

# Physical and Emotional Domestic Violence Knowledge among Jazan University Female Students

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## Abstract

Domestic violence against females is one of the most important social problems negatively affecting health psychologically and physically. This study aims to estimate the prevalence of violence against female students at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia, and identify their knowledge and response towards emotional and physical domestic violence.

**Method of study:** It is a descriptive cross-sectional, observational type of epidemiologic study conducted on 450 female students at 3 Faculties, female sections, Jazan University, for eight weeks. The data was collected using an Arabic questionnaire containing 35 questions and analyzed by SPSS Program.

**Results:** 25.6% of the female students in the studied sample were exposed to domestic violence at some point. The emotional type is the most prevalent (18.3%), followed by the physical type (16.9%). Arts faculties showed the highest rate of domestic violence (11.3%), followed by health faculties (9.3%), and the science faculties exhibited the lowest rates (4.9%). Most participants (15.78%) believed that male power in Jazan society allows them to emotionally abuse women, while 15.33% thought that physical violence against women

is mainly caused by men's abuse of drugs and alcohol. 94.5% of the participants believed that violence against women has a negative impact on children and teenagers, and 86.5% supposed that the most significant psychological effects of violence against women are loss of self-confidence, frustration, and depression.

**Conclusion:** Domestic violence against females is prevalent in the Jazan community, with various socio-demographic and economic determinants influencing its occurrence. The most prevalent type is emotional domestic violence. Arts faculties showed the highest rating of domestic violence, then health faculties, and the least, science faculties.

**Recommendations:** Increase community awareness about domestic violence. Religious leaders sustain the greatest responsibility to increase awareness according to the rules of the Islamic religion.

**Key words:** Knowledge, physical and emotional domestic violence, Jazan University female students

## Introduction

In the place where they should be safest, females are often in great danger; within their families. Intimate partner violence (also known as "domestic" violence) means that a female faces any violence by an intimate family member (father, brother, or intimate relative) or spouse; This is one of the most common and universal forms of violence experienced by females, (WHO, 2005). Violence against females poses a major threat to social and economic development (WHO, 2005). One-in-three females have experienced domestic violence (Semahegn et al., 2019). The prevalence ranges dramatically from 39% to 58%, with several types of physical and emotional abuse. However, violence is a serious problem in Arab and Islamic countries, and most abused females don't mention they were abused. Statistics show that married females are Saudi society's largest segment of victims of abuse (Halawi et al., 2017).

Violence against females takes many forms, from the overt to the subtle. It includes physical, emotional, economic, and sexual violence (WHO, 2005). Although there is no single factor to account for violence perpetrated against females, several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors have kept females particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them (UNICEF, 2000). Some people with very traditional beliefs may consider they have the right to control their partner and that females are not equal to men (Toby

and Goldsmith, 2018). Gender inequality and lifestyle acceptance of violence are the main causes of violence against females (Mabunda et al., 2009).

In addition, severe and fatal effects on females' mental health are noted in females exposed to domestic violence. The incidence of stress-related diseases such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, panic attacks, depression, sleep and eating disorders, high blood pressure, alcohol abuse, and low self-esteem that accompany domestic violence have fatal outcomes such as homicide or suicide (UNICEF, 2000). Moreover, females may suffer from isolation, unemployment, loss of wages, lack of normal involvement in activities, and limited ability to worry about themselves and their children. Children growing up in violent families may experience a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances. These behaviors can also be associated with subsequent perpetration of violence (Mabunda et al., 2009). Children who witness or are victims of violence can learn to believe that violence is a reasonable way of resolving people's conflicts (Goldsmith, 2016).

To prevent domestic violence, developed countries provide support and counseling interventions to modulate access to services for the survivors. Home visitation program settings include: empowering females economically and socially, raising communication and relationship skills, and reducing access to harmful use of alcohol (Mabunda et al., 2009).

On the other hand, in collaboration with partners, WHO has exerted efforts to build evidence based on the size and type of violence in a different framework and supporting countries' efforts to measure violence and its effects. These efforts include strengthening research and capacity to evaluate partner violence interventions and secondly, research interventions to test and identify effective interventions in the health sector. Thirdly, is the developing of guidelines and operational tools to enhance response to partner and sexual violence and support countries and partners in implementing the Global Plan of Action on Violence (Mabunda et al., 2009).

