

Utilising Facebook As A Digital Tool For Social Change: Jordanian Women'S Experiences In Addressing Violence Against Women

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Abstract

Facebook remains a dominant platform for civic engagement, public discourse, and social activism across the Arab world. In Jordan, where entrenched cultural norms and societal expectations often restrict women's ability to voice experiences of gender-based violence (GBV), Facebook has emerged as a critical digital space for resistance and social transformation. It enables women to share personal narratives, foster solidarity, and challenge patriarchal silence. Despite its significance, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to Facebook's role in addressing GBV within the Jordanian context. This study examines how Jordanian women utilise Facebook to promote social change and resist gender-based violence. Employing a qualitative approach, the research draws on face-to-face interviews with six purposively selected participants, supplemented by secondary data from academic literature and policy documents. Thematic analysis, guided by Social Mobilisation Theory, revealed that Facebook serves as a safe space for storytelling, emotional resilience, and collective mobilisation. It contributes to individual empowerment, enhances public awareness, and supports advocacy efforts to challenge patriarchal norms and promote institutional responsiveness. Nonetheless, structural impediments, including economic constraints, social stigma, and institutional inertia, continue to limit the full potential of digital activism. This study highlights the importance of improving digital literacy, developing context-sensitive online protection mechanisms, and fostering strategic partnerships between civil society organisations and social media platforms. These insights help policymakers, activists, and scholars understand the impact of digital platforms in conservative societies. Future research should examine the link between online and offline activism across Arab contexts.

Keywords: activism, Facebook, Jordan, social change, violence against women

1. Introduction

In the evolving digital landscape, social media has become a vital tool for advocacy and social mobilisation, particularly for groups constrained by cultural and institutional barriers. In Jordan, where traditional norms often silence women, Facebook has emerged as a crucial outlet for expressing concerns and raising awareness about violence against women (VAW). As Salhab (2024) notes, this participatory platform enables women not only to share their experiences but also to contest the patriarchal structures embedded in society. Facebook's capacity to facilitate community dialogues and forge digital solidarity renders it an influential space for resistance and reform in the Arab world. Through its accessibility and reach, Facebook has enabled grassroots movements that challenge the cultural taboos surrounding gender-based violence.

The intersection of socio-political constraints and digital opportunity forms the backdrop for Jordanian women's activism online. Although conservative societal norms often inhibit public discourse on abuse, Facebook offers a semi-anonymous and participatory space where women can bypass traditional gatekeepers. Campaigns such as #NotYourHonour and #SheSurvived have gained momentum on the platform, drawing attention to personal narratives and catalysing wider public and media engagement (UN Women, 2023; Boshmaf, 2023). These movements have also permeated offline discussions, influencing media framing and policy debate. Haddad et al. (2025) argue that such online activism has created "counter-publics," where women reclaim narrative authority and contest marginalisation, forming collective identities that defy silence and stigma.

The platform's potential to foster agency and community is further evident in the creation of private or anonymous

Facebook groups, which offer safe environments for sharing stories and seeking advice. These virtual spaces function as informal support systems and sites of resistance, amplifying voices that are often excluded from mainstream dialogue. Younger, digitally literate Jordanian women are particularly active on Facebook in intersectional feminist activism, engaging in dialogue with policymakers, NGOs, and media professionals (Haddad et al., 2024). However, digital engagement is not without risks; surveillance, online harassment, and platform algorithms can hinder participation. Despite these challenges, Facebook remains a powerful medium through which Jordanian women contest injustice and demand systemic reform.

This research is driven by the question: *How do Jordanian women use Facebook to address and challenge violence against women?* It investigates the strategies women employ in digital spaces, the challenges they encounter, and the extent to which Facebook engagement contributes to broader social change. The study contributes to debates on digital feminism, social media activism, and the cultural dynamics of online advocacy in the Arab world. By capturing the digital experiences of Jordanian women, it highlights the transformative yet contested role of Facebook in resisting gender violence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Facebook and Women's Digital Empowerment in Jordan

In recent years, digital communication technologies have reshaped social interaction and public discourse in Jordan, offering new opportunities for civic participation and gender empowerment. Platforms such as Facebook have become vital tools for women's advocacy, enabling marginalised voices to challenge patriarchal norms and mobilise social change (Esposito & Sinatora, 2023; Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Servaes (2020) explains that digital media democratise access to information, creating alternative spaces for dialogue that transcend conventional boundaries. This transformation is especially significant in conservative societies, such as Jordan, where gender norms often restrict women's participation in public life (Salhab Altamimi, 2024).

