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A Grounded Theory of Intimate Partner Violence from the Perspective of Saudi Men

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ABSTRACT

Background: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, and or sexual harm to those in the relationship. Research related to IPV, especially from the perspective of men, is scarce in many countries, including Saudi Arabia (SA).

Aim: This study aimed to generate a theory grounded in data that lead to an understanding of how Saudi men define IPV and what behaviours qualify as physical, emotional or sexual IPV. This will allow for exploration leading to an understanding of social processes underpinning the phenomenon and the development of culturally specific explanations for IPV in SA.

Method: A constructivist grounded theory approach was used for this study. I targeted the desired population by sending flyers and invitation texts through social media accounts. Semi-structured individual in depth interviews were conducted with 26 Saudi men. The basic principles of grounded theory were explained along with an example to explain how key concepts and themes were identified.

Findings: The following categories emerged through the process of data analysis: marital dynamics, the role of family, the role of culture and religion, definitions and perceptions of IPV, causes and contributing factors of IPV, and addressing and preventing IPV. Marital dynamics, the role of family, and the role of culture and religion were identified as core categories. Throughout the data analysis process, I recognised the critical significance of the *notion of understanding* in the marital relationship. Therefore, the findings suggest that IPV occurs in Saudi

society as a consequence of the continual and complex interaction of several factors and processes that impact the *notion of understanding*, which inhibits or facilitates IPV in the marital relationship.

Conclusion: This study provides insight into the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. Findings from this study have several implications for practice and future research, which include, developing awareness and educational programmes to educate Saudi women and men about IPV, its many forms, as well as prevention strategies.

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DECLARATION

I, Turki Alqurashi, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Research related to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is scarce in many countries, including Saudi Arabia (SA). As a result, little is known about the occurrence and possible causes of IPV in SA. The purpose of this chapter is to draw the reader's attention to the context of the thesis and the rationale that prompted me to conduct this research, thereby explaining the aim of this research study. Also, this chapter provides a background to my study that aimed to explore the issue of IPV in the context of SA. Thus, this chapter is composed of fourteen sections. The first section of the chapter will present a general background on the issue of IPV, followed by highlighting the motivations for conducting this research. Subsequently, the study's aims, research questions, and the significance of the study will be outlined. The fifth section provides an overview of the definition of IPV, followed by placing IPV in its historical context. The seventh section surveys several types of IPV, followed by an examination of the relationship between IPV and gender. The ninth section provides an explanation of masculinity as gender roles and IPV. The next section provides an overview of IPV risk factors, followed by the eleventh section, which investigates the health consequences resulting from IPV. Section twelfth discusses various theories that have been employed to explain the issue of IPV. Section thirteenth presents a broad country profile of SA, laying out aspects of SA relevant to understanding its struggles with IPV: geography, population, economy, education, healthcare, Saudi Vision 2030, as well as culture and religion. Final section will discuss the historical context of IPV in SA.

1.2 General Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2012, p. 1), IPV '… refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship'. Global data suggest that one in every three women may experience sexual or physical abuse within their lifetime (WHO, 2017). In the United Kingdom, more than 1.3 million women are subjected to various forms of abuse each year, with IPV being the most common (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2018). According to Garca-Moreno *et al*. (2013), partner violence against women has a high lifetime prevalence of 37.7% in Southeast Asia and 23.2% in high-income regions. Low- and middle-income regions within the Americas had a rate of 29.8%, the Eastern Mediterranean region had a rate of 37%, Africa had a rate of 36.6%, the Western Pacific had a rate of 24.6% and the rest of Europe had a rate of 25.4%. Male partner homicide against female partners was found to range from 6% to 38%, with a worldwide median of 13% (Garca-Moreno *et al*., 2013). Despite its prevalence, IPV is not well explored in most Arabic countries, and it is thought that many Saudi women are victims of it. (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020). Furthermore, Sahar (2015) noted that IPV is a hidden problem in SA, where it is believed that one-third of women have experienced IPV (Wali *et al*., 2020).

1.3 The Rationale for Undertaking the Research Study

I learned about IPV in 2013 after seeing the anti-abuse advocacy ads 'Some things cannot be covered' (Carrington, 2013). I then started learning about it from television programmes, personal observations and reading. I discovered a shortage of empirical evidence on issues related

to IPV, despite the widespread publication of cases of abuse in both electronic and printed media. From my perspective, the scholarly literature lacked a cultural interpretation of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men and women. I also realised that researchers still knew little about the issue, especially from the perspective of men, who can play a significant role in their families and communities about the prevention of IPV. I strongly felt that more needed to be done to provide a better understanding of IPV, and more specifically, the roles of Saudi men in this phenomenon. Highlighting the role of Saudi men will identify the complex dynamics of abuse in marital relationships as well as allow for the exploration of factors associated with IPV.

1.4 The Aim the Research Study

The aim of the research presented here is to understand the phenomenon of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men, as earlier studies have failed to explore the problem of IPV through this lens, thus creating a research gap regarding their attitudes and perceptions of this phenomenon. The qualitative research method employed here helped to identify Saudi men's perspectives in their cultural and social contexts; in addition, this approach addressed the lack of qualitative studies on this topic in SA. Although some research frameworks can explore sensitive and difficult issues, the inherent factors and features of the personal and social problem of IPV can be best understood through the application of an intensive and logical method. Thus, grounded theory (GT) was the most appropriate approach for this research, as it was necessary to explore the participants' understanding of IPV. Furthermore, selecting constructivist grounded theory (CGT; Charmaz, 2014) was essential because it helped to search out the social situations that highlight the issue of IPV from the standpoint of Saudi men. Finally, the purpose of this research was to generate a theory grounded in data that led to an understanding of how

Saudi men define IPV. This will be discussed in Chapter 3. Given this context, the following research questions were answered in this thesis:

- What are the perspectives of Saudi men about violence in intimate relationships and how do they define it?
- What is the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the reasons for and associated factors of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the coping and prevention strategies for IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

1.5 Significance of the Thesis

This research study explores an un-researched area. It will identify key issues for understanding IPV from the perspective of men in SA and will be useful for the development of culturally sensitive programmes for spreading information relating to IPV as well as constructing culturally specific research tools to understand IPV. The implications for future research and practise will also be identified.

1.6 Intimate Partner Violence

IPV is a significant public health and social concern. It has been described using many different terms, and no consensus has been reached regarding the proper terminology to be used when discussing violence involving intimate partners. The terminology used to describe IPV includes wife abuse, spousal violence, spousal abuse, wife cruelty, relational violence, household violence, wife lashing, and partner abuse, among other terms (Shipway, 2004; Nicolaidis & Paranjape, 2009; WHO, 2013). However, the utilization of certain terms has proven contentious. For instance, the use of terms such as ‘abused wives’ has

been criticized for excluding divorced or separated women, as well as single partners who are cohabitating (Nicolaidis & Paranjape, 2009).

Furthermore, this terminology portrays men as offenders and women as victims. On the contrary, evidence shows that women can also engage in acts of violence (Hoyle, 1998; Cook, 2009). In most countries, the phrase 'domestic violence' has commonly been applied to mean IPV, and this has broadly been acknowledged (WHO, 2013; Shipway, 2004). Nevertheless, there are debates surrounding the depiction of domestic violence and IPV as similar, as domestic violence can also denote child abuse, abuse of older adults, or abuse of other family members.

Domestic violence is defined, by the UK Department of Health (2015), as actions that involve hostility, intimidation, threats, and control that take place amidst individuals over sixteen years of age who are in or have been in an intimate affair. Domestic violence can occur through emotional abuse, physical assault, psychological abuse, or even financial abuse. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) specifies IPV as the most prevalent form of violence against women, taking the form of sexual or physical violence, psychological hostility, or stalking by a current or previous intimate partner.

IPV can take place amidst gay or heterosexual partners; therefore, it can be equally experienced by women and men. IPV can also transpire in any community, notwithstanding financial status, sexual orientation, age, education level, cultural background, race or religious conviction. It is possible that the intimate partners may be living together nor not. However, such individuals usually have a close connection, which may be associated with emotional attachment, continuous interaction, and ongoing physical and sexual contact. Intimate partner relationships

comprise present or previous girlfriends or boyfriends, partners who are dating, continuing partnerships such as married spouses, civil union or common-law spouses, and domestic spouses (Breiding *et al.*, 2015).

IPV is now widely accepted term, and this has partially settled the ongoing terminological debates. For example, this phrase can be applied to individuals who are staying together, whether married or not married. It can also be applied to individuals in same-sex or heterosexual relationships. Furthermore, the application of this phrase recognizes that women can also carry out acts of violence when in a relationship with a male or female partner (WHO, 2013).

1.7 Historical Context of Intimate Partner Violence

Before the 1970s, spousal violence was widely regarded as a normal occurrence worldwide (England, 2007). In many regions, this act was viewed as a way of disciplining and controlling wives or women. There was no marriage law, and the first law governing marriage was enacted by Romulus, the founder of ancient Rome, in 753 BC. This marriage law specified that married women belonged to their husbands and were to always submit to them in everything (England, 2007).

In the 5th century, Christian writings emphasised the idea that men had power over their wives. During the late 5th century, Friar Cherubino set down the Rules of Marriage, which explicitly depicted rules regarding IPV. According to Cherubino's rules, a husband had the authority to apply force against the wife in cases where the wife commits an offense or shows disobedience (Hart & Hart, 1995). Further, under Anglo-American common law, any husband who assaulted his wife was never considered as having committed an offense if the assault did not result in any lasting injury or harm (Siegel, 1996). English common law stated

that a husband had the right to control the wife, as well as her property found in the family home.

In discussions of the historical development of IPV, it is often stated that a popular rule was enacted in 1782, prohibiting husbands from beating their wives using a staff which was more than a thumb in thickness (Frost, 1997; Walker, 2015). This 'rule of thumb' has been claimed by various authors to be a British Common Law principle. For instance, Del Martin (1981), as well as Terry Davidson (1978), referred to this rule in their essays. The explanations given by Davidson and Martin have been widely cited in various law journals as authoritative fact. Despite this, no evidence has been established to show the existence of this rule of thumb that permitted husbands to batter their wives within British Common Law. Additionally, some evidence has revealed that English women were able to attain protection from their hostile husbands through court protection orders (Kelly, 1994; George, 2007).

During the late 19th century, several countries enacted IPV laws. The move to enact these laws was informed by the influence of the women's movement which was growing at that time. In the US, Alabama became the first state in 1871 to annul the authority of husbands to apply physical force to their wives. From 1878, women in the United Kingdom gained the authority to seek separation from their abusive husbands if it was determined that the woman's life was at risk due to violence (Frost, 1997).

Maryland outlawed wife-beating in 1882, becoming the first US state to enforce such a law. According to this legislation, any man who physically assaulted his wife was to be jailed for one year or receive forty lashes (Hart & Hart, 1995). Nevertheless, women did not receive

proactive protection through these laws. Most perpetrators of violence against women were not successfully prosecuted. Most women endured domestic violence in silence as the police were not willing to intervene (Hart & Hart, 1995; Fagan, 1996; Frost, 1997). This resulted from the belief that anything occurring between couples was a matrimonial issue, to be addressed privately within the confines of the home (Zorza, 1993). Therefore, the police seldom made any arrests in cases of reported IPV, and seldom even probed such incidences (Fagan, 1995).

The second feminist movement wave of the late 1960s was instrumental in enhancing public awareness of persistent violence against women. Through this movement, the social problems brought on by violence against women attracted more attention. Most US states amended their laws prohibiting violence against women, making changes to offer more protection to victims and ensure that perpetrators are punished (Siegel, 1996; Riger *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, hotlines for rape crisis and rescue centres, as well as shelters, were created to help victims of domestic violence. The overall aim of introducing these services was to help women who required rescue from abusive relationships, as well as to increase awareness about domestic violence in the community and change attitudes regarding violence against women (Riger *et al.*, 2002).

Thanks to the second wave feminist movement in the UK, many studies regarding violence against women were carried out. These research studies attempted to determine political and public viewpoints concerning this problem, whilst at the same time providing statistical support to campaigns geared towards eliminating violence against women. These studies significantly highlighted the previously hidden issue of IPV and illuminated its prevalence in the community. For example, a study carried out by Hanmer & Saunders (1984) showed that

in West Yorkshire, about 59% of women had gone through one or more incidences of domestic violence (cited in Harne & Radford, 2008). Another study conducted by Painter (1991) on relationship rape revealed that women were raped by male partners or husbands at seven times the rate of rape by strangers (cited in Harne & Radford, 2008).

In addition, several campaigns concerning violence against women found support by the police, the criminal justice system and the government, and were created to emphasize the criminality of IPV. The Women's Aid Federation of England serves as an example of the types of institutions created by these campaigns (Harne & Radford, 2008), with its primary objective being the deterrence and elimination of sexual abuse and violence against women and children. Additionally, it offered safety services for the victims of violence (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2015).

Over and above this increased research, local campaigns, and institutions, the second wave helped stimulate global initiatives to tackle IPV. Four global conventions on women were organized by the United Nations (UN) to discuss the issue of women's empowerment and rights, with the first convention conducted in 1975, the second in 1980, the third in 1985, and the last one in 1995 (UN Women, 2014). The 4th World Women Conference, held in Beijing, China, came to be called the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995; this conference had a particularly global impact, leading to the creation of various policies aimed at addressing the issue of domestic violence in many countries. Around 189 countries were represented in this conference, sharing information and solutions in hopes of eliminating violence against women. These deliberations were considered by many countries as a model for wiping out discrimination against girls and women, and

became the basic protocol for attaining human rights and gender parity. However, it has been shown that there is no country in the world that has succeeded in offering optimal protection to women against violence. Furthermore, the incidence of violence against women is still high globally (UN Women, 2014; WHO, 2013).

Worldwide, many organizations were created to empower women, to deter violence against women and children, and to alleviate the impacts of violence on women (WHO, 2014). The roles played by these organizations, seen in various parts of the world through partnership with other regional institutions, have been vital in the effort to eradicate violence against women. The subsequent two examples demonstrate the functions of these institutions in deterring and minimizing the incidence of violence against girls and women.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides our first prominent example. The mission of UNICEF is to support equal rights for women and girls, enhance the participation and incorporation of communities, and offer opportunities for healthcare access. A second important organizational example is given by the World Health Organization (WHO), which plays a significant role in the prevention of violence against women as well as the management of victims' health. WHO took the key step of carrying out a multi-country study on domestic violence and women's health (Garcia- Moreno *et al*., 2005). This resulted in a wealth of valuable information regarding IPV's prevalence, health consequences and risk factors (Digest, 2000; Garcia-Moreno *et al.*, 2005).

IPV is regarded as a global epidemic, and studies have shown that about 35%, or one in three, women have undergone either sexual or physical

violence from strangers in their lifetime (WHO, 2017). However, the majority of IPV studies have been carried out in Western countries, with few studies on IPV carried out in the regions of South-East Asia where the prevalence of IPV involving sexual or physical assault stands at 37.7% among women with partners (WHO, 2015).

1.8 Types of Intimate Partner Violence

There are numerous forms of IPV, and most victims usually report having experienced more than one form (Breiding *et al.*, 2015). Thompson *et al.* (2006) carried out a study in northern Idaho and Washington State, revealing that about 45% of those who took part in the study had undergone one or more forms of IPV within the past five years. Additionally, about 80.5% of the IPV in the US reported having undergone only one form of abuse within the preceding three years. 52.8% of the victims reported only one form of IPV within the preceding year. Most prevalent form of IPV experienced by victims were stalking and abuse from a non-sexual partner, accounting for about 7.2% of all the reported cases. This was 1% less than other forms of domestic abuse, such as physical and non-physical abuse, and stalking as well as sexual assault (ONS, 2018).

As per the ONS, UK, and the outcomes of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), non-physical abuse such as financial and emotional abuse were the most prevalent forms of abuse at 72.6% that was experienced by women victims of IPV. Physical abuse was the next prevalent form of abuse among women victims with threats accounting for 37.8% and force 28%. Other forms of physical abuse, such as sexual abuse through rape, was at 3.8%, and unsuccessful penetration or rape was at 0.5%. As for male victims, the majority (50%) were highly likely to undergo non-physical abuse as compared to force, which was at 45%,

or threats, at 28.7%. These studies revealed that there was no notable variation in the frequency of experiences of offensive exposure, threats, stalking, or inappropriate sexual contacts between men and women (ONS, 2018). According to the most recent statistics available on the most prevalent forms of IPV in the UK during the last year of 2020, non-sexual violence (which includes financial abuse, physical force, emotional abuse, and threats and force) was the most prevalent kind of IPV experienced by adults (5.0%). 1.0% of adults reported having been the victims of domestic stalking and 0.3% of adults were victims of domestic sexual assault (ONS, 2020).

There are four primary forms of PIV. They include sexual violence, psychological aggression, physical assault, and stalking. In the subsequent sections, these forms of IPV will be separately discussed.

1.8.1 Physical Violence

Physical violence is regarded as the intentional application of physical power or force in a manner that leads to harm to the victim, physical injury, disability, or even death (Breiding *et al.*, 2015). Physical assault or abuse is known to be the most noticeable kind of IPV, as it results in instant harm to the victim; the impact of physical abuse can be devastating and long-lasting. An individual who has undergone physical abuse, particularly during childhood, can be at high risk of developing psychological and emotional difficulties in later life. Furthermore, physical violence can result in poor mental and physical health, and these adverse health outcomes can have long term effects on the victim well after the period of abuse. There is an increasing body of evidence suggesting that physical violence can lead to increased risk of

developing poor health, including chronic illnesses, depressive symptoms, injury, and substance abuse (Coker *et al.*, 2002).

The various kinds of physical abuse include hitting the victim, kicking them, rough handling, scalding with hot objects, force-feeding, violent shaking, slapping, medication misuse and inappropriate restraints, among others. This form of abuse can be indicated by a history of unexplained injuries, bruises, body marks with varying ages, unexplained scalds, recurrent bone fractures, long-standing injuries, and cigarette burns (Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, 2014; Breiding *et al.*, 2015; CDC, 2015; Fortson *et al.*, 2016).

1.8.2 Sexual Violence

According to the WHO (2005), sexual violence is defined through three kinds of conduct: being physically coerced into having non-consensual sex, engaging in sex to evade probable harm emanating from denunciation, and being forced into sexual acts that are degrading and embarrassing to the victim. Phrases such as sexual abuse or assault, sexual violence, and rape are usually applied interchangeably and have a similar connotation. Nevertheless, in certain locations and circumstances, these phrases can have notably varied meanings depending on the country or region within a given country. In the UK, for instance, the phrase 'sexual assault' denotes, as per police records, a form of sexual offense involving sexual touching without express assent from the other party. In contrast, in the CSEW this same term is applied all forms of sexual offenses comprising forced penetration, assault, inappropriate touching, and indecent exposure (WHO, 2003; ONS, 2018).

The CDC (2015) segregates sexual violence into different types, including rape, coercion into penetrating another person, sexual coercion, unwelcome sexual contact as well as sexual acts that do not involve contact. Sexual violence can take place in a wide variety of settings, such as emergency situations or during armed conflict. In some cases, victims can experience abuse from more than one offender, and abuse can take place with or without pre-planning. Offenders may be anyone, including an acquaintance, a date, a member of the family, a friend, a stranger and a present or past intimate partner; however, the most common offenders are those whom the victim is familiar with.

The CSEW report (2018) states that male and female victims of sexual violence are more likely to have undergone assault through penetration, including rape attempts, at the hands of a present or past partner as compared to a family member. Moreover, the report indicated that 55% of females were abused by their present or past partner, compared to 10% by a family member, whilst 39% were abused by past or present partners, and 13% were abused by a family member. The most seen victim/offender relation for assault through forced penetration, including rape attempts undergone by many female victims, was from the present or past partner. This was followed by someone familiar to the victim, a stranger, and lastly, a family member (ONS, 2018).

Sexual violence itself comes in many forms, such as coerced exposure to pornographic materials, sexual slavery, coerced pregnancy/sterilization or abortion and sexual harassment (WHO, 2003; Jina & Thomas, 2013; Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, 2014). In most cases, sexual violence has been associated with the risk of developing acute or long-term health impacts. These effects can result in lifetime adverse impacts on the victim, with these effects taking place at various

mental levels (Jina & Thomas, 2013; Basile *et al.*, 2014). Several studies have demonstrated that sexual violence can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, stress, somatic symptoms, panic attacks and social phobia (Itzin, 2006; Jina & Thomas, 2013). Sexual and physical assault can lead to various acute and long-term adverse health impacts. Acute impacts include infection with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unplanned pregnancy and injuries resulting from rape. Long-term impacts can include irritable bowel syndrome, gynaecological problems (dysmenorrhea, premenstrual syndrome, and irregular vaginal discharge or bleeding) and chronic pain on the neck, back, face or head (NHS, nd; WHO, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2009; Basile & Smith, 2011; Jina & Thomas, 2013).

1.8.3 Stalking

Stalking is regarded as the pattern of constant, indiscreet and intimidating actions, which results in the victim developing a feeling of being unsafe and fearful. Stalking can worsen and lead to other forms of crime like murder or assault (HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2017; Houses of Parliament, 2018). Some of the behaviours attributed to stalking include contacting or trying to get in touch with a person through any means, following or monitoring from a distance and prying on an individual. Others include sending unsolicited gifts or mails, going to the house, place of work or school of the victim uninvited, and dropping items that are potentially frightening or bizarre at a place that the victim can find them (Melton, 2007; Breiding *et al.*, 2015; Noffsinger, 2015; HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2017; Jarrett, 2017; Houses of Parliament, 2018).

In most cases, stalking is linked with a psychiatric disorder in the offenders (Rosenfeld, 2003), and the victims can develop considerable

social, mental, and physical complications (Mullen, *et al.*, 2006; Breiding, *et al.*, 2015; Houses of Parliament, 2018). The victim of stalking can experience various impacts, including traumatic stress alongside other forms of mental illnesses as well as damage to career or social life (Mullen *et al.*, 2006). In most cases, the negative impacts of stalking reported by victims include mental and emotional effects. These comprise feeling frightened, becoming depressed and getting humiliated or embarrassed, which can result in mistrust, hatred or anger. Other victims of stalking may also experience adverse effects in their social life, work or finances. For instance, such victims may be increasingly in need of sick leave, may leave their job, experience poor productivity at work or even change their career. Additionally, victims may avoid their usual activities, may become insecure and lose trust in other people, and may lose their wages because of changing their job, unpaid sick leave, or through legal fees resulting from legal redresses due to negligence. The severity of these effects may depend on the duration of stalking, the intensity of stalking, the extent of fear developed by the victim, the individual characteristics of the victim as well as the degree of the victims' familiarity with the offender (Melton, 2007; Noffsinger, 2015; Jarrett, 2017).

1.8.4 Psychological Aggression

Psychological aggression denotes the use of non-verbal or verbal communication to inflict mental or emotional harm to an individual and is recognized as the most prevalent kind of IPV (Dokkedahl *et al.*, 2019). Various phrases have been applied as alternatives to the term 'psychological abuse'. These terms include emotional abuse/control, verbal battering/abuse, and psychological cruelty, as well as psychological/mental torture (Follingstad, 2007; Doherty & Berglund, 2008). Psychological aggression commonly takes place alongside other

kinds of IPV, and it usually heralds sexual or physical violence. It can also predict the likelihood of physical abuse (Follingstad, 2009; Breiding *et al.*, 2015).

As a form of IPV, psychological aggression may occur through the humiliation of an individual, degrading actions towards the victim, name-calling and restricting an individual's ability to access money, their family or friends and transport. Additionally, it can involve extreme monitoring of an individual's communications and location, regulating their sexual or reproductive health as well as threatening to cause harm to the victim's close relatives or properties (Lawrence *et al.*, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2012; Breiding *et al.*, 2015). Psychological aggression has also been associated with the risk of developing various psychological health problems such as PTSD, anxiety and stress/depression (Lawrence *et al.*, 2009; Dokkedahl *et al.*, 2019).

1.9 Intimate Partner Violence and Gender

Statistics show that, worldwide, about 30% of all women who at some point had been in a relationship reported having experienced some form of violence meted out by their partners (Bacchus *et al.*, 2018). According to the WHO (2013), South-East Asia displayed the highest regional incidence of sexual and/or physical violence against women in some form of partnership, standing at 37.7%. Regions with the next highest rates of violence were Africa, at 36.6%, and the Eastern Mediterranean, at 37%. This rate was highest among women aged 40-60, standing at 37.8%. The psychological and physical impacts of various types of IPV on women has been extensively documented (Duvvury *et al.*, 2013; Scott, 2015). Women experiencing IPV are at increased risk of developing various health complications. Some of the most prevalent

physical signs of IPV may include long-standing pain, headache, and body injuries.

Additionally, such women are prone to other health conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure and cancer. Furthermore, these women are at high risk of developing reproductive health problems such as a sexually transmitted infection, premature labour and spontaneous abortion. IPV has also been associated with various mental health concerns like suicidal ideation, depression and stress (WHO, 2012; Duvvury *et al.*, 2013; Kamimura *et al.*, 2014; Dahlen *et al.*, 2018).

It is apparent from the discussion above that IPV can take place in any region, socioeconomic or cultural background, and religion. IPV, as a type of abuse, can also occur among same-sex or heterosexual partners (WHO, 2012). Nevertheless, male partner violence towards their female partners has been recognized as the most widespread variety of IPV, and as it is associated with a high severity rate it has attracted considerable attention (Scott, 2015; Zara & Gino, 2018).

1.10 Masculinity, Gender Roles and IPV

Studies have highlighted that IPV is most prevalent in societies that follow strict gender roles. Researchers have also linked masculinity with male honour and dominance (Eisler *et al*., 2000). According to Reidy *et al*. (2009), the term hyper-masculinity refers to an exaggerated, dysfunctional form of masculinity or an extreme adherence to masculinity.

One body of research investigates the association between masculinity and IPV by analysing gender in terms of behaviour displayed and/or beliefs about gender roles that include deviations from traditional gender

norms. Some researchers have proposed that men who perpetrate IPV feel the need to assert masculinity; they have argued that IPV is more likely in situations when a man feels that his masculinity is threatened (Dutton & Browning, 1988; Totten, 2003), and the cost of this losing identity is high. Adverse conditions can arise if the intimate partner's behaviour deviates from established traditional gender roles. In addition, a man also fails to follow rigid masculine roles, fearing the loss of his identity. A man can perceive his partner as nonconformist if she is a breadwinner, takes on an assertive role in the relationship, or challenges his dominance or authority. A man's failure to follow rigidly masculine roles includes his inability to engage in male behaviours or to use his power over his partner, as well as his engagement in female-related activities. For example, losing a job might make a man sensitive and make him feel weak for being unable follow traditional gender norms. In such cases, the man tries to restore his masculine identity by being violent towards an intimate partner (Loveland, 2017).

Research may be inconclusive, but violence is not necessarily related to hyper-masculinity or traditional masculinity. Not all males who follow hyper-masculine gender roles become violent when they perceive a threat to their masculine identity (Loveland, 2017). Masculine gender role stress, which refers to situations in which men perceive an attack on their male gender role, is an important concept in explaining the pathway between IPV and masculinity. Higher stress levels among college-going males increased violence and aggression towards their female partners (Eisler *et al*., 2000; Jakupcak *et al*., 2002). As expected, masculine gender role stress did not predict violence and aggression among men who did not strictly align with masculine gender roles. More significantly, the researchers discovered that when gender role stress was low, men who supported highly masculine identities reported

experiencing lower tendencies toward violence and aggression (Jakupcak *et al.*, 2002).

Outcomes also indicate that men who follow highly conventional gender roles are more prone to threats, meaning that they do not show any aggression or violence towards female partners in the absence of gender-threatening or stressful conditions, because they can easily adhere to a more traditional code. Conversely, gender-threatening conditions aggravate aggression and violent tendencies among such men (Jakupcak *et al*., 2002), meaning that threats have an interesting mediating effect on men's aggression and violence. Overall, studies propose that men's conceptualization of their roles and masculine identities interacts with their sensitivity towards masculine insult. Interaction between these aspects influences their ability to interpret situations with partners (Loveland, 2017).

1.11 Risk Factors for being a Victim of IPV

Researchers have explored IPV in detail and investigated risk factors contributing to both male and female perpetration (O'Leary *et al*., 2007; Stith *et al*., 2004). These include anti-social behaviours and attitudes, a history of behavioural problems, psychological issues, personality disorders, employment status, relationship status, attitude towards females and an abusive childhood (Dutton & Kropp, 2000). Other factors associated with IPV are anger and hostility, substance use, anxiety and depression, anger and hostility, exposure to IPV in childhood and acceptance/approval of IPV. However, Dutton & Kropp (2000) maintained that these factors do not necessarily cause or predict IPV; instead, these co-occur with the behaviour. Factors related to the onset of IPV do not directly correspond to the factors associated with persistent IPV. Shepard's (1992) research highlighted the differences

between IPV offenders who received treatment but reoffended and those who remained untreated. This study identified duration of abuse as the most significant contributor to persistent IPV; it further indicated that recidivists continued offending for some time, as compared to non-recidivists, before starting a treatment programme.

Smith Slep *et al*., (2014) tested an ecological model to ascertain the importance of generally and clinically significant (CS) IPV perpetration in predicting IPV. Using a large sample of males and females, researchers identified ecological factors relevant to both general and CS IPV perpetration for both genders. They explored various factors including depression; physical health; alcoholism; perceived financial issues; spousal support for primary career; social and community support; support from family, neighbours, and formal agencies; income; community resources and number of working hours.

Researchers identified the relevance of modifiable risk factors from all ecological levels to general and CS IPV. They also explored several related community factors, analysing proximal factors such as age and relationship aspects, family factors and individual functioning. They also identified a substantial role of alcoholism in predicting both general and CS IPV. However, alcohol issues did not directly indicate both general and CS IPV; instead, alcohol problems were associated with CS IPV through general IPV and relationship satisfaction.

These findings lead the authors to argue that the association between IPV and alcohol significantly varies according to severity levels, and that the male and female models were identical because the effect magnitude was similar. The authors further argued that their findings support a strong relationship between general and CS IPV, and though

distinguishable they can overlap. Also, general IPV correlates with CS IPV proximally. Therefore, the findings indicated that severe IPV forms, such as intimate terrorism, are related to individual functioning such as impulsivity and psychopathology, while couple functioning relates to general and CS IPV.

O'Leary *et al*., (2014) examined the unique and relative predictive ability of social learning, developmental, demographic, dyadic and psychopathological variables as risk factors for IPV in a large sample of sample of 770 females and 798 males from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. The authors observed significant variation and similarity among males and females. For men, unique risk factors were parental violence, dating aggression, early dating (<14 years), victimization by the partner and intermittent explosive disorder (IED) before the age of 20. They also identified marital/relationship strain as a significant predictor, but it did not appear as a unique risk factor. Instead, marital/relationship strain was highly correlated with victimization. Unique risk factors for women were dating aggression, IED before 20 years, younger age, victimization by the partner, marital relationship strain, and cohabitation. They found that the developmental progression of these risk factors contributed to IPV. Though they could not ascertain the longitudinal relationships between variables, they did observe the progression of dating aggression, marital discord, alcohol use/abuse and family violence. Some factors appeared consistently across both sexes: aggression in dating relationships, victimization by the partner, and IED before the age of 20. The findings of this study indicate that general temper and aggression issues among teenagers predict IPV in later life.

Other than the above factors, gender role attitudes appeared as the most effective indicator of violence against women (McHugh & Frieze, 1997;

WHO, 2012). Most societies have strong beliefs concerning men and women's 'proper' roles. In this context, one may consider gender role attitudes as a continuum from a traditional system to an egalitarian system that advocates equality for all people. In traditional societies, people hold stereotypical attitudes regarding the gender when interacting with others. Contrarily, gender stereotypes do not prevail among people with egalitarian attitudes. Also, gender is not a primary factor in responses from people. Gender roles and their associated beliefs represent both a culturally specific and modifiable set of IPV causal factors, as researchers such as Abouchedid (2007) have emphasized that gender role attitudes are formed and passed through generation. For example, children's beliefs are shaped by their significant role models, especially their mothers, which subsequently determine their behaviours.

These findings are in consistent with other research that has identified a significant correlation between gender roles attitudes and negativity towards women. Berkel, *et al*., (2004) conducted a study on spirituality, religion and gender roles attitudes as indicators of IPV, using a sample of 316 White college students and identifying gender role attitude as the most effective predictor of negativity towards females. In addition, spirituality was also found to be a significant predictor (Berkel *et al*., 2004)

Conventionally, gender roles stereotypes portray males as dominant and authoritative and females as powerless and submissive. This generates a power imbalance between men and women in all spheres of life, while also creating imbalanced societal expectations that put females under pressure to maintain the household and rear children. Conversely, men are responsible for earning money. On the other hand, non-conventional

gender roles advocate that male and female share their burdens equally, without any rigid segregation of responsibilities. Men can also work at home, while women can work outside to earn. This non-conventional approach is significant in amending long-established stereotypes and perceived gender roles. Existing research also indicates that people believing in gender stereotypes are more likely to get stressed, aggressive, and angry, especially when they feel that their expectations are challenged or remain unfulfilled (Ali *et al.*, 2017).

Society expects women to remain submissive in marriage, especially when voicing their concerns and choosing their spouses. It is their basic marital right, but gender roles have imbalanced the dynamics, which could be an underlying reason for IPV. Ignoring, challenging, or neglecting men with rigid and traditional belief systems is likely to aggravate violence against females. Moreover, women with non-conventional attitudes are vulnerable to IPV because their partners or society can perceive them as assertive or disobedient (Haj-Yahia., 2000; Al-Rasheed, 2013; Eidhamar, 2017). Non-conformity between gender-role expectations and reality is also possible. Though there is an improvement in beliefs and behaviours, equality is still a far cry. Gender-role expectations are still a prominent factor in IPV (Ali, 2017; Ali, *et al*., 2016; Abouchedid, 2007).

1.12 Health Consequences for IPV Victim

The severity and duration of IPV significantly determines it subsequent health consequences. In sever IPV cases, these health outcomes can be extreme. Global statistics have estimated the involvement of intimate partners in 38% of female homicides, as compared to 4% of male homicides, often committed after a long history of abuse (Stoeckl *et al.*, 2013; WHO *et al.*, 2013). Around 42% of IPV victims experience

physical injuries, in addition to several other health problems (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jewkes, 2002; WHO *et al.*, 2013).

IPV also results in far-reaching psychological issues and mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and suicidal attempts (Pico-Alfonso *et al.*, 2006; Devries *et al.*, 2013). Women facing violence by their partners are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and infections such as HIV (Coker, 2007; Jewkes *et al.*, 2010; Kouyoumdjian *et al.*, 2013). IPV also adversely affects maternal health, leading to severe complications such as pregnancy loss, premature delivery, and low birth weight (Valladares *et al.*, 2002; Coker, 2007; Hill *et al.*, 2016).

IPV affects not only mothers' health, but also the well-being of children living with victimized mothers facing the ill effects of IPV. Such children are likely to have a higher mortality risk, lower immunity, higher likelihood of diarrhoeal disease and general maltreatment (Dube *et al.*, 2002; Campbell, 2002; Holt *et al.*, 2008). However, many studies investigating the ill-effects of IPV merely uncover correlational relationships, and few can definitively pin down causation. Longitudinal data, collected from the same respondents over time, is required to confirm any putative causal linkages.

1.13 Theoretical Frameworks

Various aspects of IPV are debatable, and there is disagreement among scholars regarding how it manifests. Over the years, researchers and scholars have proposed several ideas about and theories regarding IPV. This section provides a brief overview of different views, approaches, and frameworks that scholars have employed to explain tendencies toward violence in intimate relationships. These include social learning

theory, biological and psychological explanations, resource theory, feminist theory, family violence theory, social norms theory and ecological frameworks. Each of these perspectives has underlying theoretical frameworks that make significant contributions to understanding the issue of IPV.

1.13.1 Social Learning Theory and IPV

Social learning theory suggests that people learn and reproduce behaviours through interaction with others, as social interaction exposes them to various behaviours, and they observe social reinforcement that either encourages or discourages socially unacceptable action. Bandura & Walters (1977) opined that what people see in their childhood gets reproduced when they enter adulthood. In the 1980s, this theory was first applied to the concept of IPV. Consequently, the idea of intergenerational transmission of IPV gained credence and received varying levels of support (O'Leary, 1988). However, not all children who have witnessed IPV grow up to be perpetrators. Likewise, not all IPV perpetrators have witnessed IPV during childhood (Widom, 1988).

Nonetheless, recent studies have outlined a strong association between adverse childhood experiences and IPV. In simple terms, children who have experienced abuse, IPV or neglect are more likely to perpetrate IPV. Thus, such studies have revived interest in social learning theory (Dube *et al*., 2002; Fulu *et al*., 2013; Fonseka *et al*., 2015; VanderEnde *et al*., 2016; Yount *et al*., 2018). One limitation of these studies is a lack of clarity, as the cross-sectional data do not clarify whether observing violence during childhood relates to other factors (e.g., experiencing violence in childhood), nor do these data establish whether a causal social learning effect exists (Heise, 2012).

1.13.2 Biological and Psychological Explanations for IPV

Scholars have proposed that both biological (e.g., genetic influences, head injuries and varying levels of neurotransmitters) and psychological (e.g., depression, psychopathology, or personality disorders) factors are linked with IPV perpetration (for a summary, see Ali & Naylor, 2013). Some of these aspects explain IPV at an individual level. Population-based studies have also delineated a linkage between IPV perpetration and personality disorders in men, although the mechanisms and pathways are unclear (Fulu *et al*., 2013; Machisa & Shamu, 2018). However, these explanations fail to explain varying levels of IPV in different countries and communities. Furthermore, they do not consider cultural and ecological aspects that influence the occurrence of IPV (Ali & Naylor, 2013).

1.13.3 Resource Theory and IPV

Resource theory states that the inability to fulfil the socially prescribed role of provider causes violent tendencies and behaviours among men. In other words, violent tendencies are more likely to manifest when resources are either unavailable or depleted (Allen *et al*., 1975). Relative resource theory and status inconsistency theory are two different variations of resource theory. These state that relative resources play a more significant role for males and females than do established social roles, such that women may be at a greater risk of experiencing IPV if they have more resources than their husbands do (Atkinson *et al*., 2005). However, this premise contradicts feminist theory (Section 1.13.4), which suggests that economically independent women are less likely to face IPV.

Empirical evidence is mixed, leading to the conclusion that a balance between men and women in terms of resources is most likely to mitigate the risk of IPV. However, the association between women's economic independence and IPV may differ because of local societal and cultural influences (Kim *et al*., 2009; Vyas & Watts, 2009; Ackerson & Subramanian, 2016; Caridad Bueno & Henderson, 2017; Lin- Chi, 2017). An imbalance in relative resources might contribute to IPV, but as a sole factor, this is unlikely to explain IPV perpetration.

1.13.4 Feminist Theory and IPV

Feminist theory suggests that IPV is a sex-specific and gendered behaviour. More specifically, it is the outcome of gender imbalances and patriarchal structure in society (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pagelow, 1980; Bart & Moran, 1993). Patriarchal societies are male-dominated, and women carry only subordinate status; as such, men exert control over women using different forms of violence and dominance (Schechter, 1982; Kurz, 1989). Some feminists argue that IPV is not inherent to men; instead, they argue, socially established norms foster IPV because societies approve male dominance over women through a variety of means (Heise *et al*., 1994). Researchers drawing on feminist theory today believe that gender imbalances and economic inequality may influence society, thereby creating social norms that contribute IPV (Heise, 2011). Although patriarchy explains the risk factors for IPV, it does not clarify the reasons as to why men are violent towards their partners. It also fails to describe men's motivations for perpetrating IPV. Furthermore, feminist theorists ignore the substantial evidence demonstrating the prevalence of female-to-male IPV and female-to-female IPV (Archer, 2000; Messinger, 2011). By considering IPV to be a sex-specific behaviour, those drawing on feminist theory have missed

significant aspects of this phenomenon, making their approach one-sided.

1.13.5 Family Violence Theory and IPV

Family violence theory proposes that family members resort to violence to resolve conflicts. It is in sharp contrast to feminist ideas, as family violence theory considers IPV to be a family issue, rather than a male-to-female construct (Gelles & Straus, 1979). Spouses can experience conflict because of frustration, stress, and anger (Kurz, 1989). Researchers testing this theory emphasize the sex-symmetry of violence to demonstrate that IPV is not gendered. Some have presented evidence that the prevalence of female-perpetrated violence is equal to that of male-perpetrated IPV (Straus, 1999; Archer, 2000; Straus, 2014; Hamberger & Larsen, 2015). However, critics argue that these studies are primarily from high-income countries (HIC) and that they consider only less severe forms of IPV (Archer, 2006; WHO/LSHTM, 2010). Most studies have confirmed that male perpetrated IPV is more pervasive, and females are more likely to face violence from their partners (Whitaker *et al*., 2007; Straus, 2009; WHO, 2012). Critics further argue that family violence theory goes against the evidence, as it identifies general conflict as a primary motive for both male and female IPV perpetration, which is at odds with evidence that suggests different factors drive males and females to perpetrate IPV in different contexts (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Hamberger & Larsen, 2015).

1.13.6 Social Norms Theory and IPV

Rather than representing any uniform theory, social norms theory refers to a general concept proposed by researchers from various disciplines

who have studied the role of social norms in perpetuating harmful practices (Heise & Manji, 2016). Despite the lack of a mutually agreed-upon definition, most researchers acknowledge that social norms describe how beliefs about typical and appropriate behaviour within a social reference group influence individual behaviour (Mackie *et al*., 2015; Alexander-Scott *et al*., 2016; Heise & Manji, 2016). Most researchers also agree that individuals' approval or disapproval within a reference group maintains social norms. Significantly, social expectations are based not on actual behaviour but on beliefs about behaviour, which can sometimes be mistaken (Alexander-Scott *et al*., 2016). Examples of IPV-related social norms include convictions that marriage gives a man the right to sex and that violence is an acceptable way to resolve marital issues/conflicts (Alexander-Scott *et al*., 2016). Social norms concerning gender roles and the broader acceptability of violence might also reinforce IPV perpetration (Heise & Manji, 2016). Thus, social norms theory may explain the varying levels of IPV found globally (Mackie *et al*., 2015).

Studies using population-based data provide support for social norms theory in that they have reinforced the supposition that community-held beliefs and community factors (e.g., the proportion of females with low autonomy or the proportion of males who justify IPV) enhance the likelihood of male-perpetrated IPV (Gage, 2005; Koenig *et al*., 2006; Boyle *et al*., 2009; Uthman *et al* l., 2009; WHO/LSHTM, 2010). However, the perspectives that social theory comprises do not comprehensively explain all aspects of IPV. For example, they do not describe why men, and not women, mostly perpetuate violence (Jewkes *et al*., 2015), nor do they quantify the relative importance of explanatory power for a particular behaviour (Manji, 2018). Furthermore, social norms theory does not provide any reason for varying types of violence

against women and different forms of violence within the same community (Jewkes *et al*., 2015). Finally, terms and definitions are still unclear because the theory is relatively new (Mackie *et al*., 2015).

1.13.7 Ecological Frameworks and IPV

Over the past thirty years, public health approaches have widely used ecological models (McLeroy *et al*., 1988; Richard *et al*., 2011). In 1998 researchers applied this framework to IPV perpetration and subsequently revised it in 2012. Unlike the single-factor theories explored above, the ecological framework includes a comprehensive list of factors that might contribute to IPV (Heise, 1998, 2012), which it describes at four levels:

- Individual characteristics and experiences
- Factors related to an intimate relationship
- Community factors
- Wider macrosocial aspects

This conceptual model emphasizes that IPV perpetration is not the outcome of any single pathway. It incorporates evidence that factors at different levels contribute to the occurrence of IPV. In 2002, WHO widely endorsed and adopted the ecological framework as a basis for their IPV programme. However, the explanatory power of this framework is limited, even though the conceptual model is helpful for programme planning. The framework incorporates all proximate risk factors that contribute to IPV perpetration, but it does not clarify the relative importance of individual elements (Heise, 2011).

In summary, Ali & Naylor (2013) have suggested that no single theory or framework can holistically explain IPV. As Carlson (1984) maintains: ‘It is futile to attempt to demonstrate that one or two theories are correct,

whereas others are wrong when there are factors at many levels that play a causal role in domestic violence' (p. 571). Each perspective is significant in explaining violence in intimate relationships, and researchers have supported and challenged each of these perspectives, providing valuable insights into the problem of IPV (Ali & Naylor, 2013).

All these aspects discussed above require thorough consideration to better understand the dynamics of IPV in SA. Thus, the following country profile of SA provides a comprehensive overview of its religion, culture and relevant societal factors, followed by highlighting the historical context of IPV in SA.

1.14 Saudi Arabia: Country Profile

This section presents a broad overview of SA, including geography, population, economy, education, healthcare, Saudi vision 2030 and culture and religion.

1.14.1 Location and Population

Saudi Arabia, officially known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is in Western Asia. With a massive land area of 2,149,690 km^2, it spans a significant portion of the Arabian Peninsula, with the Red Sea to the West and the Arabian Gulf to the East. The country shares borders with Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Iraq, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Map of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2021)

During the mid-20th century, birth rates increased significantly, causing a frequent rise in the population. However, life expectancy also increased during that time. Now, birth rates are lower but remain high, increasing SA's population at an annual rate of 3.19% (4.3 births per female) (Brown & Busman, 2003; Ministry of Health [MoH], 2011). Thanks to this growth rate, the population is expected to reach 36 million by 2030. The indigenous people of SA are predominantly Arab, while 37% are migrant workers and 10% are naturalized from African and Asian countries (Index Mundi, 2018). Table 1.1 lays out the age structure of SA by gender.

Table 1.1 Age Structure of Saudi Population by Gender

Age Group (yrs.)	Total Percentage (2021 est.)	Male	Female
0-14	24.84%	4,327,830	4,159,242
15-24	15.38%	2,741,371	2,515,188
25-54	50.2%	10,350,028	6,804,479
55-64	5.95%	1,254,921	778,467
65+	3.63%	657,395	584,577

Source: Index Mundi (2021)

The Saudi Arabian economy is the largest among Arab nations and stands as one of the top 20 economies in the world. Its gross domestic product (GDP) is about USD 650 billion, powered primarily by petroleum reserves (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2019). Oil exports increased after 1970, and the oil industry now account for half (45%) of GDP, 90% of export earnings, and 75% of government revenue (Aarts & Nonneman, 2005; Dincer *et al*., 2004). SA is the biggest oil exporter globally, which is also the primary reason for its economic growth. The state-owned Corporation Saudi Aramco manages the country's oil reserves and production. The private sector accounts for approximately 40% of GDP. SA became a part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2005, securing its long-term growth plans. Ascension to WTO helped SA continue with a development strategy that aimed to diversify the economy and boost foreign investment (Aarts & Nonneman, 2005). Public education from primary through to college level is open and free, but not mandatory to every citizen of SA. Children aged between three and five years are enrolled in kindergarten, and from the age of six, children in SA enrol in primary school. Finally, intermediate, and

secondary education lasts three years, followed by advancement to either college or university (North & Tripp, 2009).

The government is responsible for providing care services to SA's citizens through several government agencies. Private sector participation has also increased, moving the country into the top thirty countries in terms of healthcare services (Almalki *et al.*, 2011). The growth of this sector serves a crucial purpose by ensuring a healthier and more productive population, and this in turn enhances the economy: 'In SA, the Ministry of Health (MOH) provides health services at three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary…Basically, PHC focuses on preventive and curative primary care services, referrals to secondary and tertiary hospitals' (Alzaied & Alshammari, 2016, p. 2).

1.14.2 Saudi Vision 2030

'Saudi Vision 2030' refers to SA's official development plan for the coming decade. SA introduced the Vision in 2016 to boost private sector employment, modernize the education system, internationalize the economy and increase the contribution of non-oil exports to half of the total exports. The long-term purpose of the plan is to ensure the economy's sustainability in a post-oil era (Vision 2030, 2022).

The Vision covers a significant range of socio-economic areas, including employment, healthcare, education, housing and women's empowerment. It also aims to address SA citizens' poverty, inequality and vulnerability via carefully specified objectives, policies and targets. Some key features include managing the female labour market, education and training and addressing social vulnerability. Additionally, the Vision incorporates the effective initiation and implementation of several political integration programmes (Alsayyad & Nawar, 2017).

Overall, given its comprehensive and forward-looking nature, young citizens perceived the Vision as a positive step in Saudi Arabia's progress.

1.14.3 Saudi Culture

Historically, Bedouin dress, marriage and familial traditions have also influenced the social lives and customs of Saudi Arabians. The Bedouins, the original inhabitants of Saudi land, were desert nomads and constitute an influential minority; Bedouins dominate the country's religious leadership, judiciary and National Guard (North & Tripp, 2009). Dress is dictated by religion and custom, and has long specified various styles of dress, especially for women. Thus, all women are expected to wear an abaya, a long black cloak meant to cover the whole body, including the head, leaving only the hands and eyes. This is a modest style of dress, focused on making sure that women do not expose their body. Saudi men and boys are required to wear a traditional dress known as a thobe, coloured plain white during hot and warm seasons and pale colours such as grey or ochre during cold weather (North & Tripp, 2009). Finally, the distinctive Saudi form of greeting is lengthy because it is expected that when Saudis meet, they engage in a long conversation inquiring about each other's health and family (McLaughlin, 2019).

Family and Marriage

Scholars have long argued that 'the family is the most important social group in Saudi Arabia' (North & Tripp, 2009, p. 52). This is like elsewhere; though the concept of family takes different forms in different cultural contexts, it remains the core unit in all societies. The ancient tribal history of SA has made the extended family the most

important social institution. The devotion of people to their families and self-identity is extreme, well above their dedication to their profession, career, ethnicity, or even country (Winter & Chevrier, 2008). The professional and personal lives of Saudi Arabians revolve around their relationships; a highly family-centric milieu shapes their identity while tribal patronage guides their family norms. However, this scenario has changed in recent decades as nuclear families have become increasingly frequent due to increasing urbanization, which has colossally modified the traditional settings of extended families. Nevertheless, the family remains a central aspect of people's lives, providing self-identity (Alabdulaziz & Cruz, 2020).

It is important to note that a couple in SA has no way of living together legally unless they are husband and wife (Coker, 2018). Marriages in SA are traditionally arranged with tribes or families in mind, rather than any consideration of Western/modern self-identities or romantic love (Zuhur, 2011; Long, 2005). Daughters and sons from the Saudi Arabian culture are normally encouraged to marry their cousins or other relatives as a means of strengthening the family (Zuhur, 2011). Polygamous marriage is legal in various Islamic and Arabic countries, including SA. However, while previously common, as society has continued to progress monogamous marriage has become encouraged among Saudi Arabians.

The process of marriage incorporates several stages. A proposal is the first step, in which the groom's mother is informed of the bride's family intentions to take her daughter. The next step is viewing (*Shawfa*) the bride and confirming if the couples have agreed or not. The following step is the marriage contract (*Milka*); the dowery (*mahr*) should be provided to the bride at this stage. At this point, the marriage contract

will be approved, most usually by the imam of a mosque or other authorised person. A party will be held at the home of the bride's family once the contract has been approved, whereby the bridegroom will present the bride with the dowry and an engagement ring. The next step is the engagement period; while this usually lasts a year, the couples are still unable to live together until the last step, the wedding celebration (*Zawaj*). Typically, the bridegroom's family hosts the wedding celebration, held in a private wedding venue or a large hotel ballroom. Traditionally, the newlyweds are taken to their new home after the wedding ceremony (Long, 2005).