Saudi Arabia has worked to stop domestic violence by providing social services in cooperation with charities through study, social research, and accommodation. These efforts established the Public Social Protection Administration to raise awareness among society members. Additionally, they set up the Social Guidance Unit and the toll-free number 8001245005 to provide strict confidence in social, psychological, educational, and judicial counseling (Was, 2017).

However, the problem is that there is no previous study about the prevalence of domestic violence against Jazan University female students, as well as the victims' response to domestic violence. The hypothesis is that Jazan University students are exposed to emotional and physical violence.

### Objectives of the Research

This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of violence against female students at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia, and identify their knowledge and response towards emotional and physical domestic violence.

## Methodology

**Study area:** Jazan region is the second smallest area in the southwestern corner of Saudi Arabia. The region is subdivided into 14 governorates and covers an area of 11,671 km<sup>2</sup> with 1,567,547 inhabitants in the 2017 census. The region has the Kingdom's highest population density. Study setting: Jazan University

**Study design:** A descriptive, cross-sectional design of observation type of epidemiological studies.

**Study population:** The study target is 450 female students aged 18-30 years old enrolled in three faculties at Jazan University.

### Sample size

This equation was used to calculate the sample size because the population size is unknown:

$$n = \frac{z_{1-\alpha}^2 P (1 - P)}{d^2}$$

z= is determined based on confidence level.

Confidence level: 95%= z-value 1.96.

P= population proportion (assumed to be 50%=0.05).

d= absolute error, a small amount that is allowed for in case of miscalculation or change of circumstance= 5%=0.5

The formula becomes as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384 \approx 400$$

Assuming a non-response rate of 10%:

$$\frac{(400) (10)}{100} = 40$$

Total sample size= 400+40+10=450

### Sample techniques

It includes four stages only as follows:

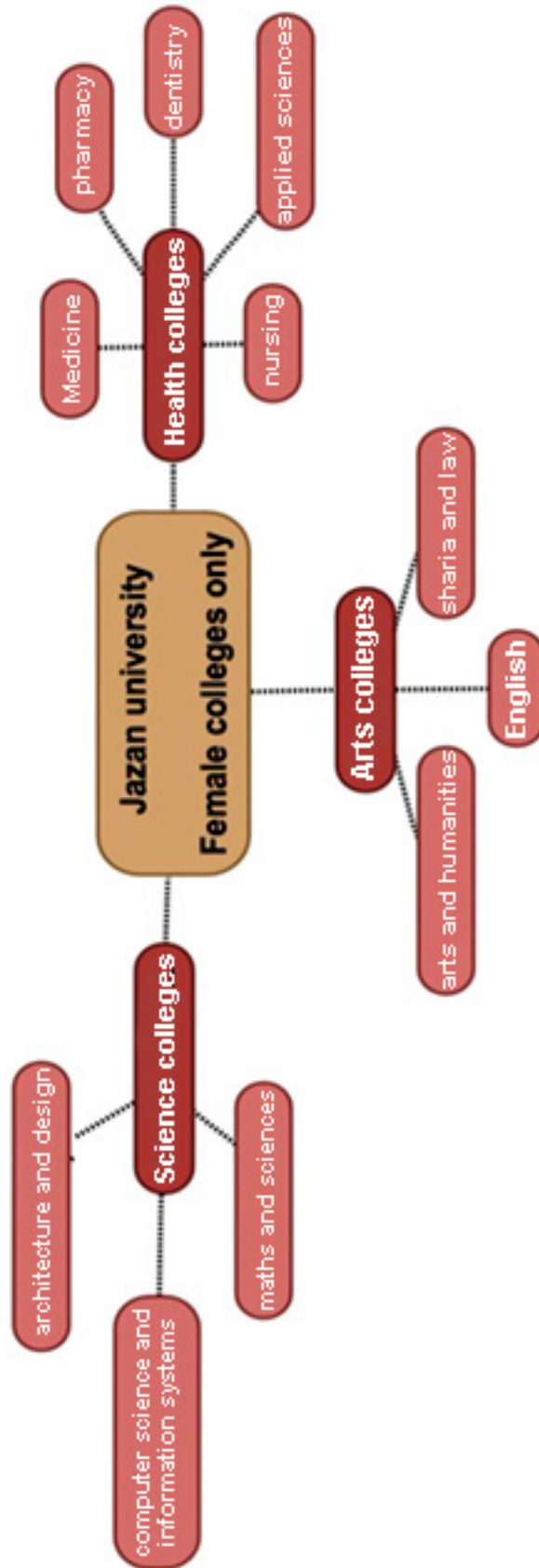
**First stage:** The large cluster was taken from the female students at Jazan University.

