:

> It is not just his words, it's his treatment in general. It is awful. You can sense that even if
>
> he didn't say a word, you immediately feel sad, broken, helpless, alone. It is like when
>
> you want to scream, but you don't have a voice. (Fai)

Fai also shared with Hiba and Samar the experience of her husband marrying another

wife. Fai was "broken and sad for a long time" after her husband married another wife, whom he

is still married to now, but she seemed to accept it. On the other hand, Samar felt that her

husband's second marriage, even though it did not last for a long time, was unforgivable. She

explicitly shared: "I think what he broke in me was unfixable. I don't see him as the same man I

loved, and I'm very sure he doesn't see me as the loving person he loved… it is really hard when

your pain comes from the person you love the most."

Subtheme Two: Justifying or Rationalizing Their Husbands' Behaviors

A key component of participants' interpretations of emotional/ psychological Intimate

Partner Violence (IPV), which left them powerless, was their attempt to rationalize and justify

their husbands' abusive behavior. Doaa clearly expressed her understanding of the causation of

abusive behavior in general and in her situation in particular by saying:

> IPV is everything that harms the other partner's dignity. I understand it comes from a
>
> weak partner so in some way I have empathy. I am still against it, but I am just saying I
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> understand where it comes from… My experience is weird. He can't live without me, he
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> comes to me in every detail, he respects my parenting style, he loves my relationship with

his family, but I think he is intimidated or threatened by all that, so he talks with me in a way that does not reflect all this love and respect. (Doaa)

Fai's husband demonstrated the same conflicting behaviors that Doaa's husband displayed. He shared with Fai that he could not live without her and wanted them to be happier together. Fai tried to make sense of his conflicting behaviors by trying to understand his characteristics, and she concluded that "he is troubled and doesn't know how to communicate or act." She realized there was nothing to do to help or change him because she could not "change someone if they don't want to change." She explained:

It is very weird how he treats me and yet can't live without me. I know his actions don't reflect that, but when we got divorced after one of the biggest fights, he cried like a baby who lost his mother. He came to my father's house every day, waited for me in front of my work, sent me like a million people to convince me to get back to him, and again I didn't listen to my father when he said do not go back. I thought that he regretted what he did and was sorry because the fight was very big and I went to the hospital, the police came to investigate. Of course, they didn't do anything, and the case was closed because his brother used to work there. Obviously, there is something wrong with the whole family, that's why I am saying he is troubled. (Fai)

Fai thought about divorce, but she felt sorry for him as "he became very weak and alone, especially after his mother died." Fai felt empathy toward her husband increased because of the changes he displayed in his interactions with her. She mentioned: "he kisses my forehead every time he enters the house, which is weird, but that shows me how vulnerable he is." Therefore, she feels sorry for him and is obligated to not leave him when he is in need.

Hana also conveyed her empathy and understanding for her husband's situation in life. She mentioned that his father died when he was an infant and his mother and sisters spoiled him because he was the youngest child and the only boy among all his sisters, which contributed to his weak nature. She explained her reason for not leaving him by saying:

I feel sorry for him. The way he cried when I asked him for divorce the first time made me realize how fragile he is. I can't forget his face and his vulnerability. He was like a baby. I blame his mother and sisters for his actions because they really spoiled him. They made him think that he was the only man on this earth, which is sad. I don't know, maybe one day he will change. It is still not acceptable to do or say what he is doing, but maybe, because I know that deep inside him, there is a good man who will come out one day.

(Hana)

Amal's husband showed similar conflicting behaviors, which made her feel compelled to justify her husband's behaviors to make sense of their conflicting marital dynamics. Amal believes that because she and her husband "are such amazing people together," it is impossible for her to live without him. She knows that her marriage is "not the best type of marriage," but she also acknowledges that they have been through a lot together, which helped her rationalize their "complicated" marital dynamic. She explained:

He knows I am the best wife anyone could possibly have, but he thinks he is trapped in this marriage because of the history between us. I think what we have been through was enough to make him want to leave this marriage, but the fact that he loves me, and I am a good wife and great mother, he could not leave and cannot…. I understand his view I just do not agree with it…to be honest, my husband is a great person to talk with. He listens

very well. He is my rock even though he is the source of pain. It is funny and ironic to see how deep damage he can cause and be a great and best support at the same time. (Amal)

Considering the good qualities that a husband has was not what only Amal did but also Noha. Noha deeply believes her husband is "a very good man with really rare and good qualities." She recognizes that her husband is "really a nice man. He is caring, giving, and considerate. He has all the good qualities you wish for in a husband. His anger is a little bit extreme, but the good qualities overshadow his anger." Noha shared that her husband says hurtful things when he is angry, but she believes he does not mean them. She justified his anger as being driven by his fear and concern about the rapid changes in the country, which she also shares. Although Noha hoped they could discuss their concerns together rather than him yelling at her and controlling her, she justified his lack of healthy communication and emotional expression as a result of coming from a generation that does not promote healthy talking or communication but rather "more doing than saying," and it appears that he always realizes what he did and makes amends to her. Lena also acknowledges her husband's effort to change and make it up to her, especially after he became friends with her friend's husband. She mentioned that they went out several times with her friend and her husband, who has "a good influence" on her husband. Lena rationalized her husband's actions by saying:

> I know he loves me, in his own way, and I know that he doesn't want to lose me, but he needs to work a little bit harder to make me deeply believe it. I don't want to say he is a completely bad person. I know he is trying but I'm not sure if he is trying in the right way. I mean he is trying to be with me and do more stuff together, as a couple. He also started to invite me for dinners to try new restaurants… So, I know he is trying because

he feels I'm drifting away from him, but he did not change his short temper, so, my fear

is still the same. (Lena)

On the other hand, Samar expressed her reluctance to accept her husband's attempts to

reconcile with her, despite his efforts to make amends for having taken another wife and

following his friends' advice:

I know he is sorry and regrets what he did, to some extent, because he said that. He said

he didn't know how he did it, his friends convinced him to marry another wife, and all

that stuff that he thought would make me accept his apology. He even tried to make it up

for me by buying more stuff, luxury stuff, but this was not what I wanted. He

disrespected me as a woman and person. He hurt my dignity, and he can't buy me. He

needs to change his attitude and his interaction, which he did not. He is angry and

stressed, and he needs to figure it out and change. He must apologize without mentioning

any excuses, just apologize, don't blame your friends or life. You are an adult, you can

think. (Samar)

Despite refusing to accept her husband's apology, Samar demonstrated a capacity for

empathy and understanding by rationalizing the root cause of her husband's actions. She

explained: "he didn't receive the right support or guidance and that led to some actions that he

needs to deal with their consequences."

Theme Two After Vision 2030: A Sense of Empowerment

The shared theme between all the participants after Vision 2030 was their sense of

empowerment. They were able to change the meaning and interpretation of their experience with

emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), either directly or indirectly. Although

some participants had concerns and doubts about the impact of Vision 2030 on Saudi culture and

religion, they admitted that it impacted their interactions with their husbands and their overall

experience with IPV, leading to their sense of empowerment. Faten expressed that the Vision "is

the best thing that happened in Saudi" after learning about the new legal laws and policies. She

said that when women's status and guardianship laws changed, she was able to manage her

situation by herself without waiting for her brothers' approval. She was able to leave her

husband's house, had her own place with her sister, and did not need to move back with her

mother after separation. Faten felt empowered and financially supported by the system because

her husband was not only paying child support but also paying for her because her daughter was

under the age of seven. Faten explained:

> He has nothing to say about how much to pay or when; the system will determine the
>
> amount based on his income and will automatically transfer it to me, and during that
>
> process, there is the government child support fund that will pay to me until paper works
>
> and procedures are done. He then needs to repay the government whatever they paid for
>
> me. If he doesn't pay, they will stop all his legal and financial services, so he won't be
>
> able to travel or buy anything until he pays the government back. (Faten)

Faten felt empowered and independent, as she expressed:

I was weak, scared, vulnerable, and a victim. The vision empowered me. It gave me hope

> and strength to live again, to have a decent and dignified life that was taken from me by
>
> my husband and brothers… I became free, alive, independent, empowered… I know my
>
> rights and my daughter's rights, and I will never let anyone put me down again. (Faten)

The independence and empowerment that Faten gained after Vision 2030 was also

experienced by Doaa, as she shared: "Nothing will hold me back now. I will live my life by my

standards." Doaa explained: "The system and people used to support the idea of weak women,

the good obedient patient women, but now it is the opposite, women must stand for themselves, live their lives based on their standards, and be themselves." Doaa took the first step of being financially independent from her husband and started to plan to open her own business. Her husband, who disagreed with that step at first, had no choice but to support her. Doaa explained:

> The new laws allowed women to be equal to men and granted them their basic rights. Even if she decided not to use this power, I think the fact that men knew she could, is empowering to women. Therefore, limiting men's abuse. They know they don't have the power or control they used to have. (Doaa)

Although Doaa did not leave her husband, nor did he change his controlling behaviors, she mentioned that she feels empowered and able to live her life with a new perspective:

> I don't know how or why because my life didn't change very much, but I am very sure that I feel empowered. I feel like a person with a voice and right. I think that was enough for my husband to change a little bit. I am not saying that he is not trying to control me anymore, because he still does, but I have other things to focus on in my life, my children, my social life, my new business. So, I learned to not let whatever he was saying or doing affect me. I think I realized that he is this way and will never change so, I will not bother myself with him anymore. I will focus on myself and what matters to me. (Doaa)

Lena thinks that she feels empowered, supported, and heard because of the new resources, new laws, legislation, opportunities, and equality. Similar to Doaa's husband, Lena's husband did not change his short temper or actions even though he was trying to be closer to her. However, Lena was able to change the way she copes with that. She explained that her new lifestyle enhanced the quality of her relationships and provided her with the love, respect, and

strength to live her life without her "husband's or brothers' approval." She was finally able to "feel like an adult and able to act like one." Lena said:

> The only thing that changed in our relationship after the Vision is that he feels I am different and not so attached to him. He said it once. He said you are not the same; you are stronger and not afraid of losing me. (Lena)

Hiba was able to access supportive resources after the implementation of the new laws without the control and restrictions of her husband and with the encouragement and support of her daughter-in-law. She shared how she felt "empowered, stable, and confident," and she could focus on herself and set her priorities—her "mental health and stability" are her top priorities. Hiba's husband feels her empowerment as well because she became "socially and financially able to do whatever he denied" her before. She explained that the best aspect of Vision 2030 is:

> Women empowerment and new laws. The fact that I can do more things and have a voice is empowering even though nothing major changed in my life. I mean I am still married to the same man; I am retired so I didn't professionally benefit from the new laws, but I feel supported, equal, and empowered. I can spend my money as I wish, travel, and be me… I can literally walk away if he says mean things to me without the fear that he will yell at me or hit me. I feel supported as simple as that. (Hiba)

Hiba was unable to learn about the new laws and resources without the support and encouragement of her daughter-in-law, which was also the case with Noha, who received the same support from her daughter. Noha's daughter noticed that Noha had withdrawn from the family. Therefore, she helped Noha "to have a better focus in life and to maintain" her sanity and health. It was easier for her to present several workshops on topics she was passionate about. She explained:

It was very complicated to find a venue to present my work and organize a workshop.

Even if I did, people would not attend because their families would not approve or

because it was not common. Now it is different; easier access, advertisement, interest,

and most importantly, more support and encouragement from the government. (Noha)

Noha thinks that her "lifestyle now is healthier and has a goal and purpose." She is no

longer just focusing on her "husband and his satisfaction, which is positively impacting" her and

her life. She changed the way she reacted to him and his angry outbursts because she realized

they were not because of her but rather because of "his fear and concerns," which "made a huge

difference in their impact" on her.

Hana, who became a business owner after Vision 2030, also changed the way she coped

with her experience of IPV. She specifically highlighted how she benefited from the changes in

the country. To her, the Vision created more job opportunities for women, ensured their rights

were met, stopped the guardianship law, and gave women a voice in different sectors. She

sincerely believes that these changes were empowering and enough to change women's abuse

without the need to address IPV directly. Hana shared:

I would not be able to keep moving forward without the changes in the country… There

is a lot in the Vision that positively changes people's lives… It became easier for me to

be my normal self; the outgoing, caring, giving person. I am back to my social life,

started my business, became more independent and mature. (Hana)

She also explained how her husband attempted to control her and make things more

difficult for her when she wanted to begin her own business or buy a car. However, his behaviors

only motivated her more and gave her a new focus on life:

When I started driving, he couldn't do that anymore. It is my car, and I can do whatever I want. He of course didn't buy it for me to make it hard for me to buy one, even though he is very wealthy, but he just wanted to make it hard for me to own a car. But I took a loan and bought it anyway. Even when I bought it, he made fun of me because I bought a regular car, all his family have luxurious cars and he has more than one, but I did not care. I just wanted a car to be able to go where I wanted without being under his mercy. I learned how to save money and invest until I was able to open my salon, which he also made fun of, and when he realized that his talking didn't stop me, he started to criticize me, my face, my body, anything you think about, he criticized. So, I stopped trying to change him or our relationship. His inner soul is damaged, and he damaged mine. It took me a long time and too much work to get back to myself; the one that is pure and beautiful… I just don't pay attention to my husband anymore. I am very busy with my work, salon, kids, and friends. I barely have time to worry about what he says or does, and he doesn't have the authority over me as he used to. (Hana)

Although Hana thinks that she "might not be the best example to fight IPV," she interpreted her experience by saying: "It changed me a lot; changed my soul, my trust in people, my values. It gave me a new self, a new perspective, a new way of living." Samar also thought her IPV experience was "a life-changing situation, a turning point." However, Samar did not think that Vision significantly impacted her experience with IPV because she considered herself "a privileged woman" with plenty of resources and support from her family and friends. She explained that she never felt any males in her family were her guardians because her father raised her and her sisters to be independent and responsible. In both her husband's family and hers, women were never underestimated or mistreated by men. Samar agreed that "the Vision is

empowering. Each one, man and woman, has clear rights now and equal, or almost equal, opportunities. No one can control or restrict another person's life." Therefore, she admitted that Vision had "some hidden or underlying impact that increased and enhanced" her "existing power and wisdom," which significantly impacted her response. She said: "I still can't deny the fact that knowing what the Vision created in a similar situation was empowering enough… In general, the vision is life-changing, empowering, and promising."