Facebook serves as both a personal and political arena where Jordanian women engage in identity construction, storytelling, and advocacy (Gunawan et al., 2023). Koburtay et al. (2023) observe that Jordanian women are increasingly using online networks to voice their concerns about gender-based discrimination, transforming private grievances into public debates. Al-Sharah (2022) highlights that Facebook facilitates solidarity among women by allowing them to share testimonies of domestic violence and receive emotional and social support. This digital space thus enhances women's agency and self-efficacy by connecting them to broader activist communities, underscoring the platform's transformative role in fostering gender equality.

Through these dynamics, Facebook is not merely a social networking site but a platform for political participation and empowerment. It allows Jordanian women to contest dominant narratives about gender roles, disseminate awareness campaigns, and mobilise collective responses to systemic inequality. As a result, online engagement increasingly complements traditional advocacy mechanisms, reshaping the digital public sphere into a participatory space for social justice.

2.2 Online Activism and Social Change in Addressing Gender-Based Violence

The emergence of Facebook-based activism has amplified women's voices in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in Jordan. According to Laksana and Abduh (2023), social media activism transforms private suffering into public awareness, offering victims a platform for visibility and justice. Nandy (2024) similarly argues that digital platforms enable grassroots movements to develop alternative narratives that challenge state inaction and cultural taboos. This evolution aligns with LaGrande's (2023) view that the visibility of GBV stories online disrupts the silence surrounding domestic and sexual violence, thereby contributing to the broader struggle for social change.

The role of organisations such as UN Women (2023) and local NGOs has been central in leveraging Facebook for awareness campaigns on women's safety and rights. Al Taweel (2023) observes that digital storytelling and hashtag campaigns in Jordan, such as those mirroring global #MeToo narratives, have encouraged survivors to break their silence, mobilise community support, and demand institutional accountability. Marzouk and Vanderveen (2021) highlight that online discourse fosters empathy and engagement, transforming bystanders into advocates for gender equality.

However, it is important to note that online activism does not always translate into policy change or tangible legal outcomes. For example, despite widespread engagement with campaigns highlighting domestic violence and harassment, state responses in Jordan have often been slow or limited, reflecting entrenched patriarchal norms and weak enforcement mechanisms (Watkins, 2020; Mirbabaie et al., 2021). Similarly, global studies of digital activism indicate that while online movements can increase awareness and solidarity, they sometimes fail to achieve concrete legislative or institutional reforms due to political resistance, lack of sustained organisational capacity, or tokenistic governmental

responses (Rachimoellah, et al.; (2024).; Selviaridis, et al., 2024) Including these perspectives balances the discussion by acknowledging the limits of digital mobilisation, emphasising that online visibility alone does not guarantee systemic change.

However, Watkins (2020) and Mirbabaie et al. (2021) caution that online activism must transcend symbolic gestures to yield real policy outcomes. In Jordan, the persistence of patriarchal values and inadequate legal protections continues to undermine women's digital activism. Despite this, social media remains a crucial space for nurturing awareness and solidarity. Facebook's capacity to foster dialogue, amplify marginalised voices, and encourage public accountability reflects its growing significance in shaping contemporary gender discourse in Jordan.

2.3 Socio-Cultural Barriers to Digital Advocacy and Women's Safety

While Facebook facilitates digital activism and women's empowerment, its impact is shaped by Jordan's broader socio-cultural and institutional environment. Abuhammad et al. (2023) identify persistent patriarchal attitudes, social stigma, and family pressure as key barriers preventing women from fully engaging in online advocacy. Al-Momani and Rababa (2022) add that cultural expectations surrounding modesty and reputation discourage open discussions of abuse. These social constraints are compounded by structural weaknesses, including limited enforcement of protective laws and inadequate institutional support for victims (Department of Statistics Jordan & ICF, 2023).