**Second Stage:** Participants were selected by a series of clusters from the 3 main faculties (Health, Science, and Arts). Health faculties include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, applied sciences, and nursing. Science faculties include architecture and design, computer science and information systems, and maths and sciences. Finally, Arts faculties include Arts and Humanities, English, Sharia, and law.

**Third Stage:** Three Female faculties were chosen by lottery method of simple random sampling technique to be the clusters of study: Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Maths & Sciences, and Faculty of English.

**Fourth stage:** Three clusters of participants were selected as a percent proportion from each Faculty

Figure 1. Distribution of the students in the study



### Data collection tool

The data was collected by a semi-structured questionnaire composed of four parts and adapted to suit our culture using the Arabic language. Sociodemographic characteristics include age, educational level, and social status, secondly, the participants' background and thirdly assessment of how females respond to domestic violence.

**Pilot study:** A pilot study was carried-out and the questionnaire was modified, and the time was also adjusted according to its results. The results of the pilot study are not included in the final results. Cronbach's Alpha of the whole questionnaire is estimated as 0.75.

**Data presentation and analysis:** Data were presented and analyzed using suitable statistical methods using SPSS program version 25. Qualitative data were described using frequencies and percentages. An independent t-test was conducted to compare two continuous groups, while one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare more than two continuous groups. Values less than 0.05 were judged to be statistically significant.

**Ethical consideration:** Ethical approval from the Jazan University Ethical Committee was taken. Also, official approval to access the university campus was obtained from the Dean of each Faculty. Likewise, informed written consent was collected in the questionnaire, including the study background, risks, potential benefits, and declaration of voluntary participation. Besides, data collected from study participants are only used for scientific purposes. Finally, all the participants had the right to stay or withdraw at any time from the study.

## Results

A total of 450 female students responded to the questionnaire. The response rate is 100%. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of participants. Regarding age, 50.9% of participants were 22 to < 24 years old (229). For marital status, 68.9% of the female students wear single (310), married students (117, 25.9%), and divorced students (23, 5.1%) with zero widows. Regarding residence, 59% of the students (266) are from rural areas, and 41% (175) are from urban areas. As for the type of faculties, 36.0% of the students (162) were from the Arts faculties; 32.7% (147) were from the science faculties, and 31.3% (142) were from the Health faculties.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows that the overall prevalence rate of violence is 25,6% (115/450). Among the sample of the study (450 female students), the distribution of age is significantly higher in 22 to <24 years old (33.6%) than in 18 to <20 years old (20%), 20 to <22 years old (16%) and the least was the age of 24 years old and more (21.5%),  $P= 0.001$ . Regarding the distribution of female students according to the classification of Faculty, it was found that the number of students was significantly higher in the Arts faculties (31.5%) than in the Health faculties (28.6%) and Science faculties (15.5%),  $P= 0.004$ . From the side of marital status, domestic violence is significantly higher in divorced students (82.6%) compared to married students, where it is (26.4%) and in single students, it is (20.9%),  $P< 0.001$ . Lastly, regarding residence, it is higher in students from rural areas (27%) than in students from urban areas (23.3%). However, this difference is not statistically significant,  $P= 0.472$ .



**Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of participants**

	Variable	Number (450)	Percentage
Age	18 to <20	24	5.3%
	20 to <22	118	26.2%
	22 to < 24	229	50.9%
	24 and more	79	17.6%
Marital status	Single	310	68.9%
	married	117	26.0%
	divorced	23	5.1%
Residence	Village 'rural'	266	59%
	City 'urban'	184	41%
Faculty	Health	147	32.7%
	Science	141	31.3%
	Art	162	36.0%