In Saudi culture, there are different roles for each spouse. Evason (2019) gave the following description of Saudi husband and wife roles:

> Men are responsible for the primary income, security and safety of the family. They are expected to work outside the home, [to] earn money and to provide for their famil[ies]. Women have traditionally taken responsibility for the domestic space as the nurturers and bedrocks of the family. They are expected to look after their husband[s] and children, prepare food and provide love and warm-heartedness for [their] famil[ies]. (p. 3)

SA society holds traditional views concerning women, in which women's primary roles are mothers and wives. Local customs, tribal traditions and cultural norms have played a significant role in defining gender roles in society. However, family structures are also substantially important in assigning specific roles and responsibilities to women (Yamani, 2000). In SA, the Bedouin culture of the indigenous people has also been prominent in defining family and gender norms. As mentioned above, Bedouin remained an influential minority group who

adhered to Islamic religion and culture. Society accepts that women are not equal to men; based on unfair grounds, this notion has fostered patriarchy in the country (Engineer, 1992).

Patriarchal Culture

SA is a patriarchal society where conventional gender roles heavily restrict women's voice and freedom. Law and society obstruct their free and active participation in both public and professional spheres. Patriarchal culture has barred females from decision-making, and they are expected to obey male family members. Gender segregation is strict, making women's virtues representative of the family's pride. An intricate set of social conventions encourage the belief that male members must protect their family's honour by dominating females (Littrel & Bertsch, 2013).

As mentioned above, society considers females as mothers and wives, and tribal traditions guide their roles and responsibilities (Yamani, 2000). The burden of carrying family pride and honour requires them to comply with established social norms, making them submissive because of having negligible authority to make decisions in marriage or family matters. These gender roles and the resulting segregation are offshoots of the Indigenous Bedouin culture.

Some religious scholars have also argued that Islamic Law (*Shariah*) grants women the responsibility to take care of the house and nurture children (Sabbagh, 1996). However, the Prophet Muhammad says, 'every Muslim male and female, are requested to seek knowledge, so both sexes are equal in searching for education' (Al-Hariri, 1987, p. 51). Some episodes in Islamic history have presented the wives of the

Prophet actively participating in critical public roles. Hamdan (2005), for example, notes that:

> [O]ne of the wives of Prophet Mohammed, Aysha, led an army of 30,000 soldiers, cooked for them, and helped medicate them. Aysha negotiated various issues and political matters with Prophet Mohammed, who freely acknowledged her wisdom. (p. 53)

Thus, there is no denying the patriarchal orientation of SA's culture and society. While Islamic law considers men and women as equal, the subordinate status of women seems to be the result of misconceptions and fundamentalist interpretation of the Islamic Law. According to Moaddel & Karabenick (2008) 'religious fundamentalism is conceived as a distinctive set of beliefs and attitudes toward one's religion, including obedience to religious norms, belief in the universality and immutability of its principles, the validity of its claims, and its indispensability for human happiness (p. 1675)'.

Therefore, it can be argued that problems related to the unequal status of women and gender discrimination do not directly pertain to Islamic Law. Instead, they are related to and outcomes of strict and linear religious interpretations. The following section discusses these dynamics in detail.

1.14.4 Religion and Culture

SA is Islam's birthplace, so it is natural for people to have Islamic influences and inclinations. More than 90% of Saudi citizens are Muslims, and Islamic heritage defines the country's culture (SACM, n.d.). Ezzi *et al.* (2014, p. 3) noted that 'As the birthplace of Islam, the

Saudis have assumed the religious leadership position for Muslims around the globe'.

Culture is a significant part of society as it manifests throughout society's endeavours and creative pursuits. Therefore, if a religion drives a society, it also drives the culture. Being the birthplace of Islam has significantly shaped SA's society, which has in turn defined the country's culture. Robertson *et al.* (2001) and Hickson & Pugh (1995) have indicated that strict Islamic culture and traditions distinguish SA from other Arab counterparts. Islamic traditions have also penetrated the legal sphere, and the implementation of Shariah is vital in SA. In 1992, SA enacted a Basic Law that is itself based on Shariah, setting out both the rights of the individual and the powers and duties of the State. Shariah is derived from four sources: the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, Ijma, and Qiyas.

The Quran is the Holy Book for Muslims, and it is considered as the 'book containing the speech of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in Arabic and transmitted through a process known as *tawatur*', or continuous testimony (Al-Salami, 1999, p. 12). As per Islamic Law, the Quran carries the highest authority in the legal system (Alghamdi, 2002). It contains general rules and principles, and their elaborations and explanations are included in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad is the second-highest authority in the Islamic legal system.

The Sunnah contains a record of the Prophet's actions, as well as his words to his companions. Additionally, it details the Prophet's way of life (Alghamdi, 2002). Thus, the Sunnah is important to understanding the Quran because it explains the Quran's rules in detail and provides

adequate interpretations (Alghamdi, 2002). Ijma, the third source, refers to the consensus among scholars concerning each specific situation (Bhala, 2011). Ijma becomes necessary when the Quran and the Sunnah remain silent on matters and problems, and thus allows Islamic Law to evolve according to changing social needs (Bhala, 2011, p. 49). Qiyas, the fourth and final source of Islamic Law, is an analogy used to establish a law concerning an incident based on clear injunctions issued about a previous incident, so long as the two incidents share the same effective cause (Al-Salami, 1999).

Hence, through this multi-tiered structure Islamic law allows for the interpretation and establishment of new meanings. In SA, the primary sources for Islamic Law are the Quran and the Sunnah. After referring to these primary sources, the Council of Senior Scholars (*ulema*) can issue a religious ruling (*fatwa*). Legislation in SA also adheres to these religious rulings and does not contradict the principles drawn from the Quran and Sunnah (Deif, 2008). These particularities distinguish SA from other Muslim nations as the only one to base its legal law on religious sources and maintain that all rules and decrees must conform to Shariah.

However, interpretations of Islamic law tend to be narrow and strict in SA. The country follows the Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence, a significant influence on possible interpretations. The Hanbali School belongs to traditional Sunni Schools and derives its understanding of Sharia from the Quran. Compared to the other three Sunni schools, it is strict and rigid in interpreting the primary sources. The term ‘strict’ here refers to a taking a literal interpretation of the sacred text without paying heed to context and reasoning. This strictness, and the teaching of the

Hanbali School in general, inspired several puritanical movements, such as the influential Wahhabism movement (Baderin, 2003).

Islamic Context and Women

Females have certain privileges under Islam that protect several aspects of their lives from birth. These privileges also secure females' rights by proclaiming equality between males and females. As such, Islamic Law does not differentiate between men and women. It advocates equal rewards for both and provides additional rights to females inside families and relational unions. It elevates the status, pride, and self-worth of women. For example, in the Quran, Surah Al-Nisa ('the women') extensively elaborates on and discusses females' rights.

Islam forbids discrimination based on colour, sex, and ethnicity, and Prophet Muhammad clearly stated that equality is one of the most vital preconditions of humanity. Discrimination based on personal characteristics is not justified, nor is it rational to discriminate based on social status, sex, ethnicity or race (Muhammad, 1995). Nonetheless, the notion of equality and Islamic egalitarianism has manifested in different forms across different human communities. To an extent, the inequality doctrine has lost its meaning because of diverse and faulty interpretations, resulting in discrimination and violence against women. The following section discusses this issue in more detail.

Male Guardianship

SA's male guardianship system refers to the dominance of males over females, in which men control women from birth until death. Every female has a guardian in the form of a brother, father, or husband, possessing the power to make decisions on their behalf. Male

guardianship (*wilayah*) means that the guardian (*wali*) will be responsible for assisting vulnerable sections of the community, and in most cases, this refers to females. Assistance is thought to encompass health, happiness and support. Thus, *wali* is tasked with supporting (*mahrams)* (members with whom marriage is prohibited, such as mothers, sisters, nieces, and daughters) (Musawah, 2018). Islam also outlines the requirements for the roles and responsibilities of the *wali*; for example, a *wali* must protect an orphan child until the child reaches adulthood. Usually, a *wali* is male but, a female can also become a *wali* for her children.

The male guardianship system is one of the biggest obstacles to women's empowerment in SA. It prohibits females from making their own life decisions and voicing their concerns. Instead, it requires females to acquire permission from their male guardians for any initiatives taken in the spheres of education, travel, public participation and other domains of life. They cannot access healthcare, conduct financial transactions, rent an apartment or pursue education without permission. Accordingly, this makes their life quite restricted. Moreover, the system's coverage is quite extensive, as *wali* govern females' personal and professional lives. Saudi women even need permission from their male guardians before undergoing medical procedures (Tønnessen, 2016; Al-Amoudi, 2017; Musawah, 2018).

SA's *mahrams* system is rooted in biological differences between males and females. While males are considered dominant and authoritative, women are too emotional and fragile to be trusted with decisions. Thus, perceived physical differences manifest in women's incapability to govern their lives. Verse 34 of the Quran's Surah Al-Nisa talks about this obedience aspect and uses the term '*qawwamun*' to describe a man.

Later, one line of scholarly interpretation argues that *qawwamun* referred to male guardians.

In contrast, Islamic feminists have interpreted *qawwamun* to mean a breadwinner. According to this feminist interpretation, a *qawwamun* is a person who provides financial security to females but does not entirely control their lives. Despite these terminological ambiguities, many variations of the *mahrams* system put females in a precarious legal position. At the same time, several laws have been modified to protect females from the undue authority and dominance of male guardians:

- SA allows women to travel and drive without permission
- Girls under 18 years of age cannot marry without the Court's permission
- Mothers can assume the role of guardian for their children. They are eligible to make important decisions concerning their children's education, healthcare access and finances together with their children's fathers.
- Women have equal rights in registering births.
- Women, like males, have the right to request family registration with the Department of Civil Status. The law has been amended to state: 'In the implementation of this scheme, the head of the family shall be the father or mother of the children'.
- Women are not required to get permission from guardians concerning government services, such as getting passports.
- After a divorce, mothers have custody of children under the age of 15, but they may lose custody if they remarry.
- The Labour Law prohibits discrimination against women in hiring or wages.

These measures highlight SA's efforts to enhance women's lives and protect their rights (Saudi Embassy,2019).

There is no denying that women in the country have faced discrimination and male dominance for years. After centuries of restricted existence due to Saudi culture, religious tenets and conservative society, their condition improved to some extent after 2019, when SA enacted several laws to ameliorate their status and social conditions. These women's issue-related reforms enhanced SA's ranking in the Forum's 2018 report. Women's educational attainment improved and equality between men's and women's employment opportunities increased by 59%.

The country achieved another milestone in 2011, when King Abdulaziz Al Saud extended voting rights to females and allowed them to participate in elections; consequently, females participated in the 2015 municipal elections. He also facilitated women's appointment to the Shura Council, where presently women hold 30% of the Council's positions. Despite these enactments, women's workforce participation is significantly lower than that of men, and while they comprise less than 20% of the total Saudi workforce, as discussed below, Saudi Vision 2030 aims to increase this to 30%. King Salman's reign has further improved conditions for females. In one prominent change, he allowed females to drive alone from 2018. The male guardianship system had earlier restricted females from traveling without their *wali*'s permission (Lim, 2018). Now, everyone 21 years or older, irrespective of gender, can travel without any restrictions, and women can stay in tourist accommodations alone (Aleqtisadiah Newspaper, 2018).

Empowerment of Saudi Women as Part of 2030 Vision

In recent years, particularly after the changes of 2019, SA has shown significant progress in women's empowerment. The new crop of rules and legislation emphasizes the promotion of female education. Several long-standing restrictions no longer exist: women can now drive alone, travel alone, become a guardian for their children and even take high-ranking positions on the Shura Council (Saudi Embassy,2019). It is expected that unemployment rates will plummet to 7% (from 12%) by 2030. Increasing rates of women in the workforce will also help SA meet the changing demands of the Saudi market (Saudi Vision, 2030). This will positively influence the nativist localization strategy and contribute to creating a trained and qualified workforce aligned with modern industry's requirements.

It is therefore likely that Vision 2030 will immensely improve the status and lifestyles of females in the country. It will also strengthen women's agency and sensitize them to the ill-effects of IPV. Moreover, women's improving education and employment situation will better their social positions, making them more independent. They will rely on themselves and be more capable of raising their voices against discrimination and violence. The Vision is in sync with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which SA ratified in 2000 (Bianco, 2020).

Vision 2030 also guarantees gender equality in line with the specifications of Sharia. Previously, gender inequality persisted, obstructing women's participation in personal and professional spheres. Women could not participate in politics and the economy because of the strict male guardianship system, even though discrimination against women contradicted the doctrines of Islamic Law. Rigidity and

discrimination primarily existed because of culture, tribal mores and conservative socio-cultural practices, such as banning women from traveling alone (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Women in rural regions have always been particularly independent and driven, despite, despite the stricter religious and cultural boundaries in such areas (Lim, 2018).

1.15 Saudi Women and Intimate Partner Violence

Unfortunately, IPV remains prevalent among SA women, eroding both their physical and mental health (Eldoseri *et al*. 2014; Al Dosary 2016; Barnawi 2017; Afifi *et al*. 2011). Islamic law asks Muslims to be compassionate, but violence continues to victimize women and society, undermining women's rights and the social fabric itself. It is essential to note that addressing the issue of IPV was impeded by various factors in SA. For instance, Al-Badayneh (2012) noted that conservative culture and society are the primary causes of IPV. By this the author means that the male guardianship system, patriarchal roots and cultural rigidity significantly influence gender roles. Biases and stereotypes prevail, creating a climate where women are tolerant of violence and subservient to their male guardians. Furthermore, Abdel-Salam et al. (2022) indicated that Saudi cultural norms prevent women from seeking assistance and disclosing that they have been a victim of IPV. Women also in SA were reluctant to reveal being subjected to IPV in order to protect their families from separation. The situation has undoubtedly improved, but much more needs to be done to meet the goals of Saudi Vision 2030.

1.15.1 Historical Context of IPV in SA

The historical context of IPV in SA is hard to put together for many reasons, with only the recent era able to be reliably reconstructed. Stories

shaping the historical context of IPV in the kingdom started emerging only recently, enabled by the greater ability of Saudi women to leave the country. Hennessy-Fiske (2017) explained that Saudi women flee the country in large numbers due to their newfound ability to access help via social media. The rise of these social-media-assisted escape opportunities is still too early a phenomenon to inform an extended historical account of abuse; Thomas & Housden (2017) showed that major platforms, such as Skype, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were launched over a decade ago. In 2005, the national family safety program (NFSP) was established by a decree of King Abdullah, aiming to prevent domestic violence and child abuse. In order to deal with domestic violence, the NSFP provided training for health care professionals (Almuneef & Al-Eissa, 2011). Although the government acknowledged domestic violence, even at that time there was no clear law to criminalize the problem. Not until 2013 did the kingdom criminalize IPV, which was due to the efforts of an organized media campaign (Nabbout, 2018). If not recognized as a criminal act, IPV is likely not to have been recorded much until recently, which makes it impossible for scholars to contextualize IPV in the kingdom. The media, for their part, deserve much credit for changing the mindset of Saudis regarding women's treatment and getting the authorities to enforce the existing protective legal measures.

The Saudi media landscape has only recently seen any anti-abuse advocacy ads promoted. The initial ad ran in 2013, in the April 17 and 18 editions of several Saudi national newspapers. According to Speiser (2015), this became an important landmark in a women's rights history heavily laced with gender inequality. The ad featured a powerful image of a woman clad in a burqa, with the skin around one of her eyes severely bruised to the extent that it turned red and black. Beneath her eyes was

placed a small message suggesting that some things could not be covered (see Figure 1.2). Research shows that the media message went under the aegis of the royal family: although produced by international ad agency Ogilvy, the ad was promoted by the King Khalid Foundation that oversees the not-for-profit sector and advocacy. Speiser (2015) also explained that the ad went on to become a difference-maker, claiming that it managed to kindle a nationwide discussion on women's rights and IPV despite SA being a nation where strict gender roles are deemed a pillar of Islam. In less than three months after the advertisement, the Saudi Council of Ministers passed legislation prohibiting any form of abuse, in the workplace or at home. Once enacted, the law put courts in a position to mete out 12 months' worth of prison time, coupled with 50,000 Saudi riyals fine (equivalent to 13,300 dollars), to those convicted of IPV in SA (Speiser, 2015). However, a bribe paid to direct relatives of a victim can silence those who may otherwise seek justice. As a result, this possibility of incidents being resolved before going to court serves to complicate the establishment of an accurate view of the prevalence of IPV, especially over an extensive period. Of course, money or no money, Saudi women had no way of making themselves heard in the pre-2016 period. In fact, there was no venue for Saudi women to report their painful domestic experiences, as Nabbout (2018) reported that SA established an IPV reporting centre only in 2016. In the first three days alone, the centre received a total of 1,890 reports related to IPV (Nabbout, 2018). Most recently, 'Saudi Arabia's sweeping plans to overhaul its economy in coming years are matched by proposals for social transformation that extend to ways of tackling IPV, increasing city park space and reducing road deaths' (McDowall 2016, p. 1). These most recent plans were fundamental parts of Saudi Vision 2030. Regarding IPV, 19 million riyals will be spent on raising awareness about IPV as well as 9 million on services of IPV (McDowall, 2016).

It is thus clear that IPV is an important and troubling social problem, as seen in thousands of reported abuse cases over a brief one-year period. Whatever the reason, no information on the scope or roots of IPV has reached researchers outside of several high-profile cases that saw print over the past decade; this place limits any historical understanding of IPV. As mentioned above, analysis of the historical context of IPV is only made possible by important recent landmarks: the emergence of punitive laws, an ad campaign from 2013, the launch of a reporting sector and the first prevention program.

Figure 1.2 The Message of 'Some Things Cannot be Covered'



Source: Carrington, 2013

1.16 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the topic of IPV in the Saudi context. As seen in thousands of reported abuse cases over a period that is as brief as one year, IPV emerges as an important discouraging factor. Whatever the reason, no information on the scope or roots of IPV has reached researchers, except for a number of high-profile cases that have

appeared in print over the last decade, which limits the historical IPV context to the last few decades. As mentioned above, the anti-abuse advocacy advertisement, the emergence of punitive law, the launch of a reporting sector and the establishment of the Saudi prevention programmes have become important landmarks in the history of IPV, making it crucial to study and present this issue. It is also worth noting that research related to IPV in many countries, including SA, is scarce. To the best of my knowledge, very few efforts have been made to aggregate studies conducted in SA, and not much is known about the situation and possible causes of IPV in SA. Thus, aggregating and reviewing available empirical evidence related to IPV among Saudi populations is essential to fill the gap in current knowledge and promote a better understanding of the issue of IPV in Saudi culture. The next chapter reviews the existing literature on IPV among Saudi women and men.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review which aims to aggregate and review available empirical evidence related to IPV among Saudi women and men. The chapter has five sections. The first section provides a review method. The second section presents results of the review. The third section explains the critical review. The fourth section discusses a justification of the proposed study and finally the chapter provides the research questions of the thesis.

The review question was developed using the PICO format (Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcome) (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Research Question Developed using The PICO Format

What is known about intimate partner violence among Saudi men and women in Saudi Arabia?	
P- Population	Saudi men and women
I-Intervention	Intimate partner violence
C- Comparison	-
O-Outcome	Prevalence, factors associated with IPV, impacts and consequences, responses and attitudes, perceptions and knowledge

2.2 Method

For this review, a scoping review approach was used to explore the range, nature and extent of literature on the topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). It also helps identify research gaps, theories, evidence and key concepts (Halas *et al*., 2015; Grant & Booth, 2009).

2.2.1 Eligibility Criteria

Any study exploring IPV in SA, published in a peer-reviewed journal, based on empirical data (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method), written in the English language, and involved Saudi women and men was included in the review. Studies not published in English, scholarly or theoretical articles, editorials or commentaries, grey literature such as master's theses and doctoral dissertations were not included in the studies.

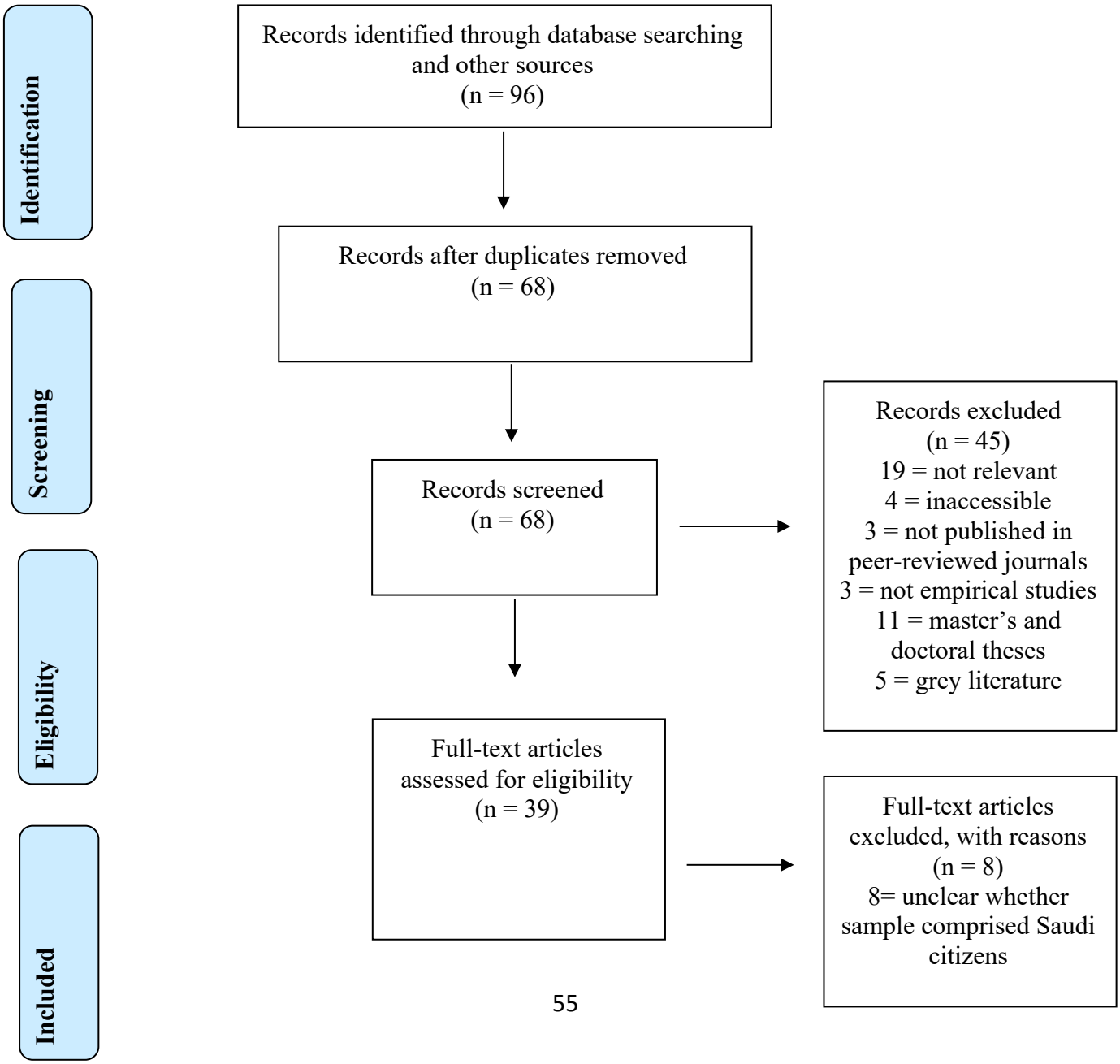
2.2.2 Data Sources

Various search engines, including MEDLINE, CINAHL, and PsycINFO were used. Keywords used in the search included 'domestic violence' AND 'Saudi', 'domestic violence' in 'Saudi', 'intimate partner violence' AND 'Saudi, 'intimate partner violence' in 'Saudi', 'wife abuse' AND 'Saudi', 'wife abuse' in 'Saudi', 'spousal violence' AND 'Saudi', 'spousal violence' in 'Saudi', 'women abuse' AND 'Saudi', 'women abuse' in 'Saudi' and 'violence against women' AND 'Saudi'. Google and Google Scholar were also searched to identify studies not published in indexed journals. The reference list of each article was scrutinized to identify studies that may not have been listed in the searched databases

2.2.3 Study Selection

A total of 96 potentially relevant articles were identified. Forty-five of these articles were excluded for various reasons, including lack of relevance (n = 19), inaccessibility (n = 4), lack of peer review (n = 3), non-empirical work (n = 3), being master's and doctoral theses (n = 11) and being grey literature (n = 5). In addition, eight studies were excluded because the sample did not include Saudi citizens. Finally, 23 studies were included in this review. Figure 2.1 shows a PRISMA diagram illustrating the process and number of included and excluded studies.

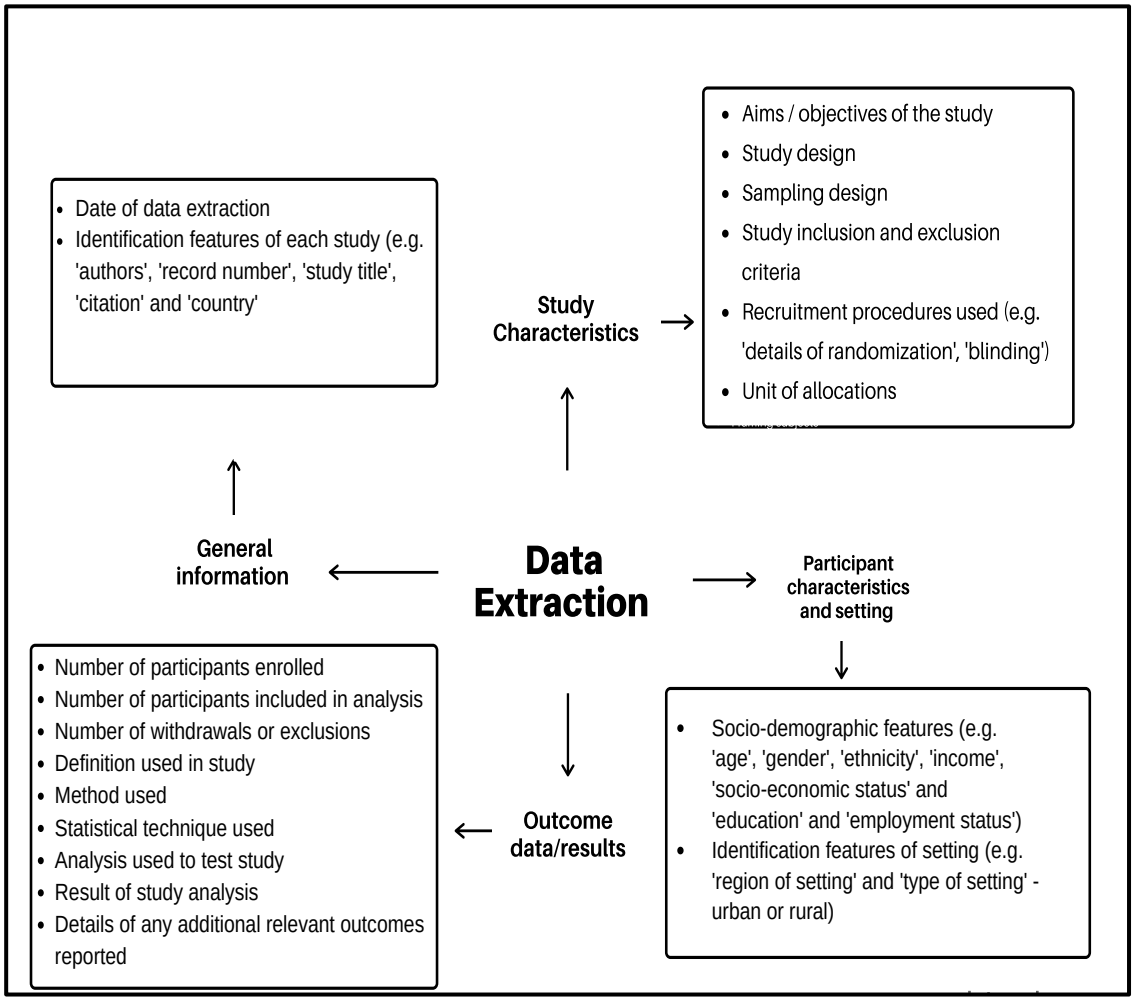
Figure 2.1 PRISMA Flow Diagram



2.2.4 Data Extraction

Data were extracted using a specially developed extraction tool to find information about date of publication, authors, study location, study design, number of study participants and their demographic characteristics and methods of data collection and data analysis (see Figure 2.2). Five themes were developed to presented narrative findings and insights from included studies.

Figure 2.2 Data Extraction Tool



2.3 Results

2.3.1 Study Characteristics

Focus: The issue of IPV in SA has only recently been explored and the first study was only published in 2009. Appendix 1 summarizes the purpose of the included studies. IPV against women by men was a primary focus of 22 studies. Most studies explored perspectives of women victims of IPV, and only one examined the perspectives of health professionals (men and women) about IPV (Zaher & Mason, 2014). Appendix 2 summarizes the settings, methods, sampling and participants, data collection techniques and findings.

Many studies report the prevalence of IPV (n = 17), the factors associated with IPV (n = 16) and the effects and consequences of IPV (n = 8). While others report attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of IPV (n = 6) and victim response to IPV (n = 3). Table 2.2 presents the outcome data of each study.

Setting: IPV was explored in five out of 13 Saudi Arabian provinces. The studies were conducted in hospital (n =18), shopping malls, colleges, and government shelters (n = 4) and through online survey (n=1). The sample size in the studies ranged from 30 to 2000. All the studies were quantitative; 21 out of 23 studies used cross-sectional designs, and two studies used descriptive designs (see Appendix 2).

Data Collection: Some studies used pre-tested, standardized questionnaires including the World Health Organization (WHO) Violence Against Women questionnaire (Jradi & Abouabbas, 2017; Barnawi, 2017; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Shiraz, 2016; Alzahrani *et al*., 2016; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Afifi *et al*., 2011; Abolfotouh & Almuneef,

2020) and Composite Abuse Scale (CAS), NorVold, Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (NOVAQ and NORAQ) (Sari *et al*., 2016; Al Dosary, 2016; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022; Wali *et al*., 2020), the Physician Readiness to Manage Intimate Partner Violence Survey (PREMIS) (Zaher & Mason, 2014), the Conflict Tactics Scale, the Lie scale, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009), and the Hurt-Insult-Threaten-Scream (HITS) instrument (Alzahrani *et al*., 2016). Other instruments used include PTSD Checklist-Civilian version, (PCL-C), Centre for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CESD) Scale, body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference, Abuse Assessment Score (AAS) and the Chronic Pain Grade (CPG) scale (Alhalal, 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2017; Al Taifi *et al*., 2021). Several studies used self-administered questionnaires (Halawi *et al*., 2017; Barnawi, 2017; Shiraz, 2016; Al Dosary, 2016; Alzahrani *et al*., 2016; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015; Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Wali *et al*., 2020), while others used structured interviews (Alhalal, 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2018; Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Alhalal *et al*., 2017; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Afifi *et al*., 2011; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020; Al Taifi *et al*., 2021). Only one study, used semi-structured interviews (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009). Only seven studies reported validity and reliability (Jradi & Abouabbas, 2017; Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Shiraz, 2016; Zaher & Mason, 2014; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022; Wali *et al*., 2020) of the instruments used.

Table 2.2 Outcome Data of Each Study

		Prevalence of IPV	Factors associated with IPV	Attitudes, perceptions and knowledge of IPV	Victim response to IPV	Effects and consequences of IPV
Abdel-Salam et al.,	2022	√	√	X	X	X
Abolfotouh & Almuneef,	2020	√	√	X	X	X
Afifi et al.,	2011	√	X	X	√	√
Al Dosary	2016	√	√	X	X	√
Al Taifi et al.,	2021	√	√	X	X	X
Al-Faris et al.,	2013	√	√	√	X	√
Alhalal	2018	X	X	X	X	√
Alhalal et al.,	2018	X	X	X	X	√
Alhalal et al.,	2017	X	X	X	X	√
Almosaed & Alazab,	2015	X	√	X	X	X
Alquaiz, et al.,	2017	√	√	X	X	X
Alzahrani et al.,	2016	√	√	X	√	X
Barnawi	2017	√	√	√	√	√
Bohlaiga et al.,	2014	√	√	√	X	X
Eldoseri & Sharps,	2017	√	√	X	X	X
Eldoseri et al.,	2014	√	√	√	X	√
Halawi et al.,	2017	√	√	√	X	X
Jradi & Abouabbas,	2017	√	X	X	X	X

Sari et al.,	2016	√	√	X	X	X
Shiraz	2016	X	√	X	X	X
Tashkandi & Rasheed,	2009	√	X	X	X	X
Wali et al.,	2020	√	√	X	X	X
Zaher & Mason,	2014	X	X	√	X	X

2.3.2 Prevalence of IPV among the Saudi Population

Seventeen studies reported the prevalence of IPV in SA (see Table 2.2). Most studies (n = 15) focused on the prevalence of physical IPV. Others explored emotional (n = 11) and sexual IPV (n = 9). Common acts of physical IPV included slapping (Al-Faris *et al*., 2013; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022) and pushing or shoving (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022). The lifetime prevalence of physical IPV ranged between 7.5% - 57% and prevalence in the last 12 months ranged between 16% to 67.2%.

Commonly reported acts of emotional IPV included insults and threatening behaviour, shouting, belittling, and intimidating (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Afifi *et al*., 2011; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022). The lifetime prevalence of emotional IPV ranged between 7.5% -75.10%, and prevalence in the last 12 months ranged between 32.8% - 92.6%.

Commonly reported acts of sexual violence included rape, having sex out of fear, forced shameful behaviour, and forced sexual acts that are degrading, humiliating or unacceptable (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017). The lifetime prevalence of sexual IPV ranged between 5.9% -

34.3%, and prevalence in the last 12 months ranged between 10 % - 44.3%.

Out of 17 studies, five reported the prevalence of more than one type of IPV (physical, emotional, and sexual) during the lifetime and last year (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Sari *et al*., 2016; Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022; Wali *et al*., 2020; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020; Al Taifi *et al*., 2021). The lifetime prevalence of IPV ranged from 33% to 57.80%; the prevalence in the last year ranged from 11.90% to 30.3%.

Only one study explored controlling behaviour, including keeping a partner away from friends, ignoring and treating a partner indifferently, restricting a partner's contact with family, suspiciousness and restricting a partner's access to health care (Alquaiz *et al*., 2017). The prevalence of controlling behaviour was 36.8% (Alquaiz, *et al*., 2017). There were a few studies exploring other forms of IPV including social and economic IPV and the prevalence was reported to be 34% (Barnawi, 2017) and the prevalence of economic IPV ranged from 25.3 - 26%, (Barnawi, 2017; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020).

Based on these studies, the most common types of IPV among Saudi women, in order of frequency, were emotional and physical IPV and torture, while the least common form of IPV was sexual; however, this could be due to reporting issues. Nevertheless, the prevalence of two or three types of IPV over a lifetime was slightly high in comparison to the median rate of each form (physical, emotional, and sexual). Thus, to verify the validity of this result, the lifetime median prevalence of physical, emotional, and sexual IPV was calculated (see Appendix 3). The median prevalence of emotional IPV was 30.9%, The median

prevalence of Physical IPV was 25.3% and the median lifetime prevalence of sexual IPV was 14.7%.

2.3.3 Risks and Factors Associated with IPV

Fifteen studies reported factors connected to IPV in SA (see Table 2.2). Due to the high number of studies reporting the factors connected to IPV, the median of these studies was calculated (see Appendix 4). Thus, the findings suggest that men are more likely to perpetrate IPV if their wives were previously divorced (54.4%), unemployed (43.3%), or had low education (20%). Husbands' low income (43.5%), the presence of multiple wives (35.1%) and unemployment (29%) were also identified as predictors of IPV. There were only two studies that discussed the role of occupation and education in connection with IPV among Saudi women (Shiraz, 2016; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). The women low levels of education and employment experience higher levels of violence and were more likely to accept and cope with violence. Experiencing childhood abuse, polygamy and having more children were also identified as risk factors for perpetrating IPV (Al-Faris *et al*., 2013; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022; Al Taifi *et al*., 2021).

2.3.4 Attitudes, Perceptions, and Knowledge of IPV

Few studies explored attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of IPV among Saudi populations (see Table 2.2). For example, three studies explored women's perspectives on why some men commit IPV (Barnawi, 2017; Halawi *et al*., 2017; Al-Faris *et al*., 2013). Common reasons included socio-cultural influences, social stressors on men, unfaithfulness, poor income and alcohol or drug use (Barnawi, 2017; Halawi *et al*., 2017). Other reasons include women disobeying their

husbands, leaving home without permission, refusing sex, and not completing housework (Al-Faris *et al*., 2013), husband's low income and drug or alcohol use (Barnawi, 2017; Halawi *et al*., 2017).

Two studies explored the attitude of accepting IPV in SA (Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014). The findings suggest that most women do not accept violence (92%); however, 8% of women either had no objection or had an accepting attitude towards violence (Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014) in situations such as a wife's infidelity (Eldoseri *et al*., 2014), disobedience, leaving house without permission (Al-Faris *et al*., 2013). No research was conducted to explore men's attitudes towards IPV in SA.

Only one study evaluated knowledge of IPV among health professionals (Zaher & Mason, 2014). The participants identified alcohol or drug use as a reason for occurring IPV. The findings also suggest that the sample showed low knowledge and preparedness of identify and mange disclosure of IPV.

2.3.5 Victim Response to IPV

Victims' responses to IPV in SA are unexplored (see Table 2.2). Complaining and speaking with one's own family, being abusive to them and requesting divorce or separation are the most common responses by women when exposed to IPV. Other responses include leaving home and going to social services, police, judges, human rights organizations, complaining to sheikhs and friends, going to the hospital, visiting a doctor, and talking to the husband's family and friends were identified as common responses (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Barnawi, 2017; Alzahrani *et al*., 2016).

Findings of the studies suggest that as much as 41.4% of Saudi women do not disclose their experiences or seek help due to various reasons, including financial dependence on the husband, fear of divorce, fear of leaving their children in case of divorce, acceptance of maltreatment and hope that the husband will stop the abuse. Children constituted the most common reason (37.8%) for disclosing experiences of IPV (Afifi *et al*., 2011).

2.3.6 Effects and Consequences of IPV

Eight studies reported the effects and consequences of IPV (see Table 2.2), including mental health problems such as depressive symptoms and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Other health impacts experienced by victims include chronic pain, poor health status and somatic complaints (Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Al Dosary, 2016; Barnawi, 2017; Afifi *et al*., 2011), suicidal thoughts and drug abuse (Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Afifi *et al*., 2011). However, obesity among Saudi women was reported as a common consequence of IPV (Alhalal, 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2017).

2.4 Critical Review

In terms of settings, three studies were conducted in similar settings by the same primary author (Alhalal, 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2017), as were a further two (Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017). This raises questions about the impact of the findings because of the authors' aims and use of similar or identical samples in their studies. Five studies reported the prevalence of IPV in Riyadh (Jradi & Abouabbas, 2017; Barnawi, 2017; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Al-Faris *et al*., 2013; Abolfotouh & Almuneef, 2020); four studies reported the prevalence of IPV in Makkah province (Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017;

Alzahrani *et al*., 2016; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Wali *et al*., 2020); three studies were in the Eastern province (Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Afifi et al., 2011; Al Taifi *et al*., 2021) while two studies were in the Madinah province (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Sari *et al*., 2016) and only one study in Aljouf province (Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022). All studies involved women participants except one which explored health professionals' perceptions and knowledge of IPV. In addition, none of the studies recruited samples from the lower socioeconomic class as the samples were not from rural area in SA. Most of the primary authors reviewed are women. Due to the sensitivity of exploring IPV, both culturally and as a topic of research, male authors would face many obstacles to discover IPV among Saudi women and vice versa.

All the reviewed studies employed a quantitative approach using questionnaires. Most studies used a cross-sectional design, precluding the exploration of the other relative variables affecting the issue or of the phenomenon in depth. Most studies did not report the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. Only a few studies used random sampling, while convenience sampling was overused, as shown in Appendix 2.

The prevalence of two or three types of IPV over a lifetime was slightly high in comparison to the median rate of each form (physical, emotional and sexual) (see Figure 2.4). To verify the validity of this result, the lifetime median prevalence of physical, emotional and sexual IPV was calculated. The median prevalence of all forms of IPV as mentioned before were 30.9%, 25.3% and 14.73%, respectively, and the median result of these numbers is 25.3%, which indicates the logical prevalence of IPV in SA.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that in SA, IPV is present, and the behaviour is widely carried out by husbands against their wives. The findings of the studies may represent the middle and high classes of Saudi citizens, and there is a lack of research in other provinces of SA that were not mentioned in the previous studies. The prevalence of IPV during a lifetime varies from region to region. Some provinces, such as Madinah, have recorded significantly high prevalence of IPV during a lifetime (57.8%) (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009). On the other hand, the Eastern province has reported the lowest numbers of prevalence during a lifetime at 33% (Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014). Thus, these findings raise questions about the representativeness and generalisability of IPV data against Saudi women, and these studies may overestimate the range of IPV in Saudi culture.

2.5 Justification of The Proposed Study

The literature review shows that earlier studies have failed to explore the problem of IPV from Saudi men's perspective and that there is a gap in research when it comes to defining their attitudes and perceptions of this phenomenon. The available empirical research on IPV in SA employs quantitative approaches and collect data using surveys. The survey questionnaires use definitions of IPV that may be appropriate for other countries and cultures but not SA. The authors embrace the assumption that respondents' definitions of IPV aligns with their own, which may not be true due to cultural and social differences. In addition, given the sensitive nature of the topic, participants' responses may be biased because they wish to conceal unsightly information. Therefore, it would be more reasonable not to impose the commonly accepted definition of IPV on this population. Instead, I propose using a qualitative approach to identify Saudi men's definitions of IPV to understand what

behaviours they qualify as physical, emotional or sexual IPV. It would be useful to avoid applying the Western definitions of IPV in SA and it would be much better to understand how Saudi men perceive the phenomenon of IPV and what it means to them personally. This allows the development of culturally specific explanations of IPV in SA. Thus, a qualitative research method is necessary because there is a lack of qualitative research on the topic in SA, and it will help identify Saudi men's perspectives in cultural and social contexts.

2.6 Research Design

The following key components of the current research design:

- ***Research Problem and Gap***

  Earlier studies have failed to explore the problem of IPV through the lens of Saudi men, thus creating a research gap regarding their attitudes and perceptions of this phenomenon.

- ***Research Purpose and Aim***
  - Understanding the phenomenon of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men
  - Obtaining comprehensive background information about men's perceptions of IPV and its contributing factors
  - Generating an appropriate evidence-based theory
- ***Research Questions***
  - What are the perspectives of Saudi men about violence in intimate relationships and how do they define it?
  - What is the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
  - What are the reasons for and associated factors of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

- What are the coping and prevention strategies for IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

- ***Research Objectives***
  - Adopting a qualitative research method to identify Saudi men's perspectives in their cultural and social contexts.
  - Identifying a suitable qualitative research framework that helps to explore the issue of IPV from Saudi men's perspectives

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a literature review related to IPV in SA. This review reveals insightful information about the quality and quantity of studies carried out on the problem of IPV in SA. It is essential to note that this study was not restricted to a specific study design, whether qualitative or quantitative. As such, it provides a comprehensive view of the perception of IPV in SA in relation to existing empirical evidence. Furthermore, the review revealed new insights into the median prevalence rate of IPV as well as the risks and factors associated with IPV in SA. The review has also assisted in the identification of other areas that require further studies in this field. More importantly, the present research attempts to fill the gap in the current knowledge and promote a better understanding of Saudi men's perceptions of IPV. The expected outcome of this study is the development of a culturally specific theory that explains the meaning of IPV in the Saudi setting. The methodology and methods will be explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODODLGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided a review of the relevant literature for this study. This chapter provides an explanation of the philosophical underpinnings and methodology used in the study. The chapter consist of five sections. The first section provides the rationale for a qualitative approach. The second section discusses the qualitative research process, which was adapted from Denzin & Lincoln (2017) for this study. The third section delineates the first phase of the research process, which aimed to disclose the personal life and perspectives of the researcher that might influence the study. The fourth section explains the second phase of the research, which provided a detailed description of the research paradigm, followed by the third phase, which explored potential conceptual frameworks that may be utilised and why constructivist grounded theory was the most suitable approach. To begin discussing the qualitative research process, I will explain why this approach is the most appropriate to this study.

3.2 Research Approach: Why Qualitative?

Within an epistemological context, positivism and interpretivism are two main paradigms that underpin research (Bryman, 2008). The positivist viewpoint emphasises a focus on control of events and variability, value-free knowledge, and prediction (Rodwell & 'Connor, 1998). The interpretive perspective provides opposite different view based on the subjectivity of social action (Bryman, 2008). It is important to mention that the positivist approach primarily employs quantitative research tools, while the interpretivist approach primarily employs

qualitative methods for understanding the nature of reality, therefore consideration will now be placed into these two different perspectives.

In a philosophical sense, the foundation for these two approaches (qualitative and quantitative) is that researchers suggest they have something to impart to society about, truth, reality or knowledge (Becker, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Epistemologically, however, the positivist and the interpretivist perspective have different approaches and techniques to study 'some knowledge or verity'. Consequently, both approaches rely upon different research processes, though both are appropriate for aims.

According to the quantitative approach, an understanding of the philosophical concept of truth, knowledge or reality comes from physical dimensions of phenomena that can be measured, observed, and objectively evaluated (Bryman, 2008). In this case, to generalize results, researchers can isolate cause and effect' based on a theoretical framework of 'measuring and ... quantifying phenomena' (Flick, 2002, p. 3). However, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to view the truth, knowledge, or reality as a social phenomenon and not as unified data that depend on social and natural meanings (Draper, 2004). Hence, when applying the qualitative approach, the researcher seeks to obtain information about the studied phenomena through social or natural causes to understand and explain their meanings, beliefs and behaviours.

The aim of my PhD research study was to identify Saudi men's definitions of IPV to understand what behaviours they identify as IPV, so as physical, emotional or sexual IPV. Given the subjective nature of perceptions of IPV, a qualitative methodology was a suitable research

design, as it allows for description and interpretation of socially related phenomena by presenting them clearly and truthfully to researcher participants within the participants' cultural context. Moreover, I deemed qualitative methodology to be appropriate for this research for the following reasons:

1. The issue of IPV is complex and challenging and it is essential to conduct both intensive and in-depth exploratory research regarding IPV in the country. It is a sensitive, hidden issues which is not supposed to be discussed in SA. Earlier studies failed to explore the problem of IPV through the lens of Saudi men, thus creating a research gap in defining their attitudes and perceptions of this phenomenon. To develop better understanding of the phenomenon, an exploratory approach is useful in finding a well-grounded picture of the situation. The research questions developed from the review of the literature were concerned with the 'what', 'how' and 'why' rather than with 'how many' and 'how much'. Thus, I believe that the qualitative approach is appropriate for this study.

2. Regarding contemporary studies related to IPV in SA, I can conclude that researchers have applied western definitions which may not be relevant Saudi culture. Therefore, I will specifically focus on the views and interpretations of IPV within the Saudi sample population, obtained in their native social environment.

Having explained why the qualitative approach is the most appropriate methodology for this study, I will discuss how this approach places theory and philosophy into perspective within the research process.

3.3 Qualitative Research as a Process

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2017), the interrelated concepts of methodology, epistemology and ontology are important in qualitative research. Behind these concepts stands the personal biography of the researcher, who has specific ideas and perceptions of reality, truth and knowledge about a particular culture and community. To properly perform rigorous and systematic qualitative research, the researcher needs to follow five basic processes, described in Table 3.1. Within this chapter and the subsequent chapter (Chapter 4), I shall use this process to explain and justify the employment of methodological aspects of the study.

Table 3.1 Research Process (Adopted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2017)

Phase 1: *Researcher*	History and research traditions
	Conceptions of self and the other
	The ethics and politics of research
Phase 2: Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives	Positivism, post-positivism
	Interpretivism, constructivism, hermeneutics
	Feminism(s)
	Racialized discourses
	Critical theory and Marxist models
	Post-colonialism
Phase 3: Research Strategies	Grounded theory
	Case study
	Ethnography
	Phenomenology
	Action and applied research
	Clinical research

Phase 4: Methods of Collection and Analysis	Interviewing
	Observing
	Artifacts, documents and records
	Visual methods
	Autoethnography
	Computer-assisted analysis
	Textual analysis
	Focus groups
	Applied ethnography
Phase 5: The Art, Practices and Politics of Interpretation and Evaluation	Criteria for judging adequacy
	Practices and politics of interpretation
	Evaluation traditions

3.4 Phase 1: The Researcher

A constructivist approach to qualitative research acknowledges that a researcher themselves is one of the tools for data collection (Rodwell & O'Connor, 1998), and thus, value-free research is impossible. In the current study, this concern is not relevant given that the researcher includes within it his personal biography, cultural history and explores how these affect his view of himself and others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Creswell, 2013). In a similar vein, because social reality is a procedural, systematic construction, some researchers who explore social phenomena use their standing, prerogatives and authority in conducting their research (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, it is important for me to disclose the influences that result in bias within this exploratory study. About positionality, my researcher stance is as follows.

3.4.1 Personal Life and Perspectives about IPV

I was born and raised in SA. I am 37 years old, and I grew up as a boy among four girls in a traditional Saudi family setting where there were set gender expectations for both men and women. I received my bachelor's degree in Social Work in SA and my master's degree in Social Work in the United States. My father was the head of the household and the sole breadwinner. My mother, in contrast, was a housewife responsible for cooking, raising the children and caring for them as well as for her husband. Although my father is the head of the family, he has never made any decision without consulting my mother. In fact, I can say that my mother made most decisions, especially those related to care and upbringing of my sisters and me, but she never did so without consulting my father.

I never saw any major disagreements or any type of IPV between my parents throughout my childhood, but minor arguments occasionally occurred. Typically, these conflicts were about supporting and helping my father's siblings instead of supporting his own wife and children. My father was the oldest of his siblings and had to support and provide for his younger siblings as well as his parents. Supporting younger siblings is not strictly based on Islamic rules; however, it is culturally expected for the oldest sibling to take care of younger ones and for younger siblings to respect their older sibling. Supporting parents is a religious and cultural obligation, and usually, the oldest child has more responsibility in than the younger siblings. In the event of any conflict between my parents, they discussed it privately and tried to keep my siblings and me unaware of this argument. They were aware that conflicts might affect us and therefore did not want us to know about any disagreements between them. Additionally, my partners kept their marriage issues private from their families, and they have never discussed these issues with their families (both their father's and

mother's families). I believe they were well aware that seeking the help of their families to solve their issues would have had a detrimental influence on their lives. Considering the situation of my parents' relationship, I believe that keeping their issues private and discussing these issues without intervention from their families were important factors contributing to their stability and success.

Furthermore, during my childhood, my parents treated my sisters and me fairly and equally; for instance, if they hugged one of my siblings, they immediately would hug the others. From my perspective, I think they knew that unfair treatment could arouse lasting feelings of jealousy and hatred in children and lead to bitterness in the child's heart toward the parents as well. On the other hand, I have heard and witnessed that some families treated girls unfairly, whereas the boys were treated kindly. I was wondering whether the family's unfair treatment of the daughters might increase the likelihood that they would be abused throughout their married lives. As a Saudi citizen, and like many other Saudi men and women, I was unfamiliar with the term 'IPV' until I read the anti-abuse advocacy advertisement that was discussed earlier in this thesis. (see Section 1.15, Chapter 1). I believed that IPV was not prevalent in SA households, because I could not see it in either my family or in the homes of my relatives. I then started learning about it from television programmes, personal observations and reading. I realised that IPV was present in every culture; however, the reasons for its occurrence, its nature and the numerous contexts in which it appears are varied. I discovered later that there was a shortage of empirical evidence on issues related to IPV in SA, despite the widespread report of abuse cases in both electronic and print media. Globally, IPV may be committed by either men or women, but it was mostly committed by men in Saudi culture. I believe that men frequently have a major roles

and responsibilities in the IPV issue in SA. Because of the way gender roles were constructed in SA, the head of the family role may be misconstrued as male dominance, leading to IPV. Furthermore, individual perceptions regarding IPV, the dynamic of a couple's relationship and social and cultural attitudes and expectations of each gender can all influence IPV.