Ferreira (2023) and the World Bank (2022) emphasise that socioeconomic inequality exacerbates women's vulnerability to violence, particularly among low-income and rural populations. Malka et al. (2022) note that digital activism often remains concentrated among urban, educated women, leaving marginalised groups underrepresented in online spaces. Reports by Human Rights Watch (2024) and UNDP Jordan (2023) further highlight gaps in state-led initiatives, stressing the need for integrated policies that combine digital advocacy with legal and educational reforms.

Civil society organisations, such as the Renaissance Strategic Centre (2023), continue to advocate for stronger partnerships among digital platforms, policymakers, and educational institutions to sustain social transformation. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional strategy that recognises the intersection of digital empowerment, social structures, and gender justice. Only by bridging online activism with offline policy reforms can Facebook-driven advocacy achieve enduring social change in Jordan.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that Facebook has become a vital platform for empowering Jordanian women, promoting digital activism, and advocating against gender-based violence. Existing studies highlight how online spaces enable women to negotiate social identities, raise awareness, and mobilise communities for social change (Esposito & Sinatora, 2023; Laksana & Abduh, 2023; Al-Taweel, 2023). However, many studies remain fragmented, focusing either on the technological dimension of digital media or on socio-cultural barriers to women's participation. Few studies have examined how these dimensions interact to shape women's lived experiences of activism in conservative Arab contexts. This gap underscores the need for a holistic analysis that connects Facebook's communicative potential with the structural and cultural challenges women face in Jordan. Addressing this gap, the present study explores how Jordanian women utilise Facebook as a digital tool for social change, with a particular focus on confronting violence against women.

3. Methodology

This study employed an explorative qualitative research design to examine how Jordanian women utilise Facebook as a digital tool for social change in addressing violence against women. A qualitative method was considered most appropriate as it allows the researcher to capture the complexity of lived experiences, digital practices, and cultural dynamics that shape women's responses to violence (Creswell, 2013). This approach further enabled the study to generate rich, detailed data from participants' perspectives, providing insights into their strategies, perceptions, and meaning-making processes.

The informants were selected using purposive sampling, following Patton's (2015) recommendation that it is suitable for exploratory research to choose cases that best contribute to generating insights into the problem statement and research questions. *Six participants were selected, and the study now explicitly focuses on their distinct roles, such as victims, activists, academics, psychologists, and officials, to allow for clearer role-based comparison.* These participants were based in Amman, Jordan's capital. They were chosen for their direct involvement in digital advocacy on Facebook, as well as for their personal or professional experiences with violence against women.

The interviews were conducted between January and March 2025, focusing on participants' personal experiences with various forms of violence, including physical assault, sexual violence, and emotional abuse within intimate, professional, or familial relationships. Despite challenges such as relocation, divorce, and disengagement from former relationships, locally recruited research assistants facilitated access to participants. Some interviews were conducted in Arabic, the participants' preferred language, and were later transcribed and translated into English by the researcher to

ensure accuracy and contextual fidelity. Ethical procedures were strengthened by obtaining informed consent, ensuring anonymity, and securely storing all recordings and transcripts, thereby providing a clearer, more explicit ethical framework. Semi-structured interview questions were employed to ensure consistency across participants while allowing for flexibility to explore individual experiences in depth (Janesick, 2004; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interview questions were developed based on the study's theoretical gap. Following Castillo-Montoya's (2016) recommendation, the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework was applied to ensure the reliability and validity of the protocol. In the first phase, alignment was established between the interview questions and the research questions, ensuring their relevance and eliminating redundancies. The second phase entailed developing an inquiry-based conversation through an interview script that included broad, open-ended questions, along with possible follow-up and prompts (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Finally, the protocol was piloted in conditions resembling actual interviews, and the feedback obtained was used to refine and improve the instrument.

To analyse the data, thematic analysis was employed to identify, interpret, and organise patterns of meaning (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This involved three stages: data coding, theme development, and analytical theme construction. Survivors and professionals were coded separately, and themes were later compared to integrate insights where appropriate. In this study, thematic analysis facilitated the interpretation of recurring patterns within participants' narratives while remaining sensitive to their individual nuances.