While the Vision enhanced the resources and power that Samar had, it created new ones for Fai, who thinks that her experience is "one of the best examples of what the vision added" to her life. She explained: "It brought back my dignity, my respect, my life. I feel confident, empowered, capable, resourceful, and that is more than enough to grant me whatever I want or need." Fai believes that:

> Vision is very empowering more than people think. It is deeper than events and seasons.
> It is what women wanted a long time ago. It is what God gave women and men took from
> them… and it's been a long time of injustice and abuse of women, which is not what God
> or religion supported. The Vision finally brought religion, human rights, and justice to the
> surface. It helped us to live equally, peacefully, and fairly. We are humans, not objects.
> (Fai)

Fai elaborated on how the Vision created new laws "that draw clear lines for any kind of abuse," which empowered her and allowed her to defend herself, have a successful and peaceful life, and enjoy all the blessings she had:

> Things are different now though. I am more powerful, independent, and in peace. I
> bought two apartment buildings, so I have more income besides my salary. I am
> financially independent and better than him. I also bought my house, so he lives in my

house, my roles, my money. He is not my guardian anymore, so I control my life like I

want. I go out with my family and friends, I travel, I drive, I become more confident and

don't care about him as I used to... He is not yelling like before, and if he talks about

something that I don't like or is offensive to me I just simply say I don't want to talk or

walk away. He doesn't follow me to threaten or hit me like before. I do great at work; I

am the head of the department now. My kids are healthy and happy, and I have a

grandson, who is a blessing in my life. I have good friends. I can see my brothers and

mother whenever I want. I travel. I do everything I want and wish without his control.

(Fai)

Despite Amal's professional knowledge about the shortcomings of the Vision, Amal

admitted that the Vision "to some extent" changed the existing laws in the systems, "but not very

much, or at least not like what people really need." Related to her personal experience, she

mentioned that "maybe indirectly my husband thinks of it but… I never thought the Vision was

related to me or my experience… because I have a complicated marriage." She acknowledged

that the Vision "maybe indirectly" gave her greater power since she now realized she had "more

chances than before," such as not having to return to her parent's home in the event of a divorce

and being able to live on her own. Amal made it clear that she began to concentrate on her own

needs and self-empowerment.

Themes for the First Guiding Question

The participants dealt with emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in a

variety of ways. There were three primary themes for their coping methods, which were carried

out differently depending on the circumstances of their experience.

Theme One: Did Nothing

The most common response among most of the participants was surrendering to their experience with emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and doing nothing. Amal's husband threatened to divorce her if she responded to him or expressed her feelings. Given her powerlessness, she had no choice but to submit to his demands. She expressed:

He denied me from expressing my feelings. Whenever I am sad, mad, or even frustrated, I have to pretend that I am fine because he said that if I express them, he will remember everything, and we go back to point zero where he seriously considered the divorce. (Amal)

Hana also could not "say a thing" in response to her husband's extreme control over everything in her life. She wanted to respond to him, but she had been taught since she was a kid not to "react in a bad manner even if the person in front of" her was bad. Hiba also did "nothing much at first" despite her desire to react in any way she could. She said "I wanted to leave, to talk to him, or even to hit him back, but I was so afraid and worried. I was weak and socially isolated so there was nothing much to do."

On the other hand, Noha consciously chose not to "say a thing to him" because she "did not know what to say" in this new dynamic between her and her husband. She said:

His response was very new to me. He became very defensive and aggressive. I felt like I was his daughter, and he was disciplining me. He even asked me to leave the house if I did not follow his orders. I did not like it at all, but I didn't say a word. I did not know what to say, this was new to me. He never did it before. (Noha)

Also, Lena was powerless to do anything and simply went along with her husband's wants to have peace since she knew she had nothing else to do. She revealed that their marriage

ended in a first divorce when she told her husband, "Enough." The second divorce "was a few days, maybe a week" after her father's death. She explained: "I was unable to discuss anything with him so when he was angry that I spent most of the time with my mother, I said so what, the next day I was divorced." After these humiliating experiences and an unsuccessful therapeutic experience with her husband, Lena learned to refrain from acting. She explained her responses by saying:

> I did nothing. I just do whatever he wants to have peace because there was nothing else I could do. Even when we went to therapy, he wanted me to change more. So, no thank you, I don't want to do anything. (Lena)

> Doaa "felt alone, with no option but to accept that" her husband or marriage was not what she "hoped for." Through her experience, she realized that her husband "was a better option" as she expressed: "My husband was a better option, the only option then. I focused on my girls to not be as weak as me and on my boys to not be as abusive as their father."

> Similarly, Fai discovered that her only choice was to not do anything and to be occupied with her work, house, and kids because there was nothing more she could do to change her husband's behavior or the dynamics of her marriage. Fai was too timid to disclose the aggressive dynamic that started on her wedding day, as she explained:

> He screamed at me the day of our wedding, and I thought he must be nervous and didn't know what to do, but a few days later he did it again. I didn't say a word to him or my father. I was young and my father told me to wait and not marry this man because my husband and his family were from a different region, but I didn't listen. So, I was too shy to tell him anything, and I was afraid of my husband. (Fai)

Even when her husband's aggressiveness intensified throughout her marriage, Fai did not react to her husband's aggressiveness and remained "the obedient wife he wanted" despite her brothers' efforts to convince her to leave her husband. She "didn't want to be divorced again… so life moved on."

Finally, Faten expressed that she "was very patient" while enduring mistreatment and neglect from her husband. She "was always afraid that he would leave," and she "would be divorced again." However, Faten's response changed when her daughter received similar neglect and mistreatment. She said: "When it came to my daughter, I couldn't accept it. She will not have the same neglect that I had. She deserves the best."

Theme Two: Asked for Support

Most of the participants asked for formal and informal support to feel more empowered in coping with their experience of emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), especially since they felt they could not change the abusive nature of their husbands or marriages. For the formal support, most of them went to therapy and a couple of them received legal support. The informal support was provided to the participants through some family members or friends.

Subtheme One: Formal Support

Lena went to couples therapy with her husband, and "he learned some anger management techniques and conflict resolution." They also "worked together on communication." However, Lena "struggled during therapy to forgive him and had several individual sessions." Consequently, her husband thought she was "the problem" in their marriage despite the therapist's rationalization about the objectives of Lena's individual session. Lena's husband was convinced that she needed more work to do and needed to change.

Hiba was unable to seek therapy or access any other supportive programs for abused women because her husband was "the one who was supposed to take" her there. She also mentioned that it was a stigma to use similar resources. Later, with the support and encouragement of her son and his wife, Hiba went to therapy and learned how to cope with her experience and rearrange her life's priorities. Noha also did not seek therapy until her daughter urged her to go to have a more balanced and healthier way of living.

Doaa stopped seeking therapy because she felt it was "repetitive and pointless if the husband was not involved." She was hoping to find "something that could change the dynamic" between her and her husband rather than just "learning how to live with someone who is not willing to change." Amal's husband went to therapy with her, but he did not follow through with their couple's sessions. Therefore, she continued attending her individual sessions, which helped her "to see the good within the bad." Hana also stopped going to therapy due to her busy schedule even though she is still on antidepressants. She mentioned that she "visited a therapist before and learned a lot from her."

Faten and Samar were the only two participants who benefitted from the legal support. Samar described herself: "I am a very wise and cautious person; I don't take any action before thinking about all the possible consequences." Therefore, she educated herself on the "new legal system and laws" and talked with her lawyer to secure her finances officially and legally by having the house in case of divorce. Faten on the other hand, profited the most because she could not do anything without her brothers' support or approval. Her brothers did not believe that her husband abused her, blamed her for her husband's behavior, supported her husband, and did not want to go to court when she asked them because they did not want to deal with the complicated process. When Faten learned about the new legislation, through a conversation with her friends,

and the guardianship law changed, she was able to receive legal support without her husband's or brothers' approval. She not only filed for divorce and child custody but also received support from "the government child support fund" while waiting for the legal paperwork process.

Subtheme Two: Informal Support

While some of the participants actively asked for support from family or friends, others were offered this support without asking. Their family offered their support because they were able to witness the abuse or the impact of it. Moreover, some participants received informal support just by being with their family or friends without the need to discuss any aspects of their experience with emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) because they did not know about their situation.

Amal actively sought support from her two close friends and only one of her sisters because she could not share any details about her life with anyone else, especially since such disclosure could jeopardize her social image. She shared:

> My family and friends always viewed me as a wise person who can handle everything, and I loved that. It gave me a purpose; it is tough but empowering at the same time. So, I had to live up to that expectation; never complain, always show the best side of my life, which impacted my decision when my husband and I started this crazy life… Because I couldn't show my pain, and I couldn't express it, my husband pushed it more and more. He knew I had no one to go to because he knew how much I cared about my image. He didn't know until now that I talked with my sister and close friends. He thinks that I am alone. (Amal)

These high expectations that were placed on Amal limited her ability to cope with her experience effectively and caused some contradiction in her thoughts and emotions. She

mentioned that her sister and friends had "the best impact" on her and helped her realize that she was not "a bad person at all," even though she thinks that she still has "lots of work to do" because she does not "fully have high self-esteem." Their support, along with her work with abused women, made her realize that she has "something better than other people," and to be thankful "even in the worst moments."

Samar also actively asked for her family's and friends' support because she felt that "it wasn't easy to go through this alone." She felt the need to receive support and comfort from her community, which was different than culture, as she said: "Culture can be suffocating sometimes, but community nurturing," and they were "the best." She shared how she received the ultimate support from her father and friends, which positively impacted her and their relationship:

> I told him what I wanted to say, and he directed me to when and how to say it. My friends were the silver lining of all this, we got closer through this and knew the true value of our friendship. We can rely on each other no matter what. (Samar)

Lena also shared details about her life with one of her friends, who was "wise and always directs" Lena "to do the right thing." Although Lena did not follow her friend's advice about talking to her husband, Lena knew her friend was "always there to support... and lift" her up. Her other friends were indirect support because they did not know about Lena's marital situation. She described their relationship dynamic by saying:

> My other friends usually share general talks about men and their behaviors, and we always come to the conclusion that we need to live our life to the max, so, we usually end up doing more activities to enjoy our lives. That's why they are indirect support for me. (Lena)

Hana also believed that "socializing is one of the most powerful things to lift a person up." She believed that "if you have a good social circle, then you will be fine." She described her social circle as "a great one" because they "support one another and enjoy being together."

Hiba and Noha received support from their family without them asking. Hiba's son witnessed the abusive dynamic between her and his father since he was a child and felt the need to defend his mother. When he became an adult, he supported his mother and she felt to some extent stronger. She shared:

> I became stronger when my oldest son started to defend me, but I still could not do much because his father would yell at him as well. It was when my daughter-in-law came and supported me, talked with my husband, and taught me how to take care of myself, vent effectively, and set boundaries with my husband. (Hiba)

When Noha's husband demonstrated his new aggressive attitude toward her. She avoided being with him or her family and spent most of her time alone in her room or going out with her friends because she felt "accepted and appreciated." Noha mentioned: "My friends were indirect support because they did not know about my struggle but being with them was a relief." Moreover, her changed behavior was unmissed by her daughter, who stepped in and provided support to her mother.

Faten had to endure her husband's mistreatment and neglect for a long time because she felt unsupported by her mother and brothers, though not by her sister. Faten could not tolerate his neglect when her daughter was hospitalized and decided to leave the house. She knew she was expected to move back to her mother's house, but she and her sister, who was divorced, "decided to live together and face family rejection together." Faten's friends were also indirect supporters because they were "the first spark that guided" her to learn about and benefit from the new laws.

Although she did not share many details with them, they encouraged her when they saw her take the first legal step toward separation. She felt supported just by "knowing that they will be there" if she needed something, which was "enough and a relief."

Not sharing much with friends was also what Doaa did because her friends "seemed to be happier" than her and she wanted to "have the same status." Hana felt the same "relief and support" from her father although she never shared with him anything.

On the contrary, Fai did not follow the support and advice that she received from her father or later from her brothers. Her father advised her not to return to her husband after her first divorce. After her father's death, Fai's brothers advised her to get divorced. Her brothers eventually gave up on her because she ignored their advice and did not accept their support. Religion was her informal support and "escape" from the hardship in her life. Doaa and Lena also felt supported through religion, praying, and reading the Holy Quran.

Theme Three: Approached Life with a Different Perspective (Being Independent)

After most of the participants felt empowered by the Vision and the support they received, they were able to gain a new perspective to view and cope with their experience of emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). They adapted to a new lifestyle and became more independent, which enabled them to have a new and different coping mechanism. Noha overtly expressed that "not just focusing" on her "husband and his satisfaction" significantly and positively impacted her life. She realized that since she could not change him, she needed to change the way she reacted, which eventually made him slightly calmer.