Due to my interest in child and family welfare, during my pursuit of my master's degree, I took several courses that depicted IPV from the perspective of American society. Through these courses, I realised that the definition of IPV in American culture does not apply to Saudi culture with unique norms and practices. I thought it was necessary to understand how the Saudi people define IPV. Thus, I felt it was crucial to obtain comprehensive background information about men's perceptions of IPV and its causes, as this will help view the issue from a new perspective and generate an appropriate, evidence-based theory.

As a researcher, I needed to be aware of and explicit about my own personal thoughts and perspectives, as they might influence my interpretation and presentation of the research findings. Reflection on the data collection and analysis processes will be discussed later in Chapter 4 (Methods). Having considered my personal life and beliefs about IPV that might affect the research, I now focus on the theoretical orientations which structure this study.

3.5 Phase 2. Theoretical Paradigms/Perspectives

A research paradigm assists the researcher in conducting and understanding the study. Guba & Lincoln (1994) view the basic beliefs of paradigms, which are important for developing a researcher's mind-set, and as fundamental for accessing and obtaining new information. In

addition, Denzin & Lincoln (2005) point out four fundamental metaphysics (models) of alternative research paradigms (see Table 3.2). In each model, the researcher is given an opportunity to see the world from a unique perspective, and there is no single model that is exclusively appropriate for the purpose of carrying out a given research activity. Therefore, selection of the research paradigm can be guided by the researcher's ontological views and criteria of reasonability that evaluate how likely it is that the paradigm is in line with research objectives. The next section will focus on above conceptual components with the research.

3.5.1 Research Paradigms: Ontology

Ontology concerns the researcher's beliefs regarding the nature of reality. For the research process, it is essential to correlate the study's objectives and its ontological approach. The purpose of this study was to generate a theory grounded in data that would lead to understanding how Saudi men define IPV, whereas the aim was to explore perceptions and experiences of participants to better understand the essence of social phenomena such as IPV. According to Snap & Spencer (2003) 'social phenomena are believed to exist independently of people's representations of them but are only accessible through those representations' (p. 13). This statement reflects a critical realist viewpoint, which lies between idealism and realism.

According to the concept of realism, people's perception of reality does not affect its existence (Smith, 1983). Within a realist approach, the aim of research is to test and verify a theoretical framework to reveal the truth. In contrast, an idealistic approach does not support the idea that an independent version of reality exists. Rather, this approach maintains that 'there exist multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by

laws, natural or otherwise ... these constructions are devised by individuals as they attempt to make sense of their experiences' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 86). From the idealistic point of view, research seeks to discover the views and perceptions of social phenomena to identify not truth, but reality (Charmaz, 2000).

According to idealism, multiple realities co-exist. It is arguable whether the aim of qualitative research is to uncover one of these realities, and if so, how to utilise this reality in practice. Researchers' findings become one of many realities that co-exist (Murphy *et al.*, 1998). A solution to the above dilemma requires engagement of the third viewpoint, which the concept of 'critical realism' or 'subtle realism' is suggested. According to critical realism, people's interpretations, experiences and cultural and societal contexts affect their descriptions, representations and experiences of reality. At the same time, critical realism interacts with position of constructivism in supporting the idea of a multiplicity of realities that are perceivable in various socially related ways. These considerations lead me to believe that concept of critical realism was most relevant to this research, as it allows various perceptions of reality by different persons to be considered as well as promoting understanding of the ways socio-cultural context affects these views and perceptions. Thus, critical realism acknowledges that reality for each person is multiple, non-competing idiosyncratic. Accordingly, the ontological position within critical realism was the foundation of this study. The perspectives of Saudi men on IPV are discovered and it is identified that the role of culture and religion has an influence on these perspectives in SA society. The research participants demonstrated a common representation of IPV, despite some differences in individual perspectives and perceptions. The ontology of critical realism holds that this phenomenon was usable within the research process.

Table 3.2 Fundamental (Metaphysics) of Alternative Research Paradigms

Item	Positivism	Post-positivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism— 'real' apprehend-able	Critical realism—'real' reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible	Historical realism—reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values, crystallized over time	Relativism— local and specific, constructed and co-constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/ community; findings true	Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/subjectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/manipulative ; verification of hypothesis; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypothesis; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutical/dialectical

3.5.2 Research Paradigms: Epistemology

Epistemology, as translated from the Greek language, refers to philosophical knowledge. Epistemological context explores interrelations of the knower with 'what is known', the ways of proving 'what we know', and what we can call 'knowledge' (Krauss, 2005, p. 759). The concept of epistemology provides the research with a theoretical framework to indicate how the researcher can know the subject of research. According to the theoretical principles of symbolic interactionism, they create the epistemological basis for the study.

Symbolic interactionism provides an understanding of the significance of social context at the micro-level. This arises out of pragmatism, particularly the work of the social psychologist George Herbert Mead (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In Mead's judgment, socio-cultural environment impacts the individual's self-perception, and the mind of every person may exist in interactions with similarly minded persons. Hence, symbolic interactionism assumes that individuals may create their reality using social interactions (language, clothes, etc.) as communicative tools (Fassinger, 2005). Mead's follower, Herbert Blumer, further developed the considerations of symbolic interactionism in an influential and comprehensive summary of this perspective. According to Blumer (1969), there are three essential premises of symbolic interactionism:

1. People interact with things according to the meanings they credit to them.
2. The meanings of such things, accordingly, come from social interaction.
3. The meanings of things may change via a process of interpretation in which individuals interact with things they face.

These premises form the basis for the study of socially related problems and the socio-cultural environment of the individuals. The concept of constructivism is in a line with symbolic interactionism in that it is one of the primary theoretical bases influencing qualitative research. Criticisms of this approach to the research process have concerned some limitations of early symbolic interactionist concepts that provided only descriptions of phenomena and not proper explanation and interpretation of resulting actions (Gerhardt, 1990). By broadening qualitative research through the interpretation of data using an iterative, inductive, systematic and rigorous approach, grounded theory (GT) contributed solutions to these criticised positions of symbolic interactionism (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2000). Symbolic interactionism and GT are consonant in large part: 'Both the theoretical perspective and the method assume an agentic actor, the significance of studying processes, the emphasis on building useful theory from empirical observations, and the development of conditional theories, which address specific realities' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 21). According to a GT approach, researchers test the meaning found within socio-cultural contexts and focus on how particular individuals or groups define their realities based on their experiences and interpretive social interactions (Fassinger, 2005). In this regard, the concept of symbolic interactionism is an appropriate theoretical approach within this study. First, because the research purpose was to provide a detailed analysis of Saudi men's perspectives about the meanings, they attribute to IPV, and the study aimed to understand how Saudi men define IPV in marital relationships. Second, the research recognizes the impacts of socio-cultural context on individuals' views about the phenomenon of interest. Third, individuals who have experienced IPV in their life can change the views and perceptions of themselves and environment surrounding them. Thus, the

concept of symbolic interactionism was an appropriate theoretical perspective for this research.

3.5.3 Research Paradigms: Methodology

The meaning of methodology lies in a plane of theoretical considerations regarding social reality, procedures, methods and techniques of data collection and analysis. Methodology creates interactions between ontology and epistemology as a basis for research and techniques applied to implement that research. In the context of the research question, qualitative methodology facilitated understanding of social issues, while creating a comprehensive view of these issues and keeping in mind the subjective participants' views and experiences (Creswell, 1994).

A constructivist approach recognizes the role of the researcher in bringing his perceptions, perspectives and experiences into the field of the research. In addition, the concept of constructivism accepts that perceptions and experiences of reality are influenced by the social environment and cultural context in which people live. In my judgment, a constructivist approach was also the most suitable theoretical perspective for this research study. In Phase 3 of my considerations regarding the research process (below), I address the strategy of the study.

3.6 Phase 3. Research Strategy

In the research strategy stage, the researcher develops plans and procedures that conceptually support identification and choice of methodology, and then obtains and evaluates information to answer the research questions. Denzin & Lincoln (2017) highlight numerous

strategies (Table 3.1) related to qualitative methods. However, Creswell (2012) considers phenomenology, ethnography and GT as the most relevant conceptual frameworks for reflecting the constructivist viewpoint. For this research project, phenomenology and ethnography were considered. These approaches, however, were not the most appropriate for this research. An overview of the approaches and the justifications for not using them are provided in the following section.

3.6.1 Phenomenology

'Phenomenology is an anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer' (Moran, 2002, p. 4). This research philosophy has two major functions: First, it aims to explain Husserlian's eidetic standing or to interpret the hermeneutic standing of Heideggerian theorists (Sokolowski, 2000; Creswell, 2012). Consequently, using this research approach might have enabled me to collect the responses in exploring and defining how Saudi men take the issue of IPV into account and how they elaborate on it. At the same time, I plan to explore the issue by utilising the conceptual framework of the exploratory model I consider to be the most appropriate tool for examining the breadth and depth of IPV in various homes throughout SA. However, some critics contend that the philosophy of phenomenology has limitations, including intricate philosophical underpinnings bedrocks (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). The underlying philosophy of phenomenology is so complex that it is complex to analyse and interpret the data. Furthermore, the aim of this thesis was not to explore men's experiences of IPV; rather, it was to explore men's perceptions and perspectives of IPV that may or may not be shaped by their experiences. Most importantly, I cannot explore

actual experiences of those who have committed IPV in SA due to the sensitivity of the topic and the difficulty in recruiting participants. Taking all these factors into consideration, phenomenology was not the most suitable methodology for this research.

3.6.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is a type of anthropological study. Ortner (1995) explained it as a way 'to understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of knowing' (p. 173). To gather information, ethnography helps investigators to become a part of the routine life of the participants under investigation 'watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995, p. 1). Ethnography potentially have been useful for answering the research questions in this thesis. For example, in conducting my inquiry into aspects of the chosen subject, I should record and observe how Saudi men perceive IPV, how they view their woman partners as wives, and how they measure their standing as husbands. However, the Saudi home is not a public place but a private institution where interactions between husbands and wives take place. As an outsider, it was not possible to have access to it. It would have been difficult and unethical to document their daily routines, behaviours, attitudes, perspectives and other related factors. As a result, it was not ethically justified to apply this method in the collection of data for this thesis.

3.6.3 Grounded Theory

GT not only describes but also produces explanatory frameworks inductively, in addition to elaborating on the construction of fundamental social communications and procedures (Creswell, 2012). This research philosophy is generally implemented in qualitative explorations that are necessary to 'capture complexity, linking well to practice, supporting theorizing of new substantive areas, and enlivening mature theorizing' (Locke, 2001,p. 95). In this thesis, the conceptual framework of GT is justified for a several reasons. Initially, the available data suggests that there has been no research study that has constructed a theory on the topic of IPV in SA. IPV is a complex issue, and although some research frameworks can explore delicate and difficult issues, the social problem of IPV can be best understood through the application of an intensive and logical method for understanding its inherent factors and features. Charmaz (2014) states that GT is a practical framework, as it is an organised and logical, yet flexible, manifestation of the qualitative framework. Consequently, this framework was useful in exploring the participants' understanding of IPV, as well as their basis for developing social procedures and relationships.

There are numerous versions of GT that differ from one another, depending on whether they support constructivist or objectivist assumptions (see Table 3.3). Objectivist Grounded Theory (OGT) is the primary linked with the original GT or Glaser's GT (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser, 1998), which presupposes the researcher's neutrality and passivity as well as external and objective reality in the 'discovery' of the theory. Within this research study the application of OGT might have been useful for unearthing the viewpoints of participants, but that strategy would have been of little significance, because it would have failed to explore and highlight the unchartered personal territories for understanding the related personal and social factors that contribute to

IPV. Adherents of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) support subjectivity, numerous manifestations of reality and personal perspectives while highlighting the basic theoretical underpinnings of this research framework via iterative or cooperative procedures (Charmaz, 2014). While CGT emphasises that knowledge is elicited hermeneutically via the interactions, interpretations and acts of participants, agreement on such social constructions is still dependent on dialectic consensus between the researcher and the participant. In this situation, the researcher must perform the primary role of developing and drawing conclusions from the collected information. Given that I am sensitive to both existing literature on IPV and the ethnic culture of the participants in this present study, my contribution to the construction of the participants' viewpoint can only be assessed if I use CGT. Thus, I chose CGT for this study because it considers the researcher's participation in discovering the views of the participants. Charmaz (2014) defines CGT as a comparative, inductive, open-ended approach that includes theoretical sampling, memo writing, constant comparative analysis and theoretical saturation (see Figure 3.1). In addition, rather than merely exploring, concepts are constructed in CGT work. Thus, in this context, the researcher does not remain impartial but instead becomes an integral part of the research process. I employed CGT to highlight how different social processes occur, especially in the context of IPV from the perspectives of Saudi men.

Table 3.3 Comparisons and Contrasts Between Objectivist Grounded Theory and Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014)

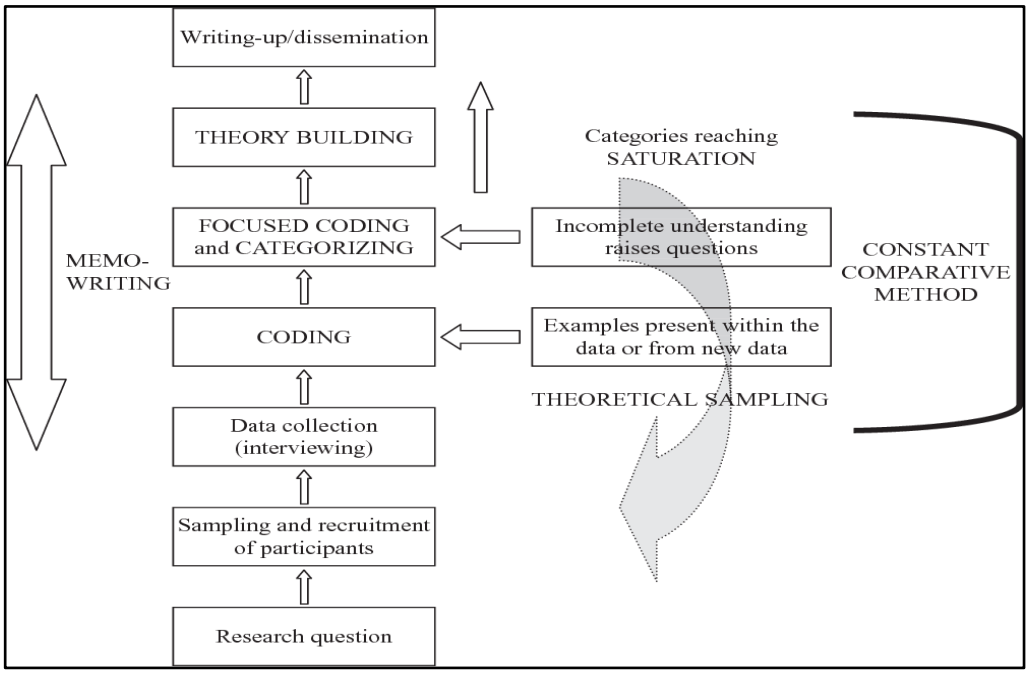
Objectivist Grounded Theory (OGT)	Constructivist Grounded theory (CGT)
Foundational Assumptions	**Foundational Assumptions**
Assumes the neutrality, passivity and authority of the observer	Assumes the observer's values, priorities, positions and actions affect their views

Assumes that external reality Assumes discovery Views representation of data as unproblematic Assumes that conceptualization emerges from data analysis	Views representation of data as problematic, relativistic, situational and partial Assumes mutual constructions of data through interaction Assumes multiple realities Assumes that the researcher constructs categories
Objectives	**Objectives**
Aims to achieve context-free generalization Aims to create theory that fits, works, has relevance and is modifiable Aims for parsimonious, abstract conceptualizations that transcend historical and situational locations	Aims to create theory that is credible, original, resonant and useful Aims for interpretative understanding of historically situated data Views generalizations as partial, conditional and situated in particular times, spaces, positions, actions and interactions Specifies range of variation
Implications for Data Analysis	**Implications for Data Analysis**
Gives priority to researcher's analytic categories and voice Sees emergent categories as forming the analysis Views data analysis as an objective process Sees reflexivity as one data source	Seeks and (re)represents participants' views and voices as integral to the analysis Views co-constructed data as beginning the analytic direction Acknowledges subjectivities throughout data analysis Engages in reflexivity throughout the research process

To date, no comprehensive research of Saudi men's viewpoints about IPV has been conducted. As a result, it is important to search out the topic particularly from the viewpoint of ordinary people who may or may not have experienced IPV. Considering the integrity and strength of Saudi family culture, some members may not have experienced IPV, but they might have observed such domestic events in their neighbourhood or their own tribe. Therefore, exploring how the events

relating to IPV occur in ordinary families is paramount, as this helped in constructing culturally specific understandings of IPV. This type of research could, in turn, support culturally sensitive programs for spreading information relating to IPV in the population. Considering this, CGT helped to search out the social situations that highlight the issue of IPV, especially from the standpoint of Saudi men. Finally, the purpose was to generate a theory grounded in data that led to understanding how Saudi men define IPV.

Figure 3.1 Visual Representation of Grounded Theory (Charmaz 2014)



3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the methodology and philosophical foundations that guided this research. The chapter began with an explanation of why a qualitative approach was used. Subsequently, this chapter provided an in-depth description of the first, second and third phases of the research process in detail. A more in-depth discussion of

the fourth and fifth phases, which explain the methods utilised to conduct this research, are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

4.1 Introduction

After considering the three phases of the qualitative process explained in the preceding chapter, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive and clear explanation of the research methods used in this study. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides a description of the settings of the study and the sampling, recruitment, and data collection methods used. The second section discusses the data analysis process in further detail. Section three provides an overview of phase five and delineates the qualitative evaluation criteria used in this study. The fourth section discusses the ethical considerations of this research project. Section five details my reflections on data collection and analysis.

Before starting discussion on phase four of the qualitative process, it is important to highlight that this research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sheffield in March 2020 (see Section 4.5).

4.2 Phase 4: Methods of Collecting and Analysing Empirical Material

Following the research process adopted from Denzin & Lincoln (2017), this section provides a detailed explanation of the application of the principles of GT and the processes utilised in collecting and analysing data. In this section I discuss the context and settings of the study as well as the recruitment, sampling and data collection and analysis methods used.

4.2.1 Study Settings

It is important to highlight that this study was designed before COVID 19, and there were significant changes in terms of the setting of the study as well as recruiting the participants. Thus, the section below will discuss the impact of COVID-19 and the initial plan to recruit participants.

The Impact of COVID-19

This research was conducted during the global COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted the study. For example, changes were made to the recruitment of research participants and the way the research was publicised to potential participants. Thus, remote data collection methods were used instead of standard face-to-face data collection methods. To prepare for these changes, I reviewed the literature on remote interviews in qualitative research and methods for recruiting participants via social media. COVID-19 challenges were thoroughly addressed with my research supervisors to identify potential solutions. The next section will discuss the applied plan of the study setting.

Applied Plan: Online Research Settings

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place in SA and the UK at the time of recruitment, it was essential to develop an alternate method for selecting the research sample. I determined that social media platforms were the most appropriate method for recruiting Saudi participants. Social media is a vital resource that should be utilized by scholars when conducting data collection. A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development indicated that despite having a population of around 25 million people and a relatively high

proportion of expatriates, SA has the highest number of smartphone users. For every 100 residents, SA has 180 mobile phones (Alarabiyah Net, 2012). Hence, by utilizing social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram, it was easy to distribute invitation flyers and text messages.

Social media is not just a place where people connect; it is also a powerful tool in the contemporary world. Through social media, people obtain information about health, education, politics and commercial products. Using social media to send out questionnaires may not be a well-known research technique in some communities; however, this technique is widespread in SA, and it works well in this society. According to Global Media Insight (2021), SA has the largest social media market globally, with 40 million subscriptions. Moreover, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp users in SA comprise over 73% of all active Saudi social media users. The subsequent section will briefly discuss the initial plan for recruiting the participants.

Initial Plan:

The initial plan was that to recruit participants from the cities of Mecca and Taif, which are in Makkah Province. Therefore, I planned to recruit Saudi men from two different settings to ensure that I reached my target sample size. I planned to recruit participants from Umm Al-Qura University (UQU) and the outpatient departments of primary healthcare centres (PHCCs). I chose UQU because it would provide me access to diverse individuals, including Saudi teaching staff (teaching assistants, lecturers and professors), services staff, security staff and students. Additionally, I planned to identify PHCCs in Taif that were accredited by the Saudi Central Board for Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions (CBAHI). I believed that both settings would allow me to identify and

recruit an appropriately diverse sample for the study. As a backup plan for recruiting Saudi participants, participants would be recruited from a Saudi community club in Sheffield. There are more than 40 Saudi clubs in various regions and cities in the UK. The clubs are supervised by the SA Cultural Bureau (SACB) in London. Students from SA, whether sponsored or not, as well as their partners, are eligible to become members of the Saudi Student Club. I assumed that each club would have Saudi members from various regions of SA, and that I could identify and recruit an appropriately diverse sample for the study from these clubs. It is important to emphasise that the remote data collection method was mentioned also in the ethical application as an alternative plan for recruiting the participants.

To recruit participants using in the initial plan, it was necessary to seek permission from UQU, PHCC and the SACB. Thus, I submitted an approval letter from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sheffield and a summary of the proposed research (See Appendix 5 and Appendix 6) to the administrative staff at each field site to obtain permission and approval for data collection. However, as mentioned before, it was not possible to carry out the initial plan due to COVID-19 restrictions in SA and the UK, which was addressed in detail above.

4.2.2 Participant Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In this study, all Saudi men (single or married) over the age of 18 were eligible to participate. I did not specify a cut-off age to increase the number of participants eligible to participate in the study. However, Saudi men below the age of 18, Saudi women and non-Saudi men and women were excluded. Individuals who have either witnessed or heard of IPV in their family, tribe or neighbourhood was part of the inclusion criterion. At the start of the inquiry, participants were recruited

according to the above inclusion criteria. Subsequently, the decision as to whether to continue sampling was made by considering provisional theoretical ideas as they appeared during the process of data collection and evaluation (Patton 1990; McCann & Clark, 2003).

4.2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Rationale

As Moser and Korstjens state, 'a sampling plan is a formal plan specifying a sampling method, a sample size, and procedure for recruiting participants' (2018, p. 10). Thus, it was nearly impossible to predict what sample size would satisfy the requirements of a certain theory (Morse, 2000). According to GT, studies do not use predetermined samples sizes. After reviewing relevant literature, I decided that the best option was to use different sample sizes to reach saturation. Creswell (2016) states that a sample for GT should be comprised of 20–30 participants. According to Charmaz (2014), reaching saturation relies on obtaining high-quality data. A review of GT studies on counsellor education demonstrated that saturation is often reached in 8–23 interviews (e.g., Bohecker *et al*., 2016; Dollarhide, Gibson & Moss, 2013; Jorgensen & Duncan, 2015; Parker *et al*., 2014; Wagner & Hill, 2015). A study by Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) found that high levels of homogeneity enable sample sizes with as few as six participants to reach saturation. Furthermore, researchers are discouraged from collecting extensive data, as large files are likely to remain unused and unanalysed. A large volume of data may overwhelm the researcher, leading to a loss of focus and distracting the researcher from performing fundamental processes (Stern, 2007). For this reason, I planned to conduct 25 interviews, as this sample size seemed sufficient to satisfy the study's aim. However, this sample size was hypothetical rather than conclusive, as the selection of participants in constructivist grounded theory (CGT) relies on the theoretical saturation of the data.

As a result, this sampling remained operational until theoretical saturation was reached (Creswell, 1994).

Creswell (2012) states that theoretical sampling is a useful strategy as it helps researchers contact and select only those participants who have unique and rich understandings related to social relationships. Here, the sampling benchmark was fundamental to developing an inclusion standard for participants. Additionally, theoretical sampling helped me develop a strategy (Charmaz, 2014) for ascertaining and improving the categories related to the theoretical framework. However, 'the full potential of GT can only be realised through sound application of its distinct methodological principles, most notably theoretical sampling' (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009, p. 23).

Therefore, theoretical sampling in this study entailed the selection of participants in accordance with emerging themes from previous phases of data analysis, including analytical coding, memo writing and comparison. Whereas the preliminary phases of analysis focused on maximising flexibility, this phase focused more on the clarification and resulting saturation of the existing categories. The initial purposive sampling was first conducted to select participants based on broader characteristics; for example, Saudi men were selected regardless of if they were married, divorced or single. However, at this phase, theoretical sampling was applied to giving directions on which data that needed to obtain subsequently (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1965). In other words, theoretical sampling entails making conscious decisions about what questions to ask in the subsequent rounds of data collection, what type of participants to include and which categories to development.

Theoretical sampling requires the researcher to identify participants according to provisional theoretical ideas that arise during data collection and analysis. For instance, a classical instance involved the first five participants, who were Saudi married men. In contrast, in the next interview, it was necessary to involve a single, divorced Saudi man. The resulting data was compared with previously collected data, and codes and categories were developed. Similarly, after acquiring data on individuals who had traditional, arranged marriages, I felt that it was necessary to interview a participant who had a non-traditional, non-arranged marriage. Moreover, most of the participants were employed and educated Saudi men. Thus, I felt that it would be beneficial to explore the ideas held by unemployed and uneducated Saudi men. Concurrently, I recognised that male participants, particularly the elderly, should be interviewed to explore their perceptions; for this purpose, I interviewed two older Saudi males. The role of religion was a common theme throughout the responses of the first 15 interviews. Therefore, it was crucial to explore the opinions of two experts in Islamic religion concerning IPV to develop and narrow the categories and theory. More details regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants will be later.

As Boeije (2002) emphasizes, the above data collection procedure assisted in the creation of categories, the clarification of category boundaries and the identification of relationships between categories. In addition, I compared new data with the initially collected data. Theoretical sampling demonstrated numerous advantages; for example, it helped me identify participants and develop and gather certain concepts. Overall, theoretical sampling proved to be a reliable method for assessing when saturation had been reached. This will be discussed later when the basic principles of GT are explained. The recruitment

section that follows describes the recruiting strategies and the number and characteristics of the participants.

4.2.4 Recruitment

Prior to recruiting participants, I obtained ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sheffield. Recruitment, which utilised theoretical sampling methods, took place over a twelve-month period. As explained earlier, the study recruited adult males (18 or older) who may or may not have experienced abuse in their marital relationships. The recruiting strategy will be discussed next.

Initially, I implemented several strategies to ensure that the appropriate participants were reached. For instance, I reached the target population by distributing flyers and invitations via text messages (Appendix 7) to relevant Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram accounts, such as Saudi student club accounts in the UK and US and other accounts run by Saudi students. I targeted these groups because they have many followers and reach hundreds of thousands of people. Based on the account descriptions, it can be assumed that the followers of these accounts were Saudi citizens. Therefore, I was confident that many people would read my messages and be encouraged to participate. Furthermore, the admins of these accounts were asked to encourage people to participate and share the flyer and invitation texts with their social circles. The invitation flyers and text messages provided information about the study and instructions about how to contact me directly through email and WhatsApp.

Once a potential participant contacted me through WhatsApp or email, I requested their age, sex and nationality to assess their eligibility for participation. Also, several individuals contacted me and introduced

potential interview participants. I recorded the contact information for these potential participants, contacted them and invited them to participate in the study after consulting the provided information, data analysis and emerging sampling frame. After confirming perspective participants' eligibility for participation, I sent them the information sheet and consent form via email or WhatsApp. Subsequently, interviews were scheduled at a mutually suitable time. After arranging the interview time and date, I invited participants to participate in a semi-structured interview over Zoom, a video conferencing software program. In total, 26 Saudi males were recruited and interviewed. The demographics characteristics of these participants will be discussed in the subsequent section. The video conferencing tool is also discussed in further detail in the Data Collection section.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participant

In total, 26 Saudi participants, including single, married and divorced males, participated in the study. Table 4.1 displays demographic information for these 26 participants. Pseudonyms and code numbers were used to protect participants' anonymity and ensure confidentiality. Participants were diverse in terms of age, education level, occupation and marital status. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 51 years or older. In terms of education level, two participants were unlettered (illiterate) and lacked a secondary school diploma, and two participants had earned a secondary school diploma. Nine of the participants had earned a bachelor's degree, and another nine had earned a master's degree. Only four of the participants held doctoral degrees. With regards to occupation status, most participants (21) were employed; four participants were unemployed, and one participant was retired. Twenty-three of the study participants were married, two were single, and one man was divorced. Moreover, marriage duration varied from 2–30 years

for both currently married and divorced participants. Additionally, one of the married participants reported that he had two wives, while the other married and divorced participants stated that they had just one wife each. These variations indicated that participants came from various urban and rural regions of SA. Furthermore, participants living with either their extended families or nuclear families were recruited to represent a variety of family structures. Three married participants indicated that they lived with their extended families, while 21 participants reported that they lived with only their nuclear families. Moreover, participants who had been married via both arranged and non-arranged marriages were recruited. Twenty-two of the participants indicated that they had been married in a traditional, arranged marriage, whereas only two participants stated that their marriages had been non-traditional, non-arranged marriages. The next section discusses the data collection methods used in this study.

Table 4.1 Demographic Information Concerning Individual Participants

Participant's pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Education level	Occupational status	Number of wives	*Duration* Of *marriage*	Number of children	Education level of spouse	Occupational status spouse wife	Living in extended family	How husband met the wife
AN 16/6	36 -40	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	15-20 years	6 children	Master's degree	Employed	No	Arranged marriage (via colleague)
AAW 17/6	31 -35	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	5–10 years	2 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife and master student	No	Arranged marriage (via friend and get married his sister)
AM 18/6	31 -35	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	One	2-5 years	Zero	Master's degree	Housewife and PhD student	No	Non- arranged marriages (contacted his wife before the engagement)
AF 18/6	41 -45 years old	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	One	15-20 years	4 children	Bachelors' degree	Employed	No	Arranged marriage (cousin marriage)
AAB 19/6	31 -35 years old	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	5-10 years	Zero	Bachelors' degree	Housewife and master student	No	Arranged marriage (cousin marriage)
AA 22/6	31-35 years old	Divorced	Master's degree	Employed	One	5-10 years	Zero	Secondary school diploma	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (cousin marriage)
AAJ 22/6	31 -35 years old	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	5-10 years	3 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (married from same tribe)
ABA 23/6	18-30 years old	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	2-5 years	Zero	Master's degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (cousin marriage)
ABF 24/6	36 -40	Married	PhD's degree	Employed	One	15-20 years	2 children	Master's degree	Housewife and student	Yes/ previously with his parents and sisters	Arranged marriage (married from same tribe)
ABM 24/6	51 year or older	Married	Secondary (higher) school diploma	Retired	One	More than 30 years	6 children	Secondary (higher) school diploma	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (cousin marriage)

AD 25/6	18-30 years old	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	5-10 years	1 child	Master's degree	Housewife	Yes/ temporary with his parents	Arranged marriage (his mother saw the wife in a wedding)
AB 3/6 (Pilot)	36 -40	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	One	10-15 years	3 children	Secondary (higher) school diploma	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (Married from neighbour)
ABMH 15/2	46 -50 years old	Married	Secondary (higher) school diploma	Employed	One	20-25 years	4 children	Bachelors' degree	Employed	No	Traditional marriage (cousin marriage)
ABS 16/2	51 year or older	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	Two	**1st marriage** 25-30 years **2nd marriage** 2-5 years	7 children	**1st wife** Less than secondary (higher) school diploma **2nd wife** Bachelors' degree	**1st wife** Housewife **2nd wife** Employed	No	Arranged marriage (married from same tribe for both wives)
ADN 5/3	31 -35 years old	Single	Bachelors' degree	Employed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
AHF 8/3	18-30 years old	Married	Master's degree	Employed	One	7 years	2 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via his family)
ABD12/3	18-30 years old	Married	PhD's degree	Employed	One	4 years	1 child	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	Yes	Arranged marriage (via his sister)
ASDW 13/3	31 -35 years old	Married	Master's degree	Unemployed/ PhD student	One	2 years	Zero	Master's degree	PhD student	No	Non- arranged marriages (contacted his wife before the engagement)
AXL14/3	46 -50 years old	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	One	11 years	2 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)
AZFAD 20/3	18-30 years old	single	Bachelors' degree	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
APFT 26/3	31 -35 years old	Married	Bachelors' degree	Unemployed	One	6 years	3 children	Secondary (higher) school diploma	Housewife and undergraduate student	No	Arranged marriage (via his family)

ALCD 28/3	41 -45 years old	Married	Bachelors' degree	Employed	One	9 years	3 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)
ABSF 24/5	46 -50 years old	Married	Less than Secondary (higher) school diploma	Unemployed/ business	One	19 years	5 children	Less than Secondary (higher) school diploma	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)
ABZY 24/5	46 -50 years old	Married	Less than Secondary (higher) school diploma	Employed	One	22 years	4 children	Less than Secondary (higher) school diploma	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)
ABRA 5/6	31 -35 years old	Married	PhD's degree	Employed	One	6 years	3 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)
FSLA 1/7	51 year or older	Married	PhD's degree	Employed	One	17 years	5 children	Bachelors' degree	Housewife	No	Arranged marriage (via friend)

4.2.5 Data Collection

Literature reviews, interviews, observations, and the researcher's reflections constitute various sources of data that can be used when applying a grounded theory approach (Creswell, 1994). Data for this study were gathered via individual interviews between July 2020 and July 2021. According to Charmaz (2014), selecting appropriate data collection methods enables researchers to address research questions with incisiveness and ingenuity. She states that the data collection methods used by a researcher influence the phenomena the researcher observes because the meaning researchers assign to data directs them to discover the social processes involved in emergence and discovery. Considering the sensitivity of the research topic, one-to-one, in-depth interviews were determined to be an appropriate data collection method for this study, as they allow for the extensive exploration of participants' perceptions. According to Charmaz (2006, p. 26), 'In-depth qualitative interviewing fits grounded theory particularly well'. Researchers following CGT employ in-depth interview techniques to reveal individuals' thoughts, hidden actions, feelings and experiences related to a particular topic (Charmaz, 2014). Collecting abundant data can shed light on a subject by delving beneath the surface of social life to produce a theory of GT (Charmaz, 2014). However, in focus group interviews, participants may be reluctant to share their thoughts and perceptions candidly due to the sensitivity of the issue of IPV in SA. Individual interviews were the most suitable method for this study, as I sought to discover Saudi men's perceptions and attitudes towards IPV.

As stated previously, participants were interviewed using Zoom, a video conferencing software program. Video conferencing is a real-time online

meeting where two or more people in various locations can communicate and collaborate over the internet. Different devices can be used for video conferencing, such as a laptop, desktop or a smartphone (Mitel, 2019). Video conferencing is not a new concept in the online working world. With the advancement of technology in recent years, it has been gradually embraced. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more people working from home; in this context, video conferences have replaced traditional, face-to-face office meetings. For example, Zoom is a leading video conferencing software program that has been widely used for social and corporate events, particularly since 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent work from home orders (Boyce-Tillman, 2021). In December 2019, Zoom recorded 10 million meeting participants per day; however, this number had increased to over 300 million by April 2020 (Dean, 2022). The company that produces the Zoom software program, which has become popular because of its ease of use, was founded in 2011 by former Webex executive Eric Yuan, and the software was officially launched in 2013. It became listed as a publicly traded company in 2019 (Trueman, 2020). Zoom can also securely record and store sessions without relying on a third-party service, which is important when sensitive data needs to be protected (Archibald *et al*., 2019).

Face-to-face interviews are considered the 'gold standard' of qualitative research because they allow the researcher and participants to develop a rapport and build mutual trust while addressing potentially sensitive topics (Sy *et al*., 2020). However, researchers have noted that Zoom is beneficial because it allows researchers to recruit more participants from remote and regional areas (national and international), which is difficult when using traditional face-to-face interviews (Archibald *et al*., 2019). Furthermore,

Archibald *et al*., (2019) state that the overall satisfaction of participants and researchers when using Zoom was a positive indicator of its appropriateness as a qualitative data collection method that may complement or expand existing methodological options for researchers. Thus, data collection via Zoom was determined to be the most appropriate method for this study.

The Interview Guides

Qualitative interviews are defined as 'conversation(s) with a purpose' (Burgees, 1984, 1988). The aim of such interviews is to have conversations with participants in which they share information with the researcher that is pertinent to the research topic (McCann & Clark, 2005). An interview guide, which contains questions related to the research question under investigation, is frequently used to guide this process. Interview guides are constructed in a variety of ways; they can be highly or loosely structured and contain broad questions (Krauss, 2009). During an interview, an interview guide serves to direct the focus of the researcher. As a result, developing an interview guide is a critical step in any qualitative research project that involves data collection via interviews.

I developed a semi-structured interview guide based on the three-phase approach to in-depth interviewing proposed by Seidman (1998) and Ali (2012). Semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews that assist the researcher in conducting a rigorous analysis with proper planning of the research study (Charmaz, 2014). Additionally, a semi-structured interview is as 'a gently-guided, one-sided conversation that explores research participants' perspectives on their personal experience with the research topic' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 56). Semi-structured interviews are also a flexible

and adaptive method of data collection that allows both the researcher and the participant to interpret data and construct meanings in a collaborative manner (Kvale, 1996). The flexibility of the semi-structured method allows for freedom in terms of the order, wording and priority of questions asked, which can result in more in-depth and unexpected answers (Robson, 2011). Additionally, it allows for the exploration of the participants' perceptions, the modification of the inquiry line and the pursuit of intriguing replies (Kvale, 1996).

In this study, the three-phase approach was employed to guide the discussion from common and general questions to particular and sensitive questions. During the first phase of the interview, participants were asked questions about demographic information, such as age, marital situation, education and occupational level, children and the type of marriage for married or divorced participants. The second phase of the interview was designed to record participants' perceptions related to the subject under study. For example, participants were asked non-intrusive questions about marital life and a happy/successful relationship. The third phase of the interview was designed to encourage participants to reflect their meaning of the topic. For instance, participants were questions about IPV, which enabled me to observe their perceptions and understandings of IPV. During the third phase of the interview, I used two vignettes.

These vignettes served as shifting questions from the second phase to the third phase (see Appendices 8 and 9). The stories were developed into two scenarios (male and female partners as perpetrators of relationship violence). The vignettes were designed to be as realistic as possible and help participants consider the issue of IPV and assess the situation

objectively. Although the language used was simple and easy to read, I took into consideration the fact that illiterate participants might struggle or be unable to read the vignettes. Therefore, I read the story aloud, and time was given afterwards to allow participants to digest the information, clarify uncertainties and think through their responses. Importantly, the participants were not required to share their personal experiences of IPV because it is a very sensitive issue, which may have discouraged many people from participating in the study. They answered the questions by sharing their perceptions and perspectives about the issue while occasionally drawing on their observations of family dynamics and cultural practices. Initially, the interview guides were constructed based on the existing literature. Thus, having reviewed the existing literature has influenced the construction of the interview guide. The interview guide was also made accessible in English and translated to Arabic (Appendix 10).

Piloting the Interview

Piloting the interview guide allows for the identification of any ambiguities and the subsequent amendment or exclusion of certain questions. I conducted two pilot interviews. The interview guide, the pilot interview process and interview transcripts were discussed and shared with my research supervisors. Any proposed changes were thoroughly discussed with my research supervisors. Additionally, Seidman's (1998) and Ali's (2012) directions regarding what should be focused on during each of the three phases allowed me to develop and ask questions in a manner that enabled me to thoroughly explore the research topic. Seidman's (1998) and Ali's (2012) guidance also allowed me to transition smoothly from one phase to the next. However, during the pilot interviews, participants'

answers prompted me to ask additional questions that I had planned to ask in subsequent phases. Thus, I realised that I may need to carefully return to a prior phase or move to a subsequent phase after hearing a participant's response. Additionally, piloting the interview guides contributed to the refinement and rearrangement of the questions. For instance, I started the first phase by asking participants to talk about their marital lives and afterwards asked them to describe a marriage life as well as a happy and successful marriage. I realised that the participants may feel uncomfortable answering the question that related to their lives at the beginning of the interview, but instead, I asked them to describe the marriage and a happy and successful marriage in general, so they would talk about their married lives later. However, I had to remind them that they were not obliged to answer any uncomfortable questions. In addition, the pilot study allowed me to realise that some participants may perceive and describe domestic violence as family violence or child abuse. Thus, I used the term 'marital abuse or violence' and 'IPV' instead of domestic violence. I also realised the importance of informing participants that there were no wrong or right answers before starting the interview, as I felt that it may have affected the nature of their responses. I think this helped participants avoid response bias by giving the actual response to the questions that represented the reality instead of the ideal response. After piloting the interview guides, I concurrently conducted data collection and recruitment using the iterative logic of GT.

Implementing Data Collection

Initially, each participant was given a participant information sheet written in Arabic via email or WhatsApp prior to the interview. Before the interview

started, the information sheet was discussed with participants to allow them to think, remember and prepare what they wanted to say more clearly and openly. Subsequently, each participant received a consent form with information regarding their rights in during study. Consent forms were also available in Arabic, and they explicitly stated participants' right to refuse, withdraw from or participate in the study. The consent form and information sheet will be discussed in further detail in the Ethics section.

The interview was scheduled at a mutually convenient time, and each participant was again asked before the interview whether they wished to participate in the study. Participants were also informed that participation in the research was voluntary, and they were able to withdraw from the study at any time without providing clarification. Additionally, each participant was encouraged to ask any questions regarding the study before starting the interview. Interviews were conducted in Arabic because Arabic is the official national language of SA. Furthermore, since Arabic is the first language of most Saudis (including myself), most Saudis can speak Arabic fluently.

To conduct interviews, the Zoom program was used in this study, as stated previously. Although Zoom supports both video and audio communication, I provided participants with the choice of either an audio or video interview depending on their level of comfort. Most participants agreed to be interviewed via a video call. Four participants, however, preferred an audio-only call. Regardless of the participants' preferences, I recorded only audio from interviews using a digital audio recording device (Sony ICD-UX570) with the participants' consent. It is important to emphasise that physical field notes during the interview were deemed impracticable due to the time

required, the potential for diverting interviewees' attention and the potential for missing or losing important information (Charmaz, 2014, p. 91). By recording audio, I was able to concentrate on my research questions; listen closely to participants' responses, language, and emotions; and maintain fluid conversation. In contrast to the classical GT approach of utilising only field notes, Charmaz (2014) recommends recording audio to retain the silences, tone and tempo of the conversation and the flow of the interchange between the interviewer and interviewee. Additionally, this technique was selected because of the expanded replicability, storage and accessibility of audiotapes; tapes can also be easily transcribed for data analysis (Tessier, 2012).

It is important to mention that the semi-structured interview allowed me to explore each participant's perceptions of IPV in depth. However, every effort was made to ensure that participants were interviewed and approached in a culturally appropriate manner, and they were asked questions in a non-threatening, non-judgmental manner. For example, I began interviews by asking participants about their views and perspectives regarding the study; subsequently, I provided two vignettes, which helped me transition into asking questions about personal perceptions of marital abuse while reminding them that there were no wrong or right answers. This process not only relaxed the participants, but also developed rapport and trust, which enabled the discussion to flow smoothly. The participants' physical comfort was also always prioritised. For example, during the interview, each participant was offered breaks. Although I was unable to provide food or drinks for the participants, I encouraged them to eat or drink whatever they wanted during the breaks.

At the end of the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to add anything they thought was useful or to ask any questions. The interviews were ended when no new information was forthcoming. Also, interviews were sometimes suspended or stopped at the request of a participant. For instance, during one interview, a participant's child distracted him. Thus, the interviewee requested that we take a break and pause the interview until he could hand his child over to his wife, who was in the next room. We then resumed the interview. Furthermore, at the end of each interview, participants were provided with contact information for services and organisations that they could contact if they had any concerns regarding IPV.

After each interview, I made a note of any important aspects of the interview or events that occurred during the interview, including the non-verbal behaviours of the participant and interruptions that occurred during the interview. Such notes can help me to reflect on the interview process and contextual factors and other important aspects that may have emerged during the interview process. Such notes are essential to maintaining the transferability and rigour of the study. Every effort was made to ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity. For example, during the transcription and analysis processes, participants' actual names were replaced with pseudonyms and code numbers. Throughout the data collection process, I kept a reflexive journal to assist me in analysing my own beliefs, values and feelings related to the topic of IPV. During the data collection period, I stayed in regular communication with my research supervisors, who supported and assisted me in expressing my concerns and feelings during this period.

4.3 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is a systematic, comparative, iterative and collaborative technique for organising, compressing, defining, shaping and analysing a massive amount of data that is primarily textual, and data analysis helps the researcher fully understand the construction of social reality in its naturalistic setting (Richards, 2014).

Moreover, when conducting qualitative research, various processes and approaches are available to use for data analysis, however, the methods used are primarily determined by the study objectives and the researcher's epistemological viewpoint. The data analysis in this study was designed to apply a 'bottom-up' technique (Draper, 2004), which GT researchers commonly use to obtain insight into the perspectives of participants and identify emergent categories and themes that are essential to constructing a theory grounded in the data (Glaser, 1998).

The data in this research was analysed utilising Charmaz's (2014) CGT concepts, including analytic coding, memo writing, constant comparison and theoretical saturation, which are essential principles for developing a theory.

Because the data was obtained in the Arabic language, added attention was given to interpretation and associated concepts. The application of core principles of CGT to transcribed data that has been translated will be discussed later.

4.3.1 Translation, Data Analysis and Related Issues

Collecting data in one language and presenting study findings in another language necessitates interpretation from one language to another. There is considerable scholarship on cross-language research where the researcher and participants face language obstacles. To overcome these obstacles, researchers may hire translators or linguists (Squires *et al*., 2020). However, scholars of CGT discourage hiring translators because translators may not be fully competent, and this can lead to translators unwittingly changing the meaning of a translation (Nurjannah *et al*., 2014).

This study required translation because Arabic is SA's official national language. Therefore, all the interviews were conducted in Arabic and then interpreted by me, which permitted me to avoid bias while constructing a theory. It has been argued that translation not only translates words from one language to another, but also involves conveying and interpreting the meaning of two languages (Buhler, 2002). Birbili (2000) suggested that collecting data in one language and interpreting and analysing it in another language presents validity issues. For this study, concerns about translation were insignificant because I served as the interpreter, and I am conversant in both languages. I also had the benefit of coming from the same culture as the participants. Moreover, because I share the same language, culture and ethnicity as the Saudi participants, the meanings of their answers and perceptions were less likely to lose lexical comparability or conceptual and technical equivalence during the interpretation and translation of any emotional connotations (Halai, 2007).

The literature suggests several techniques for reducing translation-related issues and challenges of translation, including piloting interviews, consultation and cooperation with other individuals throughout the translation process and back translation (Temple & Young, 2004; Birbili, 2000). These techniques were utilised in this research study. The interview guide, information sheet, consent form, invitation flyer and text messages were all translated from English to Arabic and then back translated from Arabic to English. To ensure accurate translation, I used English-to-Arabic and Arabic-to-English dictionaries and sought advice on the usage and meaning of terms and idiomatic expressions. To guarantee accuracy and transparency of the translation, back translation was performed by a fellow colleague who is a native Arabic speaker and was not otherwise involved in the research project and a person who holds a doctorate degree. After that, we scheduled a meeting to address translation-related issues and inconsistencies between translations and reach a mutual agreement. However, no significant differences were discovered.

Squires (2009) proposes 14 criteria for evaluating cross-language qualitative research, which refers to any study that employs an interpreter or translator during any stage of the research process (Temple, 2002). These criteria include conceptual equivalence, translator credentials, the translators' role and competence and study methods. Although I did not employ an interpreter or translator and instead translated the data myself, these criteria were still used to establish the rigour and trustworthiness of the study. Table 4.2 describes the translation process used in this study, which was evaluated according to Squires' evaluation criteria (2009).

Table 4.2 Criteria for Evaluating Cross-language Qualitative Research

Criteria	Present study
Conceptual Equivalence	
1. Provided a rationale for why the analysis occurred in the chosen language, especially if it was not the same language as that of the participants	Yes
2. Developed a translation lexicon for multi-language studies to ensure conceptual equivalence	N/A
3. Had the translation validated by a qualified bilingual individual not directly involved with data collection or the initial translation	Yes
Translator's Credentials	
1. Briefly described the translator's qualifications or previous experience with translation	Yes
2. Described the researcher's level of language competence	Yes
3. Described the researcher's or translator's identity in contrast to that of the participants	Yes
Translator's Role	
1. Described the translator's role in the study	Yes
2. Described at what point(s) during the research process translation services were used	N/A
3. Identified who conducted the analysis and in what language it took place	Yes
4. Provided a rationale for using multiple translators when the study took place in only one language	N/A
Methods	
1. Selected the appropriate research method for the cross-language qualitative study	Yes
2. The translated interview guide was pilot tested prior to conducting the study	Yes
3. The country of origin of all participants in the study was indicated, even if they came from linguistically similar regions	Yes

4. Stated in the limitations section or other appropriate location that translation or use of translators may have affected the results	Yes

4.3.2 Analysing Interviews

As previously stated, I collected data according to GT principles. As a result, data analysis began as soon as the first data were gathered (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Hence, in this study, the analysis began after all the data were translated, transcribed and made available in English. MAXQDA, a straightforward and practical data coding and analysis software program, was utilised to conduct the research. This programme can investigate text with any content in multiple languages, including Arabic. While computer software can save time, handle large volumes of information and improve the reliability and the validity of a study, it has constraints with regards to conceptualizing thoughts and meanings and analysing information (John & Johnson, 2000). For example, a computer software program permits all information to be analysed free from suppositions or biases. Thus, computer programmes can focus on the amount of information or homogenization, however, they cannot infer context, integration or meaning. To support my examination and engagement with the data, I used Microsoft Word to print duplicates of the interviews, and I used pens, paper, tones and highlighters to help me analyse the data. The basic principles of GT and their implementation in this study are described in the section below.

Basic Principles of GT and their Application in Data Analysis

Constant Comparison

Grounded theory research relies heavily on the constant comparison approach to analysis. It necessitates data-to-data comparisons and must be applied across the entire analytical process. Teshch (1990) elaborates on this point, stating,

> The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (p. 96)

In terms of data analysis, the level of abstraction should be raised. Thus, I frequently compared my own memos and transcripts to identify the degree of diversity and complication in the information. This allowed me to fully comprehend which information or translations indicated interaction or a social process in every interviewee's viewpoint on IPV. In this context, GT was beneficial for surveying my own suppositions and those of participants because I was able to contrast the categories and emerging themes with my previous experiences and knowledge, the literature I had reviewed and my preconceptions.

Each transcribed interview was analysed utilising a constant comparison approach during the phases of data display, data reduction and analytical distinction. In the following sections, I clarify how the constant comparison method was used to code and analyse the data during the stages of GT core principles.

Coding

Coding is a GT tool that involves 'categorizing portions of information with a concise name that sums up and represents each piece of information' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). In GT, coding is a crucial descriptive and analytical procedure in which data is distilled to construct categories, concepts, and social processes.

By using a CGT approach to coding, I sought to capture cultural and contextual meanings that individuals connect to key concepts, such as marital dynamics, factors associated with IPV and conflicts, abuse and the role of culture and religion. I also sought to clarify how the understandings of these key concepts define interactions, processes and social relationships. Charmaz (2014) proposes using two levels of coding – initial and focused coding – to describe the gathered data.

Initial Coding begins by highlighting key words and phrases. Initial coding necessitates data fragmentation, and it can be initiated once the primary information has been collected. Each line of the transcript was examined and named by utilising words and descriptive labels to distinguish phenomena in the data. The words used should be closely related and reflect the data (Charmaz, 2006). Similar initial codes were then assembled to construct categories, and decisions about collecting new data were made in response to the development of concepts and categories until theoretical saturation was reached.