Methodological rigour was ensured by adhering to verification, validation, and validity, as recommended by Meadows and Morse (2001). Verification involved conducting literature searches, following established qualitative procedures, bracketing the researcher's assumptions, *and applying the principle of information power rather than saturation to justify the small sample size, recognising that depth, relevance, and specificity support credibility in exploratory qualitative research*. Validation was achieved through member checks, expert input, and informant feedback, ensuring that the findings reflected participants' realities. Validity was ultimately grounded in trustworthiness and external review, supported by empathy and ethical sensitivity throughout the research process (Kearney, 2001). Claims were also tempered to ensure the findings do not overextend beyond the scope of six interviews.

Equally, this study adopted Charles Tilly's Social Mobilisation Theory to interpret how Jordanian women utilise Facebook in their struggle against gender-based violence. The theory emphasises that grievances alone do not lead to mobilisation unless supported by organisational resources, political opportunities, collective identities, and effective framing (Castañeda, 2025). Within this framework, mobilisation is viewed as a rational and strategic process in which individuals and groups use available tools to achieve social change. To strengthen alignment with digital activism scholarship, the analysis incorporates framing theory, resource mobilisation, and connective action (Bennett and Segerberg 2012), showing how women build narratives, mobilise resources, and coordinate decentralised engagement on Facebook.

Building on these theoretical insights and prior studies, this study further conceptualises how social mobilisation manifests within digital environments, particularly Facebook, by linking offline mobilisation mechanisms to online feminist activism. While traditional mobilisation depends on organisational structures, face-to-face networks, and physical spaces for collective action, online mobilisation operates through digital affordances such as hashtags, algorithmic visibility, shared storytelling, and interactive community-building. Prior research demonstrates that social media enables connective action by lowering organisational barriers, facilitating the rapid dissemination of grievances, and enabling individuals to contribute small acts such as likes, shares, and comments that cumulatively produce collective visibility (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; de Nardis, 2020). In this study, women's online engagement reflects digital forms of resource mobilisation, where emotional support, informational resources, and solidarity are circulated through posts, testimonies, and advocacy campaigns.

However, it is important to note that not all online activism leads to policy change; comparative studies have shown instances where digital mobilisation generates visibility but fails to translate into concrete reforms or legislative outcomes (e.g., online petitions that gain widespread support but do not influence policy, see Anani, 2019; Uldam, 2018). This study recognises such contradictions and examines how Jordanian women navigate similar challenges in translating online engagement into tangible social change. This theoretical lens is particularly relevant to the Jordanian context, where institutional and cultural constraints often limit traditional forms of activism. Facebook provides women with an alternative platform to connect, build networks, frame their personal experiences of violence as collective concerns, and advocate for reform. As shown in prior studies (Al-Sharqi, 2021; Caiani, 2023; de Nardis, 2020; Ramadan, 2022), digital platforms enable feminist movements to bypass patriarchal barriers, align with international networks, and amplify their voices in the public sphere. In this study, Social Mobilisation Theory highlights how women are not passive victims but strategic agents, leveraging digital communication to foster solidarity, reframe political opportunities, and drive societal transformation. Below are the key assumptions underpinning the theory.