Doaa also realized the same concept, that her husband "is this way and will never change." Therefore, she decided to focus on herself, her children, her social life, and her new business. She mentioned that she "learned to not let whatever he is saying or doing affect" her.

The Vision initiatives in different sectors, not only the legal sector, assisted her to cope differently with her experience with IPV. She expressed:

> I used to be weak, and I do not want to be weak anymore… I can drive now. I have my dream car… the entertainment and events open more doors for me to socialize and, therefore, have more connections and friends, which is great because I kind of have my own things to do instead of just focusing on my husband's business. (Doaa)

The same perspective was gained by Hana, who also became able to approach her life differently due to her new ability to be independent. She said:

> I am not unhappy now. I just don't pay attention to my husband anymore. I am very busy with my work, salon, kids, friends. I barely have time to worry about what he says or does, and he doesn't have the authority over me as he used to. (Hana)

Although Hana did not "have the intimacy" she wished for in her marriage, "it became not very important in light of all the other good things" in her life. Lena also focused on the other "good aspects" of her life and believed that she became happy with her life, kids, friends, and work, especially since they "have good moments," and her "children love their father." The satisfaction after being empowered and having a different perspective was something Hiba highlighted as well:

> I am satisfied with what God gave me. I can focus on what is good in my life rather than just focus on the negative. His words don't affect me anymore. He still says mean stuff to me and compares me to my daughters-in-law, but I couldn't care less. I have a great relationship with them and my grandchildren, so I learned to block whatever he says. (Hiba)

Knowing their rights and the new legislation was what empowered Faten, Fai, and Samar to approach their experience with more confidence and independence. Faten said: "I know my rights, and my daughter's rights, and I will never let anyone put me down again."

Fai mentioned that she became confident and less concerned about her husband's behaviors after the implementation of the new laws that granted her basic rights. She became more independent emotionally and financially and was able to approach her experience with more power and confidence. She revealed how the first time she responded to her husband differently was terrifying but necessary to change the dynamic between them:

> I remember the first time I told him "I will travel." He said, "You planned everything and did not ask me, I might say no," I literally told him "Just try and you will see what I will do, I am not the same person, and the country is not the same, so, it is better for you to not even think about it" … I just said that and walked away because I was afraid of his reaction. But I needed to do that. I needed to regain my power, and I did. (Fai)

Samar also summarized her empowered approach to her experience by saying:

> Knowing my rights and the new laws, talking to him, ensuring my rights and practical needs would be met. I think my reaction or response can be summarized in one phrase: be strong and fall on my feet. I learned my lesson. (Samar)

Themes for the Second Guiding Question

There were so many factors that influenced the participants' reactions or coping with their experiences of emotional/psychological Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The coping mechanisms of each participant were uniquely affected by various factors at the national, social, and relational levels. The common themes among all participants at the national level include (a) knowledge about supportive resources and (b) cultural and social norms. On the social level, the

themes include (c) religious beliefs and (d) financial issues. Finally, the themes at the relational level include (e) being controlled and (f) familial influence. All subthemes are linked together.

Theme One: National Level Factors

Subtheme One: Knowledge About Supportive Resources

The participants' knowledge about available resources was mainly concentrated on receiving therapy. A few of them were able to benefit from other legal resources. However, there was a common misconception that governmental resources targeted more severe situations like physically abused women.

From her experience with therapy, Lena thinks that there are good therapists in Saudi who can help other couples but not her and her husband. Lena knew about the hotline for abuse, but she decided not to use it due to her fear of disclosing any personal information about her family, which could impact their name and reputation. She also knew about "the changes in the law system, like the divorce process and child custody," that "became more supportive of women." However, she thought she could not use any of them because she did not want to get a divorce and did not want her children to see "their parents going to court and all that process."

Hiba also agreed with Lena that therapy was a helpful resource even though she was unable to use it at first. Although she later became able to access some of the supportive resources, she thinks that knowing that was enough for her because she does not need them as there are "more severe cases that can benefit them." She decided to "advocate for the new laws and new agencies" in her social circles.

Noha, who came from the same generation as Hiba, stated that "people think that therapy is for crazy people and it is stigmatized," but no one should "be afraid of it." She thinks "it is a great resource for support and having a healthy balanced life." She also thinks that the

governmental program targeted physically abused women only. She admired how the primary care centers started the "screening for mental health, which includes abuse." However, she was not sure if the physicians screened for emotional IPV.

Fai shared that the new laws "that draw clear lines for any kind of abuse" were more "effective than any resource." She shared that there are no more connections to help abusive men get away with their abuse because "people are afraid of being caught doing something illegal now because the consequences are scary, and everyone is concerned about their reputation… no doing favors anymore." She just hopes that "the Vision effort reaches everyone, especially the unfortunate, who don't know or don't have access to resources or support."

Although Faten benefited from the new family laws because she filed for divorce and child custody, she said that the governmental efforts were not apparent to everyone; "you can't see it if you didn't seek it." In her experience, Faten discovered the new legal laws and legislation through an "unplanned random talk" with her friends. She hoped the receiving services process would be faster and that they would be provided by "more considerate or qualified people." She mentioned that "the first judge was a little bit harsh and biased, but the second one was more understandable and supportive," resulting in more appropriate execution of the services. While the legal resources helped Faten in responding to her experience with IPV, she avoided seeking mental health support because her husband was in that field. She felt that his good reputation in the mental health field would make people believe him over her. She also mistakenly believed that, since her husband did not physically abuse her, she was not eligible for other governmental programs that support abused women.

Samar also knew about "the Family National Center and therapy," but she decided not to use any of them because she had her own supportive resources, her lawyer, family, and friends.

She shared that since she is a privileged woman with good connections, it was easier for her to learn about the supportive resources, "but maybe other women would not have the same privileges." She was concerned about "how a woman with a less supportive family would know about these new efforts… They are the ones who need to know more about these efforts. It is sad to see how all these efforts are not recognized or accessible by everyone." This was the case for Doaa and Hana. Doaa was unsure about "what the government is providing" because they are "unknown" to everyone. She hoped there would be "some workshops or education about women's rights and healthy marital communication and dynamics." Hana did not know a lot about supportive resources for abused women, but she believed that Vision created resources that did not directly address IPV that "gave women a voice in different sectors," which were enough to empower them to cope with their experience with IPV.

Amal was the only participant who was skeptical about the effectiveness of Vision 2030 in directly addressing IPV because she is working in the mental health field and was able to see the shortcomings of the new laws and procedures. She elaborated in explaining how the efforts made by the Vision were not sufficient and practical:

> I know it is trying to develop different laws to support women and family because I am in the mental health field, I know it's trying, but I am not sure if there is something solid to work with, but… for some people or in some cases, it might help but not very much… I know a lot, but unfortunately, the resources are limited or not fully functioning. Mental health is slowly moving toward providing good services, but we do not have enough good therapists… training of two or three weeks qualifies you as a family therapist… We studied for more than two years and had supervised clinical hours to do what we are doing then anyone who is interested in psychology or family therapy would provide

therapy after one training, and people believe them, especially if they talk from a

religious perspective. I hate this, and I know that the Commission of Mental Health is

fighting them, but they are more than you can imagine. They are even in the court system

that… is corrupted. Anyone who knows how to talk can work there; as long as you can

convince the couple not to divorce, then you can do it. It is not about staying together

because Islam does not encourage divorce. It is about the rights and lives of these abused

people. (Amal)

Subtheme Two: Cultural and Social Norms

Cultural and social norms were one of the main factors influencing the participants'

responses to their experiences with IPV. The participants' cultural and social norms were shaped

by religion or their upbringing. Noha explained how Saudi "women were expected to obey their

male guardians, husbands, fathers, and brothers. It was sinful not to do that, both culturally and

religiously." Fai pointed out how she "grew up hearing women should tolerate their husbands'

temper, attitudes, actions. The idea of powerful and superior men was implanted" in her head.

The same concept was supported in Faten's narrative when she said:

In marriage, I think it is all about luck, and of course God's blessing, but at the end, it is

all luck and, for sure, patience. If he is good, then you are lucky. If not, then you must be

patient. (Faten)

Doaa shared how "the system and people used to support the idea of weak women, the

good obedient patient women." She continued explaining her anger and frustration with the

culture that shaped her interpretation of her experience:

I was angry at our culture and cultural norms for a very long time because I felt they

failed me as a person. I always thought if I were in a different culture that supported

women, my husband would not dare to say anything to me, or at least I would be able to

stand up for myself, but here, women are supposed to accept with patience the

mistreatment from men. We always hear, you are not the only one, all men are like this,

who is not going through this, and all these messages that advocated women's

suppression. Culturally speaking, women who would say anything must be either

severely physically abused or rebellious, and I was not one of those. Thank God the

culture is finally different now. (Doaa)

Lena also highlighted how the cultural norms changed:

Culture before the Vision used to limit my ability to do things. I mean it was either

unacceptable or unavailable. Now, things are different. I can do whatever I want, and we

have the resources and availability. For example, I don't need my husband's approval to

travel. I don't need anyone's approval to go out or do anything. (Lena)

Fai "learned how to act in a way to minimize conflict and be the obedient wife [her]

husband wanted." She said: "I found comfort in my work and my kids because I couldn't do

anything more; no social visit, no family, no activity, nothing. Just work, cook, raise my

children, and be a good wife." Like other participants, Fai was concerned about social stigma and

social labeling. Fai knew that if she left her husband, "people will say: she left him after all these

years! She must be liberal or acting younger than her age," which are "bad descriptions" she did

not want to have. Her fear was maximized because of her first divorce experience:

When I got my first divorce, I didn't like the look in people's eyes. They were pitying

me, not in a good way though. It was like when we feel sorry for someone because they

are weak or unfortunate. It wasn't like we supported or empathized with you. It was very

sad and hard to deal with their looks and treatment as much as it was hard to deal with the

divorce. Even when he married another wife, their looks killed my soul, I felt like I

wasn't enough from them more than my husband. All this, and they didn't know what

was going on in my life. (Fai)

Amal was not ready to lose her social status as well, especially since she is professionally

working with abused women. She explained:

I've been through a lot to be in this place now, socially speaking. I don't think I can give

up all this. I know my parents will be supportive, and nothing financially will change, but

my status as a happily married woman with children. I can't lose that… I don't want to be

this old woman who got divorced after her kids grew up. I don't want the pity look from

them. I know I am not supposed to say this, but it is the truth at least in my social circle,

my community. They will say she is a therapist and got divorced, and all that talk is

beyond my tolerance level. I know I am wise and know what to do in so many situations,

but not in this. (Amal)

In Hiba's experience, she thinks that "social status was the reason for the abuse but not

the reaction." However, she revealed that she does not share much with her friends, who only see

the surface of her life. She said:

I have friends, but I don't share with them that much because I don't have to and because

they kind of envy me for my life… I am married to a professor, live a wealthy life, have

successful children with successful wives, travel, and have all the materialistic stuff that

is important in our culture and does not necessarily reflect your reality. (Hiba)

Hana and Doaa were also concerned about being judged by others and losing their social

status or image. Doaa was very cautious about the information she shared with her friends, as she

explained:

I kind of isolated myself from social life because I thought people would notice and sense

my sadness and fear…. My friends seemed to be happier than me, so I didn't want to be

less than them. I wanted to have the same statues. (Doaa)

Faten acknowledged that the cultural norms that held her back are changing. Based on

these changes, she said:

It is still challenging, and you need to face all the criticism and blame, and the worst, the

labeling that you are a rebel, but it is worth it, especially, if you know that there is

someone depending on you and your strength. (Faten)

Though Faten eventually benefited from the new legal laws, she adhered to the traditional

cultural norms that encouraged women to be more tolerant during the focus group discussion.

She agreed with most women that emotional/psychological IPV "is not simple, you need to be

patient and wise." She said: "All Saudi women are going through this; we are not alone." She

also commented: "This is marriage, right? Just set your priorities, children, and family, and make

sure you are not severely affected."

Samar differentiated between the meaning of culture and community which significantly

influenced her responses. She explained:

If I would follow the culture, then I need to submit to his needs and endure his actions

like the way of talking or second marriage… Women are expected to do that, but my

community taught me to be stronger than that, to speak my mind up, defend my values,

and never live a life I don't want or I'm not happy with. I grew up in a house with these

values and surrounded myself with friends with the same ones. I can't be something else

now. If I decided to stay then because I want to, not because I don't have other options.

(Samar)

Theme Two: Social Level Factors

Subtheme One: Religious Beliefs

Religious beliefs were a factor that influenced some of the participants' coping mechanisms and empowered them to endure or change their experiences. Some participants shared how they felt religiously empowered to endure their experiences. They felt that God was rewarding them for surrendering to His will through their acceptance of their experience. Hiba did not want to be ungrateful to God because she "deeply believes that we must not complain. We must be grateful for whatever God gave us. He knows best." Lena also shared: "Struggle will always be part of people's life. We will be rewarded based on our reactions whether we accept God's will or refuse it." The same beliefs were shared by Fai, who knew that God would reward her for her "patience and endurance for all" that she had been through. She believes that "the reward is satisfying," as she explained:

> Religion was my escape. Every time I felt powerless and helpless, I prayed and recited the Quran. It was my backbone. I surrendered to God and His will, I placed all my pain and concern in His mercy, and he didn't let me down. I am rewarded very well now, and I know He will always be there for me. (Fai)

Samar also believed that "religion was the source of wisdom and strength." She continued:

> Religion balanced my sanity to do what was right for me and my kids. I prayed a lot before talking to him to find guidance. I also have deep faith that God will never leave me alone and if He is testing me, the test must be based on my capabilities that He know very well even if I didn't at some points. (Samar)

Turning to religion for empowerment was what Doaa also did because she felt helpless with the only choice she had at first:

> I turned to religion to empower myself. Whenever I was sad or hurt, I prayed and read the Quran. It helped me a lot. I don't think it shaped my reaction, but it definitely helped me with the only reaction I had. (Doaa)

Hana stopped trying to change the dynamic in her marriage or change her husband as she surrendered to her sincere beliefs that "God will not change the condition of people until they change what is inside them" (The Holy Quran, 13:11). She believed that once she stopped seeking "perfection or happiness" and "just seek satisfaction," she would be satisfied because "God is going to give you and you will be satisfied" (The Holy Quran, 93:5).