Code construction begins immediately after the first piece of information has been obtained, and these codes are open, distinct and prime. By adopting

the strategies of open coding, I was able to reveal the ideas, thoughts and meanings contained in the transcript (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102); this also enabled me to examine whether the data was relevant to my research questions and the question of 'what is this information an investigation of?' (Glaser, 1978, p. 57). Moreover, my initial codes were provisional, as the degree of conceptual analysis and abstraction changed as I reviewed each interview while coding the data.

Because the initial codes were gathered from video call conversations, I was able to preserve the participants' meanings, perceptions and behaviours; therefore, my prior knowledge and preconceptions had a limited influence. Nonetheless, I used sensitising concepts to guide my initial coding because I was unsure where to begin with such a vast database. As a starting point for analysis, I used sensitizing concepts; however, sensitive concepts that corresponded to the codes were used instead to prevent harming data integrity.

Initial coding involves coding information line-by-line, word-by-word or incident-by-incident, and it relies on the size and significance of the information to construct the theory. I employed line-by-line coding, which involves labelling or coding every segment in the data. The aim of using line-by-line coding was to remain as faithful to the data as possible. Line-by-line coding permits the researcher to evaluate, adjust and compare the data while examining the 'fit and pertinence' of the analysis. Line-by-line coding also enables the researcher to remain open-minded and notice undetected actions and patterns in the participants' perceptions. Table 4.3 illustrates an example of initial coding.

I revealed participants' perceptions through line-by-line coding of data about people, settings and actions; the next step was to define and extend the theoretical categories derived from this specific data. Through this focused coding, categories began to emerge.

Focused Coding strives to generate more precise and direct codes than those used in initial coding. Focused coding is defined as 'using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to shift through large amounts of data' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). My objective in utilising focused coding was to develop properties and categories that would determine the conceptual strength and adequacy of the data through the tool of constant comparison (Charmaz, 2014). At this stage of the data analysis process, any initial codes were named that had significant analytical power, prompted hypothetical centrality or were repeated or telling. Table 4.3 illustrates an example of focused coding.

Each transcript was compared and revisited with existing codes, categories and concepts to affirm abstraction and corresponding adequacy within the data. When analysing data, comparing focused codes also facilitated the identification of gaps, frequency and emergence. This study involved surveying the perceptions of different types of Saudi men; therefore, their actions, thoughts and words were understood as representing different understandings of the same phenomenon. For example, participants used multiple words, such as 'respect', 'appreciation', 'honesty' and 'partnership', to describe 'love' in the marital life.

As mentioned before, the repeated and consistent comparison of the transcripts helped with identifying categories and concepts; it also helped

me gather new data to define the dimensions and properties of the categories. For instance, regarding the concept of 'love', I was not just interested in the frequency with which the term was utilized, but also in how Saudi men perceived this term differently and distinctively. Through subsequent interviews and transcript comparison, I discovered that married Saudi men defined love as a long-term relationship, whereas single Saudi men regarded it as the idea of sharing and understanding their lives together.

After analysing the data using focused coding, categories and properties began to emerge; however, the relationships between the concepts remained unclear. I then adopted another GT principle that explored the relationships between concepts that emerged from the data, which starts with a core category.

Table 4.3 Example of Initial and Focused Coding

Interview transcript	Initial coding	Focused coding
My view of violence in its general sense, which is often said about violence, which is hitting, for example. Hitting a wife or even a wife can beat her husband. This may be one of the types of physical violence or violence with physical assault. This is one of the types of violence. Let me explain it according to my understanding. The second type of violence is verbal violence, for example, by insulting and cursing, and the third type (which I see as the largest and strongest type of violence), is psychological violence…. For example, someone who makes his wife think that he may divorce her in any moment, her feeling of insecurity is sort of violence.	• Deafening IPV • Hitting • IPV can be toward women and men • Distinguishing different types of IPV • Insulting • Cursing • Considering psychological violence as the largest and strongest type of IPV • Divorcing wife suddenly	• Physical violence • Verbal violence • Psychological violence

	• Feeling insecure	

Core Category

Corbin & Strauss (2008) postulate that concepts alone do not constitute a theory. However, the authors argue further that the inclusion of concepts into a fundamental theme result in a general unifying explanatory method that results in a theory. Accordingly, a 'core' or 'central' category is a category that has immense analytical power and the greatest likelihood of connecting the remaining categories. Corbin & Strauss (2008) identified five criteria of a core category:

- A central category must be abstract.
- A central category must be consistent and logical with the data.
- A central category must appear frequently in the data.
- A central category must be sufficiently abstract so that it can be utilised to do research in other substantive areas in order to develop a more general theory.
- A central category should assume depth as well as explanatory power, as every other category is connected to it via statements of relationship.

Building on these postulations, Corbin & Strauss (2008) state that in order to define a core category, it is necessary to write thoughtful memos to facilitate the inclusion of different concepts. This process is illustrated below.

Memo Writing

Memos are written analytical records (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Charmaz (2006) emphasises that memos are essential tool in the grounded theory method because they help researchers to clarify their thoughts, explore codes and categories, which help them to identify the linkages between various codes and categories and eventually develop theory. Additionally, Montgomery & Bailey (2007) rightfully observe that memos are simply the researcher's written records of thought processes that can transform descriptive data into theoretical accounts.

During the data collection and analysis phase, Charmaz (2014) emphasised that memo writing is an imperative process for every researcher because it helps them to remain engaged in the research process and follow up on what is happening in the data to identify increase the level of abstraction of researcher's ideas.

The main reasons for writing memos are to justify every code; define, label and compare data; identify relationships between categories; and maintain a record of progress. In addition, memos further enable the researcher to make reflections and analyses and compare ideas emanating from data to construct theoretical categories. Thus, I kept field notes beginning from the study piloting stage until the end of the data collection stage. Also, I started writing my memos immediately after collecting the information and I continued writing the memos until the data analysis and writing stages of the study.

During the preliminary stage of the study, I recorded memos in a methodological journal to document hunches, summarise interviews, redefine provisional codes and observe and develop links between emerging categories. Subsequently, I wrote field notes, which Montgomery and Bailey (2007) define as a written record of observational data produced during fieldwork. These field notes were subsequently interpreted and integrated into my memos to reflect social constructions and interactions in the research context. In addition, the field notes and memos were used to record reflexive observations, write short interview descriptions, plan what questions should be asked in subsequent interviews and record what type of participant should be recruited next.

For example, one of my memos was about the role of religion. My preliminary analysis of the data coding indicated that religion was critical to marital life; however, my memo writing expanded the scope of factors that demonstrated that role of religion was associated with marital life and IPV. Building on this observation, I concluded that numerous rules and principles in marital relationships were derived from the Islamic religion. Therefore, writing these memos helped generate a sub-category of the role of religion. Memo writing and analysis have also contributed to the crafting and clarifying of the links and relationships stemming from emerging concepts in the data.

As the data analysis developed, the memos adopted an analytical and abstract mode in this research study. I considered the concepts and developing themes and their relationships with each other, and more fundamentally, I aligned focus codes into categories. In addition, it emerged that the memos were dated, integrative, brief and spontaneous to include

intricacies of produced transcription via dialectic interactions between participants and myself.

Theoretical Saturation

The essence of theoretical saturation elevates GT above other methods of qualitative analysis, especially in cases where rigour is needed through various levels of triangulation or confirmation. In contrast to other approaches, GT utilises theoretical saturation to identify the point during analysis when collecting new data no longer generates new theoretical insights. In addition, the core category is formulated based on properties, dimensions and variations (Charmaz, 2014, p. 213). Glaser (2002, p. 191) further explains that theoretical saturation is commonly confused with the repetition of similar patterns, stating,

> Theoretical saturation is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields the conceptual density that when integrated hypothesis makes up the body of the generated GT with theoretical completeness.

Therefore, in this study, saturation was assessed according to 'theoretical sufficiency' regardless of the number of interviews or participants that were recruited or the repetition of the concepts (Dey, 1999).

For this reason and other previously reasons, theoretical saturation or sufficiency was expected to be achieved when the categories were developed well-crafted concerning their properties as well as dimensions,

the relationships between categories were developed, and no new properties were found. More specifically, this study was based on data collected from 26 participants. In addition, the theoretical model deployed in the study was clear, well developed and seamlessly matched the concepts developed. Subsequently, the study data, initial analytical work and proposed theoretical model were presented to my research supervisors to receive a conformation of the adequacy of the data collected and saturation. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, emphasis was placed on conducting the research in a rigorous manner. This, therefore, marks the final step of the qualitative research, which shall be discussed in the subsequent section.

4.4 Phase 5: Evaluating Qualitative Research

Quality of Study Criteria

Quality is essential in evaluating the originality, credibility, integrity, authenticity and transferability of any study. It is important to note that validity and reliability refer to the exactness and generalisability of a research project (Bryman, 2008). However, validity and reliability in quantitative research cannot be evaluated using the same method used to evaluate qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Some critics have claimed that these concepts are irrelevant and underestimate qualitative research, and these critics do not consider such research to be valid, useful or trustworthy. However, other scholars have suggested different measures in qualitative research that address validity and reliability (Charmaz, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

Because this study was conducted using CGT, evaluation criteria proposed by Charmaz (2014) were used for this study. Charmaz (2014) suggested four criteria for evaluating GT research: credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Evaluating Criteria for GT Research (Adopted from Charmaz 2014)

Credibility	Has your research achieved intimate familiarity with the settings or topic? Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data Have you made systematic comparison between observations and between categories? Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations? Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis? Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment – and agree with your claims?
Originality	Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insight? Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rending of the data? What is the social and theoretical significance of this work? How does your grounded theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?
Resonance	Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience? Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings? Have you drawn links between larger collectivities or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate? Does your grounded theory make sense to your participants or people who share their circumstance? Does your analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?
Usefulness	Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds? Do your analytic categories suggest any generic processes? If so, have you examined these generic processes for tacit implications?

	Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas? How does your work contribute to knowledge? How does it contribute to making a better world?

This evaluation will be addressed in Chapter 7, where I will present my rationale for including each question that was highlighted in the above criteria. In the following section, I will discuss the ethical considerations for this research study.

4. 5 Ethical Considerations

It is essential to consider ethical implications throughout any research process to minimise any potential harm. Therefore, prior to beginning this research, I received formal ethical approval for this project from the Ethics Committee at the University of Sheffield in March 2020 (Appendix 5). Given the sensitivity of the topic and concern that the use of IPV in the title would deter people from participating (or even considering) this study, the title was slightly modified to make it less intimidating. I used the title of '***Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective'***. To comply with the requirements of the University of Sheffield's ethics policy and the Data Protection Act (2008), great care was taken in the preparation of the study. The following section describes the strategies that were used to guarantee the ethical compliance and integrity of the research.

4.5.1 Information Sheet and Informed Consent

All potential participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix 11) via email or WhatsApp. Additionally, given the sensitivity of

the research topic and the existence of confidentiality concerns, participants were given the opportunity to have the information sheet read aloud to them before the interview started.

The information sheet informed participants that their participation in the study was completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. The information sheet also clearly explained the aim of the study, the content of the interview guide and the data collection method. To ensure that participants could understand the information sheet, it was written using straightforward and clear language (Arabic). Prior to interviews, participants were also informed about the circumstances surrounding the disclosure of their personal information, which were also explained on the information sheet.

After participants agreed to participate in the study, they were provided with a consent form via email or WhatsApp. It is important to note that their mental ability was not assessed using a standard scale or tool; instead, I utilised common sense and my previous social work expertise to assess potential participants' decision-making capabilities. Participants' participation in the study was voluntary, and they were provided with full information about the intent of the study. It was made clear to participants that they had the right to withdraw at any time or decline to answer any question during the interview without providing any explanation. It was ensured that participants did not feel obligated to participate in the study, and that no personal, social or cultural pressures were placed on them. The consent form was written using simple and clear language (Arabic). Consent was received in the form of a PDF document. One copy was given

to the participant, and the other was kept as documentation (see Appendix 12).

4.5.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Every effort was made to ensure that data was safeguarded, and that participants' confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Participants were informed that their participation in the study would remain confidential. They were assured that their personal information and the interview transcripts would be shared exclusively with the research supervisors. To ensure data confidentiality, I manually transcribed interviews. Also, all transcripts were coded and anonymised using identifiers instead of personal information.

Electronic data, such as transcripts, consent forms, memos, field notes and audio files, were stored on a password-protected computer to protect data and prevent unauthorised access. The digital audio recording device (Sony ICD-UX570) used for this study was kept in a secure area to prevent loss, damage, or theft during the data collection and analysis period.

After the interviews were transcribed and verified for accuracy, the raw data from the audio files were destroyed. This follows the basic principles contained in the University of Sheffield's ethics policy. In addition, data collection, destruction, use, storage, and disclosure all conformed with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2008) and the ethics and governance policies of the University of Sheffield.

4.5.3 Avoiding Harm to Participants and Disclosure

The risk of harm to participants was quite low. Potential risk to participants was also minimised during the data collection and recruitment phases. The participants were given information on how to contact the research team if they experienced harm or stress or had any concerns after taking part in the study. Additionally, the participants were given information regarding the service and counselling resources that could offer support to those affected by IPV and marital conflicts (see Appendix 13).

There were no interviews with known perpetrators or victims of IPV, and I did not attempt to explore personal experiences of IPV from participants unless they wanted to. However, it is important to mention that the participants felt more comfortable participating in the research after being assured that they were not required to discuss their personal experiences. Thus, a few of the participants shared their personal experiences of dealing with IPV, which will be discussed later in Chapter 5. I was aware that discussing IPV experiences, whether actual or hypothetical, could cause psychological distress. Therefore, I was sensitive to the topic and participants' emotions, and ensured to inform participants about the interview questions in advance. I also informed participants that they can refuse to answer any questions or ask to stop or pause the interview at any time.

During the interview, none of the participants expressed any signs of distress. However, I felt it was necessary to prepare strategies for dealing with this situation during the interview. For example, if a participant became distressed, the interview would be stopped, and a break would be provided

before the participant was asked if they wished to continue the interview, reschedule it, or withdraw from the research project altogether. It was recognized that participants may experience harm or stress or have a concern subsequent to the interview; therefore, I provided participants with contact information for the research supervisors and support organisations at the end of the interview.

Moreover, none of the participants admitted to any major abuse aimed at themselves or others throughout the course of the interview. However, the information sheet informed participants of confidentiality limitations in the case of disclosure of any serious abuse, which required an action plan that would be performed. For instance, if the life of a participant or someone else was in immediate danger, urgent action, such as reporting the threat to the local police and authorities, would be taken. After discussing the ethical considerations of this study, I will provide my reflections on the data collection and analysis process.

4.6 Reflection on Data Collection and Analysis

While exploring my perceptions and attitudes towards IPV and conducting a literature review, I was able to clarify my preconceptions regarding the issue of IPV, and these preconceptions were clarified in the Methodology Chapter (see Section 3.4.1). However, I kept an open mind during the study and remained open to participants' perceptions. The process of collecting data for this study was a valuable experience. As mentioned previously in this chapter, I started preparing this research project in July 2020, and at that time I anticipated that most of the interviews would be performed in person, with some interviews conducted via telephone or online if

necessary. However, as time passed, national lockdowns were declared in SA and the UK; therefore, all interviews had to be conducted remotely via Zoom. Even though I expected that most participants would prefer face-to-face interviews, I was surprised to discover that some participants stated that they would have been unwilling to participate in the study if it had been conducted in person. This contradicts some of the researcher preferences that were discussed in Section 4.2.5 (Sy *et al*., 2020); however, these preferences conform with participant preferences that were documented in another study (Archibald *et al*., 2019). As a result, I was curious as to what underlying issues the remarks made by research participants may be reflecting. First, I was curious whether remote interviews made participants feel more private and comfortable since they did not take place in the proposed setting. Second, I was curious whether Zoom interviews made participants feel more open, since they may have felt less pressured to share their views on the topic. This prompted me to consider the advantages of interviewing participants via videoconferencing software compared to face-to-face interviews, as videoconferencing may provide a feeling of anonymity, allowing participants to talk more freely about sensitive topics such as IPV. This issue has been debated in the literature. The sensitivity of subject is significant, with emotionally painful themes potentially benefiting from face-to-face interviews, and embarrassing subjects potentially benefiting from anonymity (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Eventually, I discovered that some of the participants were very open when addressing the topic of IPV, and I was able to collect rich data via interviews. However, I was curious if this would have been different if the interviews had been conducted in person.

Analysing the data for this study was challenging. I double checked all the codes and categories to verify that they were accurate and relevant. Also, I continued asking questions and taking notes while reflecting on my discussions with participants and reading relevant studies. This helped me make sense of the data and the perspectives of the participants, locate answers to questions and refine the codes and categories that emerged from the data. Additionally, regular meetings and conversations with supervisors were beneficial. My supervisors' questions encouraged me to think critically, carefully analyse my data and justify my rational for constructing certain categories. There were many moments during the data collection and analysis process when I felt I would never be able to complete this project due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I was able to overcome these difficult times with the support of my family and supervisors.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored the methods that were used in this study. It explained the basic principles of CGT, such as constant comparison, analytic coding, theory sampling and saturation, and illustrated how key concepts, properties and themes were discovered. The findings of this study will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

After considering the qualitative research process, which was adapted from Denzin & Lincoln (2017), this chapter discusses the findings of the research conducted for this thesis. The aim of this research study was to develop a theory of IPV from the perspectives of Saudi men. Thus, a set of research questions guided this study:

- What are the perspectives of Saudi men about violence in intimate relationships and how do they define it?
- What is the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the reasons for and associated factors of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the coping and prevention strategies for IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

This chapter provides descriptions of the categories that were developed through the process of data analysis. The findings are presented in six categories*: marital dynamics, the role of family, the role of culture and religion, definitions and perceptions of IPV, causes and contributing factors of IPV, and addressing and preventing IPV.* It is important to note that this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will discuss the following categories: *marital dynamics, the role of family, and the role of culture and religion*. These categories do not concentrate only on IPV, but on the critical social processes and structures that provide the circumstances for IPV to occur in Saudi society. The next part will discuss the subsequent categories:

definitions and perceptions of IPV, causes and contributing factors of IPV, and addressing and preventing IPV, which primarily focus on IPV in SA. After discussing the six categories, Chapter 6 will describe the core categories, as well as its relationship to the categories discussed in both parts.

PART ONE

This part will discuss three categories: *marital dynamics, the role of family, and the role of culture and religion*.

5.2 Category 1: Marital Dynamics

Marital dynamics refers to the characteristics of the intimate relationship between the spouses that may contribute to IPV. According to the research participants, the strength and nature of the relationship between spouses seemed to be a significant factor in both marital conflict and IPV. Before discussing the characteristics of the intimate relationship, it is important to explain how spouses get married. As explained in Chapter 1 (Section 1.14.3), arranged marriage is the most common type of marriage in Saudi society. When describing this type of marriage, participants mentioned that although there is an engagement period before the marriage, it is often the case that the engaged couple do not see one another at all during that period, or only see each other in a brief meeting before their wedding day. The process of marriage in SA was also discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1.14.3). Most participants emphasised the importance of maintaining contact with each other during the engagement between the spouses. They believed that mutual understanding during this period is critical to marital success. One

participant explained the importance of understanding in the engagement period as:

> *'I see that the couple, in traditional marriage, can meet and understand each other during the engagement period. I think that this is a legitimate right for both because you are looking for a successful partnership, and this partnership may not succeed if one partner does not know the other partner well. As for me, I had a father-in-law who was very understanding because he lived abroad and did not object to my meeting with his daughter. Although my mother-in-law is illiterate, she also did not object to my meeting with her daughter. Both believed in the importance of meeting my current wife during the engagement period. I know that this is not allowed in our culture, but this family was exceptional, and they, the parents-in-law, believed in the importance of mutual understanding before marriage.'* (AHF 8/3)

A few participants believed that an unarranged marriage could succeed if the spouses are honest in their relationship, which means that both are serious about their relationship and intend to marry each other. Participants indicated that some couples would prefer unarranged marriages if they were unable to contact and meet the other partner during the engagement period. However, as this type of marriage is not acceptable culturally, there are barriers that each partner may face, such as concerns about cheating by the other spouse, and the family may reject this type of marriage as well. One of the participants stated:

> *'From my point of view, for us in the previous periods, unarranged marriage was completely unacceptable and completely rejected, but it is now possible to succeed if it is based on honesty and a serious relationship between the two partners. I think that today's generation may not prefer arranged marriage if there is no meeting between the two partners during the engagement period and may look for other ways to break the barrier of arranged marriage in*

> *favour of unarranged marriage. But from what I have heard many young people say, if you marry a girl through an unarranged marriage, it is possible that she may betray you and get to know someone else. Also, the parents could reject this type of marriage. Of course, these are the concerns and problems of this type of marriage, which may be unfamiliar to and unsuitable for us as a society.'* (AHF 8/3)

Whether spouses are married via arranged or unarranged marriage, participants emphasised the importance of discovering their partner's characteristics to understand each other and prevent conflict, including IPV, which will be discussed later in Category 6.

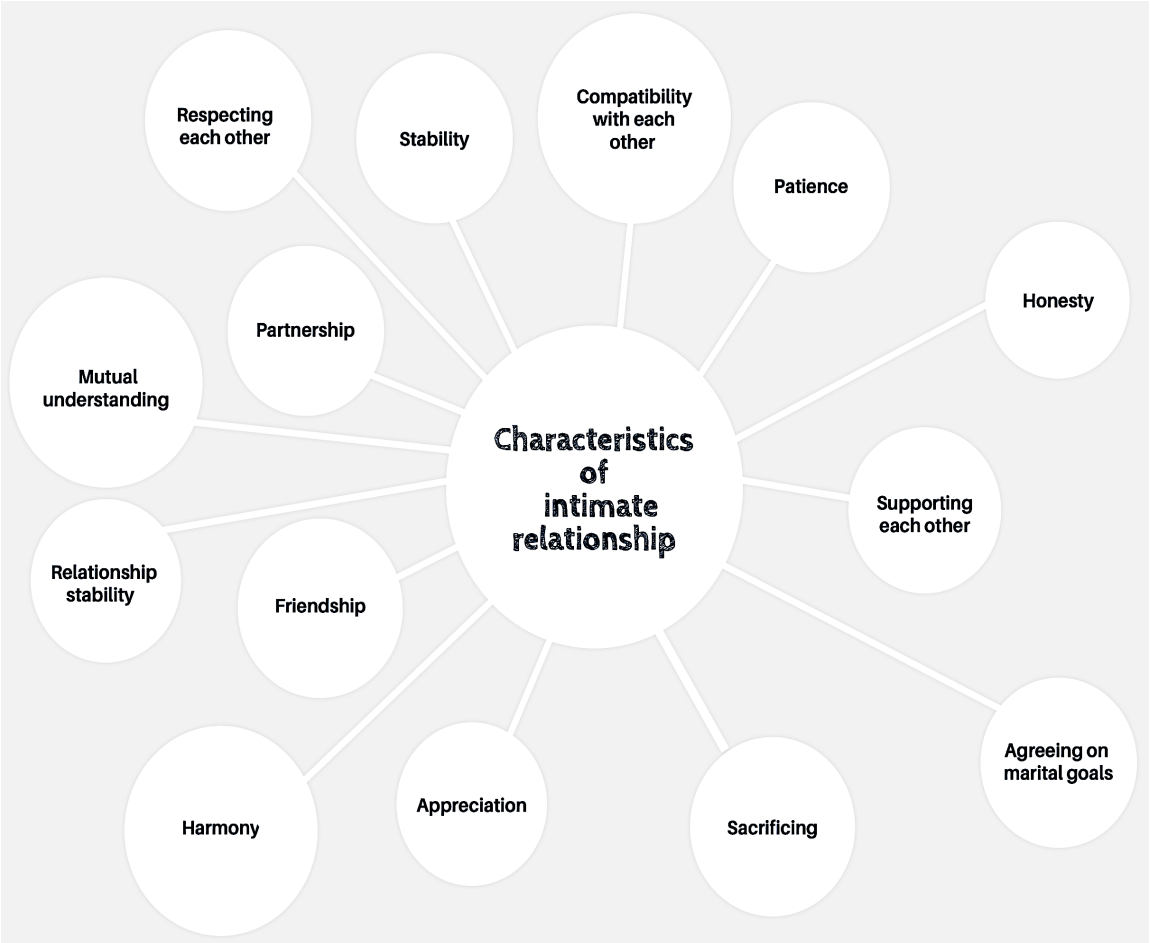
5.2.1 Characteristics of the Intimate Relationship

Participants identified many characteristics that they considered essential in marital life. The initial codes (characteristics) associated with this category are presented in Figure 5.1. Participants described how these characteristics were important for a successful relationship, and the absence of these characteristics may lead to IPV and an unsuccessful relationship. For instance, understanding was important not only in the engagement period but also afterwards, during marital life. Participants frequently described understanding in intimate relationships as a fundamental component of a successful and happy marriage. This was elaborated when the participants were asked to describe married life from their personal perspective. Most participants also believed that mutual understanding could assist spouses in resolving marital issues, which could lead to a successful and happy life. One participant elaborated:

> *'It is assumed that a successful marital life must have depth and mutual understanding between a couple. Depth and mutual*

understanding help both spouses to solve any issue between them as well as live in a happy relationship. In my opinion, no marriage can be successful if both spouses do not understand each other.' (AAJ 22_6)

Figure 5.1 Initial Codes Related Characteristics of the Intimate Relationship



Participants believed that intellectual compatibility is also an important characteristic of marital life. According to them, there is an association between intellectual compatibility and the ability to understand each other

in the marital life. They stated that each spouse needs to first understand the other to discover the spouse's ideas and, therefore, determine whether they have mutual intellectual compatibility. One participant illustrated the point of intellectual compatibility as:

> *'Each partner must try to understand the other partner. It is important for them to make sure that there is intellectual and mental compatibility between them. I mean, we are a generation that took some ideas from our society and from our fathers and mothers, but at the same time, we have our own ideas. Your own ideas should be presented to your wife, and she should also present her own ideas, and then you will see if you are compatible to each other. For example, about having children or about the job or education of the wife. '* (ABA 23/6)

Similar perceptions were reported about the understanding in marital life. Several participants indicated that marital life is a partnership in which spouses should understand one another and discuss the important matters in their lives. They explained that if spouses want to succeed in their marital life, they should agree on the important marital matters such as children, financial stability, and employment. One participant mentioned:

> *'My opinion about marriage is that it is a partnership with another person so that they will establish a successful entity…At the beginning of marriage, I think one of the reasons for success is understanding each other and then agreeing on goals that we call and consider our main goals. Such as producing children, financial income, or wife's employment.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Participants reported that excusing the partner for minor mistakes is an important component of having a happy and successful relationship, along with understanding the partner. They stated that everyone makes mistakes, and that excusing small mistakes between spouses and discussing larger,

more major marital issues will help spouses maintain a successful and fulfilling intimate relationship. As one participant said:

> *'I can tell you that the key to a happy marital life is that both spouses understand each other and know when to excuse each other's mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes and everyone has faults, but when a couple knows when to excuse small mistakes and discuss the big issues, they will have a happy and successful marital life.'* (AAB 19/6)

Similarly, several participants also considered honesty and devotion to be fundamental characteristics of a strong and successful relationship. As one participant stated:

> *'I believe that marital life consists of two parties, a husband and a wife, who build a strong and successful relationship on the foundations of honesty, devotion, and excusing small issues. Spouses should be excused for and close their eyes to small things that happen, whether they happen on the husband's side or the wife's side. I also mention that it depends on understanding. The most important aspect is that everyone understands one another.'* (AB 3_6)

Several participants stated that respect and appreciation between the spouses are essential in marital life to solve their issues and help the couple understand each other. It is important to note that a lack of mutual respect and understanding between partners may be associated with IPV, which will be discovered later in Category 5. To illustrate this view, one participant replied:

> *'I think that marital life can be summed up in two words:* respect *and* appreciation*. You may marry a girl who you did not know before, and you don't know about her customs, traditions, or culture, or how she was raised. However, with respect and appreciation, you*

become capable of breaking down barriers and begin to understand your partner. ' (AHF 8/3)

Relationship stability was another essential characteristic of the intimate relationship, according to participants. Participants explicitly stated that marital stability depends on understanding the partner and solving marital issues together. One such participant elaborated:

'In my view, a happy married life is a life of stability between spouses, meaning that each person understands the other and is able to overcome their marital problems.' (AZFAD 20/3)

Various participants believed that love is also an important aspect of marital life. It is important to mention that love in marital life is one of the religious guidelines for spouses, which will be explained in Category 3. Several participants used multiple characteristics, such as 'respect,' 'appreciation,' 'honesty,' and 'partnership' to describe the concept of 'love' in marital life. In addition, several participants described 'love' as a long-term complementary relationship between spouses to live a happy and successful relationship: Participants mentioned love in marital life as:

'In my opinion, love is important in married life. But there will be no love between spouses if there is no partnership, honesty, appreciation, or respect in their marital life.' (ABSF 24/5)

'Married life must have love between the two parties. If you love someone, your relationship will last a long time between you and your partner. Of course, there is also a need; I need this person in my life, and she needs me in her life. I mean, she complements me, and I complement her so that we can continue our lives with happiness.' (APFT 26/3)

> *'Marital life goes through happy and sad circumstances, but if there is love between spouses, marital life will go on and be happy.'* (ABM 24_6)

As discussed earlier, many participants indicated that they considered intellectual compatibility to be an important aspect of marital life, but numerous participants identified religious compatibility as equally important. As one participant expressed:

> *'The two spouses must be on the same level of thinking. For example, if the first partner is religious and the other partner is not then, the marital life may not be happy. The two must be compatible with the same level of thinking and the same religious mentality.'* (AAB 19/6)

In terms of religion, several participants agreed that spouses who are religious and follow Islamic rules will live in a happy and successful relationship, and that following Islamic rules will help spouses resolve any conflicts in their marital life. Resolving marital issues, including IPV, via an Islamic perspective will be discussed later in Category 6. As one participant stated:

> *'Certainly, from my own point of view, happiness in marital life is primarily associated with our degree of closeness to God Almighty. Whenever you approach to God Almighty, you will be happy in all your aspects of life, and you will find that Allah, out of nowhere, facilitates everything in your life* [*issue*]*.'* (AF 18_6)

5.2.2 Spousal Duties

Having highlighted the characteristics that participants identified as essential to smooth marital life in Saudi society, it is important to discuss the roles and responsibilities of each spouse within the marriage, as most

participants indicated that knowing these roles and responsibilities was also an important aspect of marital life. According to participants, fulfilling one's responsibility in the marital relationship has a beneficial impact on the relationship, whereas failing to fulfil one's responsibility contributes to conflicts, including IPV. The religious, social, and cultural context in which an individual lives has a significant impact on the duties that each partner is expected to perform, as well as mutual responsibilities.

Husband' Responsibilities

Participants discussed a variety of responsibilities that the husband should fulfil in Saudi society. Most participants believed that the husband is the head of the household and that he holds *wilayah*, or authoritative responsibility, for his wife and children. The term *wilayah* was defined and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1 (Section 1.14.4). Participants described husband's *wilayah* responsibilities as protecting the family, providing financial support as the sole or primary earner, and providing for the family's needs. The husband is responsible not only for providing for his family's material needs, but also for taking care of their health, advising them when someone has made a mistake or encountered a problem, and supporting and motivating them in their daily lives. It is worth noting that participants stated that a lack of understanding of the true meaning of *wilayah* may lead to some husbands abusing their wives or treating them unfairly. The husband's need for dominance and control was identified as a potential cause of IPV if he feels that his dominance is threatened, for example, by his wife's provocation or attempts to gain control over him, which will be explained later in Category 5. One participant explained the true meaning and responsibilities of *wilayah* as:

> *'God Almighty granted the husband* wilayah *so that he could carry out his responsibilities to his family without dominating them. Some people may think that the meaning of wilayah is to control and dominate their wives, but this is wrong.* Wilayah *means that you perform your responsibilities as a husband who works hard to provide financial support for his family and look out for their happiness. If someone in your family is sick, you must speed up their treatment. And if something is missing from your household's needs, you must bring it. You are a husband with many responsibilities, and must also be a teacher, educator, breadwinner, advisor, and motivator. All husbands must have these responsibilities.'* (ABS 16/2)

Similarly, participants believed the husband was responsible for protecting the family and should therefore find a safe and suitable place for his family to live. As one participant mentioned:

> *'One of the responsibilities of the husband is to provide for the financial needs of the household, as well as to protect the family and find a safe house. Before I got married, I lived in a very dangerous area in the US. But after marriage, I started looking for a safer and more suitable place for my family, because this is now my responsibility.'* (APFT 26/3)

Interpretations of *wilayah* have been influenced by both culture and religion, but many participants also believed that the husband is responsible for being faithful to his wife and treating her with love and honour, which is clearly influenced more strongly by religion. In addition, participants stated that the husband is also responsible for guiding the family in the right direction. It is important to note that cheating and unfaithfulness were considered one of the major marital conflicts associated with IPV that will be explained in Category 5. One participant explained:

> *'The husband must fear God when he deals with his wife and be faithful to her and treat her with love and honour. He must have guardianship, meaning all the basic matters in the house are the responsibility of the husband. He should also be in charge of the family's finances and steer them in the right direction.'* (ABMH 15/2)

Spending time with family was also reported as one of the husband's responsibilities, according to participants. They indicated that the husband is responsible for managing the time he commits to his family and to his work or friends. Not spending time together may lead to marital conflicts and IPV. One participant mentioned:

> *'Some of my friends do not spend much time at home and do not make time for their families. I see this is not the right thing, and it is the husband's responsibility to balance his time between his family, work, friends, or anything else.'* (ALCD 28/3)

Similarly, giving his wife enough attention and listening to her as, well as sharing decisions with her, was also important, according to many participants. As mentioned before, the husband is considered the head of the house and is therefore responsible for making major decisions on behalf of his family. However, many participants indicated that for a marriage to be successful, the husband must also share decisions with his wife and listen seriously to her opinions. Ignoring a partner's viewpoint and excluding them from decision-making may thus be associated with marital conflict and IPV. One participant stated:

> *'If you are thinking of getting married, you must accept all of the responsibilities that come with it. If you are ready for these responsibilities, such as allowing your wife to participate with you in all your decisions in your life, giving her enough attention and*

> *time, and listening to her as well as to your children, I expect that your married life will be happy, God willing.'* (AM 18/6)

Wife's Responsibilities

Participants also identified several responsibilities that the wife must fulfil. Participants believed that the main responsibilities for a wife in Saudi society are to be a housewife and to take care of her husband and children as well as to do household chores such as making the food, doing the laundry, and cleaning the house. Participants also stated that the wife is responsible for being faithful to her husband. Failure to fulfil the responsibilities may be associated with marital conflicts, including IPV. One participant explained the wife's responsibilities from a religious perspective:

> *'God has summarised a wife's responsibilities only in the home. First, she must take care of her husband and children, do household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing, and be faithful to her husband. If she fulfils her responsibilities and the husband fulfils his responsibilities, the married life will succeed between the two.'* (ABS 16/2)

Several participants also stated that raising the children is one of the wife's responsibilities. Although the husband is responsible for advising the family as mentioned in the section above, the participants believed that the husband is not able to raise the children alone and that it is primarily the wife's duty and ability to bring up and teach the children. They described the wife in this matter as the main and primary teacher in the family. One participant explained this further:

> *'The husband, no matter what he does and no matter how hard he tries, cannot raise children alone like his wife can. The wife is the*

> *primary teacher in the house. It is true that a father has to give advice to his sons and daughters, but the mother is the main teacher.'* (ABMH 15/2)

According to participants, another part of a wife's responsibilities in Saudi society is obedience to her husband, such as listening to him and not leaving the house without his permission. This is clearly associated with the husband's responsibility of protecting the family, which is mentioned in the husband's responsibilities. Participants also noted that this expectation of obedience is rooted in religious guidelines, which specify that a wife must obey her husband, for example, if he requests intercourse. Thus, the wife is expected to not refuse sexual intercourse with her husband unless there is an appropriate reason, such as menstruation, which will be discussed in Category 4. Also, the wife does not have to obey her husband if he commands her to do something that would be a sin. Thus, disobeying the husband may be linked to IPV, and the husband may even psychologically abuse his wife by threatening to leave her if she does not obey or listen to him, which will be discussed in later Category 4. One participant explained the wife's obedience as:

> *'A wife who has a real concept of marriage and obedience to her husband will know that obedience is part of religion. I know that some people avoid speaking about obedience to their husbands in the media. But obedience is one of her responsibilities, and there is a* hadith *talking directly about this topic. I don't remember exactly, but in brief, it says that whoever fulfils her responsibilities and obeys her husband will have the promise of good rewards and paradise.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Perceptions about the wife's obedience were also reported by participants as:

> *'In our religion, the wife must obey the husband, but she does not do any such thing as committing a sin against God. She obeys him by accepting the husband's request for intercourse, for example, and not leaving the house without his permission.'* (ABM 24_6)

> *'Obedience and respect for her husband are important. I do not say that wife has no voice, but normally the husband's viewpoint was the most dominant in many aspects.'* (AA 22_6)

Because of recent strides in women's empowerment in SA, a few participants believed that some of the wife's and husband's responsibilities might be changed. For example, a husband can help his wife with household responsibilities, and a wife can help her husband financially. Such a scenario would challenge the idea that the husband must be the sole or primary earner in family since the wife is now able to work and support her husband and family financially. As one participant reported:

> *'I think that the current period is witnessing a lot of changes in the country. Past ideas [about the husband being the breadwinner] may no longer fit with today's ideas, and there is flexibility in responsibilities. I think that women's empowerment has given a lot of space to wife so that they can work and go beyond the scope of the housewife in their responsibilities. Today, I expect that these concepts have changed somewhat, as long as the woman can work and help her husband financially.'* (AHF 8/3)

A few participants believed that most marriage responsibilities, such as being a housewife and being a breadwinner, were adopted from society and culture. However, like the previous statement, many participants believed that responsibilities can be shared between the spouses, which clearly emphasises the importance of understanding in the marital relationship. One participant explains:

> *'I had an idea before I got married that marriage meant that I was only responsible for financial matters and my wife was only responsible for the house. As I know, most of our ideas about marriage come from the society around us, whether they are from our brothers, sisters, relatives, or friends. But after I married, I found that, on the contrary, the responsibilities could be shared between the two.'* (ABA 23/6)

Mutual Responsibilities

Many participants identified several mutual responsibilities that each spouse needed to fulfil. For example, respecting each other was singled out as an important responsibility for both spouses, and was identified as a core component of a successful intimate relationship. One participant stated:

> *'I expect that each partner has a responsibility to respect the other partner if both want to live a happy life without major problems and disagreements.'* (AAB 19/6)

A few participants reported that patience is also important in marital life, and that each spouse is responsible for being patient with his/her partner. They stated that a lack of patience may lead to marital issues as well as IPV. As one participant described it:

> *'Both the husband and wife must be patient and bear with the other partner because they are approaching a new life together. If there is no patience in their marriage, their lives will certainly have many problems.'* (AD 25/6)

Many participants emphasised the need to keep marital matters private between the couple. To succeed and complete their lives, participants stated that marital matters and issues should be kept private and not disclosed or

shared with anyone else. It is vital to note that keeping marital issues private was one of the contributing factors to IPV that will be discussed in Category 5. One participant highlighted the importance of keeping matters private as follows:

> *'They should keep their marital life private as far as they can, and they should try to manage their relationship together, just the two of them. I think they can succeed and continue forward because they keep their private matters between them.'* (AF 18_6)

In summary, participants in this study identified understanding as a critical component of marital life and agreed that mutual understanding is an essential aspect of a successful marriage. Although parties in an arranged marriage may initially know little about one another, participants emphasised the importance of working to understand one another throughout the engagement period or at the start of their marital life to be successful in their relationship. Understanding between husband and wife can be facilitated or hindered by the presence or absence of certain characteristics, such as respect, appreciation, honesty, devotion, intellectual and religious compatibility. Participants also noted that discussing matters with the partner and excusing the partner for minor mistakes increases stability in the relationship, which was itself identified as a necessary component of a successful marriage. Allowing the engaged couple to get to know one another throughout the engagement period may lower the risk of IPV in that relationship, which will be discussed further in Category 6. Furthermore, couples whose relationships are stable, and who understand each other well, can deal with major conflicts such as IPV through discussion and negotiation, which will be explained later in Category 6. If a mutual understanding cannot be reached between the husband and wife,

the marriage may struggle, and the likelihood of arguments, conflicts, and ultimately IPV will rise. Regarding the husband's and wife's responsibilities, all research participants agreed that in a married relationship, both spouses have different expectations of one another. According to participants, a husband's responsibilities include providing financial support for his family, caring for their health, supporting and motivating them, protecting them, spending time with them, and being faithful to his wife. On the other hand, participants believed that a wife's responsibilities include doing household chores, caring for her husband and children, and obeying her spouse. Some participants believed that women's empowerment in SA may allow for greater sharing of responsibilities in the modern era of the country, but maintained that, regardless of role, addressing expectations regarding each partner's responsibilities in married life may assist in avoiding major conflicts and IPV.

5.3 Category 2: The Role of Family

This category is concerned with participants' perspectives on how the family influences IPV. A spouse's parents, sisters, or brothers are considered members of the family and blood relatives of each spouse. Participants expressed that family members can have a significant impact on a couple's relationship. Thus, this category was further subdivided into two subcategories: the role of the family before and after marriage. Both subcategories include the roles and characteristics of both the husband's and wife's families, which can either positively or negatively influence marital life. The initial codes and relevant subcategories are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 The Initial Codes Relevant the Role of Family

Role of family before marriage
Advising a man to refrain from getting married if he was not employed or sufficiently mature
Teaching men to be mature and dependent on themselves
Teaching men to understand marital life
Choosing a suitable wife for the man
Teaching women how to perform the responsibilities of a housewife
Encouraging men and women to get married
Conducting a background check on the potential husband
Role of family after marriage
Intervening in spouses' lives
Refusing to marry a second wife
Solving the marital issues
Salvaging the marriage and refusing to get divorced

5.3.1 The Role of Family before Marriage

Study participants indicated that members of both families can influence the couple before they are married, and that this influence can either reduce or increase the likelihood of IPV between a husband and wife. Most married participants reported having had an arranged marriage. Thus, they expressed that the families of most men would advise a man to refrain from getting married if he was not employed or sufficiently mature. As mentioned in the discussion on Category 1, it is a husband's responsibility to support his wife and children financially, as he is considered the breadwinner of the family. To fulfil this responsibility as breadwinner, the

husband must earn income from employment or a personal business. The wife's and husband's families would discourage or possibly even reject marriage if the man had no financial income. Furthermore, most participants expressed that a man should be sufficiently mature before getting married. This precondition for marriage would clearly decrease marital conflict and IPV within relationships. Participants stated that maturity helps a man fulfil his responsibilities after marriage. One participant elaborated on this idea, stating,

> *'I have three sons, and all of them are employed. People have asked me multiple times, "Why don't you get them married?" But I, as a father, do not want them to get married now. My wife and I want them to be mature and have fully developed minds [when they get married] so that they understand life more because life [married life] is very difficult. I mean, if one of them gets married now, I would say that there is a 60% to 70% chance that the marriage will fail. The reason is that he may act completely reckless and immature. As my sons get older, their minds will mature, and they will be able to take on responsibility and overcome obstacles. Every person knows their children. Also, the sayings that "a woman helps a man become mature" and "let him marry to make him mature" are not true. It is true that a wife can help a husband be more mature and responsible; however, if one sees that one's son is still in the indiscretions of youth and not fully mature, it is better to prevent him from marrying'.* (ABS 16/2)

Similarly, participants stated that most Saudi families teach young men that understanding the value of marital responsibilities, being mature, and depending on oneself are important. Moreover, participants indicated that these characteristics may help husbands manage their marital life and deal with marital issues without involving others. One participant commented on the role of the family, stating,

> *'For members of my generation, our parents and grandparents had to tell us that we should depend on ourselves before we get married, and that we should only rely on them [parents and grandparents] for serious matters. My parents and grandparents had so many responsibilities, so they made sure that we were mature and knew the value of marital responsibilities before we got married. I see this as a very important aspect of family.'* (ABMH 15/2)

As mentioned in Category 1, a wife's main responsibility in Saudi society is fulfilling the role of housewife, which includes taking care of her husband and children and performing household chores. In preparation for this role, the wife's family (usually the mother and older sisters) must teach her how to perform the responsibilities of a housewife and take care of her future husband and children. Preparatory training given by families to wife before marriage and a wife's ability to perform her duties as a housewife can minimise marital conflict and IPV in relationships. One participant described the families of wives, stating,

> *'A wife's family usually tries to teach her how to take care of household matters, such as cooking and cleaning, so that she will be ready for marriage. Of course, mothers and older sisters have an important role in teaching wives how to be good housewives and deal with husbands and her children appropriately in the future.'* (APFT 26/3)

When a husband's family feels that he is responsible, mature, and financially stable, they will encourage him to get married. Similarly, if a wife's family feels that she has learned the skills of being a housewife, they will encourage her to get married if a suitable husband emerges. However, participants expressed that husband's and wife's families may place pressure on a couple to get married even if the man and woman have no desire to get married and start a family. Participants expressed that the

possibility of such a couple succeeding in marital life is lower than that of a couple who gets married with conviction and is satisfied with the idea of marriage. One participant stated:

> *'Marriage has value. If a man feels pressured by his family to marry but does not wish to marry, he may not understand this value. Of course, if he does not understand the value of marriage, he will not have much interest in his wife or the home—or the preservation and care of the home… Marriage also fails for a large proportion of people [spouses] who are forced to marry because for such people marriage is not a priority in their lives.'* (APFT 26/3)

Like the above statement, participants also stated that sometimes families place pressure on the couple to marry when the families feel that the man and woman are ready to get married. The participants also indicated that entering middle age (30) is another factor that may motivate families to insist that a couple get married. Participants stated that in such cases, a relationship may not succeed, which may lead to major marital issues and IPV. One participant spoke about the effect of families insisting on marriage, stating,

> *'A marriage that is driven by parents will not work. It is possible that 2 out of 10 [marriages] will succeed, but it is difficult to say that it will be a successful experience. Parents sometimes put pressure on the man if, for example, he is over the age of 30 and eligible for marriage, and they may insist on him marrying. So, he may marry because of his parent's request and insistence, not because of his own desire. Wives are also pressured and may be forced into marriage if they are over the age of 30, for example. So, I think that parent's insistent pressure on marriage will definitely not lead to successful experiences for either person in the relationship.'* (ABD 12/3)

Another responsibility of a young man's family is choosing a suitable wife. As previously stated, most of the participants had been married through arranged marriages, and participants stated that arranged marriages were the most common form of marriage in Saudi society. Therefore, choosing a wife is the responsibility of the husband's family. In this type of marriage, participants stated that a family may suggest several women before proposing marriage to the wife's family. Several participants stated that a man's family may suggest one of the man's relatives. It is important to mention that the husband may refuse to marry the woman who are presented to him, regardless of whether the woman is a relative. The family may be upset if they feel that the woman is suitable for him, and this may place pressure on the man to accept the proposal and get married. One participant described the role of the family in choosing the wife as follows:

> *'Currently, in our society, your family will search for a wife for you, and your sister or mother will come to you and tell you, "We have chosen this woman for you." So, they will go and talk to her family and propose marriage. Usually, the couples do not know each other and may not even communicate before or during the engagement. However, after the wedding, they may communicate and get to know each other.'* (AA 22_6)

Another perspective on choosing a wife was observed among the participants. In the below statement, one participant shared his experience of being asked to propose to one of his cousins despite having no desire to do so:

> *'One day, my father took me to the countryside [our tribal area], and we went to my uncle's house. Unfortunately, my father put me in an embarrassing situation in front of my uncle. My father said to my uncle, "xxx has graduated from university and is now an employee, and we want him to choose one of your daughters [for*

> *marriage].” I had absolutely no idea that my father was going to do this, and I was surprised. My uncle said to me, “What do you think? We can also help you with marriage and the dowry.” I sincerely apologised to my uncle, and I told him that I could not marry one of his daughters because I was not ready. My father, at that time, was upset with me because I refused to marry my cousin.’* (ASDW 13/3)

In the past, it was common to accept a request to get married made by one’s family. A few participants mentioned that husband and wife were forced to obey their families’ wishes that they get married, as obedience to the family is a fundamental value in Saudi culture, both now and in the past. However, one’s ability to either accept or refuse a family request has become more flexible; nevertheless, parents may still become upset and dissatisfied when their wishes are not obeyed. One participant described the family requests for marriage in the past as follows:

> *‘Speaking of the old generation, they [the family] forced people to marry, be it their daughters or sons. A man may have to marry his cousin to obey and respect his father and uncle, and a girl may have to marry her cousin to obey and respect her father and uncle.’* (ABS 16/2)

As explained earlier, in the case of an arranged marriage, the husband’s family is responsible for choosing a wife. However, several participants stated that in self-selected marriages, the husband must receive approval from his family before he marries his chosen wife. The participant expressed that some families may not accept this type of marriage, as this type of marriage is considered unacceptable in some regions of SA. For example, one participant stated,

> *‘I knew my wife before we got married, and my marriage was not arranged. Frankly, the issue of marriage was not easy, especially since I came from a conservative area and was afraid of whether my*

> *family would approve of the marriage. So, I spoke to my mother because I knew that my father would not agree, and I tried to convince her. Thank God, she eventually agreed, but my father was not aware of this matter, nor was my wife's family. After that, my mother contacted my wife's family and told them that we wanted to marry their girl.'* (AM/81/6)

Many participants indicated that an important responsibility of a wife's family is conducting a background check on the potential husband prior to engagement and marriage. It is important to mention that checking the husband's background and refusing a man with a poor reputation will be discussed in Category 6; background checks were identified as a measure for preventing IPV in Saudi society. One participant described the role of the wife's family as follows:

> *'When a man intends to marry, he must speak to his parents, and, subsequently, his parents will choose a suitable wife for him. Usually, the mother goes to visit the girl's family informally and asks them to allow her to marry. Consequently, the girl's family asks for some time, which may be two or three weeks, to inquire about the husband at his work and throughout the neighbourhood in which he lives so that they can determine whether he is suitable for the wife's family.'* (ALCD 28/3)

According to several participants, an important yet hidden role of the husband's and wife's families is providing role models of marital life for the engaged couple. These participants emphasised that the relationship of the parents can both positively and negatively impact the marital life of the couple. It is important to mention that witnessing IPV committed by parents or relatives was a contributing factor that will be discussed in Category 5. One participant discussed how the relationship between his parents positively impacted his marital life, stating,

> *'I was affected, frankly, by the relationship between my father and mother. Of course, their relationship was very strong, and they loved each other, and this had a significant impact on me and my brothers and sisters. Frankly, our married lives are beautiful because we have implemented the things that we used to see with our parents, such as respecting each other and loving and caring for each other.'* (AAW 17/6)

After discussing the responsibilities of families before a couple gets married, it is important to highlight the responsibilities of families after a couple gets married. The actions of the family at this time can both positively and negatively influence the marital life of the couple, and they also potentially can influence IPV.