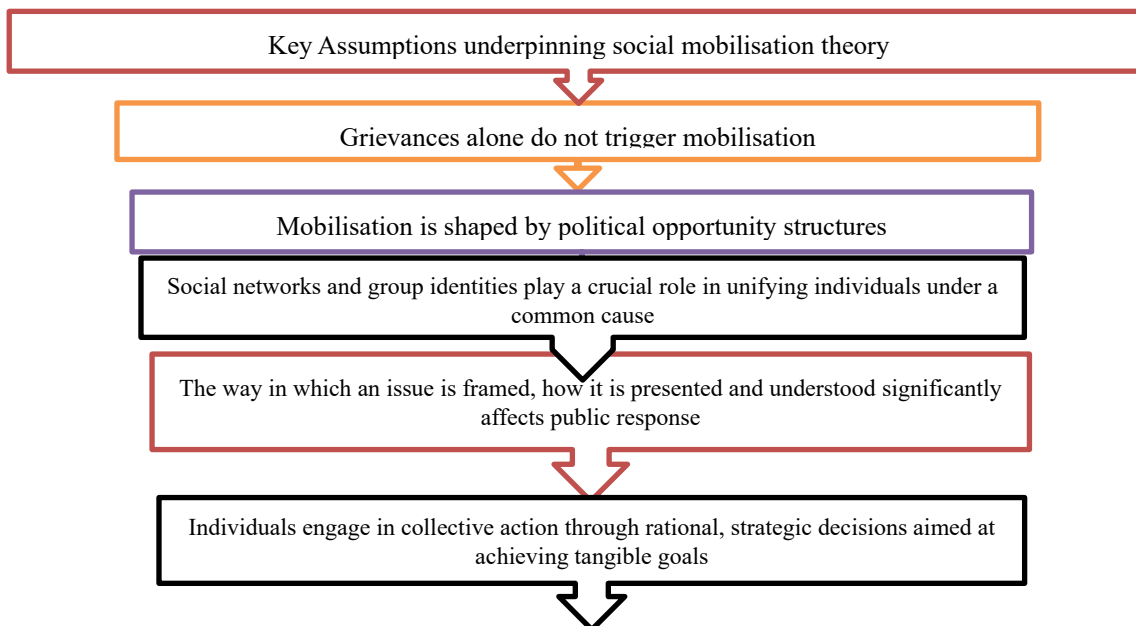
Diagram 1.1 Key Assumptions Underpinning Theory

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Source: Compiled by Researchers

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Facebook as a Catalyst for Women's Empowerment and Social Change in Jordan

The findings of this study reveal that Facebook functions as a dynamic catalyst for women's empowerment and social change in Jordan, particularly in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Beyond serving as a communication platform, it has become a transformative digital space for healing, activism, and collective mobilisation. This aligns with Servaes (2020) and Koburtay et al. (2023), who observe that digital platforms dismantle traditional hierarchies and amplify the voices of marginalised individuals, allowing users to reframe their lived experiences through participation and solidarity. In this sense, Facebook facilitates the circulation of knowledge and fosters a sense of belonging among women who have experienced violence.

In line with this, Informant 1 stated:

"Through Facebook, I found a psychologist and joined Sanabel. It saved me. Before that, I felt completely isolated, but online communities helped me rebuild my confidence and find people who understood my struggle."

This account illustrates how Facebook serves as a pathway to psychosocial recovery by connecting users to professional and peer support. As Esposito and Sinatora (2023) similarly found, women increasingly turn to online spaces to seek solidarity and institutional responses that are otherwise inaccessible offline. The ability to share experiences and receive validation within digital communities enhances emotional resilience and promotes empowerment.

Supporting this, Informant 3 explained:

"Access to psychological support and Sanabel's programmes improved my life, giving me the strength to cope with trauma. Before, I thought recovery was impossible, but online connections proved otherwise and encouraged me to seek help."

This statement reinforces that Facebook is not merely a channel for communication but an agent of transformation that empowers women to reclaim control over their emotional and social realities. It supports Azzaakiyyah's (2023) argument that participatory communication strengthens grassroots mobilisation by turning individual empowerment into collective resilience. Through such engagements, digital spaces transform women from isolated victims into active participants in social reform.

In line with this process of empowerment, Informant 2 noted:

"UN Women's HeForShe and Jordan's Sexual Health Strategy opened my eyes. I never thought these global initiatives had relevance for me personally until I saw the campaigns on Facebook, and then I realised, change was possible."

This observation underscores the intersection of global advocacy with local activism. Global frameworks like HeForShe become accessible and personally meaningful through Facebook, illustrating how digital communication localises transnational feminist discourses. By connecting local realities with global causes, women begin to recognise their own agency within broader movements for social justice and gender equality.

Similarly, Informant 1 further remarked:

"Though rare, each post impacts me deeply and motivates me to speak out. Even if it is just one campaign or one story, it gives me courage to tell mine, because I feel connected to others who experienced the same."