 Amal endured what she was going through because she believed that she might be "supposed to go through this to correct" her previous mistakes, "like a redemption or repent from" what she did in her past. Moreover, she did not want to be "ungrateful for the good things" that her husband did and still does for her. Faten held a more complex view of religion and religious practice, believing it was "unfair" to address religion in general without understanding this distinction. She believed:

> There are some people who act religious and others who are true believers. It is not linked to the way they look or act… It's more about their intention, their beliefs, which you can't see. It is in your heart. It is between you and God. (Faten)

She elaborated that her husband was a well-known religious person with religious morals that he did not demonstrate in his house or his interactions with her, which was something that "God did not encourage." She knew that religion empowered her from the beginning of her

experience, and she believed that she "became more aware of religion and the difference between true faith and acting" religiously.

Subtheme Two: Financial Issues

Living in a culture that supports men's dominance means that they have more financial abilities. Several of the participants disclosed that they were financially dependent on their husbands to support them and their children or to maintain specific living standards. Doaa, who is married to a very successful businessman, said that both her husband and she agreed that their marriage is a "business marriage." From an outsider's perspective, Doaa talked about how "everybody wants my life… good status, great house, expensive cars… all you wish for, just name it, and I have it." Therefore, she explicitly said: "I can't survive without his financial support."

Amal, Hana, and Samar similarly felt that they needed their husbands to sustain a specific standard of living. Amal stated, "I was not ready to lose my social status," especially after the challenges she and her husband had overcome to reach their current social status. Hana is also married to a very wealthy man who provides her with "a prestigious social status" that she is unwilling to give up. Samar, who has "very high living standards," mentioned:

> We are together because we want to maintain our social status… I decided to stay, not because I am weak, but because I consciously decided that staying is better for the kids and me. My life standard is very high, and I worked hard with him to reach this level. I will not simply leave everything. So, yes, I am staying with him for financial reasons, social status, and my kids' stability. I don't love him like before. I think he knows that what he did was enough to kill any love inside me. (Samar)

On the other hand, Faten, who is unemployed, admitted that it was hard for her to survive without her husband's financial support. She shared:

> I wouldn't be able to support my daughter without her father's support, financially
>
> speaking. I'm unemployed now, so you can imagine that I either beg my brothers for
>
> money or stay with my husband just because I need financial support. (Faten)

Although Hiba, Fai, and Lena did not explicitly and separately discuss their financial situations, they indicated that their spouses restricted their spending and money, which demonstrated the influence of financial factors on their marriage dynamics.

Theme Three: Relational Level Factors:

Subtheme One: Being Controlled

Being controlled does not always come in one form. People can feel controlled cognitively, emotionally, socially, financially, and physically, affecting their well-being, ability to react, and access to helpful resources. Noha explained how she felt controlled by her husband later in their marriage because of his fear of the changes happening in the country. Noha felt she did not have any other choice but to remain silent and avoid being with him because she did not know how to react to his new controlling behaviors. She shared:

> He became so controlling about what to wear, where to go, with whom, he even restricted
>
> me from going to some places that have free people. Even if we go out, I'm expecting to
>
> wear certain colors. Can you believe that? At my age, he is saying this to me! (Noha)

Whenever Noha tried to talk to her husband, he got "very defensive and aggressive," and she felt like he "was disciplining" her. His controlling and aggressive behavior reached a level where he asked her to leave the house if she did not obey his orders. Noha felt broken and sad

because he treated her this way after more than 20 years of marriage. She expressed her frustration and feeling powerless by saying:

> I did not like it at all, but I didn't say a word. I did not know what to say. This was new to me. He never did it before. How he expected me to leave the house after all these years together. How could he even say it to me? I think when he saw me quiet, he wanted to intimidate me because he kept mentioning all the good things, he had done for me over the years and how grateful I should be for all that. I am grateful, truly, I am grateful and thankful for everything, but he could not just list them for me and count them as favors, I could list my actions as well and do the same, but this is not our way of communication. I thought we were better than this. (Noha)

Similar to Noha, Hana also felt controlled and helpless to do anything regarding his controlling and aggressive behaviors: "My husband literally controlled everything in my life, where to go, when, with whom, what to say, what to wear, everything, and I couldn't say a thing." Hana's husband emotionally controlled and manipulated her by saying: "You are lucky to have me in your life, people envy you because I'm your husband. You should thank God that I agreed to marry you." Her husband also tried to control more aspects of her life to ensure that he maintained his authority and power over her:

> He felt my strength, especially every time I visited my father. I never told my father anything but just being with him was a relief and support. So, he said that I could only visit him once a week. I had my driver then, but he would tell the driver to not take me anywhere but work. Even if I wanted to go shopping, I had to ask his permission because the driver was afraid of him. He literally controlled my mobility. He even wanted me to

stay home and not work but because his mother and sisters are working, he did not.

(Hana)

The emotional manipulation and control displayed by Hana's husband were more present in the behaviors of Amal's husband, who explicitly denied her the right to express her emotions after he knew about some aspects of her past. He felt their "marriage is a lie, and he is trapped in it." To restore his power and control over her, he controlled her emotional expression and career development. He also threatened her with divorce or having another wife. Amal disclosed:

I am not allowed to get angry or get into a fight with him because I am the cause of this lie in our marriage. I believed him for a while and believed that I was a bad person but not anymore, thank God. He also placed severe restrictions on me in my career. In my field doing workshops, going on TV, or in live podcasts are all important things to be known so you can have more clients, but he said no. I listened to him, and I think this is one of my biggest regrets, but I didn't have a choice at that time because he said if I did it, he would divorce me. I think the one thing that I didn't get over through the years is that he denied me from expressing my feelings. Whenever I am sad, mad, or even frustrated, I have to pretend that I am fine because he said that if I express them, he will remember everything, and we go back to point zero where he seriously considered the divorce. (Amal)

Amal acknowledges that she is in a complicated marriage that she does not wish anyone to have. Faten, Lena, Fai, and Hiba also had similar experiences with complicated marriages and circumstances. While Faten's experience with being controlled was more hidden and took the form of emotional manipulation, Lena's, Fai's, and Huda's experiences were more intense and aggressive, including physical abuse. Faten expressed how her husband implicitly used his

educational background and the age gap between them, as well as her first divorce, to control and manipulate her, shattering her confidence and dignity and resulting in her feeling powerless and vulnerable, emotionally and cognitively. She expressed:

> He never called me any names or cursed me, but he was so good at making me feel guilty for no clear reason. I was always afraid that he would leave, and that I would be divorced again. He literally said that two divorces are harmful to a woman's reputation. He compared me to his first wife, who is way older than me. Of course, he used my age to convince me that I didn't have enough experience in life. The age gap was an issue because he used to say I'm older, I'm wiser, I'm more educated, and all that talking that is related to age and education. Even if I achieved something like having a good grade in college or wrote a good paper, he would say "Oh my God you got this, you are smart" What does that even mean? I'm younger than you, I understand, but that doesn't mean I'm stupid. The funny and sad thing is when I told him to not use age against me, he would say I am not saying you, you are way more mature than people your age. I am just saying that people in this age group usually think in that way, and just like that, I'm already thinking about what he said and why he said it, questioning if I am doing things right or wrong. He is very manipulative. He manipulates his words and my feelings at the same time. It was frustrating, emotionally draining. (Faten)

The explicit and more violent control that Lena, Fai, and Hiba experienced was no less than the covert control that Faten went through. While Faten's experience started after a few years of her marriage, Lena, Fai, and Hiba experienced their husbands' aggressive controlling behaviors early in their marriages. Lena's husband has an angry temper that he fails to control and projects onto her. Lena recalled the first aggressive incident that occurred early in their

marriage "where he threw the plates and flipped whatever was in front of him" just because he did not like the food. That left Lena scared, obedient, and avoidant even though her husband wanted to have a closer relationship. She shared:

> We went to couple therapy together, he learned some anger management techniques and conflict resolution, and we worked together on communication. I struggled during therapy to forgive him and had several individual sessions. I tried very hard with the therapist to do that, but he thought I was the problem in our marriage because I had more sessions than him even though the therapist explained to him that my sessions were to recover from the impacts of what we had been through. But he was convinced that I needed more work to do. So, I decided not to forgive him or even to think about it. I am trying to peacefully live with him. (Lena)

Lena's efforts to live peacefully with her husband were unsuccessful due to his aggressive and controlling attitude, which did not change but instead escalated to more controlling behaviors. She felt frustrated: "I don't know what to change because I am doing exactly what he wants all the time." She also felt the need to protect herself from him and his short temper, which usually leads to aggressive or impulsive actions. Unlike Amal, whose husband only threatened her with divorce, Lena's husband divorced her twice. Consequently, Lena found herself controlled by his temper and learned not to do anything that could provoke him to save her marriage. She shared:

> I was divorced by him twice because he didn't manage to control his temper, so I am avoiding any intense interaction or argument with him now because I don't want to get the third and final divorce. I think that empowered him in so many ways... I was unable to say or show my sadness or anger. I had to agree and be quiet and sometimes apologize

even though I did not do anything wrong. Just apologize because it wasn't his way or what he wanted. I got divorced when I responded and told him enough. So, I learned in a hard and humiliating way to not do anything. (Lena)

Fai also did not have a peaceful time with her husband; "I barely remember a peaceful time with him." She was also divorced once by her husband, who not only displayed controlling aggressive behaviors but also physical abuse. Fai felt fearful and controlled by him due to the major differences in their physical features and the severe physical abuse:

I was afraid of my husband. He is a tall guy, and I am petite. So, I was afraid of what he might do, and he used that later. I mean he used his body. He would stand quickly as if he was about to hit me and that was enough to make me scared. He is much bigger than me, and to be honest, there is a history of hitting me or throwing things at me. He once pulled me by my hair from one room to another, kicked me when I was pregnant, and locked me inside the house. He did everything you can imagine. (Fai)

Moreover, Fai's husband controlled her mobility and the people she could see. When her father died, her brothers tried to defend her and advise her to leave her husband, but she was afraid of him. He also wanted to control her financially to ensure he was powerful. She explained that after her father's death:

My brothers came into the picture. They were young and able to stand in front of him. They tried to defend me and grant my rights, but he was more powerful and very mean. He prohibited me from seeing them, I used to see them at work because we couldn't visit each other, but he was the one who drove me to work because we used to work at the same hospital. I was literally controlled in every single thing in my life, even my money, I mean my salary, and I inherited a lot of money from my father. He tried to take it, but I

told him that I didn't receive it because my brothers put them in a project for investment.

I think my brothers gave up on me later because they asked me to get divorced and I

didn't listen to them. (Fai)

Hiba also shared a similar experience of severe physical abuse. Her husband married her

after his first wife died, leaving him with two children. He wanted Hiba to be not only like his

deceased wife but also submissive to his controlling and rigid wishes. If she did not obey him, he

physically beat her. When Hiba and her husband lived abroad, he controlled her social life and

mobility to maintain his authority and power. She shared "I wanted to leave, to talk to him, or

even to hit him back, but I was so afraid and worried. I was weak and socially isolated so there

was nothing much to do." She also explained:

> He chose my friends there and did not allow me to see them every weekend. We were
>
> living in a foreign country so meeting them was the only support I had, but he limited it.
>
> He thought they would be a bad influence on me. To be honest, it was hard for me to
>
> meet them very often because of the bruises or sadness I had then. (Hiba)

His abuse and control progressed when they got back to Saudi Arabia to become more

verbal assaults and financial control to force her to follow his demands of specific life standards.