**Table 2: Prevalence of Violence according to some Variables**

Characteristic	Exposed Total	Prevalence	95% CI	P-value
<b>Age</b>				.001
18 to <20	(3/24)	12.5%	16.3 – 23.7	
20 to <22	(18/118)	15.2%	12.6–19.4	
22 to <24	(77/229)	33.6%	29.2- 38	
24 and more	(17/79)	21.5%	14.2-21.2	
<b>Faculty</b>				.004
Health	(42/147)	28.6%	24.4-32.8	
Science	(22/141)	15.6%	27.2-35.8	
Arts	(51/162)	31.5%	12.2-19	
<b>Marital Status</b>				<.001
Single	(65/310)	20.9%	17.1-24.6	
Married	(31/117)	26.4%	22.3-30.4	
Divorced	(19/23)	82.6%	87.6-93.1	
<b>Residence</b>				.472
Rural	(72/266)	27%	23-31.1	
Urban	(43/184)	23.3%	20.05-28	
<b>Overall prevalence</b>	(115/450)	25.6	21.7-29.8	0.477

In addition, Table 3 shows that 15.33% of the participants (69) think that the most common cause of physical violence against women is men's abuse of drugs and alcohol. About 3% of participants (13) believe that the most likely motive for domestic violence is economic, such as poverty.

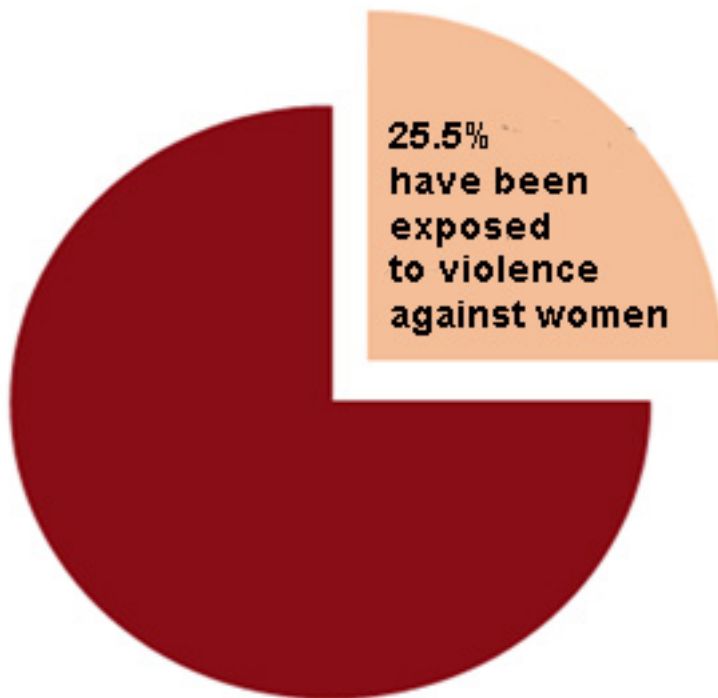
<b>Table 4 : Participants' knowledge about emotional abuse (N=450)</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Do you think that women surrendering to violence without resistance is one of the causes of violence against women	62	13.78
Do you think that traditional thoughts are a cause of violence against women	55	12.22
Does lack of religious aspect cause violence against women	51	11.33
Is ignorance and poverty of the family causing violence against women	50	11.11
Is the disobedience of the orders of her father causing violence against women	51	11.33
Does male power in our society give the powers to bully women	71	15.78
Does men's abuse of drug and alcohol cause violence against women	38	8.44
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (the self-motivation of a person such as the abuser being attacked in the past)	42	9.33
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (growing up in an environment considered violence as normal behavior to dealing with problems)	55	12.22
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (economic motives as poverty)	13	2.89
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (customs, traditions and other social motives)	44	9.78
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (the abuser feels the need to be dominant because of lack of self-respect)	45	10
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (jealous)	23	5.11
What are the most likely motives for domestic violence (feeling of inferiority due to level of education or economic status)	7	6

Additionally, Table 4 shows the participants' thoughts regarding reasons for emotional violence. It was found that most participants (71, 15.78%) suppose that the male power in Jazan society gives them the power to bully women.