This reflection highlights the cumulative yet powerful impact of digital narratives. Even limited exposure to empowering content can prompt a change in attitude and foster civic participation. This finding supports Servaes (2020), Malik (2022), and Al-Rawi (2020), who contend that social media enhances media literacy, promotes free expression, and bypasses traditional social gatekeeping.

In agreement, Informant 2 added:

"Continuous media exposure changed how I see violence against women and inspired activism. Before, I stayed silent, but the constant flow of stories and advice on Facebook gave me the strength to change my mindset."

This transformation exemplifies what Mirbabaie et al. (2021) describe as connective action, in which collective mobilisation arises organically from individual digital engagement. As women consume and share narratives, they move from empathy to activism, generating a decentralised yet powerful form of community-driven advocacy.

Extending this transformation, Informants 3 and 6 stated:

"It transformed us from victims into advocates. We no longer think of ourselves only as people who suffered. We started using our stories to encourage others and to participate in online campaigns for women's rights."

This sentiment aligns with Santoniccolo et al. (2023), who emphasise that digital storytelling redefines social identities and challenges patriarchal norms. Through the process of sharing and mutual validation, women reclaim authorship of their narratives, turning personal trauma into advocacy. Facebook thus serves as a participatory space where storytelling evolves into activism and empowerment becomes collective.

In further support, Informant 4 observed:

"Stories changed my perception and fuelled my motivation to fight for others. Seeing women share openly about violence online made me determined to act, and I realised that silence only protects the abusers."

With respect to the above, Social Mobilisation Theory supports this analysis by providing a valuable framework for understanding how Jordanian women utilise Facebook to transform personal grievances into organised activism. The theory's assumptions that mobilisation is a rational process shaped by framing and political opportunities align closely with this study's findings, supporting Salhab Altamimi's (2024) view that digital spaces empower women by connecting local struggles to global feminist networks. Through storytelling, women overcome fear and silence, employing Facebook as both a psychological refuge and a political tool. Consistent with Gunawan et al. (2023), participatory communication within these digital spaces fosters inclusivity, co-creates knowledge, and sustains collective activism, which is essential for lasting social transformation.

4.2 Facebook as a Platform for Grassroots Mobilisation

The findings of this study indicate that Facebook has evolved into a safe and inclusive platform for grassroots mobilisation among Jordanian women confronting gender-based violence (GBV). Unlike traditional institutions that often replicate patriarchal hierarchies and exclude women's voices, Facebook has created a participatory environment where dialogue, solidarity, and activism can flourish. This finding supports Fornari et al. (2021), who argue that digital platforms enable marginalised groups to circumvent restrictive structures and gain visibility in the public sphere. Through this digital space, women can connect, express themselves, and act collectively against injustice.

As reflected by Informant 2:

"Facebook gave us a community. We could share without fear. It was the first place where I spoke openly about my experience. Knowing that others were listening without judgement changed everything for me."

This account reflects how Facebook functions as both a social refuge and a catalyst for civic engagement. The opportunity to share experiences in a non-judgmental environment fosters emotional security and mutual trust, which are essential foundations for collective action. Choi et al. (2022) similarly argue that online communities provide victims with both psychological reassurance and practical assistance. Through these interactions, women not only find empathy but also identify tangible pathways toward support and advocacy.

Echoing this perspective, Informant 3 explained:

"We formed networks through Facebook, Takatoat, SIGI, and others. These networks did not just provide sympathy, but also connected us to lawyers, counsellors, and activists who could take our voices into public campaigns."

This statement demonstrates that Facebook serves as an organising hub for grassroots initiatives. Online interactions translate into offline mobilisation by linking survivors to professional networks, advocacy groups, and social movements. Marzouk and Vanderveen (2021) highlight that such digital-to-physical activism bridges gaps between virtual dialogue and real-world intervention, creating hybrid models of participation that strengthen civil society engagement.

Reinforcing this view, Informant 4 emphasised:

"Campaigns like #HerJobIsProtectingHer reached young women and rural women who would not have heard about these issues otherwise. Through videos and stories, they made it easy for women everywhere to understand their rights."