He also controlled her parenting style. She impressively summarized her experience after coming

back to Saudi Arabia:

> Later, when we came to Saudi, I thought he would change because the stress of studying
>
> was gone, he was with his family, and I already had my firstborn child, but no.
>
> Everything remained the same. The frequency of it was less though especially that his
>
> older son became a teenager, so was my supporter. However, the verbal and financial
>
> abuses started. He verbally and financially abused me in the States, but they became more

and more when we got back to Saudi. The standards of life here are different, so you need to look and live in a certain way. He was the first one to receive a Ph.D., in his family and he likes to show off what he has, and I did not agree. I don't focus on materialistic stuff that much. I am grateful that God granted us all these resources, but it doesn't mean we show off. So, the way I spent the money was primarily controlled by him, which was frustrating and caused a lot of verbal abuse, like you are stupid, idiot, ignorant, and all the words that you can imagine describing someone who doesn't know a thing in life. We both came from families with similar backgrounds that we share with our social circle, so why do this? It didn't make any sense to me. I believe the person is who he is not what he wears or has, and that in his view was nonsense. He also controlled the way I treat my children. He kept saying that I treated his children differently than mine. His children were very young when I married him, the youngest was almost two years old, so I raised all of them equally. They are all my children, and they know that even their wives know that he is the only one who doesn't. (Hiba)

It is noteworthy to mention that some of the participants shared an unusual controlling behavior that occurs among Muslim couples. In Islam, polygamy is acceptable with certain conditions and regulations, but some men abuse it to maintain power and control over their wives. Some men only threaten their wives to marry another wife, while others really marry another one as a form of discipline and preservation of power. Threatening to have another wife was just a threat in Amal's marriage, and it was a reality for Fai, Hiba, and Samar. Fai's husband married another woman, whom he is still married to, a few months after she returned to him after their first divorce. Hiba's husband married another wife "but his marriage did not last for a long time." Both Fai and Hiba seemed to overcome their husbands' second marriages. However,

Samar did not overcome her husband's second marriage even though it lasted for a short time. Samar's husband's second marriage came after he verbally abused her and unsuccessfully tried to control her financially. He then decided to follow his friend's advice to get married again to find the joy and support he claimed not to have from Samar. She explained how his second marriage was not only difficult for her to accept, but also the nature of the woman whom he married and what he did with her, especially since they shared a history of love before marriage and a healthy marital dynamic at the beginning of their marriage:

> He was angry almost all the time and wanted to talk about work every time we were together, which was frustrating. He talked about things I didn't fully understand. So, if I asked for an explanation, he became angry and accused me of being naïve, stupid, and uneducated.... So, I avoided him, not very much but enough for him to feel the distance and complain about it. He tried to place some restrictions on the house spending, but it didn't work because I didn't complain. I knew what he was thinking, and I decided not to give it to him. He would not control me with money. I know how to live based on what I have, which is plenty, even when he placed his silly restrictions…... We have very high living standards so what I had before was enough even if he cut the whole amount. I think what changed me the most was when he got married. How could he do that to me? We have been through a lot together, and we can rely on one another no matter what. What about the love we shared? How did you fight to marry me? He proposed three times. He forgot all that just because I didn't talk to him about work all the time, or because I didn't understand how the business ran. The way and the person he married was also hard on me. He married a non-Saudi woman who is known for her bad lifestyle. He told me

himself that she was not a wife material, so what material she was exactly? That was very

offensive. (Samar)

Subtheme Two: Familial Influences

Most of the participants' responses to IPV were influenced by their families or for the

sake of their children. Since divorced women are culturally expected to return to their parents'

homes, many of the participants felt trapped in their marriages. Noha shared how her family's

views about men's authority and women's obedience affected the way she responded to her

experience:

My family is not conservative, but they are moderate to conservative. We were brought

up obeying without discussing, just do what you were supposed to do even if you did not

like it or agree with it, just do it. (Noha)

When Amal considered divorce, she "was afraid of what to do after that. Where to live?

How to raise my kids? What will I tell my parents and family? I knew that I was not strong

enough to face all that." Samar also shared the same concern:

I don't want to go back to my family's house even though I can have my own place, but I

don't think my parents would agree, or even if they agree, they will keep talking about it

every time they see me. I don't want that. (Samar)

Lena was also concerned about returning to her parents' home, especially because she had

returned to them following her first divorce, which had been a struggle for her due to different

"standards of living" that forced her to return to her husband:

I went to my parents' house for the first time. It wasn't easy to be there again. They are

nice and kind, but I couldn't accept them getting involved in every single detail in my

life. When to go out, with whom, how to treat my children. It was too much I married to

escape all this, and it was really hard to return to it. So, when he called and apologized, I

accepted. (Lena)

Although Fai's brothers advised her to get a divorce, she was concerned about her

mother's response, especially since they did not approve of her returning to her husband after the

first divorce. She said:

At that time, I didn't want to be divorced again, I didn't want my mom to say we told you

he was not good the first time you got divorced. I was worried what they might say to me.

I know I couldn't handle it, so life moved on. (Fai)

Worrying about her mother's response and being divorced again were Faten's worries as

well. She mentioned that going back to her mother's house was impossible for her:

It was one of the reasons that I endured my husband's mistreatment for two years. I

didn't want to go back there. She is nice but her ideas about women and family are not

what I want my daughter to learn. I don't want her to be as weak as I used to be. Even her

ideas about divorced women. I've been there, and I will not do it again. My mother tried

many times to convince me to get back to him and be more patient, so I couldn't take it

anymore. (Faten)

Faten felt unsupported by her brothers, who seemed to have more advantages than their

female siblings. Faten explained that in her family, "women don't usually talk or express their

thoughts. There are always regulations regarding what to say and how. If she talks, then she is

not a good woman, sad, but true." Even though Faten tried to stand up for herself, she did not

receive any support from her brothers who were more supportive of her husband. She expressed:

It was really hard for me to leave the marriage. It was too late. It was hard to be divorced

again. What my brothers would say, in their eyes, he is the perfect man who would make

it up to me, I mean all the struggles I had in my previous life.… My brothers didn't

believe that he would say a bad word to me. They even asked me if I did something

wrong that pushed him to go back to his first wife. They said that he was God's blessing

in my life, and I wasn't grateful to God. Can you imagine how hurtful this was on me? To

know that your men, your rock, your support would let you down, that you had to face

everything alone...... My brothers were supportive of him. They didn't believe me at first

and then, they didn't want to be involved because they didn't want to go through all the

legal procedures (Faten)

Doaa also felt unsupported by her family. However, it was due to her father's drinking

habit and her mother's vulnerability. She expressed: "I used to cry almost every night. I wanted

to leave, but how? I can't go back to my father's house, so my husband was a better option."

Doaa described how her family's situation prevented her from even sharing her experience with

them:

My family. They had a great influence on my reaction because I knew they would not

support me. The culture also impacted my reaction, but if my family were more

supportive, I would not care about culture. I felt alone, with no option but to accept that

my husband or marriage was not what I hoped for. I could not even share what I felt or

was going through with my mother because she was weak and struggling with my father.

I knew that she would never provide good support or advice. (Doaa)

The delicate family situation was also expressed by Hana, who shared: "I don't want my

father to get sick more. He is so sensitive and kind, he doesn't want us to suffer, and I don't want

to be the reason for him to suffer." Lena also did not share much with her mother, as she

explained:

I don't share much with them. My mother is old and ill, so I don't want her to be concerned about my life. She just knows the good aspects of it. She thinks as long as he is providing for the house and children, then I need to be grateful. She always shared how women in her generation endured their husbands and tough life circumstances so for her, what I'm going through is normal. (Lena)

The emotional distress that Lena went through after she lost her father made her worried about how divorce might affect her children. She expressed after her father's death: "I was emotionally tired; I just lost a father and didn't want my children to lose theirs." Doaa was also worried about her children. She expressed: "We can't get divorced. It is too complicated with the family and children. He doesn't know how to deal with them alone." Hana, who came from a single-parent household and witnessed how hard it was for her father to raise her and her sibling alone, did not want her children to have divorced parents. The concern that children may lack a father figure was also shared by Samar, who said:

I think it is better to be with him for the kids. I don't want to be responsible 100% for them. They see him daily and that is good because I know they will not see him if we are divorced. (Samar)

Hiba's concerns when she was physically abused abroad also included the children: "We were living in the States, so I did not want the police to take him. What would I do there alone? I was afraid I would be alone with three children." Even after her children became adults, she thinks "it was too late to leave. I couldn't even if I wanted to. It became too complicated. My social image has a minimal role in that, but my children and my grandchildren played the major role." Amal has a unique circumstance because her children do not know about her marital situation, as she explained:

Because we are such a nice and close couple in front of them, actually in front of

everyone, maybe because we are good friends and we understand each other very well,

and we agreed that our children have nothing to do with all this mess. So, I don't want

my kids to lose the stability and security they have, and to be honest, I do not want to go

back to my parents' house. (Amal)

It is worth noting that familial support positively influenced the responses of a few of the

participants. Hiba shared that she felt stronger when her oldest son started to defend her.

However, her husband would still abuse her and her son. When her son got married, her

daughter-in-law significantly changed her coping and interaction with her husband. Although

Hiba was aggressive toward her daughter-in-law at first, she reacted "calmly and redirected"

Hiba's aggressiveness to a healthier direction. Hiba provided a detailed summary of how her

daughter-in-law's support influenced the way she coped with her experience of

emotional/psychological IPV:

She was my greatest support. She made me believe in myself again, took me out to

different places, and shared with me personal stories, so I opened up to her, and it was a

changing point in my life to have such support. I was not afraid to be alone again… She

also supported me when my husband got married. She stood up for me with my son and

defended me in front of him and everyone, but she was the one who made sure that my

rights and life status did not change. She did all that without disrespecting my husband or

damaging her relationship with my husband. He adores her the most out of our daughters-

in-law. To be honest, everyone in the family holds a special spot for her. She is a rock. It

was sad and heartbreaking to see her defending me and I could not defend myself, but at

the same time, it was a relief and reassuring to know that people love and understand me.

I am not as bad as he projects and treats me. I owe her, and my son, her husband, most of

the emotional stability and strength that I have to this day. (Hiba)

Noha also mentioned that her daughter "had the biggest and most important impact" on

her response. She mentioned: "I am a new person because of what she showed me. I learned how

to react, what to do, and have a healthier, more productive life." Samar also received support

from her family which influenced the way she coped with her husband's second marriage and

aggressive behaviors. Although she did not want to go to her parent's house, she knew that her

parents, especially her mother, wanted her to come back to let her husband know that she was

not alone and had a supportive family. However, they supported her choice of staying at her

house. Their understanding and support significantly influenced how Samar coped with her

experience with IPV:

My father is my hero; he is a rock, he talked to him, and I think that was powerful enough

to set some boundaries for my husband. I know I am strong and independent and dealt

with most things by myself, but having my father's support was more empowering.

(Samar)

Summary

Using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyze the collected data, eight

themes and ten subthemes were developed to answer all the research questions. The main

research question had two themes and two subthemes. The first guiding question had three

themes with two subthemes, and the second guiding question had six themes. All participants felt

a sense of powerlessness before the implementation of Vision 2030. They had low or negative

self-perceptions and justified their husbands' behaviors. Their interpretation changed after

Vision 2030 as they felt empowered and able to cope with their IPV experience more effectively.

At first, they felt they did not have any option but to obey and endure their husbands' abusive behaviors, control, or emotional manipulation. Some of the participants asked for formal support through therapy or the legal system. Some of them actively asked for informal support through friends and family members while others received it without asking for it. The informal support was indirect for a few of the participants as they felt supported just by being with their family or friends, where they felt loved and appreciated. Through the support they received or the empowerment they felt after Vision 2030, all participants felt they coped differently and had a new perspective on life. Their reactions were shaped by their knowledge about supportive resources, religious beliefs, cultural and social norms, financial issues, being controlled by their husband, and familial influences.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore how nine Saudi married women living in Riyadh interpreted their experiences of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) before and after Vision 2030. A summary of the study's findings in relation to each research question opens this chapter. The second section discusses how this study's findings relate to previous literature and theories about Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), followed by a discussion of the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of this study's findings. The study's delimitation and limitations are then addressed. The chapter ends with some recommendations for future studies and a summary of the study.

Summary of Findings

Nine Saudi married women who were married before 2015 and experienced emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) participated in the study. Their data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews, an online reflection journal, and one web-based focus group discussion. The central research question for this study was: How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030? The two main themes for this question were the participants' sense of powerlessness before Vision 2030 compared to their sense of empowerment after the Vision. Their sense of powerlessness distorted how they perceived themselves and explained their husbands' actions, which changed after the implementation of the Vision.

The two guiding questions were: (1) How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence?

(2) How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reactions to emotional/psychological violence? While most of the participants felt unable to do anything in response to their husbands' abusive or aggressive behaviors, some asked for formal or informal support. The most common type of support that participants received was informal support, either because their family felt compelled to step in and help them or because they voluntarily requested it. The indirect or passive support was mainly perceived as being with friends. A few participants found support and comfort through religion and religious practice. After feeling empowered by the Vision, all participants were able to approach life with a new and more meaningful perspective that changed their coping mechanisms and allowed them to be more independent. The national factors that influenced the participants' responses were related to their knowledge about the availability and effectiveness of supportive resources and their religious beliefs. The social factors were their cultural norms and financial concerns. The relational factors were their husbands' authority or control over them and the influence of their families.

Discussion

This study was grounded on the ontological philosophical premise, emphasizing that people perceive various realities differently (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The study was directed by a theoretical framework that combined social constructivism and feminist theory. The results of this study were theoretically and practically compared to previous research, ensuring the study's significance and practicality.

Empirical Literature

How This Study Confirmed or Corroborated Previous Research

Several findings of this study confirmed previous studies on intimate partner violence (IPV) regarding the risk factors for IPV, attitudes toward IPV, and women's reactions. The risk

factors on the family or relational level refer to the framework where males are the primary decision-makers and dominate the relationship quality, controlling relationships, divorce restrictions, and polygamy (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Alhalal, 2016; Alosaimi, 2019; Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020). These risk factors were confirmed by the findings of this study because all participants felt controlled by their husbands, either emotionally, financially, socially, or physically. Therefore, they were unable to cope with their abusive marriages effectively. Some participants explicitly noted that they had to be "good wives" by obeying their husbands, since they were the heads of the house, and by doing what their husbands expected them to do. Their views were aligned with findings from a previous study, which reported that about 49% of Saudi women believed it was essential to obey the husband to be a good wife (Eldoseri, 2012). These women found themselves adhering to the traditional expectations of a housewife and mother, which included self-sacrifice, preserving the family's social standing, and providing for other family members (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Obeid et al., 2010).