<b>Table 4 : Participants' knowledge about emotional abuse (N=450)</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
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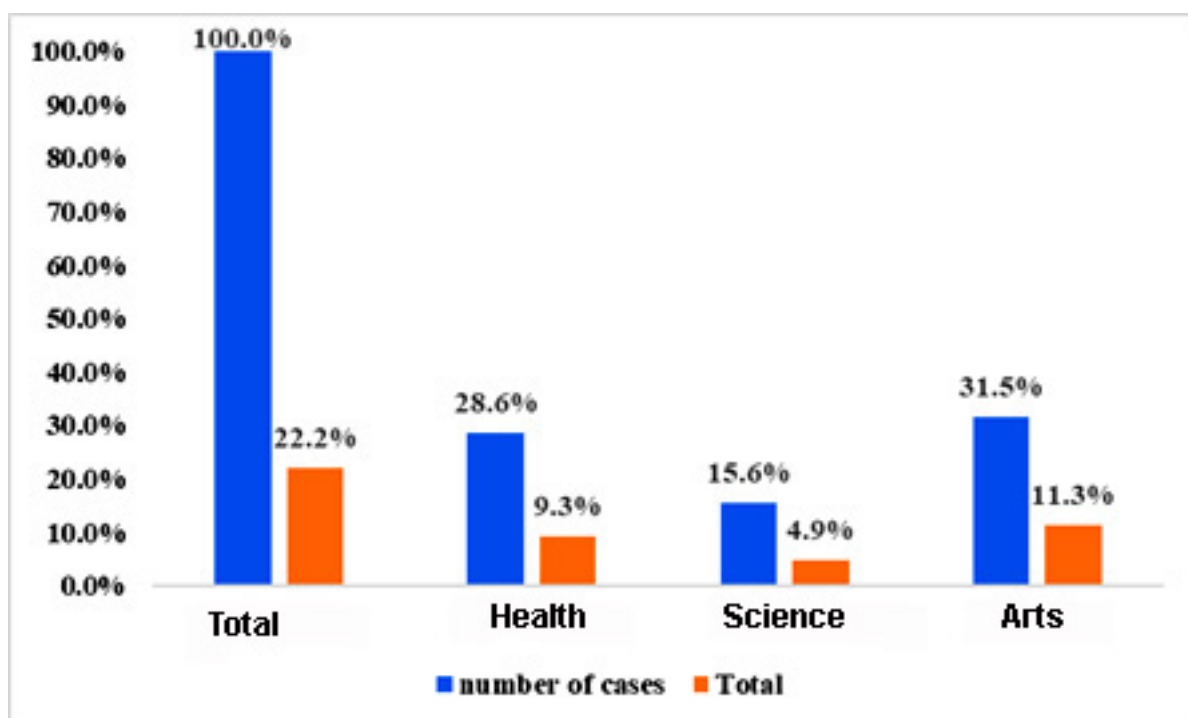


Also, Figure 2 and Chart 1 show the prevalence of female students exposed to domestic violence and then the distribution according to the type of faculties.



**Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic violence among female students in Jizan University**

**Chart 1. Prevalence of Domestic Violence according to Faculty**



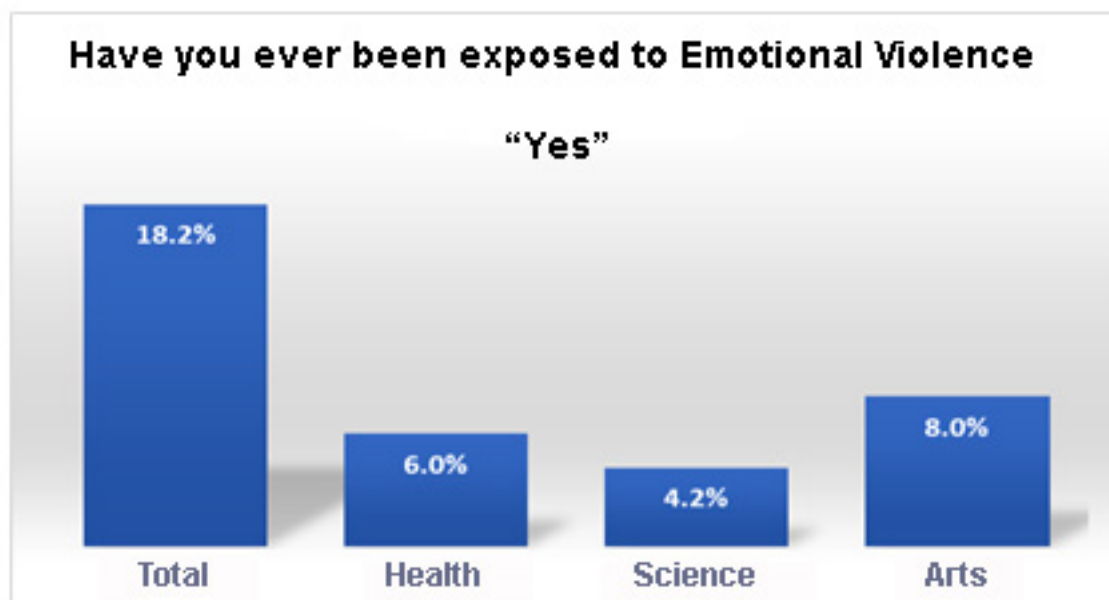
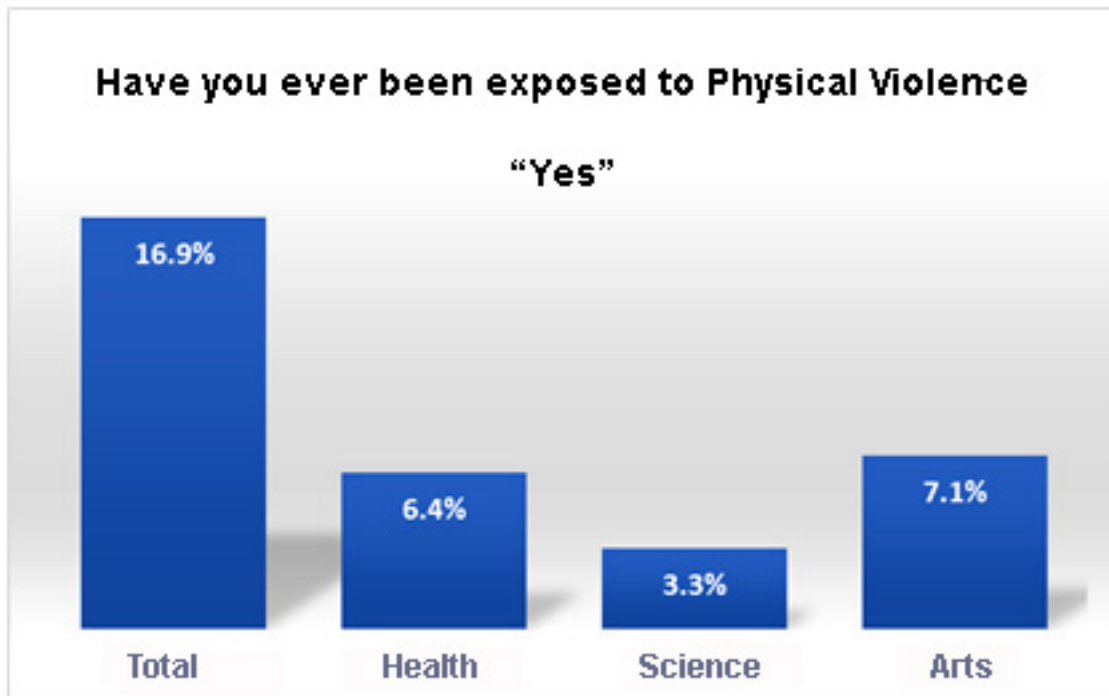


On the other hand, Table 5 and Chart 2 show that (82) of the participants who suffered from emotional violence were from the Arts faculties (36), followed by participants from the Health faculties (27), followed by participants from the Science faculties (19). Also, seventy- six of the participants who suffered from physical violence were from the Arts faculties (32), followed by participants from health faculties (29), and the least participants were from Science faculties (15).

**Table 5: Distribution of physical & emotional violence among the female students according to their faculties**

Type of faculties	Have suffered Violence			
	Physical Violence		Emotional Violence	
	N	% of total	n	% of total
Health (n= 147)	29	6.4	27	6.0
Science (n=141)	15	3.3	19	4.2
Arts (n=162)	32	7.1	36	8.0
Total (n=450)	76	16.9	82	18.2
P Value	.105		.168	

Chart 2. Distribution of physical and emotional violence among female students according to their faculties



Finally, Table 6 shows that 425 out of 450 female students (94.5%) think violence against women negatively impacts children and teenagers. On the other hand, 389 participants (86.5%) deduce that the most psychological effects of violence against women are loss of self-confidence, frustration, and depression. Forty-four participants (9.8%) considered that violence against women might solve arguments and marital problems, while 404 (89.8%) did not agree. The opinions for the ways to stop violence against women included restriction of patriarchy and empowering of women (45.3%) and imposition of more regulations and rules (36.2%).