This insight underscores how targeted Facebook campaigns effectively bridge socioeconomic and geographic divides. Digital advocacy raises awareness among populations traditionally excluded from mainstream feminist movements, reinforcing Choi et al.'s (2022) observation that online platforms extend the reach of empowerment messages to marginalised groups. Campaigns employing relatable narratives and visual media not only inform but also inspire participation and self-efficacy among women across Jordan.

Corroborating these findings, Informant 5 reflected:

"Victims use Facebook under anonymous profiles to report abuse, and sometimes these posts even trigger police interventions. For many, this is the only way to ask for help without exposing themselves to stigma."

Consequently, the above findings align with key assumptions of the Social Mobilisation Theory, which clarifies how organisational resources, collective identity, and framing processes converge to sustain grassroots activism. Facebook, as a digital organisational resource, enables Jordanian women to transform shared experiences of GBV into collective action and advocacy (Castañeda, 2025). Its anonymity further supports civic participation by protecting vulnerable voices (Fornari et al., 2021). Hence, the theory helps explain how Facebook's participatory environment transforms digital solidarity into rational, inclusive, and strategic mobilisation that extends beyond virtual spaces, reinforcing women's agency and social change in Jordan.

4.3 Violence Against Women

The findings revealed that violence against women continues to be a pervasive challenge in Jordan, despite ongoing reforms, legislative efforts, and nationwide awareness campaigns. National surveys underscore the gravity of this issue, showing that approximately 26% of ever-married women have experienced domestic violence (Abuhammad et al., 2023). These findings highlight the tension between progressive legal frameworks and the enduring cultural and structural barriers that perpetuate gender-based violence (GBV). Testimonies from the informants provided powerful, first-hand narratives that reveal the multifaceted consequences of such abuse — physically, psychologically, and socially.

To illustrate the intensity of these experiences, Informant 1 recounted:

"I was beaten by my stepbrothers the day my father died, and I suffered a dislocated leg. That experience changed my entire life and my career, my mental health, and my ability to trust anyone again."

This testimony demonstrates the profound and long-term physical and emotional damage caused by domestic violence. It reinforces the argument that GBV is not an isolated incident but a deeply embedded social problem that shapes victims' trajectories across multiple life domains.

Expanding on this, Informant 2 explained:

"My partner physically and sexually assaulted me, which resulted in severe injuries and deep trauma. For years, violence was part of the family context, and it became something I thought I just had to endure."

Her experience illustrates how the normalisation of abuse within domestic spaces creates cycles of silence and submission. This aligns with Abuhammad et al. (2023), who found that cultural acceptance and family pressures discourage victims from seeking justice or external support.

Adding further depth, Informant 3 reflected:

"Fear of marriage, emotional damage, and distrust have led me to isolate myself until I sought therapy. The stigma in society makes you feel that admitting abuse is shameful, so many women stay silent and suffer alone."

This reflection corresponds with Al-Momani and Rababa (2022), who observed that stigma and societal taboos serve as

significant barriers to reporting and recovery. Emotional trauma and social exclusion become intertwined, compounding the psychological harm inflicted by abuse.

In the same vein, Informant 4 observed:

"People normalise abuse, victims are blamed, and authorities are indifferent. In many cases, women who report violence are asked to reconcile or return home, leaving them without real protection."

Consequently, the above statement exposes institutional shortcomings that sustain cycles of violence. Despite initiatives such as the "16 Days of Activism," survivors still face systemic apathy and victim-blaming, perpetuating gender inequality. As corroborated through the lens of Social Mobilisation Theory, which guided this study's analysis, grievances alone cannot lead to collective action without key factors such as organisational resources, political opportunities, and a collective identity (Castañeda, 2025). Women's testimonies demonstrate how Facebook operates as an alternative space for mobilisation, transforming individual suffering into shared resistance. Thus, the theory clarifies that bridging the gap between legislation and lived experiences requires empowering women through community engagement, education, and digital activism to challenge patriarchal norms and dismantle entrenched violence in Jordan.

4.3.1 Factors that Facilitate Violence Against Women in Jordan

The findings revealed that violence against women in Jordan is deeply rooted in the intersection of poverty, patriarchy, and weak institutional enforcement. Participants highlighted that cultural traditions and economic instability sustain conditions in which abuse becomes normalised and difficult to escape. This mirrors the broader scholarly consensus that gender-based violence (GBV) in developing societies often reflects structural inequalities that limit women's autonomy and reinforce male dominance.