Moreover, some of the participants came from families that have a justifying attitude toward violence against women, which significantly influenced their reactions. The attitudes of their families, which view violence as an internal issue that should only be addressed within the family unit without external intervention (Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021; Eldoseri, 2012), hindered them from approaching their family for support or even revealing their marital status to them. Finally, polygamy was also confirmed as a risk factor on the relational level. A few participants felt controlled or threatened by their husbands' second marriages or a their husbands' threats to seek second wives.

The social level risk factors, which refer to employment, financial dependency, social stigma, and sociocultural influence (Abdel-Salam et al., 2022; Alhalal, 2016; Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014; Kazzaz et al., 2019; Wali et al., 2020), were also confirmed through the findings of this study. Most of the participants depended financially on their husbands, which increased the intensity and frequency of financial abuse or control. They conveyed their inability to survive without their husbands' financial support, which empowered their husbands and left the participants with fewer options and less power. They were also concerned about their social status and reputations if they disclosed their experiences with abuse or asked for help or a divorce.

The national level risk factors refer to cultural norms and supportive resources (AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Alosaimi, 2019). This study's findings corroborated with existing literature that Saudi Arabia remains a patriarchal culture with a gendered system and a family structure still governed by misguided religious and cultural principles that accept certain forms of violence as a means of discipline (Aldosari, 2017; Al-Faris et al., 2013; Alhabdan, 2015; Alhalal, 2016; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021). These cultural and social norms left the participants feeling powerless and hopeless. However, the implementation of Vision 2030 aimed to challenge and change these cultural norms and gender inequality not only through directly combating domestic violence against women but also through empowering women and ensuring their social, economic, and legal independence (Ali et al., 2021; Alsehaimi & Helal, 2021; Shiraz, 2016). The findings of this study confirmed that empowering women sufficiently provided them with more power, confidence, and options to cope with their experiences more effectively and to approach life with different perspectives and more independence.

In terms of how women responded to IPV, the study's findings supported the notion that women's reactions to IPV were shaped by the complexity or seriousness of the situation, denial of the abuse, fear of social stigma, concern for children, financial dependence on the husband, avoiding divorce, hope for change, and lack of support (Alosaimi, 2019). Most of the participants chose to take a passive approach, which was doing nothing to stop their husbands' abuse due to the culture's tolerance for violence or lack of appropriate professional support (Barnawi, 2017). Some of the participants felt religiously obligated to silently accept the abuse from their husbands to be rewarded by God, especially older women (Afrouz et al., 2020). In seeking help, the study confirmed that the most common type of help-seeking behavior was seeking informal support from friends and family, mainly from other females (Sylaska & Edwards, 2014).

How This Study Diverged from or Extended Previous Research

Many of the study's findings confirmed previous literature on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). However, one finding both confirmed and diverged from the existing literature that focused on the quality of professional resources. The literature emphasized that the healthcare system, including mental health, lacks trained or qualified professionals (Alhalal, 2016; AlJuhani & AlAteeq, 2020; Almujadidi et al., 2022; Wali et al., 2020). It also addressed that mental health is underdeveloped and did not meet the hopes of Vision 2030 due to the low investment from the Health Sector Transformation Program, which is one of the Vision's initiatives to improve healthcare in Saudi (AlHadi, 2022; Ministry of Health, 2019). However, participants who received professional mental health support admitted that it was effective and provided by qualified therapists. One of the two participants who confirmed the lack of adequate mental health support and the effectiveness of its services was a therapist, and the second one was married to a therapist.

Moreover, several studies noted the significant and considerable improvements the Vision is accomplishing in empowering women and securing their rights. These studies also reported that the task of empowering women in Saudi Arabia poses a significant challenge, primarily owing to the patriarchal societal norms, which undermine women's potential to make independent decisions, work, and negotiate (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021). The legal system in Saudi Arabia lacks the principle of equality and is affected by a guardianship system that falls short of meeting Islamic principles and global standards (Alosaimi, 2019). Also, Saudi women are compelled to remain with or return to their abusive husbands because there is a deficiency of resources available to assist them in living independently (Ali et al., 2021). However, the findings of this study diverged from these studies' results because the participants were able to make independent decisions and were granted their rights. Although most of the participants did not seek legal supportive services, they acknowledged that knowing the new laws was empowering and enabling enough for them. The only participant who received legal support expressed the crucial role that such services played in her experience. This deviation from prior literature may be attributed to the consistent efforts of government initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivism Theory

The study's findings provide strong evidence supported by the social constructivism theory, which emphasizes that the way individuals comprehend and interpret the world around them is a product of their cognitive processes, which are influenced by their cultural backgrounds and perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2017). These interpretations are not fixed or invariable but are subject to change and evolution as individuals encounter new experiences and perspectives (Heppner et al., 2015).

The findings of this study highlighted the five essential components of social constructivism theory, which are language, cultural and historical specificity, discourse and disciplinary power, power of relations, and relativism (Burr & Dick, 2017). The power of language and the participants' choices of words reflected the constructed meanings and perceptions of their experience rather than just describing their internal and external world (Burr & Dick, 2017). It was evident that participants' language significantly changed after feeling empowered by the Vision, leading to constructing a new meaning of their experiences. Moreover, this study revealed how the participants' discourse and disciplinary power influenced their reactions and how these reactions evolved over time, mirroring changes in the culture itself. The concept of discourse and disciplinary power refers to how a person's behavior is shaped by cultural and systemic factors, either through inheritance or learning (Burr & Dick, 2017). Power relation was also demonstrated in the participants' experiences and interpretations because the Saudi culture positions men and women differently, giving men more power and authority and shaping the women's ways of coping with their experiences. With Vision's changes and women's empowerment, the participants' positions changed, giving them new power and positions to set new norms. Finally, the study's findings displayed the concept of relativism, which means there is more than one truth or perspective on an event or people that are shaped by many factors, such as power relations, culture, and time (Burr & Dick, 2017). Throughout time and cultural and social development, the participants' perspectives changed, formed by new identities and experiences.

Feminist Theory

This theory is founded upon the notion of gender inequality and social constructivism and refers to a range of behaviors, attitudes, and expectations associated with each gender (Becker et

al., 2022). One of the central tenets of feminist theory is the idea that gender is a social construct, not a biological fact. Feminist theorists argue that gender roles, positions, expectations, and norms are created and enforced by society in a way that marginalizes and devalues women (Becker et al., 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015). The findings of this study revealed how societal patriarchal power dynamics and social positions distorted participants' experiences. The Vision's initiatives exemplified the Saudi government's dedicated efforts to empower women, safeguard their rights and independence, and create more opportunities across multiple sectors (Ali et al., 2021; Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; National Transformation Program, n.d.; Shiraz, 2016). These initiatives aimed to promote gender equality and bring about positive changes in the social positions of women, as well as to address any imbalanced power dynamics, which are the systematic and political changes for which the feminist theory advocated (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Heppner et al., 2015).

This study's findings have validated several feminist perspectives. The findings were in line with the frameworks of radical, liberal, Marxist, and postmodern feminism. Radical feminism supports the separation between genders and believes that patriarchy is responsible for women's oppression (Becker et al., 2022). It was evident through the findings that the patriarchal nature of the Saudi culture gave more authority to men to abuse their wives. While Liberal feminism aims to achieve equal rights for women in politics, society, law, and the economy, Marxist feminism concentrates on how women are oppressed financially (Becker et al., 2022). The guardianship law, culture, and control of women's financial independence were among the risk factors for the abusive and controlling behaviors displayed by the participants' husbands. Lastly, despite pursuing equality for both genders, postmodern feminism examines intimate partner violence (IPV) at the individual, interactional, and institutional levels and refuses to

accept that there is a single truth to explain IPV (Becker et al., 2022). The findings shed light on the risk factors of IPV at different levels and how the transformation of these factors significantly changed the participants' realities.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study used feminist and constructivism theories to explore the participants' interpretation of their experiences with intimate partner violence (IPV). The objective was to improve the general understanding of the cultural and personal complexities that influence how women decide their choices when faced with IPV. It also aimed at exploring the transforming interactions between different realities and gaining knowledge of how individuals act and engage with their environment, what meanings are associated with their values, and how they employ discourses to interpret their experiences (Allen, 2010). Therefore, more studies with the same theoretical frameworks are recommended to enhance such objectives. It would be beneficial to analyze how discourse and power dynamics change as the country develops and places extreme changes in gender roles and social positions. The challenge will remain in representing these experiences and their subjective meanings as accurately as possible, within an understandable and practical framework, to others who did not directly hear these voices (Allen, 2010).

Empirical Implications

Due to the necessity for additional qualitative studies on taboo and avoided subjects in Saudi (Alosaimi, 2022), this qualitative study aimed to explore how Vision 2030 influenced Saudi married women's interpretations of their experiences with emotional/psychological IPV. The literature on IPV in Saudi Arabia lacks specificity regarding emotional/psychological IPV and fails to take into account the shift in IPV risk factors caused by the country's transformation

and development (Alhalal, 2016; Wali et al., 2020). This study focused directly on exploring how the Vision transformed the national, social, and relational levels of risk factors and, therefore, the participants' whole experiences. The findings revealed that risk factors had significantly transformed, particularly at the national level, where most of Vision's efforts were directed. The study's participants felt empowered and supported by Vision's efforts and new laws, which enabled them to live their lives according to their standards and values and to speak up for themselves. Most of them, though, decided not to seek support from these resources because they felt that simply being aware of them was sufficient. Their choices are worth further examination to understand the underlying motives behind them, which could improve the quality of women's lives as well as the supportive services offered.

Furthermore, prior studies reported that multiple organizational, legal, historical, cultural, and religious hindrances still stand in the way of Saudi governmental efforts to empower women (Alnufaie & Beghum, 2021; Alosaimi, 2019). However, this study's findings indicated that the governmental efforts were sufficient, which also demands further exploration in this area to determine the exact effectiveness of these efforts. The primary empirical implementation of this study is to serve as a foundation for future empirical studies.

Practical Implications

The goal of this study was not only to contribute to the existing literature but also to improve the services provided to abused women in order to satisfy their needs and to raise public awareness about IPV. This study shed light on the need for increased lobbying for government initiatives to support abused women and empower women in general. Professionals who work with abused women, whether in mental health or other agencies, must become advocates for the services offered by their organizations. Furthermore, social activists must work together and

collaborate with different organizations to develop various campaigns, as this is one of the most successful ways to reach a larger audience. Many participants expressed concern and fear about losing their cultural and religious identities because of the Westernizing and liberating aspects of the Vision's initiatives. Their concerns must be addressed through active advocacy by trustworthy and qualified individuals from various fields, including mental health, law, and non-governmental organizations. Finally, because the country's improvements did not occur earlier, the participants in this study learned about healthy gender roles, equality, and power dynamics at a later age. However, these positive and healthy characteristics can be taught at an early age, such as at school, to help women become more confident and independent, resulting in a higher quality of life.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations were set before conducting the study to define its boundaries and trustworthiness. Choosing a qualitative approach was the first delimitation because it allowed participants, married Saudi women, to narrate their constructed interpretation and meaning of their experience with emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A qualitative approach was also selected because there was a lack of such an approach or extensive research studying IPV in Saudi Arabia (Alhalal, 2016; Alosaimi, 2022). Because the study aimed to examine a shared phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017), the phenomenological approach was another delimitation for this study. To focus on interpreting the meaning of the participants' life experiences, a hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen for this study (Van Manen, 2014).

Delimitations were also considered in choosing the participants for this study. Besides experiencing the same phenomenon, which was ensured using the English and Arabic Composite

Abuse Scale (CAS) (Alhabib et al., 2013; Hegarty et al., 2005), all participants were female, Saudi, living in Riyadh, and older than 18. Because the study focused on exploring the impact of Vision on women's experiences with IPV, participants must have been married before 2015, which was a year before the implementation of Vision 2030. Nine participants were selected for the sample size, which provided more concentrated data on the participants' stories and was within the usual range of the number of participants for a phenomenological study, 5-25 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Nichols, 2018).

As with any other study, some uncontrollable limitations were observed throughout the study process. Although being married was one of the delimitations, it became clear during the data collection and analysis phases that this delimitation was also a limitation. The study's findings and developed themes or subthemes were limited to women who chose to remain married and immediately excluded women who chose divorce for their response. Moreover, all participants were from middle and middle-upper socioeconomic classes, pointing out that the findings might not be relevant to other women from different socioeconomic classes. Finally, while the sample size provided concentrated and rich data to analyze, it limited the chances of having a more diverse sample of the participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study findings, limitations, and delimitations provided some recommendations and directions for future research. Having a larger sample number could include a more diverse sample with various backgrounds, such as multiple levels of socioeconomic and marital status. Therefore, the findings might vary from this study, which could improve our understanding of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV). Moreover, replicating the study in different regions of Saudi Arabia could yield a better understanding of the cultural differences

across the country, which could help the governmental initiatives and awareness or supportive campaigns to directly address relevant issues.