5.3.2 The Role of Family after Marriage

Study participants stated that members belonging to families of both the husband and wife may also play an important role after a couple marries, and that they can both positively and negatively impact the marital life of the couple. Several participants stated that regardless of whether a couple is married though a self-selected (non-arranged marriage) or arranged marriage, they may have to live with extended family members (usually the husband's family) if the wife and her family agree to live with the husband's family. Most participants stated that they live with their spouses in their own houses, while a few participants stated that they live, or used to live, with extended family members. Participants expressed that couples who live with extended family members may face obstacles when discussing marital matters privately, and that the family members (father and mother) may intervene in their lives, which may impact their marital life and lead to marital issues and IPV. One participant, for example, stated that his family members had intervened in his marital life. He mentioned that he returned

to SA for summer holiday when he had been studying in the United States, and that during this time, he and his family (wife and children) lived with his family (his father and mother). He reported that on one occasion, he discussed his wife's education with his father. His father rejected his proposal that his wife finish her education, stating that she would have to live in another city and, therefore, would be unable to take care of her husband and children. The husband stated,

> *'During summer vacation, we went back to SA and lived at home with my family. One day, I was discussing my wife's studies with my father because she had been accepted to a master's degree program, but the program was not in the city in which we were living. It is very likely that my wife would have to live in another house, and we may only be able to meet on the weekends. My father responded, stating, "We want you together in one house, and we want the children to be with you." He also told me, "Don't let her complete her master's studies." After we returned to America, I told my wife this, and there were problems between us on this subject, but in the end, I agreed, and I let her study without my father's knowledge.'* (ABF 24/6)

Various participants agreed that the families of the husband and wife are less likely to intervene in the lives of the couple when they live in their own house. However, several participants mentioned that some couples may allow their families to intervene in their lives despite living separate from extended relatives. Such interventions may impact the couple's marital life and lead to marital issues and IPV. One participant expressed his view on family intervention, stating,

> *'The messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, had problems in his house, and he is the master of mankind, and every couples will have marital issues, but many of the problems that occur between spouses are due to outside interference [from the wife's and*

> *husband's families]. These interventions involve the imposition of opinions on the couple, and this causes conflict inside the home. This thing also greatly affects the lives of the couple. This is something I noticed in the married lives of my brothers, and unfortunately, it involved a lot of interventions by the families of their wives, and it usually caused problems later. Coincidentally, one of my brothers was talking to me about a big problem he had: my brother's father-in-law had been interfering too much in his married life, and he described his displeasure with his father-in-law's interventions, stating that "he is almost living with me in my house".'* (AHF 8/3)

Some participants stated that a family that refrained from interfering in the couple's lives and respected and treated them as family members could help them succeed and avoid marital issues and IPV. One participant stated,

> *'A family not intervening in the spouses' lives and treating the wife and husband with respect and as part of the family is one of the keys to martial happiness. Thankfully, my younger sisters and brothers treat my wife as if she were a sister to them.'* (ABMH 15/2)

As mentioned earlier in this Category, choosing a wife is the responsibility of the husband's family, and the husband must first receive approval from his family to get married. However, many participants stated that the husband's family may not allow the husband to marry a second wife even if he wishes to. It is important to note that having more than one wife (polygamy) is an acceptable practice in SA, as explained in Chapter 1. Participants expressed that the husband's family may refuse the husband's request to marry a second wife, especially if the wife is a relative. In addition, participants indicated that the husband's family may also refuse a request to remarry if the husband wants to divorce his wife. Importantly, marrying a second wife or divorcing one's current wife may generate problems between the husband's family and the wife's family because they

may not be able to preserve kinship connections if there are relatives. Thus, both families may make every effort to salvage the marriage; however, such efforts may have an adverse effect on the intimate relationship of the couple. As one participant mentioned,

> *'I discussed the idea of marrying a second woman with my family. However, this is a sensitive issue, especially in my area, and the people [family] refused to accept the idea of a second wife. We were taught since childhood that a husband should not marry a second wife. The husband is also supposed to live with the wife forever and sacrifice for her, not separate from her or marry another woman. But this is not the right thing to do, especially if there is no agreement with your wife. So, how can you succeed in your marriage?'* (ABA 23/6)

Many participants also expressed that turning to family to solve marital problems would have a negative impact on a couple's relationship. They stated that revealing small marital issues to members of the husband's or wife's families may exacerbate these issues and make them more complicated to solve. One participant discussed revealing marital issues to family members, stating,

> *'I think contacting the family is wrong. I recall that one of my friends told me at the start of my marriage that small problems become bigger and more complicated when they are revealed to the family.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Most participants agreed that disclosing minor issues to family members could negatively impact the marital relationship. However, in the case of major conflicts such as IPV, it is advisable to rely on one's family and ask for help. Similarly, it was reported that relying on the family when IPV occurs is an action step that couples can take, which will be explained later

in Category 6. One participant stated the following while discussing relying on one's family:

> *'They [spouses] can rely on the family during serious conflicts; however, in my personal opinion, I prefer that the wife not talk about every small issue with the family because this can make problems become bigger and worse.'* (AB 3-6)

As mentioned previously, families will make every effort to maintain the couple's marriage because separation is seen as undesirable. Moreover, participants stated that if a wife asks for help from her family to solve her marital issues, they will likely ask the husband to give her *redwah* and pledge that he will not repeat the act. Subsequently, they will pressure her to return to her husband. It is important to mention that *redwah* was one of the steps for addressing IPV, which will be mentioned later in the discussion on Category 6. One participant stated,

> *'When she [the wife] goes to her family and asks for help [to solve her marital issues], they often seek reconciliation, not separation. Mostly, these issues are resolved by redwah. If the wife moves to her family's house, she will eventually return to her husband's house because her family will pressure her to return, especially if she has children. For the husband, her family will ask him to promise to his wife that he will not repeat the act again, and they will tell him to come and give his wife the redwah.'* (AA 22_6)

In summary, study participants stated that both the husband's and wife's families play essential roles in either promoting or reducing conflicts and IPV between husbands and wives. Families play important roles regardless of whether the married couple lives with extended family members or alone as a nuclear family. The husband's and wife's families play a critical role in preparing potential spouses to fulfil their responsibilities, and such

preparation may have a favourable effect on the couples' marital lives and help prevent marital conflict and IPV. However, participants also stated that when a couple marries, a family's attempts to resolve marital issues or intervene in the couple's marital matters may negatively impact the lives of the couple.

5.4 Category 3: Role of Culture and Religion

This category represents participants' perspectives on the role of culture and religion in contributing to or preventing IPV in Saudi society. It is essential to mention that many of these codes have already been presented and discussed in earlier categories. According to Chapter 1 (Section1.14.4), religion has a significant impact on the culture of SA, which results in a strong relationship between the two in this nation. Thus, this category is further subdivided into two subcategories: the role of culture and the role of the religion. The roles/characteristics in each of these subcategories may have an impact on a couple's marital relationship.

5.4.1 Role of Culture

Several participants believed that the culture of SA may play an important role in marital life and may impact spouses' lives either positively or negatively. For example, according to participants, Saudi society's ideas regarding family, as well as pressure from people close to the family, may force parents to encourage their sons and daughters to marry when they are entering the middle age (30). Specifically, participants indicated that the family (parents) may insist that their sons and daughters honour the cultural expectation that age (30 – 35) is a suitable age for marriage. Encouraging marriage or even insisting that couples get married when they reach this

suitable age was highlighted in Category 2 as one of the roles family plays before spouses get married. One participant reported:

> *'Some people get married when they reach a certain age, and I expect over the age of thirty or thirty-five. Age is one factor that forces people to get married, whether they are men or women. So, the family [parents]will insist the man get married, and they will insist the woman accept the marriage if someone proposes to her, because the people who are close to the family and the neighbours will ask "why did your son or daughter not marry until now?"'* (AZFAD 20/3)

Privacy in marital life is another cultural aspect that may impact the intimacy of the relationship in Saudi society. Participants stated that marital matters should not be disclosed and should be kept private between spouses and their families. Thus, in SA society, it is inappropriate for friends, neighbours or anyone else to ask a couple about their marital matters or issues. One participant discussed the privacy of marital matters:

> *'As you know, houses are full of secrets, and it is very difficult and not noble to ask a husband about his problems with his wife. It is not a good thing in our society to ask about this, and we should not ask about this matter. If a couple is separated, and I know that the husband is a good man and the wife is good as well, then I would say that all this is because there was no reconciliation from God in this marriage. But we normally do not get into these specifics, and we do not ask them [why was he/she separated?] because, from my point of view, marital matters are so sensitive, and no one prefers to get into these specifics'.* (AF 18_6)

Keeping marital matters private is one of the mutual responsibilities of couples, as mentioned in Category 1. However, disclosing matters or issues to the family of the wife or husband is culturally acceptable, and only a member of the family is permitted to intervene in the couple's life.

Nevertheless, as mentioned in Category 1, keeping marital matters or small issues private may have a positive impact on the spouses' relationship. One participant elaborated on this idea:

> *'In our culture in SA, spouses do not talk about their private lives with anyone except their family. This enhances the stability of their marriage and keeps them away from any marital problems or interference from others in their private life'.* (ABSF 24/5)

Furthermore, many participants believed that disclosing marital matters or issues may impact the partners' relationship in a negative way, as one of the participants mentioned:

> *'We learned that no one discloses his/her marital matters. If we assume that the wife discloses some of the problems between her and her husband to one of her friends and her husband knows about this later, perhaps this thing will cause many problems for the wife because she must preserve the privacy the marital matters that are between her and her husband'.* (ABZY 24/5)

In short, privacy between spouses is an important aspect of Saudi culture. Thus, spouses are expected to keep their marital matters or issues within their relationship and deal with them, or if they are not able to solve them alone, or in the case of major conflicts such as IPV, they can reveal their issues to their families, which will be explained further in Category 6. However, many participants believed that a wife may cope with IPV and not report it to maintain this privacy, to preserve her marital life and to avoid separating from her husband. It is important to note that coping with IPV and accepting beatings from one's husband to maintain privacy was one of the factors that contributed to IPV on a community and societal level, which will be explained later in Category 5. One participant stated:

> *'Some things we are forced to do because of our culture. For example, the wife's family tells her if she is subjected to IPV, "You must be patient with your husband, and you must bear with him because of your children and so that you do not get divorced". These things were not imposed by Islam but came from our culture. This is the main reason for not reporting IPV by the wife'.* (AHF 8/3)

It is important to note that participants acknowledged the cultural and societal obstacles to reporting IPV. For example, participants stated that it may affect the reputation of both the wife's family and the husband's family, and they may then be subject to negative stereotypes from their neighbours or in their communities. Thus, the wife is likely to cope with IPV, rather than reporting it to the authorities, out of fear of both her own family and her husband's family. However, because of advances in women's rights in SA, participants stated that wife can now talk to authorities and report IPV, which will be discussed in Category 5. It is important to note that it is not only the wife who may face cultural obstacles to reporting IPV, but the husband may as well, especially in the case of physical abuse or in trying get assistance from the family, which will be discovered in Category 6. One participant described the cultural and societal obstacles to reporting IPV:

> *'We have a fear of society. I mean that if we assume that there has been IPV against the wife, then the wife may not be able to speak to the police or the authorities because she will be afraid of her family and his family. Because they will tell her, "What are people going to say about us?" So, this family will be associated with a negative stereotype if she reports IPV to the police'.* (AAW 17/6)

A husband's domination of and control over his wife were also important cultural aspects reported by participants. Participants believed that a Saudi

husband has control over his wife and therefore she should obey him. Also, participants indicated that a husband had the right to abuse his wife as result of his control over her. Although many participants stated that this idea (maintaining control) may still exist in Saudi society, it has decreased since the country has made changes in terms of women's rights and empowerment. As mentioned in Category 1 (Section on husbands' responsibilities), some husbands may have the idea of dominating and controlling their wives as a result of misunderstanding the true meaning of *wilayah*. One participant expressed his perception of husbands being dominating and controlling of their wives in Saudi society:

> *'In our society, we believe that the wife belongs to the husband [obeys him]. When he married her, he expected that she would belong to him and be under his control. Unfortunately, this is a societal idea that may still exist. However, we used to hear stories and say that the husband has the right to do such a thing [IPV]. But this idea in society has begun to change gradually with the societal change in SA.* (ABA 23/6)

Like the above statement, another participant shared his view of husbands being dominating and controlling over their wives in Saudi society. He believed this to be one of the factors leading to IPV. He stated:

> *'God willing, the issue [IPV] has decreased now, but it still exists because some people still promote this idea that the husband is all-in-all and is in control. So, I hope there will be discussions and responses based on established studies to prevent IPV'.* (AA 22_6)

Witnessing how daughters, mothers, sisters or wives are treated in a community, and in society in general, can also positively or negatively impact marital life in Saudi society. Participants believed that witnessing women being abused or treated badly in the family or the community can

culturally normalise these behaviours and therefore make people consider it to be acceptable. This was highlighted as one of the factors contributing to IPV in Category 5. In contrast, a family and community that respects women and treats them in a positive manner, and refuses to abuse them, may prevent the issue of IPV and therefore positively impact marital life. One participant elaborated on his view of the impact of witnessing how women can be treated in a community:

> *'Any man who lives in a community where women are beaten and assaulted by their husbands will be familiar with such behaviour and will accept it as a common sense [normal thing] in his life. However, any man who lives in a community that respects women or follows Islamic teachings will be strongly influenced by it and treat women kindly'.* (AAJ 22_6)

Like the above statement, several participants believed that some males may normalise the act of beating a wife because they observed a daughter, mother, sister or wife being abused. They mentioned that women/girls may also normalise the beating behaviours and therefore accept and cope with it. One participant reported his experience of observing the beating of women/girls by his neighbours and relatives and how this influenced him in dealing with women/girls:

> *'I was the older brother, and I had a younger sister. I used to watch my male relatives and neighbours beat up their younger sisters. Therefore, I saw this matter as a normal thing. One day, I got upset with my sister and then beat her. Because she is younger than me, she did not tell my parents and she was silent. But one day, I hit my sister, and my father saw me beating her. Thus, he hit me in the arm in a small way, which is the only time that my father hit me in my life. He told me, "You never hit your sister, and you never hit women in general, and there is more than one way you can talk to them." Sure, as an eight-year-old child, you understand many*

> *things, and you ask yourself many things. "Why do I not hit women or girls even though the people around me are beating them?" This is one of the attitudes I grew up with, and it was a big factor in shaping my personality in terms of how I deal with women, whether they are sisters or wives'.* (ABD 12/3)

5.4.2 Role of Religion

As previously noted, religion has a tremendous influence on the culture of SA. As a result, culture and religion are inextricably linked in Saudi society. According to several participants, religion may play an essential role in marriage, and this role may have an influence on the relationship between the spouses. Through the Hadith and the Quran, Islam places emphasis on the importance of marital life and family life. Thus, many participants mentioned that some spouses in SA get married to receive the benefit of completing half of the religion. They believed that through marriage, spouses would be prevented from having a taboo relationship (premarital sex) and that they could create a family. Therefore, Islam encourages Muslim people to get married if they can take on the responsibilities of marriage. One participant shared his aim of getting married. He stated that the first aim of getting married is to complete half of the religion, and the second aim is to comply with cultural and societal norms, as being single is considered an undesirable social status, as discussed above in the *Role of culture* section. He reported:

> *'For me, I got married to complete half the religion, and the second thing is that in our society, a man without a home and without a family feels something different from the rest of the people in our society. Whatever your financial affairs, social position, or job situation, a man without a family feels inferior'.* (ABMH 15/2)

It is important to mention that premarital sex, or having sex without being married, is a taboo and unacceptable behaviour in both Islam and Saudi culture, so marriage is the only way for couples to have a relationship and fulfil their desires for intercourse. However, many participants believed that other aims, in addition to safeguarding against taboo relationships through marriage, lead people to get married. They believed that developing a relationship and sharing life with a partner were important factors in attracting spouses to the idea of marriage. One participant shared his ideas regarding getting married:

> *'I see single life as beautiful, but as a conservative person, I try as much as possible to protect myself from forbidden relationships, so I realised that marriage is necessary. So, this was a great motivation for me to ask for marriage to safeguard myself and my religion, and most importantly, to live with someone who I can share my life with'.* (ABD 12/3)

Religion in Saudi society may encourage and motivate spouses to get married. Participants further believed that Islam emphasised the importance of marriage as a strong covenant *'mithaqun ghalithun'* between spouses. Participants believed that a strong covenant indicated that spouses needed to agree to fulfil the responsibilities of marriage and to take care of each other. One participant stated:

> *'Married life is important and not an easy matter, and the religion indicated that the marriage pact was described by God Almighty as a strong covenant "mithaqun ghalithun". The person who takes this step must be completely convinced of it and be ready to take on the responsibilities of marriage. When you take this step, do it not for just one desire only, or because you want to get married, but to build a family also'.* (ABS 16/2)

Several participants believed that religion emphasised and preserved the value of marital and family life. They reported that Islam provided Muslim spouses with many marital guidelines via the Quran and the Hadith, and that these helped spouses to succeed and be happy in their marital life. They indicated that their religion was keen on marital life and wanted to promote good families to develop a good society. One participant explained this idea:

> *'Islam cares about the family and what fixes it preserves it from everything that breaks it and ends it. Islam gave us the guidelines for how marital life should be happy, good, and continuous. And preserving the rights of both spouses, and this is clear and apparent in Islam, via the Quran and the Hadith. Islam was keen on the marital relationship and wanted it to be a good relationship. The opposite of that is that Satan and his assistants are keen to end this relationship because it troubles them, because with the righteousness of this family, this society would be reformed'.* (ABRA 5/6)

Many participants indicated that they adopted numerous Islamic guidelines in their marital lives. Furthermore, they stated that marital life will succeed if spouses adopt these guidelines. The compatibility between spouses in terms of religion was also an important factor in achieving marital success, which was discussed in Category 1 as one of the characteristics of the intimate relationship. Participants noted that treating the wife gently is one of the guidelines that each husband needs to adopt. They also believed that a religious husband would treat his wife kindly, and in contrast, a husband who was irreligious might abuse and fail to treat his wife gently and kindly. One participant elaborated on the importance of adopting Islamic guidelines:

> *'Personally, many of the guidelines that I adopt in marital life are based on religious beliefs. For example, when I see something that*

> *I do not like from her [his wife] and I believe that it is wrong, I remember that the Messenger said, "Treat women gently." The Messenger's commandment is to treat your wife gently and to be kind to your female relatives ... I think that religious faith or the level of religion affects spouses positively. With the lack of a religious level, you may find someone who does not look at women properly [abusing her], because I see that the true religious aspect and compatibility in the religion between spouses [it must be underlined] helps both partners succeed in marriage'.* (AAJ 22_6)

Like the statement above, one participant believed that following Islamic guidelines was one of the factors that led the spouses to success in their lives and to having a happy family. He stated:

> *'One of the families of our relatives that we know has a happy family life, and they are considered an example of a successful family. When we got close to this family, we found that they adhered to the religious aspect, and the father is a good man, and the mother is a good woman. It is possible that the religious aspect is important in family life, and I think most of the spouses who adhere to religion have happy families.'* (AN 16/6)

One of the Islamic guidelines that was reported by many participants was that a wife was to be 'retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace' (Quran). They believed that the husband should treat his wife in a decent and consistent manner, and this included both verbal and physical behaviour. They reported that the husband must treat his wife well and kindly, seek true companionship with her and refrain from harming her. However, if he is unable to live with her and if marital life is unsuitable for both spouses, he can divorce her and give her rights after this divorce. One participant mentioned that a husband should not abuse his wife, even in the case of infidelity; he should let her go to her family and

then divorce her. It is worth noting that infidelity was one of the associated factors that led to IPV, which will be discussed in Category 5.

> *'The woman is vulnerable, and she is supposed to be "retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace" (Quran). Even if you see something dishonourable from the wife [cheating], do not abuse her, and you can let her go to her family and then divorce her'.* (AF 18_6)

Similarly, a different participant indicated that the verse cited by the participant above opposed the act of IPV toward the wife, as it dictates that the husband should treat his wife with honour and love:

> *'There are many Quranic verses that advise spouses, such as "retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace". The word "kindness" is better than the word "honour". Regarding IPV, it is rejected and extremely incorrect because this verse is opposed to IPV, whether physical or psychological. God keeps it away from everyone'.* (AAJ 22/6)

Another participant shared his personal experience about IPV during his marital life with his ex-wife. He reported that he hit his ex-wife because she was checking his phone without first asking his permission. He was sorry that he had abused his ex-wife and he had hoped that their marital life would be free of IPV. He believed that the verse that said, "retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace" (Al-Baqarah: Verse 229) denied any form of IPV because the husband should treat his wife as the verse specified. He indicated:

> *'I remember one incident of IPV with my ex-wife. She was checking my phone without telling me, and then I hit her slightly on the shoulder, and she got upset, but it was a light hit. If you ask me now, will I do the same thing? I will tell you, no, I should not expect that beating to be in my life. I regretted it because it was a bad period in*

> *my life. Now it has passed, but I was hoping that married life would be free from verbal or physical violence. "Retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace" and this is what is supposed to be between spouses. There were no other situations afterwards that occurred between me and my ex-wife. I do not think there were other things that led to the beating'.* (AA 22_6)

Many participants believed that Islam does not only not accept IPV, but it also explicitly rejects it. They indicated that Prophet Mohammed is a role model for all Muslim people, and he never treated his wives badly or abused them. On the contrary, they noted that the Prophet Muhammed treated his wives with love and affection, respecting them, assisting them with housework, being kind to them and being keen on their happiness. One participant mentioned:

> *'Originally, the issue of beating the wife was completely rejected. It is not accepted in Islam. The prophet Mohammed is our example. He did not beat his wives; this is my point of view'.* (AF 18_6)

Another participant reported a similar statement. He believed that Prophet Muhammed treated his wives kindly and calmly, although one of them, for example, threw a plate at him when she was angry, but he never abused or treated them with the same kind of behaviour. This participant reported:

> *'I know the Prophet Muhammad treated his wives kindly. One wife, for example, threw the plate at him, and another wife said such-and-such, but he used to deal with them very kindly and calmly, and he never abused them'.* (ABZY 24/5)

Even though many participants believed that Islam rejects IPV, which will be explained later in Category 4, a few participants stated that a particular verse gives the husband permission to hit his wife slightly if he observes her

engaging in inappropriate behaviour or disobeying him. This verse reads: ‘As to those women on whose part you see ill conduct, admonish them, and abandon them in their beds, and beat them, but if they return to obedience, do not seek a means against them’ (An-Nisa: Verse 34). Participants who mentioned this believed that there were three ways to deal with a wife under such circumstances. First the husband would advise her, then he would abandon her in bed, and finally he would hit her. Also, they indicated that hitting should not be severe or harmful, and instead it should be done with a 'toothpick’. However, some of the participants also believed that some husbands misunderstood the verse and therefore used it as justification for abusing their wives and causing severe physical harm. One participant elaborated on his view of this verse:

> *‘Allah gave us three solutions for dealing with conflicts in Surat An-Nisa. The first thing is to advise her, and if advice does not work, then abandonment in the bed. Abandonment in bed did not help, so the last thing, with the clarification that I personally do not want this solution, is slight hitting. As he said and explained by Abdullah bin Abbas, the hitting is only with the toothpick, so that it is not severe and does not leave a mark on the body. When Allah says "hitting”, he does not mean breaking her body or causing harmful physical violence like some people who misunderstand the verse’.* (AD 25/6)

Similarly, one participant believed that the verse did not refer to severe beating. However, because of the lack of awareness about this verse, some people misunderstand it, and as a result, they abuse their wives. He indicated:

> *‘I do not have the correct interpretation of the verse. But I think, and I am certain that it does not refer to a severe beating, and what they mean is that it is a warning to women. Perhaps some people have*

> *interpreted it incorrectly as possible because there is no awareness and education, and there is still a lack of awareness of marital life'.* (ADN 5/3)

Although most participants did not have a correct and clear interpretation of this verse, they believed that the verse would not be likely to encourage the husband to harm his wife physically or to cause severe physical violence. However, a few participants stated that they had knowledge of a correct interpretation of this verse and explained it in detail. For example, they stated that hitting should not be severe, and that there is agreement among Islamic scholars that hitting should not be harmful. Also, they believed that even small red marks can be a form of IPV, and Sharia (Islam) rejects severe hitting that can harm the wife. One of the participants elaborated on the interpretation of the correct meaning of 'hit' in the verse:

> *'The first thing is that the blow should not be severe. This is by agreement of the scholars that it should not be severe. What does "not be severe" mean? Ibn Abbas says it means "with the toothpicks", meaning it does not harm the wife. He said, "that he does not break a limb or affect anything in this way". It was also mentioned in the interpretation of al-Tabari with the following comment: he said, "It does not affect anything", and anything here means nothing. Among its linguistic significance in the Arabic language is that if anything comes in the context of prohibition or denial, then it is general. He said, "it does not affect anything", and that means nothing. Even small red marks on the body can be an indication of violence. So, the hitting does not affect the body, and it should not have bruises or blood clots. This does not come from Sharia [Islam], and Sharia from this act is innocent. This is about the interpretation of the blow in the verse'.* (ABRA 5/6)

Furthermore, participants stated that hitting is not an obligatory or desirable behaviour. They explained that hitting is an optional act for the husband. However, participants reported that Islamic scholars have advised Muslim

husbands to avoid hitting even if the other conditions of the verse are met, such as disobeying, insulting, and cursing the husband. In addition, they indicated that Prophet Muhammed never hit or physically abused his wife. One participant reported his view on hitting a wife from an Islamic perspective:

> *'It must be clarified that hitting is not obligatory, nor is it desirable. Whoever hits his wife, who has disobeyed him, will not be rewarded. This is a permissible and available option. If you want to use it, use it, and if you don't want to use it, don't use it. It is better to not use it, and the scholars pointed out this thing. Scholars have indicated that avoiding hitting is better. Even if the condition has been met, meaning the wife is disobedient and she, for example, insults the husband and curses him, he may now hit her without severe hitting, yet it is better to avoid it. And the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, did not hit his wives. This means that the most perfect case in Islam is not to hit. Even if the wife deserved to be hit, the fullest case is that Aisha, may God be pleased with her, says, "The Messenger of God never hits a woman or a servant". The woman and the servant were not hit by the Prophet in his entire life. Even if the servant or the woman deserved to be hit, he did not hit them'.* (FSLA 1/7)

As mentioned above, participants stated that scholars advised Muslim husbands to avoid hitting their wives. However, a few participants indicated that there are several conditions for hitting if the wife is disobedient. For example, they stated that the blow should not be severe and should not harm the wife. Also, it should always come after advice and abandonment of the wife, not before, as the verse explained. Moreover, the husband should not exceed ten soft hits. In addition, the husband should first fulfil his wife's rights, and then he can use this option if the wife is disobedient to him, even though avoiding hitting the wife is better. Furthermore, this option should not cause marital issues, conflicts or separation. If the husband feels that

hitting his wife may trigger more disadvantages than advantages, he should not hit his wife, because Islam will not accept this act if it causes issues between spouses. One participant explained the conditions of hitting the wife according to the Islamic perspective:

> *'Regarding the conditions of hitting, if the wife is disobedient, the first condition is that it should not be severe. The second condition is that it should be after advice and abandonment, and not before it, in the order mentioned in the verse: advice, abandonment, and then hitting. The third condition is that it does not exceed ten hits [with a toothpick]. According to the saying of the Prophet, there are no more than ten hits except within one of the limits set by Allah. The fourth condition is that the husband should fulfil her full rights. She was failing in fulfilling his rights, and when he hit her, he was failing in fulfilling her rights. No, he is not entitled to that. He must fulfil all her rights first. Then if she fails him in his rights and he demands this right from her, by advising and then abandonment, and the intended purpose has not been achieved, then this is permissible for him, and it is permissible even though avoiding is better. But if he is failing to fulfil her rights, he has no right to hit her. The fifth condition is that the blow does not result in a greater injury. Or the hitting will not work. This is the text of the Shafi'is and others. They said, "If he knows that this hitting will happen contrary to what is intended, then he should not hit. If he knows that the blow will do what is intended and the benefit will be achieved, then it is better for him not to hit and avoid it, but this remains an available option". To clarify, if he hits his wife and knows that this hitting will cause problems, separation and conflicts between the two partners, and that it will cause more harm than good, Sharia will reject this action. It is not acceptable to cause a greater harm to achieve a small benefit'.* (ABRA 5/6)

PART TWO

This part will discuss three categories: *definitions and perceptions of IPV, causes and contributing factors of IPV, and addressing and preventing IPV*. These categories emphasise participants' perspectives and assist in

clarifying how the community understands various forms of IPV, the factors that contribute to IPV, and the actions taken to address and prevent IPV in Saudi society.

It is important to note that the Vignette 1 (Appendix 8) and Vignette 2 (Appendix 9) were utilised in this part to define the perspectives of the participants in their quotes and excerpts during data collection and consequent analysis (see below table 5.2).

Table 5.1 Vignettes 1 & 2

Vignette 1 (Male toward female scenario):
Ahmed and Fatimah have been married for three years. Usually, Fatimah takes permission from her husband to hang out with her friends. However, one day, they had an argument over Fatimah hanging-out with her friends last night. Ahmed asked Fatimah why she left home without permission from him. Fatimah said that she called his cell phone, but he did not answer. Ahmed said that he has been in a meeting, and he could not answer her call, and she should have waited for his permission. Fatimah said this is not her fault; it is his fault, and she does not need any permission from him anymore and she can leave home whenever she wants. Ahmed wanted to teach her a lesson about respect, so he pushed Fatimah against a wall and slapped her causing a swollen eye and redness on the left side of her face.
Vignette 2 (Female toward male scenario):

Ibrahim and Sarah have been married for two years. Ibrahim usually gets home from work around 3 p.m., but one day he did not arrive home until 11 p.m. Sarah is furious that Ibrahim did not call to say that he would be home late and has been wondering where he is. She called his cell phone, but he did not answer. When Ibrahim walked in the door at home, Sarah told him how upset she was. Ibrahim said that he had been in a meeting that ran late, and he could not answer the call. Sarah smelled another woman's perfume on his clothes, and she *suspected* her husband was cheating. Sarah asked Ibrahim if he was cheating. Ibrahim yelled at her and said, "shut up and just prepare the diner." Sarah lost her temper and then she picked up the dinner that she kept warm and thrown it at Ibrahim, which caused burns to his face.

5.5 Category 4: Definitions and Perception toward IPV

This category describes participant's perceptions about the forms of IPV and describes the acceptable IPV according to participants' perceptions. IPV in Saudi culture can take four forms, according to participants' perspectives, including physical violence, verbal and psychological violence, sexual violence, and controlling behaviour (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.2 The Types of IPV Identified by the Participants

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Psychological violence	Verbal violence	Controlling behaviour
Strong pushing	Forcing wife to have intercourse	**Toward wife**	Insulting	Depriving wife from employment/study
Slapping	Having sexual relations without the partner's consent	Insinuation of instability	Cursing	Depriving wife for going outside without appropriate reasons
Stabbing	Forcing wife to watch porn movies	Lack of appreciation	Expressing a desire to harm the partner verbally	Depriving a spouse from exercising her or his Islamic rights
Choking	Expressing a desire to harm the partner sexually	Neglect		Controlling or taking money from the wife without her consent
Killing		Dismissiveness		
Creating a circumstance that may cause a spouse to suffer physical harm		Poor treatment		
Expressing a desire to harm the partner physically		**Toward husband**		

Disregards the husband

Fails to listen to the husband

Provokes the husband

Gives him cause to doubt her trustworthiness

Definition of IPV
Any behaviour (physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or controlling) within the marital relationship that a spouse considers unacceptable, or a desire to control, deprive or harm one's partner (physically, sexually, psychologically or verbally)

5.5.1 Physical Violence

Most participants defined physical violence as an act that results in visible harm, such as strong pushing, slapping, stabbing, choking, or killing, or creating a circumstance that may cause a husband or wife to suffer physical harm:

> *'Physical violence is excessive beating, such as slapping, a strong push or anything that causes harm.'* (ADN 5/3)

> *'I was watching the news and saw many cases of husbands harming their wives, such as a case where a man stabbed his wife, a case where a man choked his wife and finally a case where a man killed his wife, and I think that this is violence.'* (AB 3/6)

Many participants described physical violence as the intention to physically harm a spouse, and that it could be directed anywhere on the body. For example, one participant stated:

> *'From my perspective, physical violence, whatever its form – on the shoulder, on the cheek or anywhere on the body – is an act that is motivated by a desire to harm and reproach someone. Whatever its form, it is wrong.'* (AAJ 22/6)

Most study participants considered physical violence to be unacceptable. Indeed, most participants mentioned physical abuse only when they were asked about IPV in general. In addition, beating was identified as a common act of physical violence as the participants stated the following:

> *'A husband should never physically abuse his wife. Problems can be solved in many ways other than beatings. If a husband reaches the point of beating his wife, then the mistake is on the husband, and legally, he will be blamed.'* (APFT 26/3)

> *'Regarding physical violence, by which I mean beating, it is totally unacceptable because the woman is weak, and she is supposed to be either "retained in kindness or released in honour" (Quran).'* (AF 18/6)

It is important to note that most of the participants reported that the discussion about IPV has only recently emerged in Saudi society, and that this topic had not been acknowledged in the past. One participant hared his opinion:

> *'There are many definitions of IPV, but IPV as we know it in SA currently refers to beating because the issue of IPV is a new topic. Unfortunately, human rights and IPV are new topics in SA. Thank Allah that it has happened now, even though it is no came from our society, traditions, or even religion. I am referring to when a man beats his wife, or a wife beats her husband; but it is uncommon for a wife to beat her husband. So, according to the simplest definition, IPV is the act of beating.'* (ABD 12/3)

All the participants stated that physical violence can be committed by husband or wife; however, in Saudi culture, physical violence is mostly perpetrated by husbands as explained in Chapter 2. Also, physical violence, as compared to other types of IPV, was shown to be less common in current Saudi society than the other forms of IPV.

5.5.2 Sexual Violence

No participant revealed anything about sexual violence without prompting, indicating that there are taboos associated with discussing sex in Saudi culture. However, when asked directly about sexual violence, the participants identified forcing the wife to watch a porn movie. It is important to mention that the Islamic religion forbids watching porn movie and

therefore many participants believed that forcing the spouse to watch a porn movie is a form of sexual violence. Forcing the wife to have intercourse or having sexual relations without the partner's consent were also identified as examples of sexual violence. One of the participants stated:

> *'Sexual violence, for example, is forcing her [the wife] to do certain positions, forcing her to do certain things, forcing her to watch pornographic movies, and you can force her to do any certain thing. This is definitely sexual violence.'* (ABA 23/6)

Although forcing the wife to have intercourse and forcing her to watch a porn movie were considered unacceptable by the participants, they considered a sexual relationship to be an important component of any marital relationship. Thus, they believed that neither the husband nor the wife should refuse the other's sexual demands without an appropriate reason, such as menstruation. However, participants stated that the wife may refuse intercourse because her husband had physically abused her. One participant said this:

> *'I think that the sexual relationship between spouses is a legitimate right for both. Both should understand and not refuse each other. She should say, "I satisfy his desires, and I satisfy my desires, regardless of what happens to him or to me." This is a legitimate right for both, and we do not argue about it. But now tell me how the wife can go to her husband at night when he beats her during the day! How could he expect that? I mean, life should be consistent on one path. He must fulfil his duties and preserve his rights, and the same thing applies to her. They should not focus only on the duties of the other party. I mean, one of the husband's rights over the wife is sexual intercourse, the same right that she has over him. They are not supposed to use this as a bargaining card between them.'* (AA 22_6)

Participants said that the wife needs to comply with her husband's requests for sex and that refusing it could lead to verbal, physical or sexual violence, as one participant stated:

> *'If the husband requests sex, the wife must comply with this request. And often, if she refuses, he might intervene by beating her or raising his voice. It will involve physical, verbal and sexual abuse. If he asks but she does not want sex, he may force her by beating or something else [harm her physically].'* (AM 18/6)

The participants stated that one of the wife's religious obligations is to accept requests for sexual intercourse from her husband, and she is not supposed to reject them; however, they believed that a wife could refuse sex if there was an appropriate reason, such as menstruation. One participant described his perceptions as:

> *'As for the subject from a religious perspective, the idea that the angels curse the woman who refuses intercourse, I do not specialise in these things, but my understanding is that religion comes with everything that is compatible with reason and common sense, and stresses the need for obedience to the husband, even in this matter. Therefore, I expect that rejection will not come arrogantly or without reason. For sure, there is a reason. A rational husband also understands what the reason is when there is rejection, and this is, of course, normal life. As for the person who assaults his wife to have intercourse with her, he has reached an advanced stage of marital problems, and this can be sexual violence.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Few participants believed that sexual desire for both partners is an important feature in marital life. They emphasised the importance of foreplay between both spouses before intercourse, and that husbands should not have one-sided sex and should not benefit from sex for themselves. Participant mentioned the following:

> *'If we talk about the basis of it [intercourse], the matter of the bed [intercourse] is based on the desire of both parties. Ibn Abbas [one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad] said, "I love to adorn myself and smarten up for my wife just as I desire her to adorn herself for me, for Allah says, 'And [women] have rights similar to those that [men have over them which should be fulfilled] with kindness'" (Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 228). That means the desire comes from both partners. The lack of sexual desire for one partner is like saying no to the other partner. Thus, if we look at the above saying, it is based on affection and mercy between the two partners, and it is based on love between the two partners and desire between the two partners.'* (AHF 8/3)

> *'Let's talk comfortably and with our goal as scientific. Of course, spouses should have a mutual intimate relationship [mutual attractions], but not all people have an intimate relationship in their marital life, and the Prophet mentioned the importance of the intimate relationship when he said, "Not one of you should go to his wife like an animal befalls an animal; let there be a message between you." They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is the message?" He replied, "Kiss and speech."'* (AAW 17/6)

Although it is forbidden in Islam to refuse intercourse in a marital relationship without a valid reason or to use sexual relations as a weapon against one's spouse, this does not give one partner the right to rape or force the other partner to have a sexual relationship.

5.5.3 Verbal and Psychological Violence

Other commonly reported types of IPV were verbal and psychological violence, which were thought to be increasing as times and cultural patterns changed. Participants described verbal abuse as insulting, cursing, or expressing a desire to harm the partner verbally. Participants reported that

verbal abuse can destroy love and trust between the couples. In addition, most participants believed that verbal abuse was one of the root causes of most marital problems, as participants stated the following:

> *'I see that in the past, physical violence was very common, and I expect that the percentages are lower now than in the past. But with verbal abuse, that has been reversed. I mean that in the past, it was rare to see couples demonstrating verbal violence between them, like insulting and cursing each other. Physical violence was common in the past, but verbal abuse was not, and the couple respected each other. Now I see that verbal abuse is more prevalent.'* (AM 18/6)

> *'From my point of view, verbal violence is more common and more severe and violent than physical abuse ... For example, insulting and cursing your wife in front of people, in front of children, in front of her mother, or even in front of her father... This destroys trust in the wife and can destroy even love.'* (AZFAD 20/3)

Among the participants, this was also a common perception:

> *'Sometimes violence is through words – the tongue is a key for good and is the key to every problem. Sometimes violence is not even by hand... I mean what is happening at the current time, and most family problems are caused by the tongue and one partner abusing the other verbally. As for the beating, I expect God willing, that it is over. Unfortunately, the current generation is involved in verbal violence, both husband and wife.'* (ABMH 15/2)

Some participants believed that verbal abuse may cause a person psychological harm, and that the wife is especially likely to be harmed this way. They believed that verbal abuse is more painful and hurtful than physical abuse, and that the effects of verbal abuse last a lifetime and cannot be forgotten, as one participant explained:

> *'Verbal abuse may affect the person psychologically. If the speech is very offensive – for example, if he says to her that she is fat and her body is ugly, and the focus of his speech is on these things that affect her – she may say, "I wish he had hit me and not said those hurtful words." Some hurtful words and verbal abuse leave a deep impression on the wife's heart, and she will never forget it for the rest of their marriage, no matter how long it lasts. This verbal abuse remains a black spot on their marital life.'* (AA 22_6)

In terms of psychological violence, participants believed that this type of IPV could be directed at both the husband and the wife. For instance, insinuation of instability, lack of appreciation, neglect, dismissiveness, and poor treatment were identified as examples of psychological violence against the wife. On the other hand, the husband might experience psychological violence if his wife disregards him, fails to listen to him, gives him cause to doubt her trustworthiness, or provokes him. The following comments describe psychological violence toward the wife:

> *'Violence has many forms, meaning that physical violence may be, for example, beating, and verbal abuse may be cursing. In the law, there are things called "negative crimes," which are failures to act, meaning that a person may be imprisoned for not doing something. For example, if you see a person drowning in the sea in front of you and can help him but choose not to, you may be imprisoned if that person dies. I see this also existing in marital relations. For example, if the husband comes home from work and his wife has cooked a certain thing or cleaned the house, then the husband must give in return, and give a positive reaction to his wife. This may mean complimenting her for cooking or bringing her something that she likes, but the lack of appreciation for what she has done can also be violent. We can call it psychological violence.'* (AZFAD 20_3)

> *'Sometimes violence in marital life is psychological violence, and not always a beating. Sometimes psychological violence is more*

> *severe than physical abuse. For example, a house without a smile is violence, and a house without good treatment is violence. The husband who ignores and neglects his wife and does not appreciate what she does, this is also violent.'* (AN 16/6)

Insinuation of instability was defined as provoking a feeling of insecurity in the relationship by making the wife feel that her husband may divorce or leave her at any moment. In some cases, the husband might even directly threaten to leave his wife if she does not obey or listen to him. It is important to note that feelings of relationship stability were reported as an important factor in successful marital relationships.

> *'I see psychological violence between spouses in several matters. My understanding of psychological violence… I believe that it is the most harmful thing for a person. It is like making the wife feel uncomfortable in many ways. For example, if someone makes his wife think that he may divorce her at any moment, then her feeling of insecurity is a violence. A wife, for example, lived and sacrificed for her husband while he said, "if you do such-and-such, I will divorce you and leave you." While she, for example, sacrificed her career opportunities, if she even worked in the first place, it did not make sense to let her live with that sort of doubt, letting her think that he would release her and leave her at any moment. Trust in the stability of the relationship is one of the most important factors in the success of married life. I think that psychological violence, as I explained, can be committed when the husband does not give his wife reassurances and help her feel confident that the person with whom she has built her life will not suddenly divorce her or leave her.'* (AAJ 22_6)

The following statements explain psychological violence toward the husband. As one participant put it:

> *'…One thing that may put the husband at ease is knowing that he can trust his wife and that she is protecting her house and honour. However, if the husband feels he must watch her because he has doubts about her, even if this reaction was not intended by the wife,*

> *I think this could be psychological abuse toward her husband.'* (AAP 19_6)

In response to Vignette 1, one of the participants mentioned that deliberately provoking the husband is a form of psychological abuse, which provoking the husband may lead him to beat and abuse his wife, and that the wife may know how to provoke her husband by using certain words or phrases that irritate the husband:

> *'The wife knows how to manage the pace of the discussion; she is the one in control. She knows what provokes his anger to the extent that he raises his hands to beats her. For example, she knows how to provoke her husband and abuse him psychologically by using certain words or phrases that he dislikes, or by many other means, and she often controls this area. She is the one who can make him lose his temper*.' (AA 22_6)

Participants agreed that ignoring and not listening to the husband could be considered a type of psychological abuse, and that these acts may lead the husband to lose control and get upset:

> *'It is possible for a woman to abuse her husband unintentionally, and she may not be aware of it. For example, she may abuse him by ignoring him, or she may not listen to his words and do things that upset him and cause him to lose control.'* (APFT 26/3)

Participants perceived psychological violence as the most extreme, common, and severe type of IPV, whether it was used against the wife or against the husband. Unlike physical violence, psychological violence – according to the participants – is invisible to others because it is easy to hide and difficult to identify:

> *'Psychological violence may have a longer impact than any other kind of violence. With physical violence, when I hit you, you can stop this violence by complaining to someone, or by involving any judicial authority, but with psychological violence you cannot even show it. You cannot go to the judge, as you have nothing to prove that what you say is true. Because of this, the feeling of psychological abuse by the husband or wife, I think, is the biggest type of abuse that cannot be discovered.'* (AAJ 22_6)

> *'Sometimes violence is physical, and sometimes it is psychological. Violence does not only mean beatings. Sometimes moral [psychological] violence is more severe than physical violence. The physical violence may fade away, but psychological can kill the person's feelings and emotions. It is very fatal'.* (AF 18_6)

Participants indicated that verbal and psychological violence are currently the most prevalent types of IPV in SA society. Although they considered verbal and psychological violence to have been uncommon in previous generations and believed that physical violence was more common in the past, most agreed that the reverse is true in contemporary times. While the decline of physical violence may be appreciated, many participants claimed that the psychological effects of verbal abuse on the wife may be even worse than the effects of physical abuse, and that spouses may suffer long-term consequences from both psychological and verbal abuse. Psychological violence may therefore be considered a severe and particularly dangerous form of IPV, as the lack of physical and verbal evidence that it has occurred may make it difficult to seek the aid and intervention that is available to victims of other forms.

5.5.4 Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour was another form of IPV mentioned by the participants. In this type of IPV, most of the participants indicated that controlling behaviour was more often perpetrated by the husband towards his wife. A few participants, on the other hand, believed that controlling behaviour could be directed against either husband and wife. Controlling behaviour includes forcing, depriving and controlling the partner. A perception of forcing was that the wife is required to do something without her consent and approval; this could be classified as a type of IPV. Regarding this point, one of the participants stated the following as he described a marital issue between him and his wife:

> *'We had a problem when we first came to America regarding her dress [outside dress], because I did not like the type of dress she wore in America [wife should wear an abaya instead of a t-shirt and jeans]. I always told her and said, "no, this is inappropriate and not OK to wear, so don't wear it." This was from my point of view, but she refused to listen to me, always saying, "no, this is OK, and I can wear it." I did not like that she did not try to find a middle ground on the issue, and she did not listen to my opinion but followed her opinion. Of course, I was patient for about a month or two months and after that I exploded and I told her "Look, girl, I cannot stand this situation and you have one, two and three requests [he mean wearing abaya]. If you want to do these requests and live with me, you are more than welcome. If you don't like my requests, you can tell me now and I will get a ticket for you so you can go and live with your family in SA". I see that this is right for me, but she felt that it was a forcing her to wear an abaya because she knew that the idea of returning to SA in itself meant that I was going to leave her, and I was forcing her to make these requests. My wife felt that her dress and many things in her life were forced. So, forcing can be classified under IPV because it affects her mentally and emotionally, and she is also not accepting of it.'* (ABA 23/6)

Participants indicated that depriving the wife of her educational or employment rights is not acceptable in marital life. In light of this,

participants believed that partners should discuss the topic of the wife's employment or education before the deprivation takes place and evaluate the positive and negative aspects of this concern. One participant mentioned:

> *'Depriving is definitely wrong. It is wrong to deprive a wife who desires to study or wants to work. In the end, this is her life [even if it is a shared life], but in the end, it is her life. Depriving the wife of a job or of studying is a total mistake, in my opinion. However, before this deprive take place, there is supposed to be a discussion. For example, my wife wants to be an employee. Well, if she is an employee, what are the negatives and positives aspects of her job? ... If they accept both the negative and positive aspects of this job, which is not a problem.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Depriving the wife of her education or employment was not the only kind of 'depriving' act mentioned by the participants. They also indicated that depriving a wife of the ability to leave the house, visit or contact her family, or get her basic needs met were deemed to be additional acts of controlling behaviour in Saudi culture:

> *'Violence [violence in marital life] is sure that you deprive her [wife] of the things she loves and needs. For example, depriving her of calling her family, asking her not to leave the house, or failing to bring the things that are necessary in her life.'* (AAW 17/6)

Regarding 'depriving the wife of the ability to leave the house', the participants mentioned in Vignette 1 that the husband has no right to deprive the wife of going outside the house. However, they also indicated that the wife should not go outside the house without requesting permission from her husband, as he is responsible for protecting his wife as well as the family, based on the rulings of Islam., as one participant mentioned:

> *'If she [wife] wants to leave her home, she must seek permission from her husband. This is because the husband is responsible for protecting her, and this was from Sharia rulings ... There are many Sharia rulings that we strive to elicit, and therefore the husband is responsible for protecting her. If she goes out and gets hurt, then he is responsible and he will be blamed. "All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock" [Prophet Muhammad]. As soon as the news reaches her family, the husband will be blamed for neglecting his wife and not protecting her.'* (FSLA 1/7)

In relation to depriving the wife from visiting her family, another example was provided by one of the participants. It is important to note that a husband may punish his wife for visiting her family. Nevertheless, participants regarded this as inappropriate behaviour in a marital relationship, as one participant stated:

> *'Of course, there is no doubt in terms of beating. Of course, this is well known and there is no dispute. But violence, from my point of view, means depriving the wife from going to her family as a punishment for a month, two or three months, if she does not listen to you and this is not right and unfair.'* (AN 16/6)

Participants also believed that depriving a person, whether a woman or man, from exercising her or his Islamic rights was also considered IPV. One participant demonstrated this as:

> *'Violence [IPV] is defined by every culture according to its norms and traditions. It may be, for example, a culture that sees certain acts as violence and Islam does not see them as violence, or this culture does not see them as violence and Islam sees them as violence ... The use of these definitions is very important, especially at this time, which means a lot of wars are wars of definitions. Anyone who wants to put a Muslim in a dilemma may ask him "are you with freedom or not?". The definition of freedom for me is*

> *different from yours ... You do not judge me according to your definition. Also, I am not against violence that I believe in. Violence, to me, is to deprive a person of their rights as prescribed by Allah and the use of force in a way that violates the purposes of Sharia.'* (ABRA 5/6)

Several participants also indicated that controlling or taking money from the wife without her agreement was considered unacceptable behaviour as well. One participant stated:

> *'If the husband takes or controls his wife's money without her consent, then this is never acceptable in marital life. This is, of course, forbidden by Sharia, and he is not entitled to it.'* (AD 25/6)

Briefly stated, the attitude of 'depriving the wife from going outside' was reported to be a common act among the other acts of controlling behaviour in Saudi society. While the majority of the study's participants stated that this conduct was inappropriate and that the husband should deprive her of this activity, the wife, on the other hand, should get permission from her husband before going outside. A few participants stated that there are certain situations in which a husband may restrict his wife of the ability to leave the home, and that this is then considered an acceptable act rather than an instance IPV. This is discussed in the next category.