Expanding on this, Informant 1 explained:

"Violence is about control, and it comes from deep societal power imbalances, patriarchy, and poverty. In low-income households, stress is high, and men often justify physical and emotional abuse as part of their authority."

This perspective aligns with Al-Momani and Rababa (2022), who argue that economic deprivation and patriarchal expectations frequently intersect to reproduce domestic abuse. In this sense, poverty not only heightens stress but also legitimises control-oriented behaviours that perpetuate violence in households where women's dependence is most pronounced.

Building on this argument, Informant 2 elaborated:

"When a man is unemployed and frustrated, he vents his anger on his wife. If he drinks, the violence becomes worse, more physical, more unpredictable, and sometimes extremely brutal."

Her statement reinforces findings from the World Bank (2022) and Ferreira (2023), who link unemployment, economic frustration, and alcohol consumption to increased incidents of intimate partner violence. The testimony underscores how men's perceived loss of status or control in public life may be compensated for by aggression within the private sphere.

Similarly, Informant 3 observed:

"Patriarchal norms, stigma, and weak enforcement trap women in abusive cycles. Many stay because they lack education, money, or family support, so they believe there is no way out of the violence."

This account resonates with Human Rights Watch (2024), which documented how women's economic dependency and limited access to justice systems reinforce cycles of victimisation. The absence of strong institutional protection, coupled with family pressure to maintain social reputation, leaves many survivors with few viable alternatives.

Adding further depth, Informant 4 reflected:

"Violence comes from a man's insecurity and his need to dominate. When he feels powerless outside and has no job, no future, he asserts control at home through slapping, confinement, or even rape, as if this restores his dignity."

The above testimony supports Malka et al. (2022), who associate masculine insecurity and social frustration with aggressive behaviour. It demonstrates how cultural definitions of masculinity, when combined with structural inequality, can lead to violent attempts at asserting authority within the household.

Consequently, in alignment with Social Mobilisation Theory, which stresses that mobilisation is a rational and strategic process shaped by framing and political opportunities (Castañeda, 2025), these findings reveal that economic hardship, patriarchal dominance, and weak institutional responses perpetuate violence against women in Jordan. Cumulatively, cultural acceptance and stigma exacerbate the problem, underscoring the need for empowerment, education, and institutional accountability to achieve genuine transformation.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how Jordanian women utilise Facebook as a digital tool to promote social change in addressing violence against women (VAW). It particularly highlights the role of social media, especially Facebook, which has emerged as a powerful catalyst for social change by providing a public space for Victims to share their stories, raise awareness, and mobilise support. Facebook's wide reach and interactive features enable victims and advocates to connect, form social networks, and build collective identities focused on ending VAW. These online interactions challenge traditional gatekeepers, allowing new narratives to frame violence as unacceptable and urging public and institutional accountability. Such framing aligns closely with social mobilisation theory, which highlights the importance of collective identity and issue presentation in generating public engagement.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that Facebook functions as a vital platform for grassroots mobilisation in Jordan, enabling NGOs, activists, and survivors to coordinate campaigns, disseminate information, and provide psychological support. This digital activism complements offline efforts by facilitating strategic, goal-oriented collective action that pushes for policy reform and social transformation. However, the persistence of factors such as patriarchal social structures, stigma, and weak enforcement mechanisms continues to facilitate violence against women, underscoring the complexity of the struggle despite growing digital advocacy.

This study contributes to understanding how digital tools, such as Facebook, empower marginalised women in Jordan to transform private pain into public advocacy. By linking personal testimonies with theoretical insights, it shows how online platforms foster solidarity, amplify voices, and promote social change. However, limitations include the focus on a single platform and a lack of cross-regional comparison. Future research should explore the intersections of digital and offline activism across other Arab contexts. Theoretically, this study enriches digital feminism and participatory communication frameworks, offering practical guidance for enhancing digital literacy, support networks, and strategies to combat violence against women in the region.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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