Conducting future qualitative research using different approaches could enhance the understanding of emotional/psychological IPV. For instance, a collective case study approach could provide an in-depth logical understanding and explanation of multiple cases that are bound by one system (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Using this approach with identifying the proper bounded system, such as the legal system or mental health, could provide more insightful and practical recommendations to enhance the services and support provided to abused women.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the experiences and interpretations of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV), before and after Vision 2030, among nine Saudi married women living in Riyadh. The central question was: How do Saudi Arabian married women who experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) interpret their emotional/psychological IPV experience before and after Vision 2030? The two guiding questions were: (1) How do Saudi Arabian married women who have experienced intimate partner violence cope or react to their emotional/psychological violence? (2) How do national, social, and relational factors influence their coping mechanism or reactions to emotional/psychological violence? The study was guided by feminist and social constructivism theories, which provided a better understanding of how these women constructed meanings and interpretations of their experiences based on several factors, such as their culture, social position, background, and power relations.

Data analysis used the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), resulting in eight themes and ten subthemes that answered the research questions. The main conclusion to be

drawn from this study is how substantially and positively the participants' interpretations changed after the implementation of Vision 2030. The Vision's efforts, directly or indirectly, enhanced their self-perception, independence, power, abilities, and reactions, which allowed them to formulate a new perspective on life.

This study can serve as a foundation for future empirical, theoretical, and practical implementations that will enhance the general understanding of IPV and women's responses to it, as well as direct future services and support. This study had some limitations, such as the number of participants and the fact that they were all married and from the same socioeconomic class. Therefore, it was recommended to replicate the study with a larger number of participants or in a different region of Saudi Arabia. It was also recommended to use an alternative qualitative approach, such as a collective case study, to generate more insightful implications and future recommendations.

Finally, while the study represented themes that emerged from the participants' narratives, each participant had a distinct experience shaped by their unique identity and interpretation. The emerging themes may have some similarities with other women. However, there is no absolute truth or reality that can be generalized.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Recruitment and Eligibility Form (English)

Recruitment and Eligibility Form

My name is Kholoud Helmi, and I am a doctoral student at Liberty University. I am studying the experience of emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV) for Saudi, married women living in Riyadh in light of the changes brought by Vision 2030. Before I tell you about the study, I need to ask you a few questions to make sure you would be eligible for the study:

Section One:

1. Are you a woman?   Yes   No
2. Are you 18 years of age or older?   Yes   No
3. Were you married before 2015?   Yes   No
4. Are you ethnically Saudi?   Yes   No
5. Have you experienced emotional/psychological intimate partner violence? Yes   No

- If you answered (**No**) to any questions, thank you for your interest, but we can only include people who answered yes to all questions.
- If you answered (**Yes**) to all questions, please continue to the next section.

Section Two:

The study will include completing a survey and an individual, confidential interview with each participant to understand the meaning of their experience with emotional/psychological intimate partner violence. At the beginning of the interview, the participant will complete Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) on paper, which will take about 10-15 minutes. Each interview should be 60-90 minutes in length, will be audio-recorded, and will be conducted in person. The study will also include writing an online reflection journal and attending a web-based chat focus group. The online reflection journal prompts will use SurveyMonkey. The link will be emailed to the participant after completing the interview. Each reflection journal prompt takes about 15-20 minutes to complete (45-60 minutes total) and must be returned within two weeks after the interview. The focus group will use Microsoft Teams chat, lasting between 60-90 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

A consent document will be given to you prior to completing any procedures.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at KholoudCSW@gmail.com to arrange an initial interview with you.

Appendix B- Recruitment and Eligibility Form (Arabic)

Eligibility Form (Arabic)

اسمي خلود حلمي، وأنا طالبة دكتوراه في جامعة ليبرتي. بحثي يتضمن دراسة تجربة العنف العاطفي أو النفسي من شريك الحياة للنساء السعوديات المتزوجات اللواتي يعشن في مدينة الرياض في ضوء التغييرات التي أحدثتها رؤية 2030. قبل أن أخبرك عن الدراسة، أحتاج أن طرح بعض الأسئلة عليك للتأكد من أنك تؤهلك للدراسة:

الجزء الأول:

1. هل أنت امرأة؟   نعم   لا

2. هل عمرك فوق 18 سنة؟   نعم   لا

3. هل أنت متزوجة قبل 2015؟   نعم   لا

4. هل أنت سعودية الأصل؟   نعم   لا

5. هل تعرضت للعنف العاطفي/النفسي من شريك الحياة؟   نعم   لا

إذا كانت الاجابة بـ(لا) لأي من الأسئلة، شكرا لاهتمامك، ولكن الدراسة تشمل فقط النساء الاتي أجبن بنعم لكل الاسئلة.

إذا كانت كل الأجوبة (نعم)، الرجاء إكمال الجزء الثاني.

الجزء الثاني:

ستشمل الدراسة إكمال استبانة ومقابلة سرية فردية مع كل مشارك لفهم معنى تجربتهم مع العنف العاطفي أو النفسي من شريك الحياة. في بداية المقابلة، سيكمل المشارك مقياس(CAS) Composite Abuse Scale ورقيا، والذي يستغرق حوالي 15-10 دقيقة. ستكون مدة المقابلة 60-90 دقيقة، وستكون مسجلة صوتيا، وسيتم إجراؤها شخصيا. وستشمل الدراسة أيضا على كتابة مذكرة تفكير الكترونية وحضور مجموعة تركيز للنقاش على شبكة الإنترنت. سيتم استخدام SurveyMonkey لمتطلبات المذكرة. سيتم إرسال الرابط الى المشارك بعد الانتهاء من المقابلة. ستستغرق كل مذكرة حوالي 15-20 دقيقة (45-60 دقيقة كاملة) ويجب إعادتها في غضون اسبوعين بعد المقابلة. ستستخدم المجموعة المحادثة في برنامج Microsoft Teams وتستمر ما بين 60-90 دقيقة. سيتم طلب الأسماء ومعلومات تعريفية كجزء من هذة الدراسة، ولكن لن يتم الكشف عن هويات المشاركين.

سيتم منحك وثيقة موافقة قبل البدء بأي إجراءات.

إذا كنت مهتمة بالمشاركة، يرجى التواصل معي على KholoudCSW@gmail.com لترتيب مقابلة أولية معك.

Appendix C- Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) (English)

Composite Abuse Scale (CAS)

We would like to know if you have experienced any of the actions listed below from your husband. Choose a number to show how often each of these things happened to you in the past 12 months. In the past 12 months, my husband……

Action	Never	Only Once	Several Times	Once/ Month	Once/ Week	Daily
1. Told me that I wasn't good enough	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Kept me from medical care	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Followed me	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Tried to turn my family, friends, and children against me	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Locked me in the bedroom	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Slapped me	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Raped me	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Told me that I was ugly	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Tried to keep me from seeing or talking to my family	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. Threw me	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. Hung around outside my house	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. Blamed me for causing their violent behavior	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Harassed me over the telephone	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Shook me	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. Tried to rape me	0	1	2	3	4	5

16. Harassed me at work	0	1	2	3	4	5
17. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved me	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. Used a knife or gun or other weapons	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. Became upset if dinner/housework wasn't done when they thought it should be	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. Told me that I was crazy	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. Told me that no one would ever want me	0	1	2	3	4	5
22. Took my wallet and left me stranded	0	1	2	3	4	5
23. Hit or tried to hit me with something	0	1	2	3	4	5
24. Did not want me to socialize with my female friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
25. Put foreign objects in my vagina	0	1	2	3	4	5
26. Refused to let me work outside the home	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. Kicked me, bit me, or hit me with a fist	0	1	2	3	4	5
28. Tried to convince my friends, family, or children that I was crazy	0	1	2	3	4	5
29. Told me that I was stupid	0	1	2	3	4	5
30. Beat me up	0	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D- Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) (Arabic)

Composite Abuse Scale (CAS): Arabic

نود الان معرفة إذا كنت تعرضت لأي تصرف من التصرفات التالية وكم مرة حدثت لك خلال السنة الماضية. وفي حالة لم يسبق لك ان كنت في ارتباط خلال السنة الماضية، الرجاء إجابة الأسئلة عن اي ارتباط سابق في اي وقت مضى.

الرجاء وضع دائرة حول الرقم الذي يناسب عدد مرات ما حدث لك خلال السنة الماضية .كم مرة حدث لك؟

في كل يوم	مرة في الاسبوع	مرة في الشهر	عدة مرات	مرة واحدة فقط	لم يحدث أطلاقا	التصرف
5	4	3	2	1	0	1. قال لي انني لم اكن جيدة بدرجة كافية
5	4	3	2	1	0	2. منعني من طلب الرعاية الصحية
5	4	3	2	1	0	3. يتبعني
5	4	3	2	1	0	4. حاول ان يقلب عائلتي و أصدقائي و أطفالي ضدي
5	4	3	2	1	0	5. حبسني في غرفة النوم
5	4	3	2	1	0	6. صفعني
5	4	3	2	1	0	7. اغتصبني
5	4	3	2	1	0	8. قال انني قبيحة
5	4	3	2	1	0	9. حاول أن يمنعني من رؤية عائلتي او التحدث اليهم
5	4	3	2	1	0	10. طرحني أرضا
5	4	3	2	1	0	11. يتلصص حول بيتي
5	4	3	2	1	0	12. يلومني بأنني سبب لتصرفاته العنيفة
5	4	3	2	1	0	13. هددني أثناء مكالمة هاتفية
5	4	3	2	1	0	14. هزني بعنف
5	4	3	2	1	0	15. حاول أن يغتصبني
5	4	3	2	1	0	16. هددني أثناء وقت عملي
5	4	3	2	1	0	17. دفعني، أمسك بي بقوة

5	4	3	2	1	0	18. استعمل السكين، أو المسدس، أو أي سلاح آخر
5	4	3	2	1	0	19. قال إني مجنونة
5	4	3	2	1	0	20. قال لي لن يقبل بك أحد
5	4	3	2	1	0	21. أخذ محفظتي وتركني بلا شيء
5	4	3	2	1	0	22. ضربني أو حاول أن يضربني بشيء ما
5	4	3	2	1	0	23. لا يريدني أن اجتمع مع صديقاتي
5	4	3	2	1	0	24. رفض أن اعمل خارج البيت
5	4	3	2	1	0	25. ينزعج إذا لم يجهز العشاء أو تتجهز أعمال البيت كما يجب
5	4	3	2	1	0	26. رفسني أو عضني أو ضربني بقبضة يده
5	4	3	2	1	0	27. حاول أن يقنع صديقاتي، عائلتي، او أطفالي بأنني مجنونة
5	4	3	2	1	0	28. قال لي إني غبية
5	4	3	2	1	0	29. ينهال علي ضربا

Appendix E- Consent Form (English)

Consent

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of Saudi Married Women's Experience of Emotional/Psychological Intimate Partner Violence
Principal Investigator: Kholoud Helmi, *CSW, PsychCare Clinic*, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study about Saudi women's experience with emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV). To participate, you must be:
- Ethnically Saudi
- Married before 2015
- 18 years of age or older
- Experienced emotional/psychological intimate partner violence (IPV)

Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand how Saudi women living in Riyadh experience emotional/psychological IPV before and after Vision 2030, with emphasis placed on how they cope and seek support.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Complete the Composite Abuse Scale at the time of the interview. The scale will be completed on paper, and it will take about 10-15 minutes.
2. Participate in one, individual interview that will take about 60-90 minutes, will be conducted in person, and will be audio-recorded.
3. Complete online reflection journal prompts. After the interview, you will be asked to complete three reflection journal prompts using SurveyMonkey. Each reflection journal prompt takes about 15-20 minutes to complete (45-60 minutes total), and you have two weeks to complete them.
4. Participate in one online focus group that will take about 60-90 minutes using the Microsoft Teams chat.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include:
1. An increase in your awareness about dealing with and responding to emotional/psychological IPV.
2. Learning about available professional resources that provide professional and effective support.

Benefits to society include:
1. Informing other women about your experiences can help them learn from your stories.

2. Increasing public awareness, in general, by understanding your story.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The risks involved in this study include:
1. Difficulty discussing your feelings and experiences.
2. The possibility of experiencing distressing memories or feelings.
3. The possibility of your husband or community discovering your participation.

To reduce risk, I will monitor you as you process your thoughts, discontinue the interview if needed, and provide you with referral information for counseling services. The waiting rooms at the clinic are separated (women from men), and the calling system does not use the clients' names. You may choose to wear a burqa to further conceal your identity at the clinic. You may leave your copy of the signed consent form in your file at the clinic if you worry that your husband might find it. Be assured that you will be supported with the necessary resources throughout this study.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty sponsor will have access to the records.
- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing their names with pseudonyms, and no identifiable information will be included in the study.
- The interview will be conducted in a private clinic where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored in a password-locked computer and in the researcher's private, locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all physical records will be shredded.
- Recording will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher and her faculty sponsor will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate in this study or not will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, the private clinic where the interview will be conducted, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kholoud Helmi. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ or ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Todd Schultz, at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Participant Name

_____

Signature & Date

Liberty University
IRB-FY22-23-757
Approved on 2-17-2023

Appendix F- Consent Form (Arabic)

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موافقه للمشاركة في بحث علمي

عنوان المشروع: بحث نوعي عن تجربة النساء السعوديات المتزوجات مع العنف العاطفي أو النفسي من شريك الحياة
الباحثة: خلود حلمي، أخصائي أول خدمة اجتماعية اكلينيكي، عيادة العناية النفسية، طالبة دكتوراة في جامعة ليبرتي.