**Table 6: Opinions of Jazan University female students about the impact of emotional and physical domestic violence (no: 450 participants)**

	Yes		No		
	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency (percent) of who do not know
In your opinion the most psychological effects of the violence against women are loss of self-confidence, frustration and depression	389	86.5	54	12	7(1.5)
In your opinion, violence against women has negative impact on children and teenagers	425	94.5	23	5.1	2(0.4)
In your opinion violence against women is considered as a solution for arguments and marital problems	44	9.8	404	89.8	2(0.4)
The best way for stoppage of violence against women in your opinion is community awareness	99	22	344	76.5	7(1.5)
The best way for stoppage violence against women in your opinion is imposition of more regulations and penalties	163	36.2	280	62.3	7(1.5)
The best way for stoppage violence against women in your opinion is to restrict patriarchy and empowering of women	204	45.3	238	53	8(1.7)

## Discussion

Violence means using physical or emotional force against someone, which may result in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation (Rollero et al., 2019). Domestic violence is a serious problem in Arab and Islamic countries, and most abused females did not note they were abused (Halawi et al., 2017). Violence against females is everywhere, crossing cultural, class, education, income, ethnicity, and age boundaries (UNICEF, 2000). Violence against females poses a major threat to social and economic development (WHO, 2005) and is now widely recognized as a serious abuse of human rights and a major public health issue with significant consequences (Semahegn and Mengistie, 2015).

This study aimed to assess the prevalence, reasons, and perspectives of female students at Jazan University, Jazan, KSA, regarding emotional and physical domestic violence. For the socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample (Table 1), about 51% of the participants were in the age group 22 to < 24 years old (229). Regarding marital status, 68.9% of the female students were single (310), married students were 117 (25.9%), and divorced students were 23 (5.1%). Fifty-nine percent of the participants were from rural areas, and 41% from urban areas. As for the type of faculty, 35.9% of the students (162) were from Arts faculties, 32.6% (147) were from Science faculties, and 31.5% (142) were from Health faculties.

The results showed that the prevalence rate of domestic violence against women among the sample of 450 female students is 25.5% (Table 2), which is not different from the international rates of domestic violence. Many researchers and national surveys have focused on the worldwide prevalence of abuse to study its causes and impacts on females' mental and physical health status. The prevalence rates of abuse ranged from 10 - 50 percent, with different rates from developed and developing countries (Halawi et al., 2017).

Previous studies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia showed that domestic violence prevalence ranges dramatically from 39% to 58%, with several types of physical and emotional abuse. Statistics show that married females are Saudi society's largest segment of victims of violence (Halawi et al., 2017). Traditionally, domestic violence against females and children was not seen until 2013 as criminal in Saudi Arabia. The first major anti-domestic violence campaign, "No More Abuse," was launched in the same year. Further, the prevalence of violence has been found to increase intensively in numerous studies; however, it is still a hidden problem in the Saudi community (Halawi et al., 2017).

On the other hand, the present study found that the age group most exposed to domestic violence is female students between 22 and 24 years old (33.6%), while the least age group was 18-20 years old (Table 2). However, it was found that the higher percentage of female students exposed to domestic violence were from the faculties of

Arts (31.5%) followed by those from the Health faculties (28.6%). Most female students exposed to domestic violence are divorced (82.6 %) and from urban areas (23.3%). These female students are subjected to domestic violence after divorce. It is inflicted upon them by other family members following the divorce when they returned to live with their families.

Regarding participants' knowledge about the main factors of physical abuse/violence (Table 3), it was found that 15.33% assume that the most common cause of physical violence against women is men's addiction to alcohol and drugs. In comparison, about 3% speculate that economic factors such as poverty cause physical violence. Participants' thoughts regarding reasons for emotional abuse (Table 4) showed that most participants (78% ) think that the male power in Jazan society gives them the power to bully women.

Furthermore, UNICEF, 2000 stated that several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors had kept females particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them. The abuser feels that he needs to control the victim because of a lack of self-confidence or intense jealousy from others or when he sees himself as less than others. Some people with very traditional beliefs may think they have the right to control their partner, and females may not be equal to men. Others may have a psychological or undifferentiated personality disorder. Others have learned this behavior because they were raised in a family where domestic violence was accepted as a natural part of their family (Toby D. Goldsmith, 2018).