5.5.5 Acceptable Behaviours in Marital Life

Participants identified several behaviours they believed to be acceptable in marital life, such as hitting, insulting with jokes. In addition, under some conditions, participants reported that it was acceptable to control and penalise the wife's actions. It is vital to highlight that these behaviours (hitting, insulting, and controlling) were identified previously as forms of

IPV in marital life. However, participants felt that in certain circumstances, these behaviours were acceptable. For example, a few participants believed that in some situations, a husband may be able to prevent his wife from going outside. The husband is the responsible head of the household, and as a result, some participants believed that he may deprive the wife to go outside the house, for example, if she adopts some of the behaviours of her friends or has social relationships that may have an impact on the family. They believed, however, that deprivation is not acceptable if there is no reason for it or if the wife is dissatisfied with the outcome. An elaboration on this perception was discussed:

> *'Many times, for example, I have prevented my wife from going to a certain place. I do not think it is violence [IPV] because I had a view on events, because I thought that going to this event was totally wrong. For example, she wants to attend a huge party for a girl graduating from kindergarten, and I must pay thousands for it. I see that this event is wrong and unnecessary and a waste of money. I say frankly, maybe my wife will be affected and will ask me in the future to throw a very big party for my children's graduation and pay huge amounts of money. Therefore, I tried in various ways to convince my wife that this was wrong and to discourage her from attending these events, and with her consent, in the end. It is possible not to be convinced one hundred percent, but she accepted it in the end. I do not think that this is violence, but it would be violence if I prevented her for no reason or without her consent.'* (AAB 19/6)

When discussing Vignette 1, participant made a similar perspective about preventing the wife from going outside. It was also believed that this behaviour was acceptable as long as the wife agreed and did not show any dissatisfaction. It is important to emphasise that the understanding between the spouses is important for participants, as well as the belief that couples should know each other well from the beginning of their marital relationship in order to avoid any future marital issues, as one participant stated:

> *'I will give you an example from my married life. At the beginning of our married life, I did not allow my wife to go out with her sisters to shop, because she was constantly going out shopping with them, and this bothered me a lot, and I was paying a lot of money. After that, I asked my wife to stop going to shop with them, but that she might meet them at her family's house. She was not completely satisfied, and this was evident from her facial expressions, but she agreed. As she agreed, I think this is not considered controlling. However, after a while, I discovered that she was not the type who liked to shop at all. She was embarrassed by her sisters, meaning if they called her, she would spend time with them as a courtesy and not out of love for shopping. If I had known that before, I would have let her go with them occasionally. But this thing was a mistake by both of us because we did not understand each other. An understanding is required between two partners, especially at the beginning of their marital life.'* (AN 16/6)

Hitting the partner jokingly was also regarded as acceptable amongst Saudi couples. However, they added that these attitudes should not be seen as a demonstration of power or domination over the partner, since the partner could reply with the same attitude, as stated by one participant:

> *'Joking could occur. Joking can have no limits between spouses. They have whatever they want, whether by simple hitting or not, depending on what they coexist with. But not as a way of showing power or dominance over the wife, "I am strong and I want to punish you", because sometimes the wife tries to respond to this by doing the same act. She probably says, "if my husband hits me, I can hit him", or she tries to show control. This is wrong behaviour that should not happen between spouses.'* (AA 22_6)

A few participants shared their perspective on what they considered appropriate hitting. They stated that simple hitting was not deemed IPV if it was performed in the context of joking between spouses. In contrast,

hitting during a disagreement between spouses may lead to a marital problem, and can be classified as IPV. A participant mentioned:

> *'A simple hitting while joking is not considered violence [IPV]. But in some matters, if the spouses argue about a particular topic, for example, simple beatings during this disagreement can become a big issue. This is violence in my opinion'* (ABZY 24/5)

Jokingly insulting a spouse was also considered acceptable in marital relationships. It is critical to emphasise that this insult must be understood as a joke and not taken seriously by either partner, otherwise the insult would be considered as IPV:

> *'Sometimes the husband and wife may call each other by a bad nickname, but it is through joking, and they accept this nickname, so it is not considered an insult. But I can say that this nickname is a form of verbal violence if the person continues to use it and the other partner expresses dissatisfaction with it. I mean that I say things that the other partner rejects. This is violence in my opinion.'* (AAB 19/6)

Regarding hitting, pushing or insulting the spouse, a few interviewees indicated that a husband or wife may resort to such behaviours if one of them loses their temper, but this behaviour still should not harm the other partner physically or psychologically. Participants also indicated that each partner should not consider this behaviour to be IPV and should instead accept it as a consequence of losing their temper during an argument:

> *'If I lost my temper for any reason, I would just push or hit her gently and walk away so that it wouldn't hurt her physically or psychologically. Not more than that.'* (AB 3/6)

> *'My wife and I had an argument, and I didn't want to continue the discussion with her and wanted to leave the house. My wife pulled me tight and said, "Don't go away until I finish talking". I did not consider it violence [IPV], and I know that she actually extended her hand and pulled me, so some people could call it violence, but I did not see it as violence because, at that moment, she wanted to finish talking, and I did not want to listen to her.'* (AAW 17/6)

Similar perceptions were also reported in relation to the act of insulting the partner. Any spouse who insulted the other partner because they had done or said something that upset them was also not considered IPV in this situation:

> *'Sometimes a husband is forced to insult or raise his voice to his wife, but I do not see that it is violence because he was forced for a specific reason. Or it may be that even a woman can raise her voice at her husband because he has wronged her with a particular word or action. I don't see that as violence [IPV] because he had to do this in order to warn her because she made a mistake, and he probably said, "I raised my voice this time because I lost control because what you said or did was so upsetting." The second partner [wife] should understand that she must calm her partner down so the problem will not become bigger and then discuss it later with the husband.'* (AM 18/6)

Several participants believed that if a husband observes his wife engaging in inappropriate behaviour, he has the right to gently hit her. This belief was grounded in the following verse in the Quran: 'As to those women on whose part you see ill conduct, admonish them, and abandon them in their beds, and beat them, but if they return to obedience, do not seek a means against them' (An-Nisa: Verse 34). In response, one of the participants stated that the verse provides the husband with permission to beat his wife as a kind of punishment, but that the beating should not be severe. It is crucial to note that the participant used this verse as a justification for having beaten his

wife in the past, despite the fact that he later recognised that this was not appropriate behaviour in a marital relationship:

> *'I cannot tell you that we call it violence [IPV]. I am opposed to an act that leads to violence now, but previously I used to find a legitimate [Sharia] excuse that the husband can or has the authority to punish his wife if she exceeds the limits of the Verse. First by speaking, then abandoning, then finally beating, but it should not be cruel, and you should avoid the face. I used to find a legitimate excuse… Some of the Companions interpreted it [beating] as being with 'Siwak' [toothpick] or with simple things. So, I thought about it from a legitimate point of view, that it was a kind of disciplining of wife. It was from a legitimate viewpoint that it is permissible even if someone argues with you about that, and man is so convinced that he done nothing wrong. My wife made a mistake and I punished her. I talked to her, but nothing changed, I abandoned her [abandon her in bed], but nothing happened, The Verse was clear and frank, "and beat them". The Quranic verse reinforces that idea. My opinion is that this is not right indeed [abusing the wife]. There should be no beating in marital life.'* (AA 22_6)

Another participant expressed a similar perception. According to him, a husband had the right to hit his wife gently with a "toothpick". However, since the implementation of SA Vision 2030, this view has changed since the rights of women have been included as part of the vision (see Chapter 1). One participant explained this as:

> *'I am against beatings of all kinds and in all their forms. It is true that our culture sometimes enables a man to hit his wife even with a "toothpick"*, *especially in the past. But personally, I am totally against this thing [beating]. Life has changed drastically, and these changes have a significant impact on the concepts of married life [Saudi Vision 2030]. I do not currently see that a man in any form of violence is entitled to beat his wife'* (AAB 19/6)

With respect to the Quran (An-Nisa: Verse 34), most of the participants claimed that the verse had been misconstrued by some husbands, which allowed them to use it as an excuse to beat their wives. The correct understanding, on the other hand, was different from what these people believed. This was elaborated in Category 3:

> *'There are some people who have interpreted it (An-Nisa: Verse 34) incorrectly and they use it as justification to beat their wives. But sometimes when they ask a certain Sheikh about the correct interpretation, they find that the verse is far from what they thought it was. We don't say a lot of people, but we say some of them.'* (AB 3_6)

To summarise the behaviours that were regarded as acceptable and unacceptable in married life, the majority of participants reported that any behaviour (physical, psychological, or verbal) that has an impact on either spouse is termed IPV, as one participant demonstrated as:

> *'Anything that causes an effect on the other partner is violence [IPV]. If it does not cause any psychological, physical or verbal harm, it is not considered violence.'* (ABM 24_6)

In conclusion, the participants discussed several forms of IPV as well as what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviours within this category. It is clear that IPV in Saudi society is defined as any behaviour (physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or controlling) within the marital relationship that a spouse considers unacceptable, or a desire to control, deprive or harm one's partner (physically, sexually, psychologically or verbally). Furthermore, it is certain that the behaviours and perceptions associated with each type of IPV varied and were frequently influenced by several factors. Understanding the reasons for the presence of IPV in the

community and, most importantly, determining the factors associated with IPV, is critical to defining this perception of IPV forms. Understanding of these factors is addressed in the next category.

5.6 Category 5: Causes of IPV and Contributing Factors

The participants addressed several factors associated with IPV in Saudi culture. Moreover, although these factors may contribute to IPV, they are not necessarily the fundamental cause of IPV. These factors were identified as being varied and having developed on several levels, including individual, relationship, community and societal levels (see Table 5.4). Understanding these multi-level factors can assist in the development of potential preventative strategies.

Table 5.3 Causes of IPV and Contributing Factors

Personal factors	Marital relationship factors	Community and societal factors
Exhibiting anger and aggressive behaviour towards a spouse	Provocation of a husband	Witnessing IPV committed by parents or relatives
Psychological illness/issues	No respect and understanding each other	Women's rights
Substance abuse	Infidelity	Television series
	Extreme jealousy	

5.6.1 Personal Factors

Various participants indicated that IPV perpetrators possessed specific personality characteristics, including exhibiting anger and aggressive

behaviour towards a spouse. Some participants believed that the behaviour of husbands as adolescents and children continued into adulthood and made them more likely to abuse their wives. For example, one participant mentioned:

> *'If a husband had been aggressive during his childhood and youth, he may be more aggressive in his marital life compared to a normal person, and it may lead him to abuse his wife.'* (AB 3_6)

Another participant shared his experiences of becoming angry with his wife. He stated that when he lost control and became enraged, he insulted his wife. He understood that verbally abusing his wife was not appropriate marital behaviour and he admits to being wrong. Therefore, he would subsequently apologise to his wife and assure her that he did not mean what he said. However, as previously indicated in Category 3, verbal abuse may be severe and hurtful and impact the partner. Because of this, the participant stated that his wife did not always forgive him, particularly when he insulted her family:

> *'For example, sometimes when I am angry, I insult my wife using hurtful words; however, I always apologise and say, "I said these words when I was angry, and I did not mean them." Sometimes she does not forgive me right away, especially if I insult her family. My problem is that I cannot control myself when I am angry.'* (ABF 24/6)

Similarly, one participant described a scenario with a husband who abused his wife both physically and verbally. The participant described how this husband became angry because his wife had a doctor's appointment during his favourite football match. Thus, the husband had to drive his wife to the hospital; however, he was unable to manage his anger and abused her. The

participant expressed regret for being unable to report the IPV to the authorities. It is worth emphasising that, in the past, Saudi wife were unable legally to drive and had to depend on their husbands for transportation (see Chapter 1):

> *'I will offer you an example of a person who beat his wife and children. His wife wanted to go to the hospital because she had an appointment; however, a very important football match was on at the same time. The husband clearly did not want to go with his wife to the hospital because he wanted to watch football, and it was clear that he was the type who could not control his anger. So, he beat his wife and children in the car. I saw this happen in front of me while they were sitting in the car, and the man's voice was loud. Everyone in the hospital parking lot could hear him. He insulted his wife and told her that the appointment was not important, and that the football match was more important to him. I felt terrible for the wife and children and wished I had recorded a video and reported it to the police because this guy is not human.'* (AN 16/6)

This testimony demonstrates how aggressive and angry behaviour can drive either a wife or husband to abuse their spouse both physically and verbally. However, the inability to control and manage one's anger is also an issue; therefore, teaching individuals to effectively manage their anger would contribute to the prevention of IPV. Aggression and anger-induced behaviours were not the only characteristics that participants identified as personal characteristics of IPV perpetrators. Psychological illness/issues and substance abuse were also identified as common factors that contribute to IPV and, more particularly, physical violence. One participant stated:

> *'I think that the perpetrators [IPV perpetrators] may have psychological issues. It appears to me that he has some psychological issues. It is worthwhile to mention that he may be addicted as well.'* (AAJ 22_6)

Another participant made a similar observation:

> *'He [an IPV perpetrator] might be an ordinary person, but under the influence of drugs, or when suffering from a mental disorder, he may have changed to become an abusive and violent person.'* (AB 3_6)

One participant reported a case of physical abuse that occurred in his neighbourhood. The IPV was committed by a spouse who was also a drug abuser. The participant indicated that he could hear the wife's voice while her husband beat her. The participant deduced that the husband was under the influence of drugs at the time:

> *'We had a case* [of IPV] *in our neighbourhood. First of all, I live close to the Haram, and the area is, as you know, very densely populated. So, the houses are very close to each other…The perpetrator was one of our Saudi neighbours. Unfortunately, we knew that he used drugs, and we could hear his wife's voice when he was physically abusing her. I believe that he abused his wife after taking drugs.'* (APFT 26/3)

The excerpts above do not mention alcohol abuse as a contributing factor to IPV; rather, these participants expressed that only using drugs contributed to IPV. However, several other participants indicated that both using alcohol and drugs were the cause of IPV in Saudi society. This clearly indicates that substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) can reduce an individual's inhibition and may contribute to IPV in society. One participant stated:

> *'Drug abuse causes 80% or maybe even 90% of cases of husbands beating their wives and other instances of IPV. I mean, when I asked a perpetrator of IPV, I found that he was a drug addict. For example, one of my relatives beat his wife, and when I asked his brothers why he did this, they said that he was a drinker and a drug*

> *addict. So, in my opinion, drugs are responsible for 90% of IPV.'* (AXL 14/3)

Many participants expressed that most marital conflicts were settled between the couple and were not reported to authorities. Indeed, only a small number of cases were reported to the authorities, and these cases were related to mental illness and substance abuse. This was illustrated by a participant who shared his personal experience with IPV while working in the police department:

> *'I have served in the police department for 33 years. Of course, we [Saudi people] are like all human beings; we are not angels, and all countries in the world have IPV. Although it exists, it has not reached the extent of the phenomenon or big issue in our country. Usually, problems that occur in the home between spouses* [IPV] *are not reported to security authorities, such as the police, and most disputes are resolved within the family. But there are cases of violence* [physical violence] *that came to us* [the police]*, and when we investigated the reasons for the violence, we found that the man either had a mental illness or was a substance abuser. Nevertheless, there were few such cases. However, in my opinion, cases of sane and normal people who assault their wives are extremely rare in our society.'* (ABM 24_6)

It appears that both wives and husbands can exhibit angry and aggressive behaviour, which can lead to physical and verbal abuse. Mental illness and substance abuse have been identified as the most important causes of physical abuse in Saudi culture. Although physical violence is committed by both husband and wife, physical violence is more often committed by Saudi men, as noted in Category 4 (Section 5.5.1). This finding was also reflected in the perceptions reported in this section.

5.6.2 Marital Relationship Factors

The participants identified various factors related to marital relationships that contribute to IPV. Provocation of a husband via the use of phrases or words that may irritate or provoke him and threatening his dominance and control were identified as potential causes of IPV. When presented with Vignette 1, participants mentioned that beating was unacceptable. They believed, however, that the wife had provoked her husband and that the husband had physically abused her because of his masculine personality. This sentiment is reflected in the following quotes:

> *'It was a mistake and provocation on the part of the wife to say to Ahmed, "I can go out whenever I want." Moreover, this caused the second mistake, which was the husband's decision to beat her*.' (AAB 19/6)

According to participants, in Middle Eastern culture, husbands seek to obtain control and domination at home. As reflected in the preceding statement, participants also believed that the wife in Vignette 1 provoked her husband, which the husband may have interpreted as a threat to his masculinity. As a result, he may have beat his wife to maintain his masculine authority. For example, one participant stated:

> *'We live in a Middle Eastern culture, and in our culture, the man somewhat likes to be the dominant person in the house, even if he is not actually the person in control; but he loves this feeling. In the story* [Vignette 1]*, however, Fatimah* [the wife] *said to Ahmed* [husband]*, "I can go out and come back whenever I want." It is possible that Ahmed considered this a provocation and threat to his masculine personality.'* (AAB 19/6)

There was another statement that supported the view that provoking the husband and threatening his dominance may have contributed to IPV. This

participant stated that the husband is responsible for his family, and that, therefore, he should have authority over family affairs:

> *'Control always belongs to the man because he is the person in charge of the house, and he must protect the house. But, if he feels that his wife is provoking him and he wants to gain control, he may abuse her physically.'* (APFT 26/3)

It is important to note that the participants in Category 1 identified the husband as the head of the household head and primary breadwinner of the family. Although this perspective was derived from culture, the participants also highlighted another marital factor that was associated with the point of provoking a husband and might contribute to IPV, which is a lack of mutual respect and understanding between two partners. Participants believed that mutual respect and understanding helps spouses solve marital conflicts. This, in turn, can prevent conflicts from leading to IPV. This was demonstrated in a discussion with a participant:

> *'It is impossible for two people to live together and not have problems arise between them. Even friends have problems. Certainty, any two people who live together for nearly 24 hours a day will have marital problems as a regular occurrence in their lives. But understanding and respect are essential, and, in my opinion, this is one of the foundations upon which marriage is built. It will allow them to resolve their problems, and they will not commit violence* [IPV] *in their martial relationship.'* (AM 18/6)

When presented Vignette 1, many participants stated that the abuse committed by the husband demonstrated that he did not respect his wife, and, therefore, they felt that his actions were extremely wrong. However, they also believed that the wife should respect her husband's opinion and not leave the house without his consent. Additionally, participants expressed that the husband would not have prevented his wife from leaving

the home if both partners had understood each other throughout their marital relationship. A participant highlighted this point:

> *'Regarding beating, the husband did not respect his wife, so he was completely wrong. Beating is not a useful way to deal with marital problems, and this is the first point. The second point—and this is my point of view—is that at the beginning of a marriage, it is assumed that a wife will respect the opinion of her husband and wait and not leave the house unless he grants her permission. After they come to understand each other and live together, for example, for a year or two, it is assumed that the husband will allow her to leave the house without his permission.'* (AN 16/6)

Participants thought that certain marital behaviours and emotions, such as cheating and extreme jealousy, might result in IPV. Such behaviours and emotions are major concerns in married life; a partner's reaction may be unpredictable and can occasionally lead to IPV. When presented with Vignette 2, most participants reported that the woman attacked her husband because of her jealously and her suspicion that he was cheating on her or was married to another woman. The participants explained that jealousy is a normal emotion for most wives. Extreme jealousy, however, can contribute to both marital conflicts and IPV. One participant believed that the wife in Vignette 2 made a mistake by attacking her husband, which could end in separation or physical abuse by the husband. He stated:

> *'Most wife get jealous, and that is normal. The wife is jealous of her husband and does not accept that he is cheating on her or is married to another woman, and this is a normal thing. But sometimes, excessive jealousy may lead to marital problems or violence. In the story, the fault lies primarily with the wife. There is no justification for her causing problems because of jealousy, and there is no justification for abusing her husband because, afterward, her husband may separate from her or physically abuse her. But it is*

> *clear that the reason* [for IPV] *was jealousy that had exceeded its limits, and the wife felt this excess jealousy when she smelled a woman's perfume on her husband.'* (ABM 24_6)

According to participants, jealousy can cause marital problems as well as verbal and physical violence between partners. When presented Vignette 2, one participant stated that the wife's extreme jealously may have driven her to act without thinking of the implications of her actions. For example, one male participant stated:

> *'Jealousy sometimes causes problems between spouses, and sometimes it can result in verbal or physical violence. I suspect that what made the problem worse was when the wife smelled a woman's perfume. Excessive jealousy sometimes causes a wife to act without thinking about the consequences* [IPV], *and this is what happened in this story. But the wife's perfume is not evidence of infidelity, nor does it mean that the husband is married to another woman. So, she did not have the right to abuse her husband*.' (AM 18/6)

Most participants believed that infidelity, regardless of whether it is committed by a man or woman, is unacceptable in Saudi culture. Consequently, a spouse who cheats may be unable to control his or her behaviour and may even physically harm the other partner before seeking a separation. One participant described his perception of cheating as follows:

> *'There is a big problem, and we ask Allah for safety and protection from dishonouring our partners* [infidelity]. *Moreover, a man may not be able to control his behaviour, and, therefore, there is a high possibility that he will violently abuse his spouse. Infidelity, whether committed by a man or woman, is totally unacceptable in our society, and it leads to the destruction of the family* [divorce]*.'* (ABS 16/2)

Cheating, according to the participants, is a marital issue that cannot be handled inside the relationship (between spouses) and may result in IPV. They stated that infidelity is taboo and a significant marital problem, and that cheating makes it impossible for spouses to continue their lives together. As one participant stated, any relationship with a cheating partner always ends in separation:

> *'Infidelity is a problem that cannot be overlooked in marital life, and it can lead to domestic violence and separation. There are certain problems that can be overlooked and solved, and the wife and husband can continue their lives. However, regarding this issue* [infidelity]*, we cannot say that it can be solved between spouses because this is haram* [taboo] *and a big issue, and it can only be resolved by separation.'* (AAW 17/6)

Although cheating and jealousy have been identified as marital issues that are associated with IPV, it has also been shown that unresolved marital conflicts can also lead to IPV. According to the participants, disagreements are a natural aspect of any relationship. However, too many unresolved marital conflicts can result in IPV and a failed marriage. For example, one participant maintained:

> *'Some people say that "disagreements are the salt of married life" [meaning the spice of life]. But if there is too much salt, the food will spoil. Of course, there must be disagreements, not big conflicts, and they are resolved through logic, that is, by understanding each other. But having too many conflicts and failing to resolve these conflicts can lead to IPV or the spouses may not complete their lives [get divorced].'* (AD 25/6)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdowns and work from home orders in SA, several participants stated that they spent more time at home, which, in turn caused many conflicts with their spouses. As a result

of one of these conflicts, some husbands abused their wives because they were unable to resolve these issues. According to one participant, a Saudi man was normally did not spend much time at home due to his responsibilities. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the husband was compelled to remain at home, resulting in many conflicts with his wife. Because of these conflicts, he stated that the husband verbally abused his wife since they were unable to resolve their disagreements. He believed that couples who do not understand each other may be unable to resolve their conflicts, which can be associated with the factor of (a lack of mutual respect and understanding between the two partners in the relationship) that mentioned previously. He explained the situation of lockdown as follows:

> *'We* [men] *are not accustomed to spending lots of time at home. It is not that we escape from home, but we often have external responsibilities because of the nature of our work. So, that is why we do not spend a lot of time at home. Because of COVID-19, husbands were obliged to stay at home all day. Judging from the experiences of people I know personally, I think this* [staying at home] *caused a lot of problems between spouses due to their failure to solve these problems, which, unfortunately, led husbands to sometimes verbally abuse their wives and children. I think that couples do not attempt to try and understand each other since they get married, which has definitely resulted in their inability to resolve their conflicts.'* (AHF 8/3)

There are various marital factors that contributed to the issue of IPV in SA. Provoking one's husband or threatening his dominance and control, for example, may result in the wife being abused. Another contributing factor to IPV is a lack of mutual respect and understanding between spouses. For instance, infidelity and extreme jealousy are significant issues that may have contributed to instances of IPV. Furthermore, marital conflicts may develop into IPV if not resolved.

5.6.3 Community and Societal Factors

Various participants reported that several factors contributed to IPV at the community and societal levels. Witnessing IPV committed by parents or relatives, for example, was a factor associated with IPV in SA. According to participants, husbands who have observed IPV committed by their fathers or other close family members were more likely to abuse their wives. One participant believed that this was the main contributor to IPV:

> *'I expect that the environment in which a husband is raised contributes to his likelihood to commit IPV. From my point of view, I expect that this is the most important or main cause of IPV. I am referring to the environment in which the man grew up in and the behaviours of those around him, including his father, uncle or grandfather. He probably saw them abusing their wives, so it was possible that he acted the same way towards his wife.'* (ABSF 24/5)

Participants reported that husbands who have witnessed IPV behaviour by their parents or relatives may abuse their wives. One participant made the following statement related to witnessing IPV by one's parents or relatives:

> *'It may not be society that promotes this type of behaviour* [IPV]. *Rather, it may be due to the person's* [husband's] *own background and how he was raised. Thus, any man who witnesses violence between their parents or relatives will mimic this act, and this will affect the person he lives with* [wife]*, and perhaps in a state of anger or ignorance, or in the event of a major problem, he may abuse and beat her.'* (AHF 8/3)

Another participant shared a story of a wife who was subjected to physical violence by her husband. The participant believed that the husband was suffering from psychological problems since he was abusing his wife and causing her to bleed. In addition, it is essential to note that the factor of mental illness was highlighted in an earlier section (5.6.1 personal factors)

as a personal characteristic that is correlated with IPV. Regarding witnessing IPV among parents or relatives, one participant recounted how the husband of his sister and law had watched his mother be abused throughout his upbringing, which may have influenced the husband to see IPV as normal marital behaviour. He stated:

> *'I have a story about my wife's sister. She married a man, and I think he has psychological issues because he beat her very severely. Sometimes she would bleed… I heard that this man also watched his mother be abused when he was a kid. So, it is possible that this man, since he was a kid, has assumed that a relationship* [marital relationship] *is supposed to be like this* [with IPV]. *Of course, this problem went to the courts, and in the end, she got a divorce and returned to her family.'* (ABF 24/6)

In addition, witnessing IPV in the community can also contribute to IPV. Participants believed that if a man is raised in a home where the husband often abuses his wife, the man will adopt this behaviour. Therefore, a community can normalise spousal abuse as an acceptable behaviour. One participant shared his experience with IPV in the context of his own family and community:

> *'Any husband who has seen his father beat his mother or has seen men in his community beat their wives when he was a child—and therefore sees these things, such as IPV, as being present in his culture and community—will undoubtedly adopt these behaviours because this mental image has been present since his childhood and in his life as a result of his father and other husbands in the community beating their wives… I do not recall my father having beaten my mother, but I have seen IPV in my community, between my sister and her husband, between my brother and his wife and between other relatives. The situation was present* [IPV], *and the beating was present, so the situation was normal in the family and community, and if anyone witnessed their daughter, for example, being beaten, it was considered a normal thing.'* (AA 22_6)

Similarly, participants believed that husbands raised in communities where wives were frequently abused would certainly abuse their wives because they would perceive IPV as acceptable marital behaviour. In contrast, husbands who grow up in Muslim communities that teach respect for one's wife and adhere to Islamic rules are more likely to treat their wives with respect and not abuse them. For example, one participant stated:

> *'Any man who lives in a community where women are beaten and assaulted by their husbands will be familiar with such behaviour and will accept it as a common sense* [normal thing] *in his life. However, any man who lives in a community that respects women or follows Islamic teachings will be strongly influenced by it and treat women kindly.'* (AAJ 22_6)

According to participants, IPV against women is more likely to be regarded as normal and acceptable in rural communities. Moreover, most participants identified physical violence as a form of IPV that is common in rural communities. They described seeing and hearing about physical violence throughout their childhood. This supports the perspective expressed in Category 4 (Section 5.5.1), which indicates that physical violence against wives was at one time common in Saudi culture. For example, one participant stated:

> *'I was raised in a Bedouin community, and I lived in a [removed for anonymity] society, and to some extent, it was normal for a husband to beat his wife. I am talking about when I was 7, 8, or 9 years old, and we used to hear and see it* [IPV]*; but, in my family, I never saw my father beat my mother. I think that any man who witnesses his father commit IPV against his mother will be affected and possibly abuse his own wife. But, you know, he may also be affected if he witnesses it* [IPV] *among his relatives or community.'* (AAB 19/6)

Participants believed that wife were raised not to discuss marital issues outside either the wife's or husband's family. Wife is also told not to speak

to authorities, such as the police, and, as a result, wife was forced to cope with IPV and accept beatings from their husbands. Although the wife's family or husband's family may be aware of the IPV, it was common to see wife being abused, and it was regarded as appropriate behaviour. However, participants stated that wife can now talk to authorities and report IPV because of advances in women's rights, as discussed in Category 3. One participated mentioned:

> *'There are many causes of IPV, such as some customs and traditions in some rural and tribal areas. Despite the existence of violence* [beating] *against wife, wife had to sacrifice and accept violence and remain silent due to the need to keep marital issues private and protect their children. It was hidden* [IPV]*, and only people close to the woman would know about it. Now, wife have started talking a lot and saying* [to police]*, "Yes, I was subjected to violence, and I was beaten, and I don't want to stay with him anymore".'* (ABD 12/3)

Participants felt that following several changes in the country, particularly regarding women's rights, there has been violence towards wives. They emphasised that prior to the passage of laws protecting women's rights, husbands enjoyed authority and power over their wives. However, following the establishment of women's rights, some husbands began beating their wives because their wives were now able to do things like travel, for example, without the husband's permission. This affected the masculinity and authority of some men, and it was interpreted as disrespecting their manhood. This is also consistent with the perspective highlighted in (Section 5.6.2), which identified masculinity as a factor associated with IPV. One participant stated:

> *'Since about 2016, many things have changed in the country. Let's be honest and realistic: husband had significant power over wife*

> *before 2016. For example, he guarded and controlled his wife's movements and her Mahram [his sisters and daughters]; he also controlled many other things, such as her bank accounts. He was the one who controlled these accounts. However, after 2016, husbands felt that they were starting to lose everything. husband began to feel that wife had a voice and could refuse or say no, and some husbands interpreted this as an infringement on their manhood or masculinity. Therefore, husbands are forced to sometimes raise their voices and hit their wives because they do not respect his masculinity.'* (ABD 12/3)

Additionally, participants indicated that IPV was depicted on popular television series, which may lead people to believe that such behaviour is normal. According to participants, some spouses may have been unaware of the issue of IPV until they saw this television show. As a result, unaware spouses were more likely to have been impacted by this series and may have engaged in IPV during their marriage, as one participant stated:

> *'Thankfully, I have not seen violence* [IPV] *in my family. But you know that in our series* [Arabic TV shows]*, especially the Kuwaiti ones* [common TV series]*, physical violence appears in many forms, which means that you start thinking about the topic of violence. I mean, they show you that violence is a normal part of everyday life. It is possible that many families do not realise that people commit violence, so those who see these series, and husbands who see them, may begin to think, for example, "This husband on TV was beating his wife, so why do I not beat my wife also?" It is possible that anyone who lacks awareness could have this thought and act on it.'* (AAW 17/6)

In summary, this category demonstrates that IPV in Saudi society is associated with certain established factors at individual, relationship and community levels. In Saudi culture, it seems that both husbands and wives may be subjected to IPV. However, it was discovered that Saudi wives were more likely to be abused by their husbands. Accordingly, actions taken by

the community to address and prevent IPV have a strong influence on the occurrence of IPV in Saudi society. This will be discussed in the subsequent category.

5.7 Category 6: Addressing and Preventing IPV

Participants' perspectives were studied with regard to the activities that spouses may undertake to address and prevent IPV. In analysing the narratives and the codes that were developed, three levels of action-taking emerged as strategies for addressing and preventing IPV. This category describes these three levels, which comprise the individual level, the marital level, and the family and community level (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.4 Addressing and Preventing IPV Strategies

Addressing IPV		
Individual level factors	**Marital level factors**	**family and Community level factors**
Calm down	Discussing the issue together	Bring gifts or *redwah*
Remain quiet	Listening to the partner	Seeking assistance from their families
Separate from one another for a while	Seek to understand each other's	Following Islamic guidelines
Recognising the mistake		Seeking assistance from specialised family centres
Preventing IPV		
Background check on the potential husband		
Learning about each other's personality throughout the engagement period		
Understanding each other		

Increasing awareness of IPV via social media, television, and advertisements

Offering IPV prevention training

Raising awareness of the issue from a religious viewpoint

5.7.1 Addressing IPV

Participants revealed their perspectives on dealing with IPV in their responses to Vignettes 1 and 2, with some sharing their own experiences and some reflecting on others' experiences and described how they dealt with the issue. As previously stated, three levels of addressing IPV emerged within these responses, but there appears to be no linear or hierarchical structure to the levels, which may overlap or occur simultaneously. However, it was found that the severity and frequency of IPV between married couples influences the choice of one level over another. In addition, many participants believed that these actions would not only be taken to address IPV but also be taken in response to major conflicts between spouses.

Individual Level

This level refers to the actions that are taken by one spouse at a time in response to the issue of IPV. Participants believed that spouses should calm down and remain quiet in the immediate aftermath of IPV, and then separate from one another for a while until tempers had cooled. Those who responded this way feared that the violence would escalate if the spouses contacted each other again right away. In regard to calming down and remaining silent, one participant stated:

> *'First of all, both spouses must calm down, and both of them must remain silent. This is my view of dealing with IPV and big marital issues. But if one of them refuses to remain silent, the second partner must act rationally and remain silent.'* (AD 25/6)

A few participants discussed their stance on dealing with IPV from a religious perspective. Similarly, to the preceding statement, participants emphasised that the perpetrator of IPV must manage his or her anger initially and calm down. Subsequently, the victim should forgive the spouse (the perpetrator) and know that God will bless him/her in return. One participant shared this view in response to Vignettes 2:

> *'Things are in stages, meaning that he, the husband, must first suppress his anger. Of course, he must not be reckless and meet abuse with abuse and start beating his wife simply because it was, she who started the beating. He may now feel expected to start beating or burning his wife in the same way that she beat or burned him, but this is a big mistake. Don't meet bad with bad, but rather "repel evil with good" (Quran). Then, we move to the second stage, in which he forgives her. If he forgives her and is generous in his morals, God will do good to him: "do good, for God loves the good-doers" (Quran).'* (AD 25/6)

Participants agreed that the appropriate action to be performed once IPV has occurred is to separate from one another for a period of time, emphasising that contact immediately following IPV might have a negative influence and make the situation worse. For example, one participant addressed the course of action that Ahmed and Fatima should take after IPV in Vignette 1:

> *'From my personal perspective, the right thing to do is that each person should take their time. I mean that they should stay away from each other for a while, because if they communicated with each*

> *other, the problem would get worse. I mean, separation or being away is the suitable action that should be taken.'* (AA 22_6)

Separation, according to participants, is the best course of action until things have settled down, both from a practical standpoint as well as a religious one. A few participants expressed such religious perspectives, stating that the devil (Satan) would make the situation worse if one spouse did not leave or separate from the other partner after IPV occurs, as one participant stated his opinion in response to Vignette 1:

> *'The best way is to leave it and get out of the house [after IPV occurs] until the situation is calmed, because the devil is present at that time, and the devil can make the situation worse.'* (AXL 14/3)

In addition, many participants agreed that while spouses should separate themselves and prevent provocation, the partner who committed the IPV should first apologise to the other partner. As one participant stated in regard to Vignette 2:

> *'First, the wife isolates herself in a room for a day, two, or three, and thinks about what she did. She does not discuss anything and does not take any action which may provoke her husband unless she is certain that it is the right and correct thing to do – for example, apologise to him.'* (ABA 23/6)

Many participants emphasised the importance of recognising the mistake after the occurrence of IPV in the marital relationship. Participants believed that the perpetrator must be aware of his/her mistake or the IPV issue would not be resolved. As one participant mentioned:

> *'When a person is subjected to physical or verbal assault, I think the other partner, the perpetrator, needs to be aware of his/her mistake*

> *after the problem occurs. If the other partner does not recognise his/her mistake, the issue will probably not be solved.'* (AAJ 22_6)

This statement addresses an action that could be taken after IPV if it would not cause substantial injury or risk to the other partner, but many participants indicated that self-defence may be essential if the perpetrator was able to harm or kill the other partner. As one participant stated:

> *'If one of the spouses feels that he or she is in imminent danger of death or bodily injury from the other, I believe that self-defence is the wisest action at that time.'* (ALCD 28/3)

Marital Level

Participants stated that following an incident of IPV and the subsequent individual actions (controlling anger, being quiet, separating from one another, recognising the mistake, forgiving, and apologising), the couple may attempt to have a conversation to resolve the issue of IPV or major conflicts once the situation has calmed down. It seems that actions taken at the individual level may not be sufficient to address the issue of IPV among spouses but may serve as a pathway to joint actions on the marital level. Couples must thus take several actions in their relationship to resolve the issue of IPV and, more significantly, to avoid recurrence. Therefore, participants believed that the first action at the marital level should be for spouses to sit together and discuss the issue.

According to participants, the victim of IPV may feel dissatisfied with his or her partner's behaviour (IPV), and so the perpetrator should apologise and explain that the IPV was unintentional due to his or her inability to control anger and then make a commitment not to repeat the IPV in the

future. Furthermore, they highlighted that a victim of IPV may refuse to accept an apology from his/her spouse. For this reason, it is possible that the perpetrator may need to bring gifts or *redwah* to the other partner. It is important to note that *redwah* is a cultural practice in which the husband is expected to offer his wife money as an apology if he has wronged her in any way. The victim would then have the choice to decide whether or not to accept the apology. However, if the IPV was not a recurring pattern of behaviour from the perpetrator and it had only just occurred for the first time, participants suggested accepting the apology. One participant explained this mindset:

> *'The first and most important thing is that they [the spouses] sit together. I mean that the two of them must sit down after the problem subsides, but it is normal that the victim of IPV is not satisfied with the other's behaviour, so the perpetrator should then apologise and express the utmost degree of apology. For example, he says, "the behaviour I displayed was because I lost control of my anger," and then promises the other partner that this will not be repeated. I mean, they discuss and solve the problem among themselves. If it is necessary, the perpetrator can bring a gift or redwah [money] to the victim. The important thing is to show the victim that the IPV was not intended, that the issue got out of control, and that the perpetrator regrets what he/she has done. The victim may accept this apology or not, but it is preferable to accept the apology or gift if the victim is aware that their spouse is not accustomed to abusing him/her and that this situation had simply gotten out of hand.'* (AM 18/6)

Additionally, many participants believed that after the situation has stabilised, the spouses must communicate with one another and discuss the cause of the IPV or the major conflicts. They stated that to find a mutually acceptable solution for both parties, each spouse must hear and listen to the other's point of view, as one participant mentioned:

> *'Of course, after the apology, and after the situation has calmed down, there must be a discussion and understanding between the spouses, and this is an important step. I mean that it is necessary to discuss the cause of the IPV problem or any big problem so that it does not recur. Each spouse must hear the other spouse's point of view until they reach a mutual solution.'* (ALCD 28/3)

Most participants believed that following an incident of IPV, couples should discuss the events surrounding the IPV and seek to understand each other's actions, even if physical violence (such as beating) had occurred. They also emphasised the necessity of keeping marital issues, including IPV, between the spouses and not engaging anyone else in their lives unless one partner is experiencing harmful behaviour from the other partner or is facing a danger to his or her life. One participant expressed his perspective on Vignette 1 as follows:

> *'I am totally against beatings, but in the case of beatings in a marital relationship like in the story [Vignette 1], I think this issue should remain between them as long as they are able to sit together and understand each other. Then he/she should apologise to the other spouse and promise that he/she will not hit the other partner again. So, the couples must keep this issue between them and not involve anyone in their lives, as long as this issue is not harming the other partner or threatening his/her life.' (*ABSF 24/5)

Family and Community Level

As previously discussed, the perception was that IPV in Saudi society is seldom addressed at the individual level, but at the level of the marital relationship. Although spouses often prefer to keep marital issues, including IPV, between them, they may seek assistance from family members to resolve such an issue if they are not able to resolve it on their own. Thus, several participants reported that couples could address IPV via cultural

practises involving the family, most of which specifically aim to support a woman who has been physically abused by her husband. Following these practices, a wife may return to her family for a period after an incident of IPV. Her husband then visits her family together with his family and relatives and is responsible for providing *redwah* to his wife and apologising to her. The senior members of each family would eventually attempt to resolve the issue and facilitate a reconciliation between the spouses. One participant detailed this practice:

> *'I remember a story of one of my relatives who hit his wife. She went to her family, and there were certain cultural practises in which she could stay in her family's home for a while. Then the husband would come to her father with some of his own relatives, and there was a reconciliation agreement. The husband should pay first up to 5,000 or 10,000 Saudi Riyal in redwah. This amount of money depends on the beating and its severity and damage. After that, the husband should apologise to his wife. Then the elderly people of both families, usually the parents of both spouses, would try to mediate a reconciliation between the couple and return the wife to her husband. This practise existed in the past, and I believe it still exists today.'* (AA 22_6)

In addition, a few participants stated that spouses may handle the problem of IPV by following Islamic guidelines that assist in dealing with major marital issues, such as IPV. They believed that couples who were unable to resolve the problem of IPV in their marriage would be able to get help from one member of each family, who would then assess the situation and attempt to reconcile the couple using such guidelines. One participant elaborated:

> *'I believe they can resolve any major conflicts in their lives, such as the IPV issue, with the assistance of the Islamic religion's guidance. Allah says in the Quran: "If you fear a breach between them [the husband and his wife], appoint two arbitrators, one from his family*

> *and the other from her family; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation." These individuals will assess the problem and determine who is wrong, thus enabling them to listen to the other partner and know what things can satisfy him/her, like money, gifts, an apology, or anything the other partner could request to make him/her satisfied. So, I think this guidance is the best way to resolve their issue if the spouses cannot resolve it by themselves.'* (AA 22_6)

It is important to highlight that most participants believed that couples may seek assistance from their families, particularly if one spouse (usually the wife) is subjected to recurrent physical violence and the matter cannot be resolved between them. According to one participant:

> *'If a husband is physically abusing his wife and their problems occur frequently, here she can ask for help from one of her parents without the rest of her family knowing about this issue.'* (AM 18/6)

Many participants nevertheless indicated that reaching out to the spouses' families would not always be the most appropriate course of action, and that they would rather seek assistance from social workers or specialised centres that deal with family issues. For example, in the case of non-severe and non-frequent physical violence, participants reported that if the spouses' families may have a negative influence on the issue and would not assist the couple in resolving the issue, the couple may seek assistance from specialised family centres.

> *'It is better that they solve the problem if they can, especially if the IPV was not severe physical violence or was just verbal abuse and – most importantly – it was not a repetitive practice. So, let's say that they are unable to solve it, but they may not want to turn to one or both of their families because they know that they cannot help*

> *them solve it. I mean that, if they are concerned that their families will not resolve the issue and that they will exacerbate it by requesting separation from them, I believe it is preferable for them to go to a specialised centre that deals with family issues.'* (ADN 5/3)

Participants also believed that many husbands may face cultural barriers when seeking assistance from their or their wife's family wife if they have been physically abused by their wife. This cultural barrier arises as a result of the husband's authority and control in Saudi society. As a result, the family may see the battered spouse as incapable of responsibility and having a weak personality. One participant explained his view as follows:

> *'I cannot go to her family or my family and tell them, "My wife beat me," because they will evict me from the house. This is very embarrassing for any husband in this position. The family will see him as having a weak and shaky personality, not as a man of the house, and unable to take on the responsibilities of the house. This is the prevailing view in our society. It is better to go to a social worker or family counsellor.'* (AAB 19/6)

It therefore seems that the issue of IPV as well as major issues in Saudi society can be addressed at the level of family and community, as well as at the levels of the individual and of the marital relationship. The way major conflicts as well as IPV are addressed varies widely across cases and is dependent on certain circumstances, but it is most frequently resolved within the marital relationship or with the help of the family. Contacting family counsellors or social workers was not suggested by participants as a first course of action at the family and community level, unless there were reason to believe that involving the family would negatively impact the situation. In terms of reporting IPV to the authorities, some participants stated that it was uncommon for a couple to report this issue unless there

was serious and frequent physical violence, and the family (either the husband's or the wife's family) was unable to resolve the issue. This situation was associated with certain factors linked to IPV (such as mental illness and substance abuse), as was discussed in the Category 5 (Section 5.6.1). One participant confidently stated:

> *'95% of the [IPV] problems that occur are solved within the family. Perhaps 5% of cases reaches competent authorities, such as human rights authorities or the police, if it gets out of control, and the husband always beats the wife, and their families could not resolve it. As I said, in this case, he is either abusing drugs or mentally ill. I may be exaggerating, but 95% of the problems are solved at home; I mean, the spouses' families will end the problem. The husband's father or the wife's father are able to end the problem by satisfying each partner.'* (ABM 24_6)

5.7.2 Preventing IPV

Participants provided a few suggestions for preventing IPV in Saudi society, with steps at both the marital level and at the family and community level. For instance, several participants indicated that the family should do a background check on the potential husband prior to the couple's engagement and marriage. They emphasised that IPV can be largely avoided by refusing to enter into a relationship a person with a negative reputation or a substance abuse problem. As discussed in Category 5 (Section 5.6.1), this is clearly related to the impact of mental illness and substance abuse on IPV. One participant mentioned:

> *'If someone proposes to a girl and the parents do not know him well, or if they know that he has a bad reputation, for example, if he is using drugs, or has been convicted of a felony, or has been in prison, they should never agree to let him marry their daughter, even if he*

> *comes from a good family. I think this will reduce the rate of violence.'* (AB 3_6)

Many participants mentioned that after checking the husband's background, each spouse should learn about each other's personality and qualities throughout the engagement period. In this step, they recommended that any partner should terminate the relationship if he or she detects any characteristics that may lead to IPV, such as insulting, cursing, controlling, or violent behaviour. As one participant summarised:

> *'Before any man or woman gets married, everyone must try to get to know the other partner during the engagement period. I mean, each one has to get to know the characteristics of the other partner. If one of them notices, for example, some personal aspects of the other partner that may lead to IPV, it is better not to continue this relationship. For example, behaviours such as cursing, insulting, controlling, or acting aggressively... These are not good indicators.'* (ABA 23/6)

Several participants also highlighted that understanding one another after marriage is also critical to preventing IPV amongst couples. They believed that by understanding each other, they could not only prevent IPV in their marital life, but also enjoy a happier and more successful relationship. The role of understanding was discussed in Category 1, but one participant very succinctly identified its importance:

> *'Certainly, understanding is the key to a successful married life and also protects the spouses from IPV. When the two partners understand their differences, their mistakes, the problems they face, and the ways to overcome these problems, they will live a happy and successful life and protect themselves from any case of IPV.* (AAB 19/6)

The statements above discussed the preventative actions that may be taken at the levels of the marital relationship and of the family. However, many participants also reported some important steps at the level of the community and society that would help prevent IPV in Saudi society. For instance, increasing awareness of IPV via social media, television, and advertisements, and defining the issue and emphasising that IPV is an inappropriate practise in married life. Additionally, participants suggested that part of raising awareness is encouraging spouses to report IPV, and that each spouse (but particularly the woman) should disclose the violence the face, despite the cultural barriers that discourage sharing marital issues outside the home. As one of the participants put it:

> *'The authorities concerned with IPV may play a role in terms of awareness via publishing the numbers of family counsellors and how to report IPV. It is an oversimplification to say that IPV is an incorrect practise in marital life. Whoever is subjected to IPV must speak, and no one should be silent. I know that some people do not report IPV because they think this exposes the confidentiality of marital matters, but if IPV occurs, and physical abuse in particular, we must speak of it and report it. Government agencies can also play a greater role by publishing awareness of the issue on social media, on television, in advertisements, and everywhere else. We must have the courage to report it. It should not be shameful for a wife to report that she was abused by her husband. And if the husband really wants to preserve his family, he must change his ways and stop the violence. Otherwise, separation may be a better option than staying.'* (ABD 12/3)

Several participants agreed that raising awareness about IPV in Saudi society is critical but took care to point out that the actions taken to raise awareness should not be in conflict with religious beliefs, since Saudi culture is largely influenced by religion. The balance between modernity and tradition must therefore be respected. As one participant put it:

> *'We [the Saudi people] have more than thirty million internet users, and this is evidence that the vast majority of Saudi people are young men and women. The vast majority of them are social media users, and therefore the easiest tool is to rely on these platforms to educate people about this problem. I think that society has a great ability to reduce this problem, but taking into account the religious aspect first, because the Saudi people are by and large a conservative and religious people.'* (AHF 8/3)

Raising public awareness of the problem in SA may not be sufficient to prevent IPV in Saudi society; it may also require raising awareness of the issue from a religious viewpoint. Consequently, certain participants recommended emphasising the contemporary and egalitarian interpretations of relevant Quran verses and hadith. As one participant stated:

> *'I wish there were responses to the trend of justifying the husband's beating of his wife, whether it is on YouTube or on any social media. The argument must be raised and there must be a confrontation regarding this issue because some husbands resort to hadiths and Quranic verses, which should be interpreted correctly. If you researched this subject, you would find that many hadiths and verses have been interpreted to mean that marital life is in the interest of the husband, and that he has the right to beat his wife. I mean, they justify this act for him in many ways. I think this idea has decreased, but it is still present'.* (AA 22_6)

As previously stated, increased public knowledge may help reduce IPV in Saudi society, but many believe that awareness alone is insufficient. Several participants suggested that offering IPV prevention training before marriage might also help prevent IPV in SA. They stated that this training might assist the nation by lowering the number of incidents of IPV and promoting a healthy family and community. According to one of the participants:

> *'We can prevent the problem through educational training. Through this training, all husband and wife who are about to get married will be taught about IPV and how to deal with family problems. The government may give financial incentives to attend these courses. I mean, after anyone takes this training, spouses may receive financial compensations from the government. This will benefit the government because the number of [IPV] cases will be reduced, which will result in more productive families, which will lead to more distinguished children, families, and society.'* (AZFAD 20/3)

In summary, participants reported several steps that they or those they know have taken to address the issue of IPV and major conflicts as well as strategies to prevent IPV in Saudi society. Although participants acknowledged that most couples prefer to address the major issues, including IPV, within their married life, they also stated that if they are unable to address the issue or if there is harmful and severe abuse against either spouse, the spouses should consider resolving the matter with their family. In such circumstances, if the family is unable to successfully intervene, then the abused spouse may report the IPV to an authority such as the police, although this course of action appears to be quite rare. Due to certain cultural characteristics of SA, several participants believed that contacting a family counsellor or social worker may not be an appropriate first step in addressing IPV at the family and community level, preferring instead to keep the issue within the family as much as possible. There are exceptions to this stance, however, such as when the husband is physically abusive or when the family may exacerbate the IPV by demanding drastic actions such as divorce. When it comes to preventing IPV in SA, participants suggested several actions that can be taken, including checking the husband's background prior to marriage, discovering spouses' qualities and characteristics during the engagement period, raising awareness about

IPV in general and more contemporary religious perspectives on IPV in particular, and providing IPV-prevention training for couples.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the various categories that were identified during data analysis. It was stated that Saudi had a unique perspective on IPV and its different forms. Additionally, it was demonstrated that the community views various forms of IPV in more abstract and social ways than is commonly known in the broader literature. Throughout the chapter, participants discussed during the interviews a wide range of factors that they believed increased the likelihood of IPV at many levels, including the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. These factors are intricately linked, and their interaction was deemed critical in increasing the likelihood of IPV. Furthermore, the community's strategy for addressing and preventing IPV was highlighted at multiple levels, including individual, marital, family, and community. It is vital to highlight that all categories in Part One and Two are interconnected and overlap with one another. All these categories contribute to the understanding and explanation of the issue of IPV from the Saudi men's viewpoint. The core categories, as well as its relationship to the categories that were highlighted in both parts, are discussed in the next chapter. In addition, a theory grounded in the data from this research is discussed in the following chapter to explain the issue of IPV from the viewpoint of Saudi men.

CHAPTER SIX: A GROUNDED THEORY OF IPV

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed six categories derived from the data collected for this research: *marital dynamics, the role of family, the role of culture and religion, definitions and perceptions of IPV, causes and contributing factors of IPV, and addressing and preventing IPV*. This chapter develops on the preceding chapter in that it seeks to establish a theory via an exploration of the relationships between categories. The chapter is subdivided into two sections. The first section discusses the core categories and their relationships with each other as well as with other categories. The second section presents a grounded theory of IPV from the perspective of Saudi males.

6.2 Core Category: The Notion of Understanding and its Relationship with other Categories

Following the construction of the categories, further analysis was carried out to determine a core category. This is an encompassing category that has the capacity to cover all of the categories stated earlier and explain the underlying process of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. A major focus of grounded theory research is the establishment of a relationship between categories which can be used to explain phenomena and, hence, make recommendations for action (Hallberg, 2006; Charmaz, 2014). I thus believed that the process of determining a core category would be beneficial in the development of a GT.

Throughout the data analysis process, as I progressed from open codes to categories, I recognised the critical significance of *the notion of understanding* in the marital relationship. Wittgenstein (as cited in Ylikoski, 2011, p. 156) said that the *notion of understanding* 'should not be understood as a sensation, an experience, or a state of mind. Understanding is not a special moment or phase, but a more permanent attribute. It is an ability'. When one fully understands something, one can take certain actions. In other words, when something is well understood, one may draw several correct inferences about it (Ylikoski, 2011). In the context of the findings of this study, understanding was described as a fundamental component of a successful and happy intimate relationship. It was suggested that mutual understanding could assist spouses in resolving marital issues, which could lead to a life of contentment. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 5 (Category 1) and explained in Chapter 1 (Section 1.14.3), the most common type of marriage in Saudi culture is the arranged marriage, which is culturally and religiously acceptable. When it comes to this type of marriage, there is an engagement period; however, it is often the case that the engaged couple does not see each other throughout that period or meets only briefly before their wedding day. Thus, the couples may not have the opportunity to learn about one another's characteristics and develop a deeper mutual understanding. Therefore, the marital dynamics between the spouses may be affected, potentially leading to marital conflict as well as IPV.