دعوة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

أنت مدعوة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية حول تجربة المرأة السعودية مع العنف العاطفي أو النفسي من شريك الحياة. للمشاركة يجب أن تكوني:

- سعودية الأصل
- متزوجة قبل عام 2015
- 18 سنة أو أكبر
- تعيشين العنف العاطفي أو النفسي من شريك الحياة

المشاركة في هذا البحث تطوعي وغير إلزامي.
الرجاء قضاء بعض الوقت في قراءة هذا النموذج بأكمله وطرح الأسئلة قبل اتخاذ قرار بشأن المشاركة في هذا البحث.

ما هو الغرض من هذه الدراسة؟

الغرض من الدراسة هو فهم كيف تعاني النساء السعوديات، اللواتي يعشن في الرياض، من عنف الشريك الحميم العاطفي أو النفسي قبل وبعد رؤية 2030. تحديدا كيف يتعاملون مع تجربتهن ويسعون للحصول على الدعم.

ما هي إجراءات هذه الدراسة؟

إذا كنت موافقة على أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فسوف أطلب منك القيام بالأشياء التالية:

1. إكمال مقياس Composite Abuse Scale في بداية المقابلة. سيتم تعبئة هذا المقياس ورقيا وسيستغرق حوالي 10-15 دقيقة.
2. المشاركة في مقابلة فردية واحدة تستغرق حوالي 60-90 دقيقة وسيتم تسجيلها صوتيا.
3. إكمال كتابة مذكرات الكترونية. بعد المقابلة، سيطلب منك كتابة ثلاث مذكرات إلكترونية باستعمال SurveyMonkey. كل مذكرة ستستغرق 15-20 دقيقة (45-60 دقيقة كاملة) وسيكون لديك أسبوعين لإتمامها.
4. المشاركة في مجموعة تركيز واحدة عبر الإنترنت تستغرق حوالي 60-90 دقيقة باستخدام محادثة Microsoft Teams.

كيف يمكنك والأخرين الاستفادة من هذه الدراسة؟

تشمل الفوائد التي يجب أن تتوقع المشاركات الحصول عليها من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ما يلي:

1. زيادة وعيك حول التعامل مع العنف العاطفي أو النفسي وطرق الاستجابة له.
2. معرفة الموارد والخدمات المتاحة لتلقي الدعم المهني والفعال.

يمكن للمجتمع الاستفادة من:

1. تعريف النساء بتجربتك قد يساعدهن على التعلم من تجربتك.
2. زيادة الوعي العام من خلال فهم تجربتك.

ما هي المخاطر المحتملة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟

المخاطر المتوقعة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ضئيلة، مما يعني أنها تساوي المخاطر التي قد تواجهها في الحياة اليومية. تشمل المخاطر التي تنطوي عليها هذه الدراسة ما يلي:

</div>

1. صعوبة في مناقشة مشاعرك وتجاربك.
2. إمكانية استرجاع ذكريات أو مشاعر مؤلمة.
3. إمكانية اكتشاف زوجك أو أشخاص آخرين بمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة.

لتقليل المخاطر، سأراقب تعاملك مع أفكارك خلال البحث، أوقف المقابلة إذا لزم الأمر، وأزودك بمعلومات لخدمات الاستشارة. غرف الانتظار في العيادة منفصلة (النساء عن الرجال)، ولن يتم استعمال اسمك في العيادة، كما يمكنك لبس النقاب لإخفاء هويتك. يمكنك ترك نسخة الموافقة في العيادة إذا كنت قلقة من أن يجدها زوجك. نأكد من أنه سيتم دعمك بالموارد اللازمة طوال هذه الدراسة.

في حال كان هناك معلومات حول إساءة معاملة الأطفال أو إهمالهم، أو إساءة معاملة المسنين، أو نية إيذاء النفس أو الآخرين، فإنني ملزمة بإبلاغ السلطات المختصة بذلك.

كيف سيتم حماية معلوماتك الشخصية؟

سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات هذه الدراسة وتخزينها بشكل آمن. لن تتضمن التقارير المنشورة أي معلومات تجعل من الممكن تحديد هوية المشارك. سيتم تخزين التقارير بشكل آمن ولن يتمكن غير الباحثة ومشرف البحث من الوصول إلى هذه السجلات.

- سيتم الحفاظ على سرية المشاركات عن طريق استبدال أسمائهم بأسماء مستعارة، ولن يتم تضمين أي معلومات يمكن منها التعرف عليهن في البحث.
- سيتم إجراء المقابلة في عيادة خاصة حيث لن يسمع الآخرون المحادثة بسهولة.
- ستستخدم مجموعة التركيز أسماء المستخدمين في غرفة الدردشة. لا يمكن ضمان السرية في إعدادات مجموعة التركيز. وعلى الرغم من عدم تشجيعهم، قد يشارك أعضاء آخرون في المجموعة المركزة ما تمت مناقشته مع أشخاص من خارج المجموعة.
- سيتم تخزين البيانات في جهاز كمبيوتر مقفل بكلمة مرور وفي خزانة الملفات الخاصة بالباحث. بعد ثلاث سنوات سيتم حذف جميع السجلات الإلكترونية وسيتم تمزيق السجلات الورقية.
- سيتم تخزين التسجيلات الصوتية على جهاز حاسوب مقفل بكلمة مرور لمدة ثلاث سنوات ثم يتم حذفه. سيتمكن الباحث ومشرف البحث من الوصول إلى هذه التسجيلات.

هل طبيعة الدراسة طوعية؟

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة طوعية. لن يؤثر قرارك بشأن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة أم لا على علاقتك الحالية أو المستقبلية مع جامعة ليبرتي أو العيادة الخاصة التي ستجرى فيها المقابلة أو الباحث. إذا قررت المشاركة، فلك الحرية في عدم الإجابة على أي سؤال أو الانسحاب في أي وقت دون التأثير على تلك العلاقات.

ماذا يجب أن افعل إذا قررت الانسحاب من الدراسة؟

إذا اخترت الانسحاب من الدراسة، برجى التواصل مع الباحثة على عنوان البريد الإلكتروني أو رقم الهاتف المتضمن في الفقرة التالية. إذا اخترت الانسحاب، سيتم إتلاف البيانات التي تم جمعها منك، ماعدا بيانات مجموعة التركيز على الفور ولن يتم تضمينها في هذه الدراسة. لن يتم إتلاف بيانات مجموعة التركيز، ولكن لن يتم تضمين مساهمتك في مجموعة التركيز في الدراسة إذا اخترت الانسحاب.

بمن اتصل إذا كانت لدي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن الدراسة؟

الباحثة التي تجري هذه الدراسة هي خلود حلمي. يمكنك طرح أي أسئلة لديك الآن. إذا كانت لديك أسئلة لاحقا، **فنحن نشجعك** على الاتصال بها على ███████████████. يمكنك أيضا التواصل مع مشرف البحث الدكتور تود شولتز، على الإيميل ███████████████.

بمن أتصل إذا كانت لدي مخاوف حول حقوقي كمشارك في البحث؟

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن هذه الدراسة وترغب في التحدث إلى شخص آخر غير الباحث، فنحن نشجعك على الاتصال بمجلس المراجعة المؤسسية، University Blvd. ، Green Hall Ste. 2845، Lynchburg، VA 1971 24515، أو البريد الإلكتروني على irb@liberty.edu.

إخلاء المسؤولية: تم تكليف مجلس المراجعة المؤسسية (IRB) بضمان إجراء أبحاث الأشخاص بطريقة أخلاقية على النحو المحدد والمطلوب بموجب اللوائح الفيدرالية. الموضوعات التي تمت تغطيتها ووجهات النظر التي أعرب عنها أو ألمح إليها الطلاب وأعضاء هيئة التدريس الباحثون هي تلك الخاصة بالباحثين ولا تعكس بالضرورة السياسات أو المواقف الرسمية لجامعة ليبرتي.

موافقتك

من خلال التوقيع على هذه الوثيقة، فإنك توافقين على أن تكوني في هذه الدراسة. تأكدي من أنك تفهمين ما تدور حوله الدراسة قبل التوقيع. سيتم إعطاؤك نسخة من هذه الوثيقة لسجلاتك. يحتفظ الباحث بنسخة من سجلات الدراسة. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول الدراسة بعد التوقيع على هذه الوثيقة، يمكنك الاتصال بفريق الدراسة باستخدام المعلومات الواردة أعلاه.

لقد قرأت وفهمت المعلومات المذكورة أعلاه. لقد طرحت أسئلة وتلقيت إجابات. أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة.

☐ حصل الباحث على إذن مني بتسجيلي صوتيا كجزء من مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة.

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اسم المشارك

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التوقيع والتاريخ

Appendix G- Interview Questions (Arabic)

Interview Questions (Arabic)

أسئلة لكسر الحواجز وجمع المعلومات الأساسية:

1. يرجى تقديم نفسك لي، كما لو كنا قد التقينا للتو ببعضنا البعض.
2. ما هو عمرك أنت وزوجك؟
3. كيف التقيت/تزوجت من زوجك؟
4. منذ متى وأنت متزوج؟
5. ما هو المستوى التعليمي لك ولزوجك؟
6. كم عدد الأطفال لديك؟
7. كيف تقضي أنت و عائلتك الوقت في المعتاد؟

الأسئلة المتعلقة بسؤال البحث الرئيسي:

8. ما رأيك في طبيعة زواجك؟
9. كيف ينظر شريكك إلى زواجك؟
10. كيف تفسر فهمك العام لعنف شريك الحياة (IPV)؟
11. ماذا تعرف عن عنف شريك الحياة العاطفي/النفسي؟
12. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن تجربتك مع IPV؟
   a. ماذا عن تجربتك مع عنف شريك الحياة العاطفي/النفسي على وجه التحديد؟
13. لقد كنا نتحدث عن حياتك الشخصية وزواجك. الآن، أريد أن أحول انتباهنا إلى ظاهرة أوسع نطاقا نشهدها جميعا في البلاد وفي حياتنا، ثم أريد أن أسألك بعض الأسئلة حول كيفية تأثيرها على حياتك. إننا جميعا نشهد التطور والتحول السريع في البلاد في مختلف الجوانب، والتي تعد جزءا من رؤية 2030. ما هو مفهومك لهذه الرؤية؟
14. ما هو شعورك تجاه رؤية 2030 وتأثيرها على البلاد وحياة الناس؟
15. ما هي جوانب رؤية 2030 التي تعتقد أنها مهمة بالنسبة لك شخصيا في حياتك وعلاقاتك؟
16. كيف تعتقد أن تجربتك مع عنف شريك الحياة قد تغيرت في ضوء رؤية 2030؟

الأسئلة المتعلقة بأسئلة البحث الثانوية:

17. كيف استجبت أو تعاملت مع تجربتك؟
18. ما هي الأسباب الكامنة وراء ردود أفعالك؟
19. بما أننا لا نزال، إلى حد ما، دولة محافظة، كيف تصف تأثير عائلتك وأصدقائك على ردود أفعالك مع عنف شريك الحياة؟
20. كيف ترى العادات بشكل عام والدين بشكل خاص اثرت على ردود أفعالك؟
21. ما هي معرفتك ورأيك حول الدعم المهني المتاح أو الموارد التي تدعم النساء اللواتي عانين من عنف شريك الحياة؟
22. كيف تعتقد أن رؤية 2030 عززت أو غيرت هذه الموارد؟
23. كما نعلمين، فإن أحد الأهداف الرئيسية لرؤية 2030 هو تمكين المرأة. كيف ترى أن هذا يؤثر على تجربتك مع عنف شريك الحياة؟
24. ما الذي ترغبين أن تقدم الرؤية أو المملكة لتوفير الدعم العملي والكافي للنساء اللواتي يعانين من عنف شريك الحياة؟
25. بالتفكير في كل ما شاركناه اليوم، ما هي نصيحتك للنساء المتزوجات الأخريات؟
26. أنا أقدر الوقت الذي أعطيته لهذه المقابلة والدراسة. سؤال أخير: ما الذي يجب أن أعرف أنني لم أسألك عنه؟

Appendix H- Online Reflection Journal Prompts (Arabic)

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متطلبات كتابة المذكرات

1. شاركي أصعب ذكرياتك مع تجربة إساءة معاملة الشريك الحميم (IPV)؛ كيف كان رد فعلك آنذاك، وما الذي أثر على رد فعلك؟

2. منذ أن علمت لأول مرة عن عنف الشريك الحميم (IPV) حتى الآن:

a. ما هي المشاعر التي مررت بها، وكيف تغيرت بمرور الوقت؟

b. ما هو أكثر ما تغير؟ ماذا رأيت الآن ولم تره من قبل؟

3. إذا كانت لديك فرصة، فماذا ستقول لزوجك؟

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Appendix I- Online Focus Group Questions (Arabic)

أسئلة مجموعة التركيز

1. ما رأيك في عنف الشريك الحميم في الرياض؟

2. ما هي برأيك أسباب عنف الشريك الحميم في الرياض؟

3. برأيك، ما هو الوعي والإدراك العام لعنف الشريك الحميم العاطفي / النفسي في الرياض؟

4. كيف يمكنك وصف الموارد المتاحة لدعم النساء اللواتي يعانين من عنف الشريك الحميم؟

5. ما هي أفكارك ومشاعرك فيما يتعلق بجهود الرؤية لمعالجة أو مكافحة القضايا المتعلقة بعنف الشريك الحميم؟

6. ما الذي كنت تتمنى أن تفعله الحكومة أو الأنظمة الأخرى بشكل مختلف للتأثير على شعورك أو رد فعلك على تجربتك؟

7. ما الذي تريدين أن تعرفه النساء الأخريات عن عنف الشريك الحميم؟

8. ماذا تريدي أن تضيفي؟