In addition, Mabunda et al., 2009 stated that many factors cause violence against females. These factors include a low level of education, a history of violence at home when he was young, violence as part of living, and a personality disorder. Additionally, harmful use of alcohol, social beliefs that distinguish the role of a man from females, a history of violence, discord and dissatisfaction between married individuals, male control of their partners' behavior, belief in the honor and purity of the family, low legal penalties against sexual violence, male sexual rights ideologies, gender inequality, and lifestyle acceptance of violence are identified as the main causes of violence against females.

Moreover, the current study found that out of the 450 participants, 76 suffered from physical violence, while 82 suffered from emotional violence (Table 5). By distribution according to the type of faculty, those exposed to physical and emotional violence were most in the Arts faculties (32 and 36 respectively) while the least was from the Science faculties (15 and 19 respectively). Several factors could contribute to this discrepancy and merit further discussion.

Firstly, it is crucial to explore the nature of the curricula and environments within Arts faculties compared to those in Science faculties. Arts faculties often involve extensive collaboration, critique, and communication, which may



inadvertently create an environment where disagreements or conflicts can escalate to violence. Artistic expression is more personal than science, where objectivity is valued; hence comments or encounters may be more emotionally charged.

Secondly, the faculties' cultural values and social dynamics may also affect exposure rates. For instance, Arts faculties may attract people with personality traits or emotional sensitivity, making them more vulnerable to violence. Science students may be more logical and have more stress and conflict management skills, which may lessen violence rates. Furthermore, considering faculty support systems and resources, scientific institutions may have better grievance and conflict resolution processes than Arts schools. Arts schools may not have such tools, or students may not trust them. The demographics of the faculties, external stressors, and institutional changes may have influenced these conclusions. For instance, a higher concentration of varied students in Art faculties may increase the probability of misunderstandings and disputes. An alternative conjecture could revolve around the temperamental predispositions of individuals electing to pursue these fields of study. To illustrate, it is conceivable that science-oriented students commonly exhibit traits characterized by a pragmatic and down-to-earth disposition.

### Limitation

Several limitations should be taken into account concerning the present study. Initially, this study utilized a cross-sectional design, which inherently limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Although this study observed associations and correlations between various factors, the directionality or causality of these relationships cannot be definitively determined. Future research employing longitudinal or experimental designs would be beneficial in elucidating the causal effects more accurately.

In addition, this study was self-funded by the authors, which may have constrained the available resources and influenced the scope and scale of the research. The absence of external funding might have limited the sample size, data collection methods, and access to specialized equipment or expertise. Consequently, the generalizability and depth of our findings could be impacted.

Additionally, to comprehensively evaluate the impact of the 2020-2030 vision implementation on female wellness and expectations, it is recommended to conduct a longitudinal study. Such a study could span several years, tracking changes over time and capturing the evolving dynamics of female empowerment and rights gained during this period. Long-term studies would provide valuable insights into the sustained effects of policy changes on women's lives.

Future research endeavors should focus on assessing the multifaceted impact of policy implementations on various aspects of female wellness and expectations. These processes could employ mixed-method approaches to

capture quantitative data on health indicators, socio-economic factors, and subjective measures such as well-being and empowerment. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, could provide a deeper understanding of women's lived experiences and their evolving expectations.

Finally, the authors affirm that there are no conflicts of interest between themselves and any external agencies or organizations that could potentially bias the results or interpretation of this study. The research was conducted independently, and the authors declare no financial, personal, or professional associations that may have influenced the findings' design, analysis, or reporting. Transparency and impartiality were maintained throughout the research process to ensure the integrity of the study.

### Conclusion

The results of the study comply with the research hypothesis. Domestic violence against females is not just highly prevalent in the Jazan community, it occurs in the entire world, with various socio-demographic and economic determinants influencing its occurrence. Emotional type of domestic violence against females is the most prevalent type. Female students in the Faculty of Arts expressed domestic violence more than others.

### Recommendations

This study recommends implementing strategies to enhance community awareness concerning domestic violence, specifically focusing on violence against females. It emphasizes the significance of safeguarding women at risk and proposes stricter regulations and penalties for perpetrators of abuse, particularly in cases involving females. Additionally, it advocates for the restriction of patriarchal authority in order to empower women. The dissemination of religious awareness and the application of Islamic principles to the treatment of women and wives should be undertaken by religious leaders. Furthermore, it suggests conducting further studies incorporating in-depth interviews to discern the specific factors contributing to domestic violence and promote prevention awareness. Also, it could be used as a base to prepare awareness programs for females about Emotional and Physical domestic violence

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