Furthermore, there are culturally and religiously expected roles for men and women in SA, and spouses are expected to fulfil the responsibilities associated with these specified roles as well as their mutual responsibilities. A man is supposed to perform a variety of roles in his married life, including that of *wilayah*. Likewise, a woman is expected to fulfil the responsibilities

associated with her roles, including that of a housewife. In preparation for these roles, before the wedding, the families of an engaged couple should teach the couple how to perform their individual and mutual responsibilities and roles. It is important to mention that the expected roles for a husband and wife are to be the breadwinner and a housewife, respectively. However, as mentioned in Chapter 5 Category 1, some of a wife's and husband's responsibilities might be changing due to recent strides in women's empowerment in SA. For instance, a husband can help his wife with household responsibilities, and a wife can help her husband financially. Considering that a wife is now permitted to work and provide financial support for her husband and family, this situation goes against the common view that the husband should be the breadwinner of the household. This clearly emphasises the need for understanding in the marital relationship, including an understanding of what responsibilities each spouse should fulfil. Respecting and being patient with each other and keeping marital matters private were singled out as important expected mutual responsibilities for both spouses. These findings suggest that a lack of understanding of the prescribed roles for men and women as well as their mutual roles may lead to marital conflict and IPV.

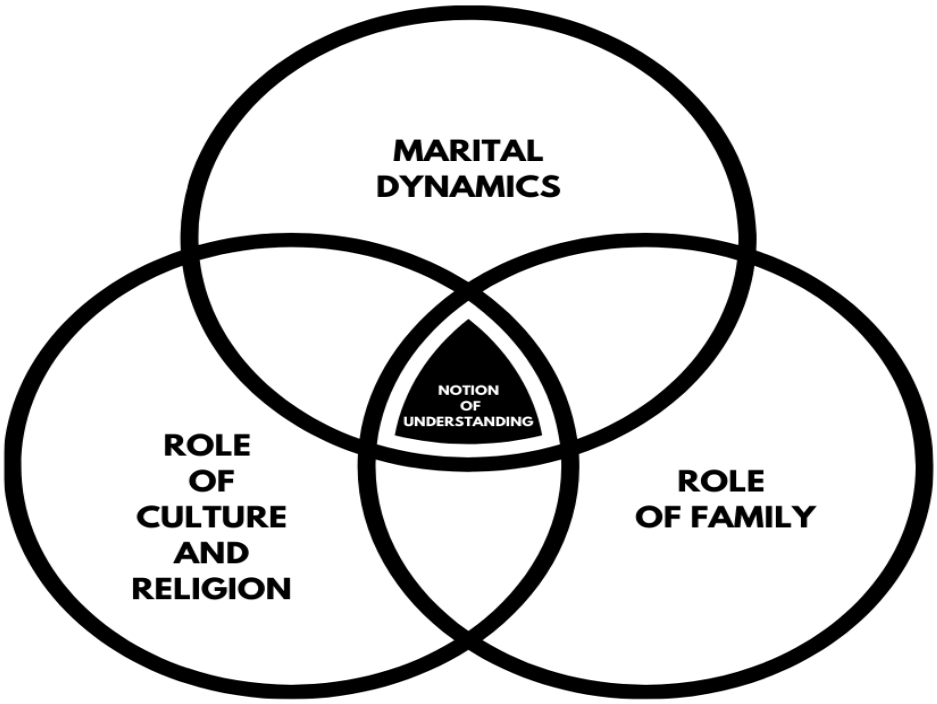
In terms of the role of culture and religion, as discussed above, there are culturally and religiously expected roles for men in SA, such as the *wilayah* role. The findings suggest that a lack of understanding of the real meaning of *wilayah* may lead some husbands to control and dominate their wives, causing marital conflict and IPV. Islamic guidelines stipulate that treating one's wife in a consistent and decent manner is the husband's responsibility; as the verse from the Quran says, a wife should be 'retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace' (Al-Baqarah: Verse

229). The findings suggest that a lack of understanding of this verse may lead to IPV, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Category 3). In addition, a failure to understand the verse that says, 'as to those women on whose part you see ill conduct, admonish them, and abandon them in their beds, and beat them, but if they return to obedience, do not seek a means against them' (An-Nisa: Verse 34) may lead to major conflict as well as IPV in the marital relationship.

Thus, the failure of a husband and wife to understand the expected roles and responsibilities of each spouse, the failure of a husband's and a wife's families to teach the couple about anticipated roles and responsibilities prior to the marriage and the failure of the couple to understand the true meaning of the above verses may increase the likelihood of conflict between spouses and IPV.

Through the *notion of understanding*, couples are able to deal with major conflicts such as IPV through discussion and negotiation, as explained in Chapter 5 (Category 6). They are also able to prevent IPV and enjoy a happier and more successful relationship, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Category 6). A comprehensive analysis of initial codes, categories and theoretical memos demonstrated that three categories were identified as core categories: *marital dynamics, the role of family, and the role of culture and religion*. These core categories were identified as important aspects that participants considered as substantially contributing to marital conflict and eventual IPV. The *notion of understanding* seemed to be a prevalent thread that connected the core categories and appeared to be associated with all categories (figure 6.1). This is discussed below.

Figure 6.1 Core Category



First, the *notion of understanding* and marital dynamics appears to be very important matters in the marital relationship. As discussed above, couples may not have the opportunity to get to know one another's characteristics and develop a mutual understanding during their engagement period. However, understanding was identified as a critical aspect of the marital relationship, and it was acknowledged that mutual understanding is an important characteristic of a successful relationship. Between spouses, understanding may either promote or impede various characteristics, such as respect, appreciation, honesty, devotion, and intellectual and religious compatibility. It is important to emphasise that a lack of mutual understanding between spouses was highlighted as one of the contributing factors of IPV, as mentioned in Chapter 5 (Category 5). In contrast,

developing understanding between couples was emphasised as one of the actions that may be taken to prevent conflict, including IPV, as highlighted in Chapter 5 (Category 6). Furthermore, the findings suggest that couples who understand one another are able to manage marital conflicts without relying on outside assistance from their families, resulting in a successful and happy relationship, as discussed in Chapter 5.

In terms of spousal duties, there are various cultural and religious duties that a husband and a wife should perform in Saudi society. For instance, a husband has *wilayah* responsibilities for his wife and children, and he is the responsible head of the family. The husband's *wilayah* responsibilities include protecting the family, providing financial support, and meeting the family's basic requirements. The husband is responsible for meeting his family's monetary requirements, managing their health, counselling them when someone makes a mistake or runs into difficulty, and encouraging and inspiring them in everyday life. However, it was identified that a husband controlling and dominating his wife due to a misunderstanding of the actual meaning of *wilayah* may lead to marital conflicts and IPV, as stated in Chapter 5 (Category 5). A wife is expected to be a housewife, caring for her husband and children as well as undertaking home activities such as cooking, laundering and cleaning the house. It is crucial to note that, as a result of recent developments in women's empowerment in SA, some of the responsibilities of a wife and a husband may be changing. For example, as discussed above, a husband may assist his wife with home chores, while a wife can support her husband financially. The idea that a husband must be the only or the main breadwinner in the family contradicts the idea of sharing responsibilities, with a wife now able to work and help her husband and family financially. This underlines the need for understanding in the

marital relationship, including an understanding of the expected responsibilities of each spouse. Furthermore, there are mutual responsibilities that each spouse must fulfil, such as respecting and being patient with each other and keeping marital matters private. These responsibilities were indicated as important components of successful marital relationships. A failure to understand the expected mutual responsibilities for both spouses can increase the likelihood of IPV in the relationship. Hence, the *notion of understanding* can prevent IPV in the marital relationship and help a couple enjoy a happier and more successful relationship, as explained in Chapter 5, Category 6.

Second, the role of family is a highly important aspect that has a significant impact on a couple's marital life and may lead to marital issues and IPV (see Chapter 5, Category 2). As mentioned in the Chapter 5, the family has several roles that can positively or negatively impact a couple's marital life. One of the family's roles is to teach young men and women to understand the marital responsibilities of each spouse. For example, as explained previously, a husband is traditionally considered to be the breadwinner of the family; therefore, his family should help him understand his expected responsibilities after marriage, such as supporting his wife and children financially and taking care of them. Traditionally, a wife's main responsibility in Saudi society is fulfilling the role of a housewife, which includes taking care of her husband and children and performing household chores. In preparation for these roles, the wife's family must help her understand her responsibilities as a housewife. However, due to recent progress in women's empowerment in SA, a wife's and a husband's responsibilities can be shared, as explained earlier. Therefore, a failure to sufficiently prepare and teach an engaged couple to ensure that they

understand and fulfil their expected responsibilities, whether these are the traditional cultural responsibilities (breadwinner and housewife) or shared responsibilities, may result in marital conflict and IPV. Preparing and teaching couples to understand their expected roles can minimise IPV and conflict, positively influencing marital life and resulting in a successful relationship. As a result, the *notion of understanding* might help couples avoid IPV and marital conflict by increasing their awareness of their expected responsibilities via their families.

Third, the role of culture and religion may play an important role in marital life and may impact spouses' lives either positively or negatively. For example, some husbands may dominate and control their wives as a result of misunderstanding the true meaning of *wilayah* responsibilities, as mentioned in Chapter 5 (Categories 3 & 5). This may cause some husbands to treat their wives unfairly or abuse them. The findings suggest that a husband's dominance and control are potential contributing factors to IPV, as mentioned in Chapter 5 (Category 5). Clearly, the *notion of understanding* is necessary in order to realise the full meaning of *wilayah*, and a failure to understand *wilayah* may affect the relationship and lead to IPV. In terms of the role of religion, the *notion of understanding* is also essential in regard to the Quranic verses that are discussed in Chapter 5, Category 3. For example, the findings suggest that many husbands adopt numerous Islamic guidelines in their marital lives in order to succeed in their lives and have happy families. One of the Islamic guidelines discussed in Chapter 5 (Category 3) is that a wife should be 'retained with honour and love or allowed to leave with kindness and grace' (Al-Baqarah: Verse 229). According to the verse, a husband is responsible for treating his wife in a decent and consistent manner, in terms of both verbal and physical

behaviour. A husband must treat his wife with respect and kindness, seek a meaningful relationship with her and avoid causing her pain. These responsibilities should be fulfilled according to this verse. In regard to the *notion of understanding*, it is evident that understanding the full meaning of this verse and adopting it in marital life helps to minimise marital conflict and IPV. In contrast, a failure to understand the verse may lead to marital conflict and IPV, as the verse opposes acts of IPV towards a wife by dictating that a husband should treat his wife with honour and love. In addition, a failure to correctly interpret An-Nisa: Verse 34 is associated with IPV in marital relationships, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Category 3). For instance, as explained in Chapter 5 (Category 3), the participants stated that the verse permits a husband to hit his wife as a form of punishment, but only if he witnesses her engaging in unacceptable behaviour or disobeying him. However, the hitting should not be severe. The findings suggest that a failure to understand this verse can lead to major conflict as well as IPV. The correct interpretation of this verse is that if a husband hitting his wife lightly causes marital issues, conflict or separation between them, he should not hit his wife, as Islam will not accept this act, as discussed in Chapter 5 Category 3. Thus, the *notion of understanding* has the potential to prevent IPV and marital conflict via an accurate understanding of the description of *wilayah* as well as the correct contemporary and egalitarian interpretations of relevant Quranic verses.

In summary, the three core categories—*marital dynamics, role of family, and role of culture and religion*—contribute to explaining the emergence of or the prevention of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. The *notion of understanding* serves as an interconnecting thread between these three categories. Through the *notion of understanding* in the marital relationship,

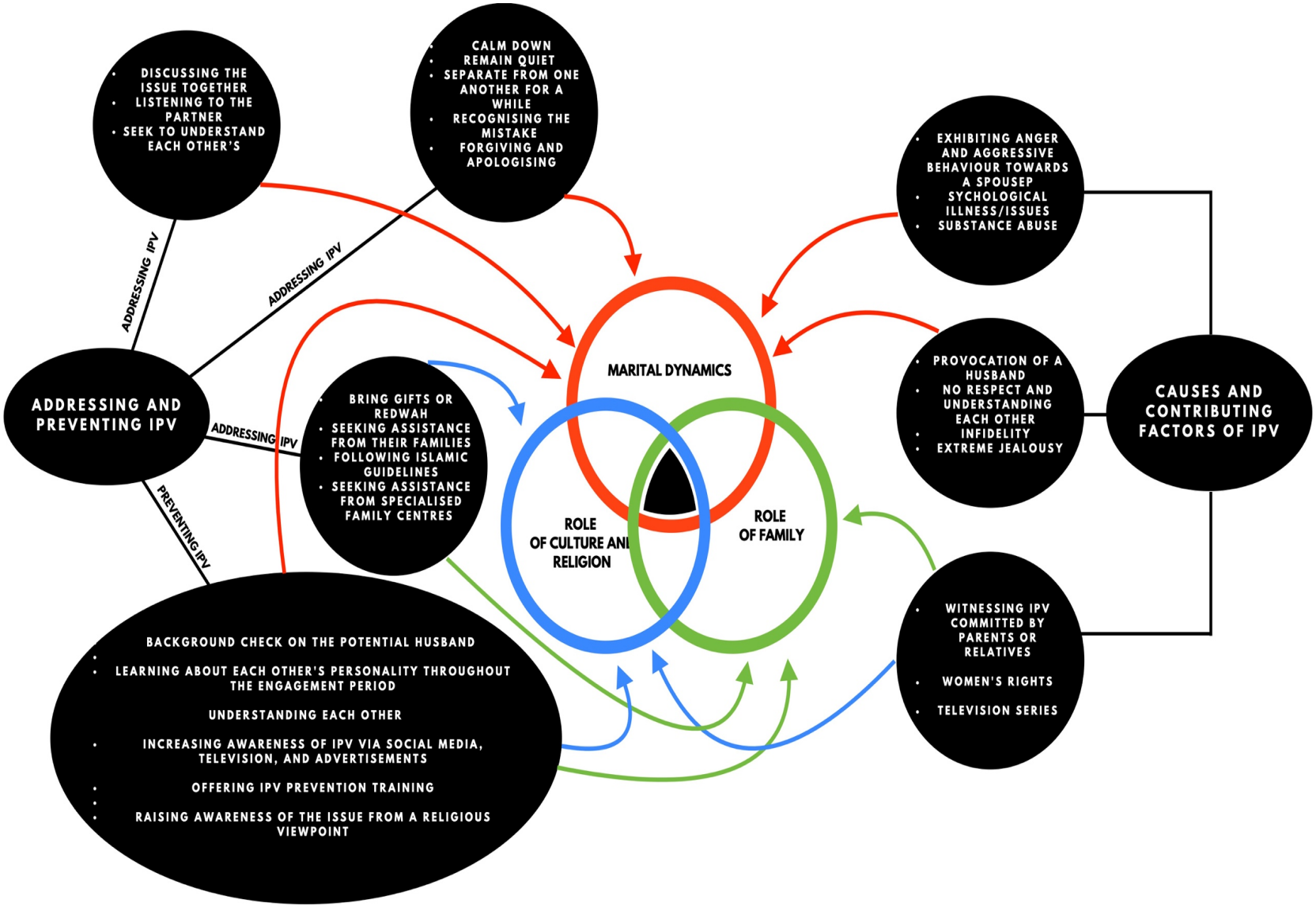
the likelihood of conflict and IPV in married life is significantly reduced. The absence of the *notion of understanding*, however, can considerably enhance the chances of conflict and IPV in the marital relationship. The following illustrates the intersections between IPV and the *notion of understanding* within the three core categories:

1. The notion of understanding and marital dynamics:
    - Failure to develop a deeper understanding of each other by learning about each other's characteristics before marriage.
    - Failure to understand the expected responsibilities of each spouse as well as their mutual responsibilities, whether these are the traditional cultural responsibilities (breadwinner and housewife) or shared responsibilities.
2. The notion of understanding and the role of the family:
    - Failure to teach young men and women about their expected responsibilities after marriage, whether these are the traditional cultural responsibilities (breadwinner and housewife) or shared responsibilities.
3. The notion of understanding and the role of culture and religion:
    - Failure to understand the true meaning of *wilayah.*
    - Failure to understand the true meaning of Quranic verses.

Altogether, the findings of the research demonstrate that there are interrelationships between categories such as *causes and contributing factors of IPV, addressing and preventing IPV* and the core categories. In terms of the category *causes and contributing factors of IPV,* various factors contributing to IPV were indicated, and it is apparent that these factors are related to the core categories, as described in Chapter 5. In addition, various

strategies for *addressing and preventing IPV* are discussed in Chapter 5, and it is obvious that these strategies are interrelated to the core categories (Figure 6.2)

Figure 6.2 The Relationships between the Core Categories and the other Categories



6.3 The importance of the Notion of Understanding in the Marital Relationship: A Grounded Theory of IPV from the Perspective of Saudi Men

The current study sought to develop a grounded theory that could explain the issue of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. Thus, this section presents the grounded theory (see figure 6.2). It is important to note that the theory aims to present a view on IPV from the standpoint of Saudi men who may or may not have personally experienced IPV.

The participants in this study identified four types of IPV: physical violence, sexual violence, verbal and psychological violence and controlling behaviour. Physical violence was described as an act that results in visible harm, such as strong pushing, slapping, stabbing, choking or killing, or an act that creates circumstances that may cause a husband or wife to suffer physical harm. Forcing a husband or a wife to watch a pornographic movie or having sexual relations without the spouse's consent were all classified as acts of sexual violence. Verbal abuse was defined as insulting or cursing the partner, or verbally expressing a desire to harm the partner. Psychological violence was described as insinuations of instability, a lack of appreciation, neglect, dismissiveness, poor treatment, disregarding or not listening to the partner, giving one partner cause to doubt the other's trustworthiness, or provoking the partner. Finally, controlling behaviour was described as forcing, depriving and controlling the partner.

In Saudi society and culture, IPV can only occur in the marital relationship, according to the findings of this research. This is because marriage is the only socially acceptable manner of living in an intimate relationship in Saudi society and culture. Although IPV can target both husbands and

wives, as discussed in Chapter 5, physical violence, sexual violence and controlling behaviour are mostly committed by husbands in Saudi society. Thus, it is clear that in Saudi society, IPV is usually perpetrated by a husband towards his wife. The findings indicate that verbal and psychological violence are currently the most frequent types of IPV in Saudi culture. Couples may experience long-term consequences of psychological and verbal abuse. The findings suggest that psychological violence is a particularly dangerous form of IPV because the absence of proof makes it more difficult for victims to get assistance compared to victims of other types of IPV.

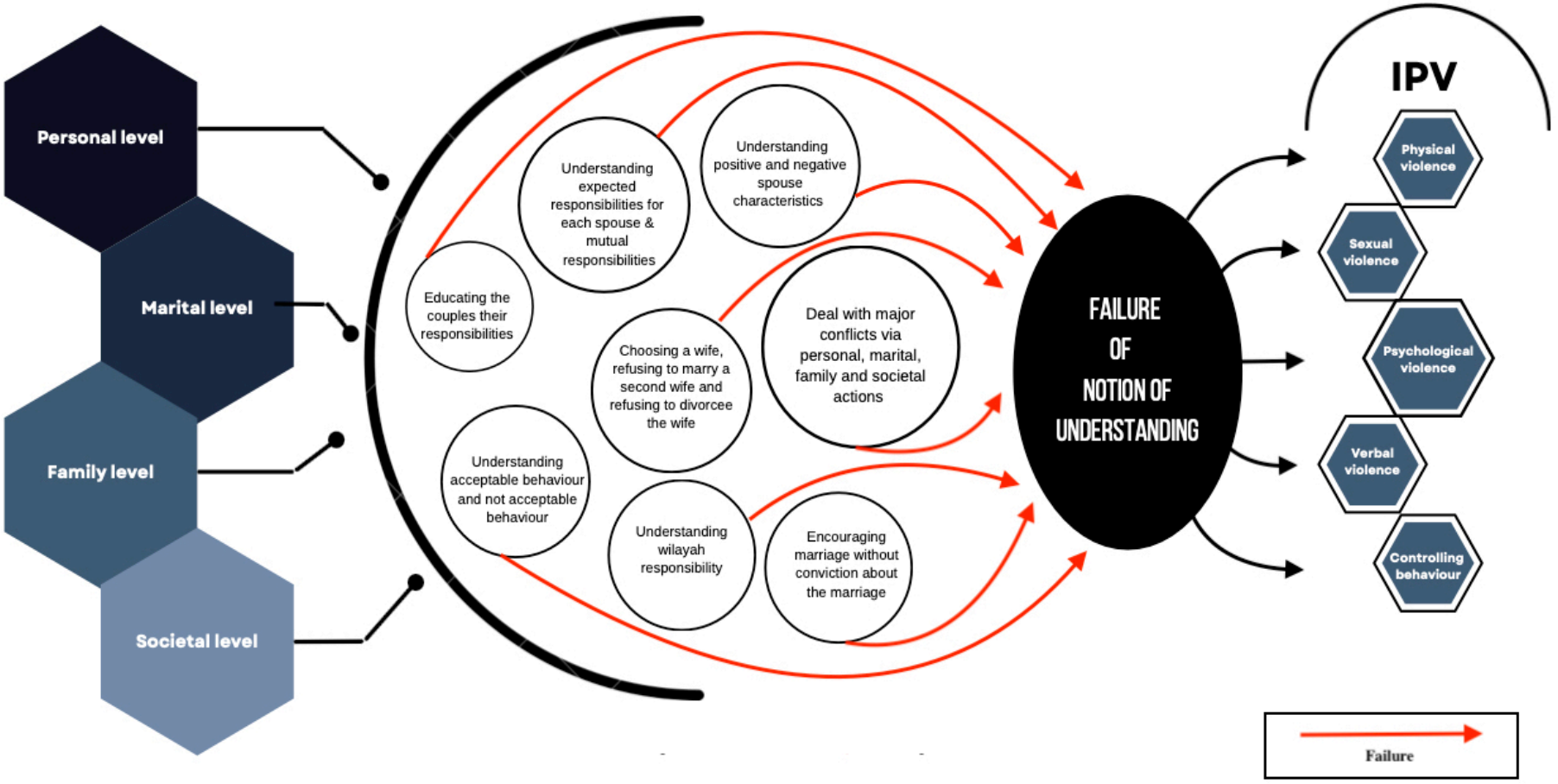
According to the study's participants, hitting, insulting in a joking way, or controlling and penalising a wife's actions are acceptable marital behaviours, as explained in Chapter 5, Category 4. However, regardless of whether or not these behaviours are deemed as acceptable, the findings indicate that any behaviour (physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or controlling) that has a negative impact on either partner is considered to be IPV. Thus, in Saudi culture, IPV can be defined as any behaviour (physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or controlling) within the marital relationship that a spouse considers unacceptable, or a desire to control, deprive or harm one's partner (physically, sexually, psychologically or verbally).

It is important to mention that several factors that are associated with IPV in Saudi culture are explained in Chapter 5, Category 5. Although these factors are not necessarily the fundamental causes of IPV in Saudi culture, the importance of the *notion of understanding* in marital life is apparently associated with IPV. As previously discussed, the inability of couples to build a better understanding of one another through learning about one

another's characteristics before marriage, as well as their inability to understand the expected responsibilities of each spouse as well as their mutual responsibilities, may result in IPV. Families' failure to educate young men and women about their expected responsibilities in married life can also contribute to IPV. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of Quranic verses or the genuine meaning of *wilayah* responsibilities can result in IPV. Thus, the theory described here emphasises that a lack of understanding in the marital relationship can lead to IPV.

According to the theory described here, IPV occurs in Saudi society as a consequence of the continual and complex interaction of several factors and processes that impact the *notion of understanding,* which inhibits or facilitates IPV in the marital relationship (figure 6.3). These factors can be classified into four levels: personal, couple, family and society.

Figure 6.3 The Interplay between Factors and the Notion of Understanding, Resulting in IPV



6.3.1 Personal Level

The theory indicates that the personal level consists of the characteristics of a husband and his wife and their personal actions in dealing with major conflict. Personal characteristics refer to those that are a part of an individual's personality and that both spouses bring to their marital relationship. It is important to mention that these characteristics may be either positive or negative, and they can have an influence on the *notion of understanding* in the relationship. The theory emphasises the importance of gaining an understanding of each spouse's personal characteristics during the engagement period, whether these characteristics are positive or negative. Through this understanding, a couple can prevent the failure of the *notion of understanding* that results in IPV in the marital relationship if either partner detects any characteristics that may impact the *notion of understanding*, such as insulting, cursing, controlling or violent behaviour. Therefore, by striving to understand each spouse's characteristics during the engagement period, a couple can have a happy and successful marital relationship.

The theory suggests that the process of understanding each other does not stop by the end of the engagement period; it continues after a couple gets married. As explained previously, the presence or absence of various characteristics is contingent upon a couple's mutual understanding, since understanding serves as a facilitator for the existence of these characteristics. For example, one spouse must understand the other in order to discover his or her thoughts and, as a result, establish whether or not they are compatible on an intellectual level. Couples can also address important aspects of their relationship, such as children, financial stability and

employment, through better understanding one another. In addition, honesty, devotion and excusing the partner for minor mistakes all rely on a mutual understanding between spouses. Stability in a marriage is as important as the above characteristics, and it is apparent that the ability to understand one's spouse plays a key role in stabilising marital life.

It is important to note that negative characteristics, such as exhibiting anger and aggressive behaviour towards a spouse, may lead to conflict as well as IPV, as discussed in Chapter 5, Category 5. Not every conflict between spouses leads to IPV; however, major marital conflict between spouses as well as unresolved marital conflict may lead to IPV. A failure to understand how to deal with major and unresolved conflicts impacts the mutual understanding in a marital relationship, which may increase the likelihood of IPV. For example, in the event of conflict, both spouses must take personal actions, such as calming down, remaining quiet, separating, recognising the mistake, forgiving and apologising. Couples who lack an understanding of how to deal with major conflict by taking such personal actions are more likely to experience a failure of understanding in their marital life, which can lead to IPV. In addition, as mentioned previously, there are several behaviours in marital life that may be acceptable from the perpetrator's perspective but not acceptable from the viewpoint of the recipient. Thus, a lack of understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour can impact the mutual understanding in a marital relationship and lead to IPV.

6.3.2 Couple Level

According to the current theory, role fulfilment and marital actions in dealing with major conflict are significant factors on the couple level. Couples are expected to perform a variety of individual and mutual roles and responsibilities. Fulfilling one's responsibilities in the marital relationship has a beneficial impact on the relationship, whereas failing to fulfil them may contribute to conflict and IPV. As discussed earlier, in SA culture, a husband is supposed to be the responsible head of the household and to have *wilayah* (authoritarian responsibility) over his wife and children. A wife is supposed to be a housewife, caring for her husband and children and performing household chores. As previously discussed, some of a wife's and a husband's responsibilities may be changing in light of recent developments in women's empowerment in SA, and couples may now share responsibilities. Thus, a failure to understand the responsibilities of each spouse can impact the *notion of understanding* and lead to IPV.

Furthermore, respecting and being patient with each other and maintaining marital privacy were highlighted as critical expected mutual responsibilities for both spouses. These responsibilities were indicated as important components of successful intimate relationships. Therefore, a failure to understand the expected mutual responsibilities of both spouses can also impact the *notion of understanding* and lead to IPV. In particular, the responsibility for privacy was indicated as one of the most important mutual responsibilities that may impact the intimacy of a relationship in Saudi society. In Saudi culture, marital matters should not be discussed outside the home and should be maintained between couples and their families. As a result, in Saudi culture, it is unacceptable for friends, neighbours or anyone else to inquire about a couple's marital issues. Therefore, disclosing marital issues to these third parties may lead to marital conflict and IPV.

Via the *notion of understanding,* spouses are able to discuss whether they should keep their marital matters private, which can prevent IPV between them.

In terms of addressing major conflict, personal actions as discussed above may not be sufficient to solve conflict between spouses. Couples must thus take several actions in their relationship to resolve major issues and avoid recurrence. The theory suggests that each spouse must listen to the other's point of view and then discuss the issue in order to understand each other and find a mutually acceptable solution. A lack of understanding of how to deal with major conflict by taking marital actions can impact the *notion of understanding* in a marital relationship, increasing the possibility of IPV in the relationship.

6.3.3 Family Level

The theory proposes that the families of a husband and a wife play a significant role on the family level. Families can play a positive or a negative role in a marital relationship. A positive family role facilitates the development of a marital relationship, while a negative family role may contribute to problems, conflict and/or IPV between a husband and a wife. One of the important roles of the family is to teach the young man and woman their expected marital roles before the wedding. The theory suggests that a failure to sufficiently prepare and teach an engaged couple to ensure that they understand and fulfil their expected individual and mutual marital responsibilities, whether these are the traditional cultural responsibilities (breadwinner and housewife) or shared responsibilities, can result in major conflict and IPV.

Another role of the family is to intervene in the marital relationship, which may positively or negatively impact the relationship. Couples may seek assistance from family members to resolve their issues if they are not able to do so on the personal or marital levels. In this regard, it is important for couples to carefully consider the most appropriate course of action, as involving family members in marital conflict can negatively impact the relationship and make the situation worse. The theory suggests that through the *notion of understanding,* a couple can prevent unnecessary family intervention that could lead to major marital conflict and IPV. Spouses can also appreciate whether consulting family members to solve their conflict will negatively impact their relationship and lead to IPV. In addition to the above factors, choosing a wife, refusing to marry a second wife and refusing to divorce a wife are also important factors that can affect the *notion of understanding* and lead to IPV in the marital relationship.

6.3.4 Societal Level

The theory proposes that, on the societal level, culture and religion may have a significant role in influencing the *notion of understanding*, which is linked to IPV. For example, in Saudi society, parents may insist that their sons and daughters honour the cultural expectation of being married by age 30 or 35. Parents strongly encouraging marriage or even insisting that couples get married at a certain age without due consideration of the idea and aim of marriage can affect the *notion of understanding* in a marital relationship and lead to IPV.

Additionally, how women are treated and respected in a community and in society in general can positively or negatively impact marital life in Saudi society. Witnessing women being treated badly in the family, the community or on television can normalise these behaviours and make spouses consider them acceptable, which may lead to major conflict and IPV. The theory suggests that deeming behaviours gleaned from family, culture or television as acceptable or unacceptable in the marital relationship is based on the *notion of understanding* in the relationship. Couples who understand each other are more likely to not accept negative behaviour in their relationship, therefore avoiding major conflict and IPV. For example, dominating and controlling the wife were seen as important cultural aspects that may lead to IPV. These behaviours were clearly associated with misunderstanding the true meaning of *wilayah* responsibilities. Thus, the latter can impact the *notion of understanding* in a marital relationship and lead to IPV.

In terms of addressing IPV, as discussed previously, reaching out to family members to solve marital issues is not always the most appropriate course of action. Couples can also consider seeking assistance from social workers or specialised centres that deal with family issues. Thus, via the *notion of understanding*, spouses can determine whether disclosing their marital issues to third parties will have a positive or negative impact, as maintaining privacy is an important cultural responsibility of both spouses.

In terms of the role of religion, adopting numerous Islamic guidelines through the Quran and the Hadith in the marital relationship can help couples succeed and be happy in their marital life, as discussed in Chapter 5, Category 3. Through the *notion of understanding,* couples are more likely

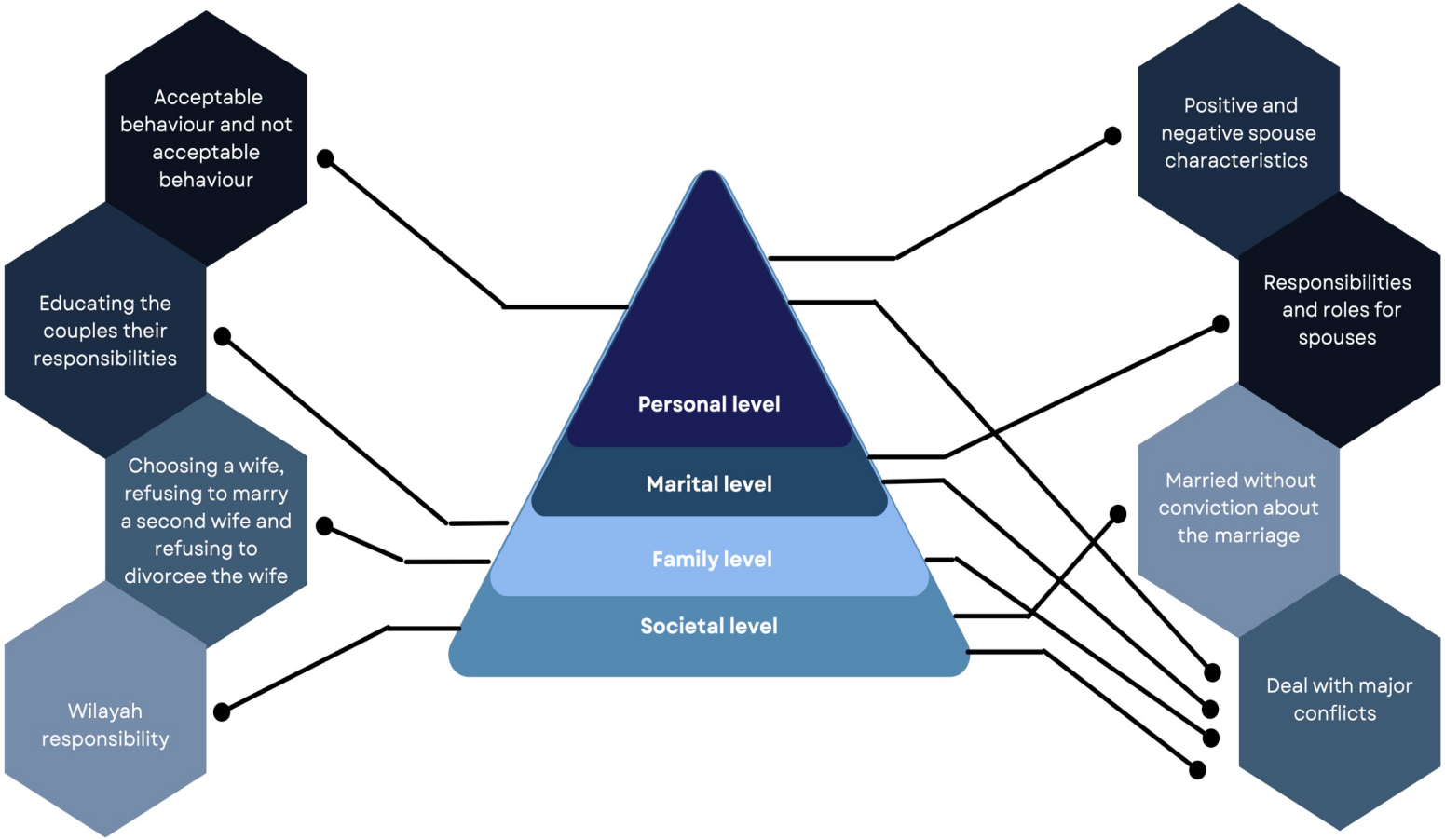
to adopt these guidelines and, thus, avoid conflict and IPV. In contrast, misunderstanding the genuine meaning of Quranic verses can clearly impact the *notion of understanding* and result in IPV in the marital relationship.

In summary, the grounded theory of *the importance of the notion of understanding* generated from this study suggests that in Saudi society, IPV develops as a result of a failure of the *notion of understanding* between a husband and a wife. A couple's success in their marital relationship mainly depends on their ability to understand each other and minimise the occurrence of IPV. The grounded theory proposes that IPV in the Saudi context is a complicated reaction that develops as a result of the interaction of different factors. These factors are addressed above and can be classified into four levels, as shown in figure 6.4. It was apparent that various factors on each of the four levels influence the *notion of understanding* and increase the possibility of IPV between couples. Some of these factors are:

- Understanding positive and negative spouse characteristics during the engagement period and after the wedding.
- Understanding personal, marital, family and societal actions to deal with major marital conflict.
- Understanding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in a marital relationship.
- Understanding the expected individual and mutual responsibilities of each spouse through being educated by family prior to marriage.
- Understanding the true meaning of *wilayah* responsibilities.
- Choosing a wife, refusing to marry a second wife and refusing to divorce a wife.

- Parents encouraging marriage or even insisting on marriage when couples reach a certain age without conviction about this marriage.

Figure 6.4 The Theory of the Importance of the Notion of Understanding in the Marital Relationship



In addition, within the four levels, it was clear that the *notion of understanding* can help couples embody important marital characteristics such as respect, appreciation, honesty, devotion, and intellectual and religious compatibility. If the *notion of understanding* is lacking in a marital relationship, these characteristics are unlikely to be maintained, which can increase the likelihood of IPV between spouses. Through the *notion of understanding*, couples are able to discuss important matters in their marital life, such as privacy, family interventions, accepting and not accepting behaviour gleaned from family, culture or television, adopting Islamic guidelines and involving family or other third parties to solve marital conflict. The absence of the *notion of understanding* can cause spouses to neglect to address these matters, which can increase the chance of IPV in the relationship. Hence, that *notion of understanding* in marital life enables spouses to understand their expected individual and mutual roles, their positive and negative characteristics, the relationship characteristics that need to be maintained, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to deal with conflict and other important matters, as discussed above. Thus, in Saudi culture, it is essential to implement the *notion of understanding* in marital life. If the *notion of understanding* is lacking in a marital relationship, the chances of IPV occurring are far greater.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter explains the core categories and its relationship to the other categories discussed previously, as well as a grounded theory of IPV from the Saudi male perspective. The next chapter discusses the findings in light of the wider body of literature on IPV.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the dynamic relationship between the central concepts and the subsequent construction of a theory regarding IPV among Saudis. I begin this chapter by discussing the study's findings in light of previous studies on IPV in SA and worldwide. In the second section, the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding'* is discussed in light of alternative theoretical explanations of IPV. The next section aims to evaluate several aspects bearing on the quality and outcome of my research process, as well as the ensuing theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*'. Subsequently, I present the reflections of the researcher and then discuss the strengths of the study, followed by highlighting the limitations of this study. The next section presents the study's contribution to the body of knowledge. The final section provides recommendations for future research and practice.

This study developed a constructive grounded theory of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. Building on this novel theoretical grounding and the sensitizing concepts discussed in previous chapter, I created a set of research questions, as follows:

- What are the perspectives of Saudi men about violence in intimate relationships and how do they define it?
- What is the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the reasons for and associated factors of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

- What are the coping and prevention strategies for IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

The comparison of the research results with existing knowledge will be discussed in the following section.

7.2 Comparison of Thesis Findings with Existing Knowledge

The aim of this research study was to develop a theory of IPV from the perspectives of Saudi men. Thus, the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*' generated from this study suggests that IPV in the Saudi context is a complicated reaction that develops as a result of the interaction of different factors, which have been addressed in the previous chapter. In this section, the study's findings will discuss in light of the findings of previous IPV studies.

Initially, this study's results suggest that, in the context of the Saudi population, IPV can only occur in married relationships. This is because it is the most frequent and socially acceptable type of intimate relationship, with societal and cultural standards not only prohibiting but also strictly limiting relationships between unrelated men and women (Alzahrani *et al*., 2016; Coker, 2018; Long, 2005). According to the participants in this research, IPV is often perpetrated by a husband against his wife. Participants agreed that women may perpetrate IPV, although only a few indicated that they had experienced IPV from their wives, and a few stated that they had witnessed or were aware of incidents of such behaviour against the husband. However, no prior research undertaken in SA has shown any evidence of women's use of IPV in their married relationships on the basis of a literature

review (see Chapter 2). This study's findings are in direct opposition to the findings of prior SA research that failed to discover any evidence of female aggression towards male partners (Halawi *et al*., 2017; Barnawi, 2017; Shiraz, 2016; Al Dosary, 2016; Alzahrani *et al*., 2016; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015; Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Alhalal, 2018; Alhalal *et al*., 2018; Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017; Alquaiz *et al*. 2017; Alhalal *et al*., 2017; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Afifi *et al*. 2011; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Jradi & Abouabbas, 2017). Due to fear of shame and social stigma, the Saudi men in this research may not have reported that they were IPV victims. The lack of research on this topic is a concern, and there is therefore an urgent need to investigate the issue of female perpetrators of IPV in SA. The findings of earlier research on different types of IPV will then be reviewed, taking into consideration the current types of IPV as revealed by the study's findings.

7.2.1 Types of IPV

According to this study, IPV is divided into four forms: physical violence, psychological and verbal violence, sexual violence, and controlling behaviour. These forms are largely consistent with the WHO's (2012) classification of IPV, with several similarities and differences when comparing acts within each form. For instance, participants described physical violence as strong pushing, slapping, stabbing, choking, killing or creating a circumstance that may cause a husband or wife to suffer unacceptable physical harm or expressing a desire to harm the partner physically. This finding is consistent with some of the WHO's delineated physical acts, which include slapping, hitting, kicking and beating. However, acts of physical violence in this study were more detailed and comprehensive than the WHO's. Sexual violence refers to forcing one's

wife to watch pornography or have intercourse, having sexual relations without the partner's consent, or creating a circumstance that may cause a partner to suffer unacceptable sexual harm or expressing a desire to harm the partner sexually. This definition is similar to the WHO's specified acts of sexual violence, which include forced sexual intercourse and other types of sexual coercion. In contrast to the WHO's definition, however, my research findings provide a more detailed description of sexual violence acts.

Verbal violence was defined as insulting or cursing the partner or expressing any unacceptable verbal harm or the desire to harm the partner verbally. Psychological violence was described as insinuations of instability, lack of appreciation, neglect, dismissiveness, poor treatment, disregarding or not listening to the partner, giving one partner cause to doubt the other's trustworthiness, provoking the partner or creating a circumstance that may cause one's spouse to suffer unacceptable psychological harm or expressing a desire to harm the partner psychologically. In contrast, the WHO's categorization includes belittling, insults, intimidation, constant humiliation, threats to take away children, or threats of harm, making it clear that the WHO definition involves verbal and psychological violence. When comparing this study with the WHO there are certain acts of verbal and psychological violence that are consistent, though this study's definition allowed deeper explanations for various acts of verbal and psychological violence. Controlling behaviour was described as forcing, depriving and controlling the partner in ways that were deemed unacceptable by the partner or the desire to control, force and deprive the partner. This definition was similar to the WHO's definition, which includes isolating a partner from friends and family, monitoring their movements and limiting their

access to medical care, education, employment or financial resources. This study, on the other hand, characterised controlling behaviours in more depth, such as the desire to control, force and deprive the partner, as well as any controlling acts that were considered inappropriate by the spouse.

Regarding previous IPV studies conducted in SA that discussed in Chapter 2, it is clear that that are also similarities and differences in the acts that comprise each form of IPV. For example, several acts were reported as physical violence in SA, including shoving, use of a stick, use of a rope, hair pulling, arm twisting, slamming against a wall, being thrown something, being kicked or hit with a dangerous object, being bodily pulled, being kicked, being hit or being hit or threatened with a fist, knife or any other weapon and being choked or burned (Al-Faris *et al*., 2013; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014; Afifi *et al*., 2011; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Sari *et al*., 2016; Halawi *et al*., 2017; Bohlaiga *et al*., 2014; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017; Al Dosary, 2016; Barnawi, 2017). Some concordances between this study and previous studies include pushing, slapping, stabbing and choking, although the many other acts of physical violence present in previous SA studies were not reported by my participants. However, participants also described acts of physical violence acts as the creation of a circumstance that may cause a partner to suffer unacceptable physical harm or expressing a desire to harm the partner physically, both of which can obviously encompass, and even surpass, the physical acts mentioned in previous studies.

In terms of the sexual violence reported in previous SA studies, several sexual acts were described, such as forced sex, forced shameful behaviour, having sex out of fear, and forced sexual acts that are degrading,

humiliating, or unacceptable (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Sari *et al*., 2016; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017; Al Dosary, 2016; Barnawi, 2017). In light of this and previous studies, it is evident that forcing the partner to have sexual relations is consistently considered an act of sexual violence. However, the previous studies described other acts that were not mentioned by my participants. According to this study's findings, in Saudi culture it is forbidden for the wife to refuse intercourse in a marital relationship without a valid reason; however, it was clear that does not allow a partner to have the right to rape or force the other partner to have sexual interaction without consent. Furthermore, this study found that any condition that causes a partner to experience unacceptable sexual harm, or expresses a desire to harm the spouse sexually, is deemed an act of sexual violence in Saudi culture as explained in Chapter 5.

In previous studies, psychological (emotional) violence was described as insulting, threatening behaviour, shouting, belittling and intimidating (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009; Afifi *et al*., 2011; Alquaiz *et al*., 2017). It is crucial to note that earlier studies in SA have considered some acts of verbal abuse, such as insulting and shouting, as a form of psychological (emotional) violence. This contrasts to this study's findings, wherein an insult was described as verbal violence by participants. While shouting was not explicitly mentioned by participants, the findings indicated that verbal acts were defined as any expression of any unacceptable verbal abuse or the desire to harm the partner verbally, which obviously includes shouting behaviour or other acts of verbal abuse that the spouse regards as unacceptable. In comparison to the psychological violence identified in this study, belittling was similarly highlighted by the participants; however,

none of the participants indicated that threatening behaviour and intimidation were acts of psychological violence in Saudi culture.

Only one study discussed the controlling behaviours, which included trying to keep a partner away from friends, ignoring and treating a partner with indifference, restricting a partner's contact with family, being suspicious and restricting a partner's access to health care (Alquaiz *et al*., 2017). Some of these acts are similar to the controlling behaviours outlined in this study's findings, such as isolating a partner from friends, restricting a partner's contact with family, and restricting a partner's access to health care. Interestingly, the remaining acts in previous SA research were also similar to several of the acts of psychological violence this study identified, such as ignoring, treating a partner indifferently, and suspiciousness, which implies that the conceptualizations held by my Saudi participants can sometimes be starkly at odds with the way IPV concepts are hashed out in earlier research.

In summary, all of the earlier studies undertaken in SA used quantitative approaches and gathered data via questionnaires, and thus participants were not given the chance to describe how they defined different forms of IPV. Thus, it is almost clear that the current study is the first and only one to have sought to discover Saudi men's definitions and understanding of IPV on the basis of a literature review (see Chapter 2), allowing a clear definition of IPV within SA's cultural and societal context.

7.2.2 Factors Influencing IPV

This study's findings suggest that the frequency of IPV in any marital relationship varies depending on the spousal relationship, the surrounding

circumstances and the situations in which they live. From the participants' discussion, it is evident that the failure of understanding in marital life results in the development of intimate partner conflicts, as explained in Chapter 5. However, the failure of understanding between spouses does not always result in IPV, especially physical IPV. Thus, there are many factors and circumstances which maximise or minimise the likelihood of IPV.

Marital Dynamics

The present study suggests that the absence of marital characteristics such as respect, appreciation, intellectual compatibility and honesty between a husband and wife affects their marital relationship and may lead to IPV. One study emphasised the importance of respect in a relationship in order to improve marital life between couples and reduce IPV (Alao, 2006). Another study indicated respect is an important aspect in every marriage, and a higher degree of respect between couples may be associated with a higher degree of happiness in their marriage (Erol, 2016). Appreciation is another essential marriage characteristic; one study mentioned that the expression of appreciation between spouses is important factor for developing and maintaining high-quality relationships, a result in accord with the current findings (Algoe *et al*., 2010). One previous researcher demonstrated a relationship between appreciation and IPV, stating that spouses who do not appreciate their spouses are at a higher risk of experiencing IPV (Issahaku, 2017), which is also consistent with the current research findings.

In terms of intellectual compatibility, one study suggested that higher levels of intellectual compatibility may be associated with higher levels of

relationship satisfaction. Additionally, these researchers anticipated that intellectual compatibility would play a significant role in resolving problems that arise throughout the course of a marital relationship (Gignac & Zajenkowski, 2019). Furthermore, if both spouses have a poor level of intellectual compatibility, their issues are more likely to escalate rather than be resolved peacefully (Mittal & Student, 2005), which may later lead to a major conflicts as well as IPV. The importance of honesty in marriage was also mentioned; one study stated that honesty is very significant in a relationship since it is necessary for the partnership's health and longevity. The authors also stressed the importance of honesty because it provides partners with the certainty that they can trust and depend on each other (Azzahra & Suhadi, 2021). Consistent with this study's findings, it was revealed that dishonesty was associated with IPV and that a woman's infidelity, in particular, was recognised as a high risk factor for IPV (Ibragimova, 2010).

As discussed in the previous chapter, understanding can help couples embody the marital characteristics mentioned above. Several studies have emphasised the importance of understanding between spouses. For example, a lack of understanding between spouses has been highlighted as a cause of divorce (Chaudhry, 2004; Lavner & Bradbury, 2012). In addition, conflicts and IPV are less likely to occur among spouses who maintain an effective understanding of the relationship (Ali *et al*., 2012; Kazi *et al*., 2006). Furthermore, only one study identified the necessity of understanding between couples as a significant factor of IPV (Ali, 2012). In contrast to prior studies in SA, none of these studies examined the marital characteristics of understanding, respect, appreciation, intellectual compatibility and honesty as potential risk factors for IPV. However, one

study did discover a link between poor relationship satisfaction and IPV, particularly physical violence, between spouses (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2009).

In terms of spousal duties, the current study's results emphasise the significance of knowing each spouse's roles and responsibilities as a factor that may influence marital dynamics. As discussed in the previous chapter, a woman is expected to be a housewife, caring for her husband and children while also doing household chores like cooking, laundry and cleaning. A husband, on the other hand, has wilayah responsibilities for his wife and children and is regarded as the primary breadwinner. The husband's wilayah responsibilities also include family protection, financial support and providing basic needs. Keeping marital matters private was identified as an important mutual responsibility for both spouses. Understanding and fulfilling marital responsibilities and roles were highlighted as essential elements of a successful relationship. Previous studies have likewise demonstrated this significance of the spouses' roles and responsibilities. For example, researchers discovered that role expectations in married life had an influence on the level of marital satisfaction (Falconier, 2013; Loscocco & Walzer, 2013). This finding is consistent with prior studies indicating that marital conflict may be exacerbated by spousal role expectations and may therefore result in IPV (Vives-Cases *et al*., 2009; Ali *et al*., 2020). In contrast, none of the previous studies in SA have discovered this importance of fulfilling spousal duties (see Chapter 2). However, the suggestion of examining gender roles and attitudes and their association with IPV was mentioned by Alhalal *et al*. (2021).

As discussed in Chapter 5, participants addressed several factors that were related to marital dynamics and may contribute to IPV, including negative personality characteristics (exhibiting anger and aggressive behaviour), psychological illness/issues and substance abuse. Compared to previous studies, it was clear that a husband's aggressive attitude increases the likelihood of IPV (Stith *et al*., 2004; Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005; Baron *et al*., 2007). Also, in line with prior studies of available data, a strong association has been established between IPV and substance use (Jennings *et al*., 2012; Bacchus *et al*., 2018; Devries *et al*., 2014). It is important to note that the relationships between psychological illness and IPV perpetration need to be examined further, as the majority of studies to date indicate that certain associations between psychological issues and IPV occur as a result of, and not as a risk factor for, IPV. However, one study did indicate that a spouse (mostly a husband) who is suffering from mental illness is more likely to commit IPV against his partner (Yu *et al*., 2019). In contrast, no earlier research conducted in SA examined psychological issues as potential risk factors for IPV, according to the literature review (Chapter 2). A few studies, however, did find that substance abuse and husbands exhibiting aggressive behaviour are risk factors for IPV among Saudi couples (Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017; Halawi *et al*., 2017; Abdel-Salam *et al*., 2022).

Role of Family

This study's findings underline the importance of the respective families of a wife and husband in marital life, particularly in the areas of marital conflicts and IPV. The findings indicate that both families may have a positive and negative effect on the spousal relationship. In a similar vein,

several studies have emphasised the role of the family as conflict instigators in the couple's relationship or as a direct cause of conflict with the wife, raising the likelihood of IPV (Chan *et al*., 2009; Hyder *et al*., 2007; Chan *et al*., 2008). In addition, one of the roles of the family is to intervene in the marital relationship, which may positively or negatively impact the relationship. Couples may seek assistance from family members to resolve their issues if they are not able to do so themselves. This study's findings suggest that it is important for couples to carefully consider the most appropriate course of action, as involving family members in marital matters can negatively impact the relationship and make the situation worse, possibly leading to IPV.

Consistent with this study, family intervention was also shown to be strongly associated with IPV in previous research, but only when couples perceived it as potentially negative for marital life (Clark *et al*., 2010). Another important role of the family before the marriage is to teach the young man and woman their expected marital roles and responsibilities. Preparing and teaching couples to understand their expected roles and responsibilities can minimise IPV and conflict, positively influencing marital life and resulting in a successful relationship. On the other hand, failure to sufficiently prepare an engaged couple to ensure that they fulfil their expected responsibilities and roles may result in marital conflict and IPV. There has only been one study that similarly emphasised the family's role in preparing the woman to fulfil her responsibilities as a positive factor decreasing marriage conflicts and IPV (Ali, 2012). However, a few studies described one of the roles of the family before marriage: the expectation to support their children's marital transitions as a significant parental role fulfilment (Fingerman *et al*., 2009; Kalmijn & De Graaf, 2012). None of the

previous SA studies examined the role of the family in terms of prepping and teaching women and men their marital roles and responsibilities before marriage (see Chapter 2). However, a few studies identified one family role when dealing with IPV, clarifying that women subjected to IPV were likely to rely primarily on their families for assistance (Afifi *et al*., 2011; Bohlaiga, 2014).

Role of Culture and Religion

Culture and religion may play an important role in married life, impacting spouses' lives either positively or negatively, and potentially contributing to or preventing IPV in Saudi society. This study found that parents may require their sons and daughters to adhere to the cultural expectation of marrying by the age of 30 or 35. As a consequence, parents strongly encourage, or even insist, that couples marry at a certain age, without adequate acceptance and understanding of the concept and goal of marriage. This, in turn, may have a negative impact on marital life, thereby increasing the likelihood of IPV. This cultural expectation of marriage age was likewise discovered in previous studies. For instance, Chen & Tong (2021) described how some parents may face social stigma because their children are unmarried beyond socially expected ages. In addition, being unmarried beyond the socially expected age may also influence unmarried children, who are typically stigmatised by negative labels. However, prior studies have not investigated whether parents encouraging or forcing their children to get married in response to cultural expectations of marriage age has an influence on the resulting marriage.

Furthermore, this study proposed that witnessing how daughters, mothers, sisters or wives are treated in a community, and in society as a whole, may have a positive or negative influence on marriage in Saudi culture. Witnessing women being abused or mistreated in their families or communities may lead to cultural acceptance of such behaviour, increasing the likelihood of IPV in marriage. This finding corroborates earlier studies highlighting that witnessing IPV in the family is significantly correlated with an increased likelihood of violent behaviour in marital life and/or the idea that such behaviour is normal (Heise, 1998; Hayati *et al*., 2011; Mallory *et al*., 2016; Koenig *et al*., 2006; Ibragimova, 2010). In addition, women who lived in communities where IPV was widely accepted were more likely to be victims of IPV (Tiruye *et al*., 2020). In the Saudi context, the role of culture has not been explored as an IPV risk factor in any of the previous studies. Although a few studies have addressed the social and cultural norms that may contribute to increased levels of IPV, they have not evaluated their statistical correlations as a risk factor (Alhabib, 2011; Eldoseri *et al*., 2014).

Alongside culture we must consider religion, and it is clear that Islam has a tremendous influence on the culture of SA. Culture and religion are inextricably linked in Saudi society, as discussed in Chapter 1. This study's findings indicated that misunderstanding the correct meaning of some Quranic verses relating to marriage, such as (Al-Baqarah: Verse 229; An-Nisa: Verse 34) may lead to husbands treating their wives unfairly or abusing them. Various studies have similarly shown that some practises are being misused in the name of Islam, usually due to ignorance and misunderstanding of Quranic teaching. Misinterpretation and misunderstanding of Quran verses, for example, were the primary causes of

injustices and the decline of Islamic women's position (Kamaruddin *et al*., 2018; Ahmad *et al*., 2019; Ali *et al*., 2019). According to the literature review (Chapter 2), none of the previous studies examined the relationship between misunderstanding Quran and the likelihood of IPV specifically within SA.; Alhalal and her colleagues (2021) discovered in their review that the association between religion and IPV remains unexamined and in need of further exploration.

7.2.3 Addressing IPV and Marital Conflicts

This study suggests that IPV in marital life can be dealt with on three distinct levels: the individual level, the marital level, and the family and community level. It is important to note that these actions would not only be taken to address IPV, but also in response to more general conflicts between spouses. As explained in Chapter 5, not every conflict between spouses leads to IPV; however, major marital conflict between spouses as well as unresolved marital conflict may lead to IPV. A failure to understand how to deal with major and unresolved conflicts impacts the quality of marital relationships, which may in turn increase the likelihood of IPV. Furthermore, these findings indicated that the severity and frequency of IPV between spouses influences the choice of one level over another. If spouses address their issues in the early stages, they potentially minimise the likelihood of causing severe IPV (physical harm). In agreement with this study, previous studies suggest that the failure of the couple to address their marital conflicts effectively may result in IPV (Holtzworth-Munroe *et al*., 1997; Ellis & Stuckless, 1996; Johnston & Campbell, 1993; Straus & Yodanis, 1996; Johnson, 2006). A few studies have gone on to examine the association between dealing with marital conflicts and IPV. They suggested

that controlling and managing the conflicts between spouses would likely reduce IPV (Dunkle *et al*., 2020; John *et al*., 2022). However, to the best of my knowledge, there is only one study that has developed culturally sensitive strategies and interventions that spouses may use in resolving and managing conflicts in order to prevent IPV (Ali, 2012). In studies specific to SA, it has been demonstrated that wives were more likely to be subjected to physical IPV as a result of marital conflict (Eldoseri & Sharps, 2017). However, prior SA studies have not investigated whether managing or not managing marital conflict is linked to IPV (see Chapter 2).

7.3 IPV Grounded Theory in the Context of Other Theories

Theories play an important role in describing the behaviours, events and situations surrounding a given study's phenomena of interest, and in doing so they offer effective preventatives and interventions (Roberto & Teaster, 2017). Following the development of the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding'*, it was essential to assess whether the theory was comparable to or differed from prior theories used to explain and understand IPV. For instance, the ecological model provides a significant theoretical explanation for IPV, as described in Chapter 1, Section 1.13. Unlike the ecological model, other frameworks, such as biological, psychological, feminist and sociological theories, all contribute a single explanatory factor for IPV (Ali, 2012; Ali & Naylor, 2013). In contrast to these monocausal theories, the nested ecological model is the only theory acknowledging that causal factors bearing on IPV arise from numerous sources, including the individual, relationship, community and society; it is therefore the only theory that will be discussed in this section (Heise, 1998; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). The nested ecological model

incorporates the majority of variables identified in the current study yet does not take into account the risk of IPV associated with the family's role.

According to the theory established in this thesis, IPV is a complex and multi-etiological phenomenon that can be best understood by considering multiple contexts. Furthermore, the ecological framework is obviously similar to the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*'. In consistency with the ecological model, the theory suggests that IPV is the result of the complex interaction of several variables (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Heise, 1998). The current theory, on the other hand, goes a step further by emphasising the significance of the '*notion of understanding'* between husband and wife, which influences marital dynamics that may contribute to IPV. Additionally, the grounded theory developed in this study emphasises the importance of the roles of family, culture and religion. The theory highlights the significance of the roles of the husband and the wife's family, as well as the roles of culture and religion, and emphasises the significance of understanding their roles as contributors to the issue of IPV in SA.

There is a significant distinction between the two theories in that the nested ecological model is offered to address the problem of violence against women and may be used for IPV as well, whilst the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*' is specifically geared towards understanding IPV in the Saudi population. The nested ecological framework was developed with the assistance of international and cross-cultural research literature, as well as data received from North American Social Science (Heise, 1998), while the grounded theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*' was developed with the assistance of data

collected from Saudi males that captured IPV from their viewpoint (Heise, 1998). A comparison of the two theories demonstrates that they both seek to explain IPV on four different levels. Comparing both theories is shown in Table 7.1.

A more in-depth assessment of both of these theories reveals that the theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*' goes further in terms of explanatory depth by describing the issue of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men. It implicitly and explicitly includes most of the elements listed in the nested ecological model, even while highlighting additional elements that the ecological model neglects. For example, elements provided at the individual level (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Heise, 1998) of the nested ecological model (being male, witnessing marital violence as a child, absent or rejecting father, being abused as a child, and alcohol use) may impact spousal characteristics at the individual level in the perspective of the theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding'*. The theory also suggests that dealing with conflict and IPV to prevent IPV are essential components not only at the individual level but also at marital, family, and societal levels. However, in contrast to the nested ecological model (Heise, 1998; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002), the grounded theory of IPV generated in this study highlights marital dynamics between the husband and wife, as well as the role of family, culture and religion, as important components leading to IPV. Unlike the nested ecological framework, which only considers marital conflict and male control of wealth as variables at the relationship level, the theory of 'the importance of understanding' emphasises the marriage relationship as critical. Furthermore, the theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*' recognises the role of family, culture and religion as also being significant, whilst the nested

ecological model considers poverty, delinquent peers, the isolation of women and family, control norms, the acceptability of violence to settle conflict, the notion of masculinity, honour or aggressiveness and strict gender roles as elements at the community and society levels that lead to IPV.

In order to understand IPV in SA, it is essential to consider marital dynamics alongside the role of family, culture and religion. This is due to the importance of the roles and responsibilities of each spouse, of the role of the family in preparing and teaching an engaged couple before marriage, of the role of culture and religion in understanding how a wife should be treated, and finally the importance of understanding the genuine meaning of Quranic verses. Thus, the grounded theory of IPV constructed via this research illustrates the process of IPV in Saudi culture from the distinctive perspective of Saudi men. As previously stated, the theory suggested in this study is similar to the nested ecological model and yet adds to our understanding of IPV by including crucial aspects not included in the nested ecological framework.

Table 7.1 Comparison of Grounded Theory of the Importance of the Notion of Understanding and Nested Ecological Framework

Nested Ecological Framework	Importance of the Notion of Understanding

Individual Level: Witnessing marital violence as a child Being abused as a child Absent or rejecting father Alcohol use Being male	**Individual Level:** Spousal characteristics Dealing with conflict and IPV to prevent IPV (Individual level)
Relationship Level: Male control of wealth and decision making in the family Marital conflict	**Marital Level:** Characteristics of the intimate relationship Spousal duties Dealing with conflict and IPV to prevent IPV (Marital level) **Family level:** (before and after marriage) Role of Wife's family Role of Husband's family Dealing with conflict and IPV to prevent IPV (Family level
Community Level: Associating with delinquent peers low socio-economic status, unemployment, poverty Isolation of women and family	**Societal Level:** Role of culture Role of religion Dealing with conflict and IPV to prevent IPV (Societal level)
Society Level: Rigid gender roles Acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict Norms granting control over female behaviour Notion of masculinity linked to dominance, honour or aggression	

7.4 The Theory of the Importance of the Notion of Understanding in the Context of Other Grounded Theories of IPV

To the best of my knowledge, there has been no previously reported grounded theory that explores participants' perspectives on the issue of IPV aside from one study involving Pakistani people conducted by Ali (2012). Notably, there are similarities and differences between the current theory and the theory reported by Ali (2012). First of all, these two studies report that marriage in SA and Pakistan, respectively, is the accepted way for couples to live together. This is to be expected because they are both Muslim countries; according to the Quran and Shariah, it is forbidden in Islam to have a relationship with a spouse unless you are husband and wife. In addition, both studies emphasise that arranged marriage is the most common type of marriage, which appears to be prevalent in many countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East since it is the cultural norm for the majority of Muslim people globally (Mehndiratta *et al*., 2007; Hena Zuberi, 2011). Both studies also report that most of the participants live with only their nuclear families, with just a few participants indicating that they live with their extended families. However, there are major differences with regard to the study sample; the current study only recruited Saudi men, while Ali's study (2012) recruited Pakistani men and women.

Based on the significant similarities between the studies mentioned above, the corresponding theories can be expected to exhibit agreement on several factors derived from each study's findings. For example, at the individual level, the two theories agree that personal characteristics may have either a positive or negative impact on marital life and may lead to the issue of IPV. However, the current study indicates that IPV perpetrators possess specific personality characteristics, including exhibiting anger and aggressive

behaviour towards a spouse. On the other hand, Ali's study mentions that suspicion is the most negative characteristic that contributes to conflicts in marital life and increases the likelihood of IPV.

At the marital level, both theories identify several characteristics considered essential in marital life—i.e., those important to the success of the relationship—and indicate that the absence of these characteristics may lead to IPV and an unsuccessful relationship. More specifically, both studies propose that mutual understanding is one of the most important characteristics in an intimate relationship; it can assist spouses in resolving marital issues, which can lead to a successful and happy life. However, unlike Ali's study, the current study also identifies other essential characteristics in a happy and successful relationship, such as relationship stability, appreciation, honesty, devotion and excusing the partner for minor mistakes. Both theories recognise spouses' roles and responsibilities as important matters that impact marital life positively or negatively and may lead to the issue of IPV. Furthermore, both theories emphasise the importance of each spouse fulfilling their expected roles and responsibilities (breadwinner and housewife) in order to avoid marital conflict and IPV. However, in contrast with Ali's study, the current study discusses several mutual responsibilities that each spouse must fulfil, such as respecting and being patient with each other and keeping marital matters private. Another point of contrast is that the current study mentions that some of the responsibilities of wives and husbands might be going through a process of change due to recent strides in women's empowerment in SA. For instance, a husband can now help his wife with household responsibilities, and a wife can now support her husband financially.

It is clear that the notion of family plays an important role in Saudi and Pakistani cultures; as such, it may impact marital life. Thus, both studies propose that the families concerned can either positively or negatively affect a marital relationship. Positive family influence facilitates the development of a marital relationship, while negative family influence may contribute to problems, conflict and/or IPV between a husband and a wife. In the current study, the participants mentioned that the wife's and husband's families may interfere with their marriage, which may consequently escalate issues in their lives. Meanwhile, Ali's study reveals that involving the wife's family may impact the marital life of the spouses and lead to marital issues because their influence is supposed to be limited; they are not expected to be involved in the couple's life. In contrast, Ali observes that the role of the husband's family is more significant and prominent, since the wife's first destination after marriage is her husband's family. Furthermore, unlike Ali's study, the current study discusses several pre-marriage family roles that impact later marital life, such as choosing a suitable wife and teaching the young man and woman their expected marital roles.

At the societal level, the two studies agree that culture may play an important role in marital life and may impact spouses' lives either positively or negatively. However, the current study differs from Ali's study in that it discusses how parents may insist that their sons and daughters honour the cultural expectation of being married by the age of 30–35. Thus, parents strongly encouraging marriage or even insisting that couples get married at a certain age without due consideration of the idea and aims of marriage can negatively affect the marital relationship. Additionally, how women are treated and respected in a community and in society in general can

positively or negatively impact marital life in Saudi society. On the other hand, Ali's study discusses other important societal aspects such as socioeconomic factors, including finances and education of the spouses, which may lead to conflict and IPV in marital life. Both studies highlight the importance of religion, as following numerous Islamic guidelines from the Quran and Hadith throughout the marital relationship can help couples succeed and be happy in their marital life. However, unlike Ali's study, the present study mentions that misunderstanding the genuine meaning of Quranic verses can clearly impact marital life and may lead to the issue of IPV.

In conclusion, the grounded theory of the *'the importance of the notion of understanding'* generated from this study suggests that in Saudi society, IPV develops as a result of a failure in the *'notion of understanding'* between a husband and a wife. A couple's success in their marital relationship mainly depends on their ability to understand each other and minimise the occurrence of IPV. The grounded theory proposes that IPV in the Saudi context is a complicated reaction that develops as a result of the interaction between different factors, which are addressed in Chapter 6. On the other hand, Ali proposes a grounded theory of *'managing or not managing expectations'*, stating that IPV in Pakistani society is exacerbated by conflict between husband and wife over everyday issues as well as unfulfilled expectations. Ali's theory also suggests that the ability of the spouses to manage each other's expectations of their roles might reduce the likelihood of marital conflicts and, therefore, IPV. These two studies aim to develop a grounded theory of IPV from the perspective of participants in SA and Pakistan, respectively; however, despite similarities between these theories, the significant differences highlighted above raise the issue of

whether the present theory is applicable to Pakistani culture and vice versa. Thus, whilst the methods utilised in this research were adequate for the identification of a grounded theory, more testing is required to determine whether the theory is applicable beyond the sample used in this study.

7.5 Quality of the Study

Much scholarly effort has been expended to both define and explain research quality. Most of the discussion revolves around validity and reliability; however, a wide range of additional aspects bear on the question of how best to enhance overall research quality. A research study must adopt adequate processes and products to meet established standards. Simply put, processes and products of research must cater to research expectations (Charmaz, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Whilst there are a number of standards and criteria for qualitative research such as Seale (1999), I used Charmaz's criteria because it is relevant to the grounded theory study and therefore more appropriate to use. Thus, the current study adopts a CGT methodology and employs the four key aspects of quality evaluation criteria suggested by Charmaz (2014): credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness.

Credibility

Credibility is essential to maintain trustworthiness in research. Charmaz (2014) has recommended the following questions to ascertain the credibility of a research study:

- 'Has your research achieved intimate familiarity with the settings or topic?

- Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data.
- Have you made a systematic comparison between observations and between categories?
- Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations?
- Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis?
- Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment – and agree with your claims?'

As I am a Saudi citizen with substantial experience in the area of child and family welfare, I had a solid grasp of both the research topic and the study participants. This helped me plan introductory strategies regarding the creation of research questions and overall research design. Though I shared a similar background with participants, I decided to spend time with them to develop mutual trust and understanding. I also informed them about the research purpose before seeking their participation due to the sensitive nature of the research topic.

I employed a comprehensive search strategy to identify relevant literature and extract pertinent information, identifying sensitizing concepts that would aid the development research questions concerning IPV. The availability of peer-reviewed scholarly literature provided comprehensive insights on IPV, which then proved helpful in providing clear direction to the research study. An extensive literature review also enhanced my familiarity with essential concepts, building a deep understanding of the

topic and its various offshoots. It also prompted me to reflect on my assumptions throughout the process.

I prepared wide-ranging interview questions to collect information on different dimensions of IPV. Referring to Charmaz's (2014) suggestions regarding interviewing participants on sensitive issues, I used appropriate etiquette such as scenarios (vignettes) to motivate participants to share in detail. A thorough discussion with participants revealed variations and novel dimensions on the central themes and categories, indicating that data saturation was reached.

Starting with the earliest data, I constantly cross-compared my results ensure that the operationalized theory remained inclusive, systematic and grounded in data. I thoroughly labelled and re-labelled interview transcripts, memos and analytical codes to enable rigorous comparison and logical interlinking between categories.

Additionally, I provided a detailed description of participants' backgrounds, opinions, views, and perceptions to facilitate 'transferability judgment' for potential readers or users of my results (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Chapter 4 provided a detailed explanation of sample and sampling that included size, strategies, demographics information and inclusion/exclusion criteria. It also explained study settings, context and the interview guide, as well as changes necessitated by developments over the course of the research process, such as the pilot study. At base, the resulting findings apply to the Saudi population. However, the limitation section (see 7.7.2) discusses the extent to which the study's results may be transferrable to others.

Originality

Originality is another critical criterion of qualitative research, ensuring novelty and creativity. Charmaz (2014) recommended the following questions to ascertain the level of originality:

- 'Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insight?
- Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?
- What is the social and theoretical significance of this work?
- How does your Grounded Theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?'

The present research is the first qualitative study to explore IPV from the perspective of men in SA. Moreover, this study has considered the views of a wide range of participants. Thus, the resulting theory of IPV from men's perspectives provides uniqueness, imparts systematicity, reveals multi-factorial explanations and unearths novel concepts surrounding the issue of IPV in SA. The resulting theory will add to existing knowledge and provide much-needed evidence in this understudied domain. These contributions will be discussed later in detail. In a brief, this theory highlights '*the importance of the notion of understanding'* in Saudi culture, a notion which increases the risk of IPV and yet has gotten little attention in the current literature.

Resonance

The term 'resonance' refers to a researcher's position of openness and receptivity towards possible meaning(s) embedded in data (Given, 2008). Charmaz (2014) recommends the following questions to ensure resonance in a research study:

- ‘Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?
- Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings?
- Have you drawn links between larger collectivities or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate?
- Does your GT make sense to your participants or people who share their circumstance?
- Does your analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?’

I collected substantial, rich and relevant data that portrays the participants’ voices and opinions. Via systematic and rigorous analysis, I paid due attention to participants’ language and discourse in order to illuminate hidden meanings. I encouraged participants to explain, justify and present their meanings with alternative explanations that consider that social reality is fluid and multiple. A higher weight was given to the category of family and the category of culture and religion, as these two categories deeply impact a couple’s marital life. They can also cause debilitating marital issues and IPV, as discussed in Chapter 5. Laying bare these multiple causal threads, the theory explains the connection between individual lives and macro-social institutions.

Usefulness

Charmaz (2014) suggests the following items to ensure the usefulness of a research study:

- ‘Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds?

- Do your analytic categories suggest any generic processes?
- If so, have you examined these generic processes for tacit implications?
- Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?
- How does your work constitute knowledge? How does it contribute to making a better world?'

I developed this study's theory by collecting extensive information from participants. The resulting theory provides a logical, comprehensive and tightly linked explanation of IPV in SA. This theory details important concepts in an easily navigable manner and includes experiences and perspectives useful for both academic and non-academic purposes which others may implement in their own operational contexts. It clearly identifies key categories defining marital dynamics, the role of culture and religion and the role of family. Moreover, it thoroughly explains the interrelationships between core and peripheral categories, as illustrated in Chapter 6. After discussing the quality evaluation criteria of the research process and its outcome, the next section will present reflections on the research process.

7.6 Reflexivity: Reflecting on the Research Process

Reflexivity is one of the most significant aspects of qualitative research. It reflects the transparency and trustworthiness of the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Gentles *et al*., 2014). This section explains details of the research process as well as my own learning from this research. The purpose of this research was to understand IPV from the perspectives of Saudi men, using their unique perspective to construct a fitting theory that could

properly capture IPV as a social phenomenon. Upon reflection, I considered it appropriate to employ a qualitative approach. This facilitated the exploration of multiple IPV dimensions in detail, the contexts that had assisted in developing my theoretically informed explanations, and their meanings from Saudi men's perspectives. Chapter 3 extensively discussed why a qualitative approach was chosen for this study.

Overall, I employed a critical realist ontology, an epistemology based on symbolic interactionism, and a constructivist research paradigm. Thus, the methodology used in this study was well-suited to the topic, as it enabled me to reveal participants' perceptions while acknowledging the impact of socio-cultural contexts on participants and their ideas. This framework also acknowledged the researcher's presence and impact on the research process. As mentioned previously, I am Saudi in origin, and it was not feasible for me to remain detached from the subject. Selecting constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) was essential because this approach considers researchers as co-producers, allowing them to have an important role in constructing a shared reality with participants (Charmaz, 2014). The approach helped explore differences and similarities in participants' perceptions and experiences, as well as their views about IPV.

I found it interesting to conduct the study, as it was an outstanding learning experience. Throughout the research period, the project offered me several learning opportunities. It assisted me in understanding the process of conducting qualitative research. In addition, it gave me invaluable opportunities to nurture research skills, develop a proposal, develop and pilot an interview guide, maintain ethical approval, identify and recruit participants, collect and analyse data, and report findings.

Each research step provided a comprehensive learning experience. Data collection proved challenging because of the COVID-19 pandemic; there were many moments during the data collection and analysis process when I felt I would never be able to complete this project, but the support of family and supervisors kept me motivated throughout and helped me overcome these challenging periods.

I fully acknowledge that my engagement with my supervisors and the influence of that interaction on the co-construction of this research cannot be divorced from the study itself. My supervisors, Professor Parveen Ali and Dr Sharron Hinchliff, are both experienced qualitative researchers with significant experience in child and family welfare. Drawing on their expertise significantly helped me decide my research approach and design. I met them at least once a month, starting in the first year of my PhD program until the writing up period. I must acknowledge that they provided continuous and consistent support during supervision meetings; this helped me achieve and complete the PhD journey and should be gratefully acknowledged.

7.7 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Conducted for this Thesis and Suggestions for Future Studies and Practise

This section will discuss the strengths and limitations of this study, as well as explore recommendations for future research and practise.

7.7.1 Strengths of the Study

The findings of this research study provided novel insight into the issue of IPV in SA. The fact that such a study has not been undertaken in the context of SA, as the current study is the first qualitative study to explore the issue of IPV from the perspective of men in SA. Also, this research has developed a thick descriptive account and rich knowledge about the issue of IPV via an understanding of the process and meaning of IPV in Saudi culture and society from the perspectives of Saudi men. It has therefore been able to firmly demonstrate assumptions that had previously been taken for granted in the existing research corpus. This research also investigated participants' own definitions of IPV to discover their subjective perceptions, rather than merely asking them categorical questions shorn of important contextual factors. Taking into account cultural influences, this study is the first to construct IPV definitions from a Saudi male perspective. The use of theoretical sampling allowed the accumulation of a diverse sample that comprised married (monogamous and polygamous) as well as single and divorced men. The sample was diverse in terms of the types of marriages included (arranged and non-arranged). Additionally, participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as rural and urban areas, were included. The sample was also diverse in terms of age, level of education and occupational status. Finally, the research included a sample of participants who lived with their extended families or nuclear families.

The use of grounded theory principles, which included theoretical sampling and constant comparison of the data, assisted in identifying the similarities and differences between men's perceptions and experiences, ultimately leading to the construction of a theory grounded in the data. Numerous critical variables were emphasised that impact the development or nondevelopment of the '*notion of understanding* and, as a consequence,

result in or prevent IPV. One prominent set of variables are marital dynamics, which underline the anticipated roles and responsibilities for both spouses. In addition, this research emphasised other important aspects, such as several strategies to address conflicts and IPV in married life, as well as the importance of the role of the family, culture and religion. It has thus revealed insights that could not have been acquired using quantitative methods. Not only does this research provide a thick and rich account of participants, but the comprehensive framework and novel contributions speak to the study's high quality and rigour. Despite this, there are a number of limitations to this research which will be considered in the next section.

7.7.2 Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that there are several limitations to this research, and the results should thus be interpreted with caution. For example, data for the study was gathered via in-depth individual interviews, but Charmaz (2014) recommends the use of longitudinal interviews as a more effective strategy which allows the researcher to evaluate the data and discover issues of interest over time. However, due to the sensitive nature of the issue, time limits and COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible to conduct long-term interviews. In addition, all interviews were conducted in Arabic and were thereafter translated and transcribed into English by me. However, it is likely that I may have missed cultural nuances or additional information during the translation, despite the fact that I made efforts to check the accuracy of the translation by having sections of certain interviews translated by two people, as described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1. My findings may also have been impacted by the fact that I am from the same country as the participants, with my own personal viewpoint and

interpretations possibly having an influence. To address this, I have included enough information about my personal and professional history to allow the reader to interpret my results for themselves.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, data for this research was only obtained through Zoom. Given the sensitive nature of the issue, identifying and recruiting participants for the research was challenging. However, I initially anticipated that the vast majority of participants would prefer face-to-face interviews. Instead, many participants indicated that they would have refused to participate in the study if it had been conducted in person, and I believe that, contrary to my expectations, remote interviews helped participants feel more open since they felt less pressured to express their thoughts on sensitive issues. This prompted me to think about the benefits of interviewing participants using videoconferencing software rather than in person. Videoconferencing tools may create a sense of anonymity, which in turn may allow participants to speak more freely about sensitive issues such as IPV. However, it is possible that the study sample did not contain very poor and uneducated men as a result of using videoconferencing tools, although the socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels of the study participants varied, as mentioned previously. This may have been an issue because of the use of a videoconferencing technique that may have excluded extremely poor and uneducated participants from the research sample, and who may have had different attitudes and perceptions regarding IPV. However, every effort has been made to guarantee the findings' transferability by giving sufficient information regarding the sitting and the sample. This may assist readers of this study in determining the findings' relevance to other locations and cultures.

This research provides only a substantive theory of IPV from the viewpoint of those who may not have experienced IPV in their marital life, as all findings are based on the perceptions and perspectives of the participants. As previously stated, participants were not required to discuss their personal experiences unless they wanted to. The findings are also inapplicable to Saudi women, owing to the sensitive nature of the issue and the fact that recruiting Saudi women was not within the scope of the research. Further studies may be carried out in order to determine if the theory is applicable in such situations. The subsequent section highlights the study's contribution to the body of knowledge.

7.8 Contribution to Knowledge

The purpose of this thesis, as stated in the Chapter 1, was to answer the research questions that had been developed in response to the study aim. Thus, it was necessary to establish objectives that would address the research questions. As a result, addressing the research questions allows for a unique contribution to knowledge based on the results of this research study. Contribution to knowledge is necessary for developing a unique body of knowledge and avoiding research duplication (Tracy, 2010). As a result, it is important that the original body of knowledge be clearly acknowledged and highlighted.

This thesis provides significant contributions to knowledge by providing novel insights on the issue of IPV in SA. In particular, this research study has highlighted an un-researched area of IPV from Saudi men's perspectives. All of the studies undertaken in SA have been quantitative, and no effort has been made to understand the Saudi public’s own

perceptions of IPV, its definitions, or the processes that lead to its occurrence. As a result, the current research was carried out in order to discover how Saudi men understand the issue of IPV. It sought to first identify IPV, and then to construct a grounded theory of IPV that could be used to explain the phenomenon from the standpoint of Saudi men, independent of their personal experiences with IPV. This research has made a significant contribution to the body of knowledge by revealing unprecedented detail regarding IPV in SA, using a qualitative method and offering a grounded theory of IPV from the standpoint of Saudi men. Data for this research was gathered via individual interviews using constructivist grounded theory methodology. One of the most important novel findings of this research is that IPV arises in Saudi culture as a result of the absence of the '*notion of understanding'* in marital relationships. This is related to IPV's nature as the consequence of the complex and continuous interaction of a multiplicity of elements and processes. Through the '*notion of understanding*', couples are able to discuss important matters in their marital life, such as privacy, family interventions, accepting and not accepting behaviour gleaned from family, culture or television, adopting Islamic guidelines and involving family or other third parties to solve marital conflict. It then follows that the absence of the '*notion of understanding*' can cause spouses to neglect to address this complex concatenation of issues, which can then increase the chance of IPV in the relationship. Based on the findings of this research, a fully elaborated theory of the '*notion of understanding'* was developed to explain Saudi participants' perception of IPV. The ensuing discussion indicated that the theory of '*the importance of the notion of understanding'* is supported by the body of information on IPV, goes beyond current data, extends and transcends existing theories, and contributes to our understanding of IPV in

a country like SA. The resulting theory highlights the implications for future practice, as well as raises suggestions for future research. The later section of this chapter elaborates on these implications.

7.9 Implications and Recommendations for Research and Practises

This section discusses this study's implications for future practise and research. Several of the following suggestions were initially raised during the discussion of the findings and limitations.

Implications and Recommendation for Practises

There are a number of practical recommendations which can be drawn from this study's findings, which are highlighted below:

- IPV awareness must begin at an early age, via the educational system. The issue of IPV must be incorporated into all levels of education, from elementary to secondary education. As a further step, schools could organise day, week or month-long programmes that focus on IPV, bringing speakers from relevant professions, such as social workers, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers and police officers, to explain the subject in more depth and plan activities related to it. Students will be better prepared to deal with IPV situations in the future if these strategies are used to educate them from an early age to the secondary education level.
- IPV might be made a required course in higher education for a number of fields that are involved in marital issues and IPV, including social work, sociology, psychology, nursing, medicine, law and Islamic studies. Along with the curriculum, there may be a required work experience and internship aspect in which students would be required to work in the field of IPV to gain a more comprehensive and practical knowledge of the issue. These

students should have comprehensive training and official certification in order to deal with the issues associated with IPV. In order to provide the best possible service to IPV victims and survivors, the professionals listed above should keep themselves up to date on the most recent national and worldwide developments in all aspects of the topic of IPV.

- An educational and awareness campaign may be devised and implemented to educate individuals on how to prevent and reduce the prevalence of IPV, as well as to highlight IPV as a public issue. Additionally, such strategies may assist in eliminating the stigma attached to victims of violence, which inhibits them from recognising and revealing their experiences. This can be accomplished by using prominent television and radio shows, as well as social media platforms. Messages may also be delivered via daily television shows, which play an essential role in educating the public and are generally well-liked in Saudi society. People may be encouraged to speak honestly about their expectations of each other, not just in the position of spouses but in other roles as well, by implementing strategies and programmes that create awareness of '*the importance of the notion of understanding*'. One effort may be too de-stigmatize IPV among victims, encouraging spouses to speak out without fearing privacy repercussions. Part of this effort should promote awareness of the suffering caused by IPV, educating people on how to prevent nascent IPV through teaching spouses, family members and community members. In addition to educational and awareness programmes, raising awareness about IPV from the standpoint of religious leaders is essential. This includes presenting Islam's correct stances on the issue of IPV and clarifying the correct interpretation of Quranic verses relating to married life. A correct interpretation of Quranic verses may also help transform negative attitudes towards women in SA.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has identified a number of areas in which more research might expand our knowledge of IPV. The following section highlights these suggested future research priorities:

- It is necessary to do more qualitative and quantitative research to examine and evaluate the definitions that have been generated via the present study. Furthermore, researchers working in SA to design tools to evaluate IPV might utilise this study's results as a guideline.
- Additional research should be performed to identify Saudi women's perspectives and experiences on the issue of IPV, and to compare the results to those of the present study.
- It is necessary to do more research on the various factors revealed in this study in order to fully grasp their importance and contribution to IPV in Saudi culture.
- The '*notion of understanding'* should be investigated further, and its impact on married life should be explored.
- Further research is needed to test the strategies for addressing marital conflicts and IPV that were developed in this study in Saudi society.
- Family perspectives on IPV should be explored in more detail in future studies. Individual interviews with members of the same family regarding their perspectives on their role and contribution to IPV would be valuable.
- It is necessary to conduct research to identify the significance of role and responsibility fulfilment in married life, as well as the anticipated individual and mutual duties and responsibilities for both spouses. It would be illuminating to identify the perspectives of spouses, families, and the larger community on the influence of women's empowerment in SA on these roles and responsibilities in particular, and on married life in general.

- More study is required to determine the role of culture and religion in Saudi society, as well as how they impact married life. Particular attention should be paid to the association between witnessing women being mistreated in their families or communities and the probability of IPV, as well as the association between misinterpreting Quran verses and the likelihood of IPV.

7.10 Thesis Conclusion

IPV is a major public health issue affecting the lives of men and women in many countries, yet research on the issue of IPV in SA has been scarce. Thus, the aim of this thesis was to understand the phenomenon of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men, as earlier studies have failed to explore the problem of IPV through this lens, thus creating a research gap regarding their attitudes and perceptions of this phenomenon. The qualitative research method employed here helped to identify Saudi men's perspectives in their cultural and social contexts; in addition, this approach addressed the lack of qualitative studies on this topic in SA. The grounded theory was the most appropriate approach for this research, as it was necessary to explore the participants' understanding of IPV. Furthermore, selecting constructivist grounded theory was essential because it helped to search out the social situations that highlight the issue of IPV from the standpoint of Saudi men. Thus, the purpose of this research was to generate a theory grounded in data that led to an understanding of how Saudi men define IPV. Overall, this thesis has made a significant contribution to filling a gap in the body of knowledge by contributing to the limited current research on IPV in SA. Finally, while the methods utilised in this research were adequate for the identification of a grounded theory, more testing is required to determine if the theory is applicable beyond the sample used in this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Summary of the Purpose of Each Study

	Author	Year	Purpose of the study
1.	Abdel-Salam et al.,	2022	To determine the prevalence and correlates of IPV among women attending different primary health centres in the Aljouf region, Saudi Arabia
2.	Abolfotouh and Almuneef,	2020	To assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and its correlates, amongst currently married Saudi
3.	Afifi et al.,	2011	To provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of DV in Al-Ahsa, exploring both its prevalence, forms, and impact on women's health
4.	Al Dosary	2016	To determine health related consequences of DV against women.
5.	Al Taifi et al.,	2021	To determine the magnitude and characteristics of IPV among pregnant Saudi Arabian women, to identify the factors that increase the risk, and to assess the willingness of abused women to report IPV
6.	Al-Faris et al.,	2013	To investigate (1) the rate of self-reported physical violence from husbands among women who presented to outpatient clinics of a major teaching hospital (2) the variables associated with VAW and (3) the pattern and the consequences of abuse on the victims' health.

7.	Alhalal	2018	To examine the pathway through which IPV severity and child abuse severity influence obesity among women who have experienced IPV.
8.	Alhalal et al.,	2018	To identify the direct and indirect pathways linking child abuse and IPV to chronic pain severity among Saudi women experiencing IPV.
9.	Alhalal et al.,	2017	To investigate the construct validity (factor structure), internal consistency, and concurrent validity of a translated version of the PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL-C) in a sample of 299 Saudi women who had experienced IPV.
10.	Almosaed & Alazab,	2015	To investigate the reasons why women, continue to live with an abusive husband and examines the relationship between their reasons and a number of variables (employment status, educational level, number of children, marriage duration, the social status of the wife's family and the number of violent incidents) that support one's ability to cope with spousal violence.
11.	Alquaiz, et al.,	2017	To measure the prevalence and types of DV; to explore the association between social determinants (sociodemographic factors, husband-related factors, and social support) and violence against women by their husband.
12.	Alzahrani et al.,	2016	To estimate the prevalence of IPV among female patients, age 18-60 years, attending PHCCs and to measure its determinants, and reporting behaviour.

13.	Barnawi	2017	To estimate the prevalence of different types of DV and to identify associated risk factors and the immediate victims' reactions to such violence.
14.	Bohlaiga et al.,	2014	To ascertain the rate of women, abuse in both Al-Dammam and Al-Ahsa cities of Saudi Arabia and to explore the associated risk factors to it.
,	Eldoseri & Sharps,	2017	To explore selected risk factors for spousal physical violence (SPV) in women frequently attending primary health care clinics (PHCs) in Saudi Arabia.
,	Eldoseri et al.,	2014	To utilize the primary health care (PHC) setting to assess: the frequency and types of spousal violence; the association between reported spousal violence and adverse health effects; the types of injuries sustained; and if women discussed spousal violence with health-care professionals at the PHC. Additionally, they extended the study by exploring Saudi women's gender attitudes and acceptance of spousal violence under certain hypothetical scenarios in the context of marriage.
,	Halawi et al.,	2017	To evaluate the prevalence of physical wife abuse among teachers at intermediate schools in KSA.
,	Jradi & Abouabbas,	2017	To assess the well-being of women in Riyadh and to identify associated risk factors using the validated Arabic version of the WHO-5 Well-Being Index.
19.	Sari et al.,	2016	To determine the frequency of violent act on women lives, list the different types of violence experienced by woman and identify risk factors contributing to the existence of violence among Saudi women attending PHCCs.

20.	Shiraz	2016	To examine the role of education and occupation in connection with DV in Saudi Arabia.
21.	Tashkandi & Rasheed,	2009	To measure the magnitude and severity of physical and emotional wife abuse experienced by ever-married Saudi Arabian females attending PHCCs in Madina city. The study also explored whether victims of wife abuse discussed these incidents with their primary health care (PHC) physician.
22.	Wali et al.,	2020	To assess the prevalence and risk factors of DV in women attending the National Guard Primary Health Care Clinics in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia.
23.	Zaher & Mason,	2014	To assess the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of IPV among a sample of Saudi family medicine (SFM) residents and use this data to develop and integrate an IPV curriculum into the SFM residency curriculum.

Appendix 2 Summary of the Geographical Setting, Methods, Data Collection Techniques and Participants

No	Authors/Year	Design	Setting	Sampling	Participants/ gender	Data collection	Findings
1.	Abdel-Salam et al., 2022,	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary health centres in the **Aljouf region**	Random	403 Saudi women	Structured interviews: sociodemographic, husband's characteristics, Norvold Domestic Abuse Questionnaire	The prevalence of IPV last year was 30.3%: emotional violence 92.6%, physical violence 67.2%, sexual violence 44.3%. The significant predictors of IPV were women with one to three children, women with four children or more, and women married to husbands with aggressive behaviour.
2.	Abolfotouh and Almuneef, 2020,	Quantitative cross-sectional	Four main primary and secondary health care clinics. in Riyadh. **Riyadh province**	Convenience	400 Saudi women	Structured interviews: WHO multi-country instrument (WHOMC) on VAW	Lifetime overall prevalence of IPV was 44.8%: physical 18.5%, emotional 25.5%, sexual 19.2% and economic 25.3% violence. Wife's experience of child abuse was significantly associated with IPV
3.	Afifi et al., (2011)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary health care centres in Al-Ahsa city in Saudi Arabia **Eastern province**	Cluster random sampling	2000 Saudi women	Structured interview: adapted WHO instrument	The prevalence of lifetime DV was 39.3%, 35.9% for mental, 17.9% for physical, and 6.9% for sexual violence.

4.	Al Dosary (2016)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Online survey **Specific details of province was not mentioned**	Convenience	421 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaire online survey of NorVold Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (NOVAQ)	There was significant correlation between abused women and general health status, doctor visits, depression, insomnia, and somatic symptoms.
5.	Al Taifi et al., 2021	Quantitative cross-sectional	Antenatal clinics and primary health-care centres in **Eastern Province**	Convenience	1330 Saudi women	Structured interview; Abuse Assessment Score (AAS)	25.9% women reported emotional abuse, whereas 5.4% reported physical abuse and 13.5% reported sexual abuse. A significant association was found between having more children and emotional abuse.
6.	Al-Faris et al. (2013)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Outpatient clinic of the King Khalid University Hospital (KKUH) in Riyadh. **Riyadh province**	Convenience	222 Saudi women	Adapted WHO VAW instrument	The rate of physical violence in the current study was 12.2%. Statistically significant associations were found between the self-reporting of VAW and the physical abuse of their husbands during childhood.
7.	Alhalal (2018)	Quantitative cross-sectional	9 Primary healthcare centres (PHCS) **Specific details of province was not mentioned**	Convenience	299 Saudi women	Structured interviews; Composite Abuse Scale (CAS); PTSD Checklist- Civilian version (PCL-C). Centre for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CESD) Scale; mass index (BMI) and waist circumference.	The study showed that IPV severity indirectly influenced obesity through depressive symptoms.

8.	Alhalal et al., (2018)	Quantitative cross-sectional	9 PHCS; Eight were in the Eastern Province and one was in the capital city Riyadh **Riyadh and Eastern provinces**	Convenience	299 Saudi women	Structured interview; Composite Abuse Scale (CAS). PTSD Checklist- Civilian version (PCL-C). Centre for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CESD) Scale; Chronic Pain Grade (CPG) scale	The study supports the Dysphoric Arousal model in representing PTSD symptoms among IPV survivors
9.	Alhalal et al., (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Nine primary healthcare centres (PHC) in Saudi Arabia. Eight of these centres were in the Eastern Province and one center was in the capital city Riyadh. **Riyadh and Eastern provinces**	Convenience	299 Saudi women	Structured interviews PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C); Centre for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CESD) Scale	The study reported that mental health problems (PTSD and depressive symptoms) fully mediated the relationship between severity of IPV and chronic pain severity
10.	Almosaed & Alazab (2015)	Quantitative descriptive study	Government shelter in Jeddah city. **Makkah province**	Snowball	114 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaire of demographic questionnaire and marital violence coping scale	Employment status and educational level variables and several of the dimensions represented by the violence adaptation scale affected the women's decisions

11.	Alquaiz, et al., (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	18 PHCs and 13 privates institutions (teaching institutes, government offices, social welfare organizations) in Riyadh city. **Riyadh province**	Not clear	1883 Saudi women	Structured interviews; modified Violence Against Women questionnaire (WHO)	The lifetime prevalence for any type of violence was 43.0% (n = 810). The most frequent type was controlling behaviour (36.8%), emotional violence (22%), sexual violence (12.7%), and physical violence (9.0%)
12.	Alzahrani et al., (2016)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary healthcare centres in Taif. **Makkah province**	Two-stage sampling (simple random selection and systematic random sampling)	497 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaires and adapted Hurt-Insult-Threaten-Scream (HITS). (WHO)	The estimated prevalence of IPV during the last year was 11.9%
13.	Barnawi (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary health care centre, in Riyadh **Riyadh province**	Convenience	720 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaire	144 (20%) of Saudi women reported exposure to DV over the last year. The most common types were emotional (69%), social (34%), economic (26%), physical (20%), and sexual violence (10%)
14.	Bohlaiga et al.,	Quantitative	primary health-care clinics	Convenience	348 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaires	The prevalence of women abuse was found to be around

	(2014)	cross-sectional	(PHCs) in Al-Dammam and Al-Ahsa cities. **Eastern province**				19%, but reached to 33% when added to it the response of women to the abuse cognate questions.
15.	Eldoseri & Sharps, (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) in Jeddah city. **Makkah province**	Convenience	200 Saudi women	Structured interviews. World Health Organization (WHO) violence against women questionnaire.	SPV was reported by 45.5% of women. Husband-specific risk factors: alcohol or drug addiction, unemployment, control of wealth in the family, and physical aggression toward other men were significant predictors for SPV.
16.	Eldoseri et al., (2014)	Quantitative cross-sectional	primary health-care clinics (PHCs) in Jeddah city. **Makkah province**	Convenience	200 Saudi women	Structured interview. (WHO) Violence against Women questionnaire-	Nearly half of the surveyed women (44.5%) reported ever experiencing physical violence from their spouse.
17.	Halawi et al., (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Thirteen governorates of SA. **13 provinces**	Stratified random sampling	758 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaires	The prevalence of abuse among the studied population was 32%
18.	Jradi & Abouabbas, (2017)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Two large shopping centres in each part of Riyadh city (Northern, eastern, western, central, and southern) **Riyadh province**	Stratified random	900 Saudi women	WHO Well-being Index	16.5% Saudi women reported experiencing violence (Physical or emotional/ psychological) in the previous 12 months.
19.	Sari et al., (2016)	Quantitative	Primary healthcare centres in	Random	186 Saudi women	NorVold Abuse Questionnaire (NorAQ)	The prevalence of ever abused among them was 42.5%. The

		cross-sectional	Al-Madina Al Monawara City. **Madinah province**				result prevalence rates of emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse in orders were 36%, 25.3% and 5.9%
20.	Shiraz (2016)	Quantitative descriptive study	Major public, private Institutions, various colleges, and neighbourhoods from Jeddah, Makkah and Taif cities. **Makkah province**	Random, clusters, voluntary, and stratified.	917 Saudi women	Self-constructed short questionnaire and adapted questions from the (WHO)	Education and occupation playa positive role in the life of Saudi women by reducing the level of DV to which they are exposed
21.	Tashkandi & Rasheed, (2009)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary health centres in Medina, **Madinah province**	Convenience	689 Saudi women	Semi-structured Modified Conflict Tactics Scale, Lie scale, and Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	The lifetime prevalence of abuse among the women was 57.7%. 25.7% reported physical abuse and 32.8% emotional abuse without physical violence
22.	Wali et al., 2020,	Quantitative cross-sectional	Primary Health Care Centres in Jeddah. **Makkah province**	Convenience	1845 Saudi women	Self-administered questionnaires and NorVold Abuse Questionnaire (NorAQ)	The lifetime prevalence of DV was 33.24%, with psychological abuse 48.47%, followed by physical abuse

								34.77% and sexual abuse 16.75%. Risk factors for being a victim of abuse include being single or divorced , having a postgraduate level of education, employed, and being financially independent of the husband.
23.	Zaher & Mason, (2014)	Quantitative cross-sectional	Prince Sultan Military Medical City (PSMMC) in Riyadh city. **Riyadh province**	Convenience	30 Saudi Family Medicine residents (Men and women)	Modified Physician Readiness to Manage Intimate Partner Violence Survey (PREMIS) (Online survey)	SFM scored low in perceived perpetration and perceived knowledge to manage IPV	

Appendix 3 Prevalence Rate of IPV

	Study	Rate of 2/3 types of abuse (Physical, emotional, and sexual) Lifetime	Rate of 2/3 types of abuse (Physical, emotional, and sexual) Last year	Emotional abuse Lifetime	Emotional abuse Last year	Physical abuse Lifetime	Physical abuse Last year	Sexual Abuse Lifetime	Sexual Abuse Last year	Other type of abuse
1.	Abdel-Salam et al., 2022,	-	30.3%	-	92.6%	-	67.2%	-	44.3%.	-
2.	Abolfotouh and Almuneef, 2020,	44.8%	-	25.5%	-	18.5%	-	19.2%	-	(Economic violenc 25.3%) Lifetime
3.	Afifi et al., (2011)	39.3%	-	35.9%	-	17.9%	-	6.9%	-	-
4.	Al Dosary (2016)	-	-	75.1	-	57%	-	34.4	-	-
5.	Al Taifi et al., 2021	-	-	25.9%	-	5.4%	-	13.5%	-	-
6.	Al-Faris et al. (2013)	-	-	-	-	12.2%	-	-	-	-
7.	Alquaiz, et al., (2017)	43.0%	-	22%	-	9.0%	-	12.7%	-	(Controlling behaviour 36.8%) Lifetime

8.	Alzahrani et al., (2016)	-	11.9%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Barnawi (2017)	-	20%	-	69%	-	20%	-	10%	(Social 34%) (economic 26%)
10.	Bohlaiga et al., (2014)	33%	-	7.5%	-	7.5%	-	-	-	In the last year (Verbal 35.8%) (More than type of abuse 49.2%) lifetime
11.	Eldoseri et al., (2014)	-	-	-	-	44.5%	16.0%	-	-	-
12.	Eldoseri et al., (2017)	-	-	-	-	44.5	16%	-	-	-
13.	Halawi et al., (2017)	-	-	-	-	32%	40.3%	-	-	-
14.	Jradi & Abouabbas, (2017)	-	16.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Sari et al., (2016)	42.5	-	36%	-	25.3	-	5.9	-	-
16.	Tashkandi & Rasheed, (2009)	57.8	-	30.9%	32.8	26.9	25.7	-	-	-
17.	Wali et al., 2020,	33.24%,	-	48.47		34.77%		16.75%.	-	-

Appendix 4 The Rate of Factors Associated with IPV

	Study	Divorce women	Unemployed women	Illiterate and lower education women	Unemployed men	Low income men	Married more than one wife
1.	Al-Faris et al., 2013	-	-	-	11	-	-
2.	Alquaiz, et al., 2017	9.6 %	57.9%	31.2%	3.3%	-	25.3%
3.	Alzahrani et al., 2016	60%	09.8%	12.9%	29.2%	18.1	16%
4.	Barnawi 2017	54.4%	20.4%	21.4%	34.6%	44.2%	44.9%
5.	Bohlaiga et al., 2014	52%	18%	24.5%	33%	-	-
6.	Dosary 2016	79.4	72.8	57.1	-	70.2	-
7.	Eldoseri et al., 2014	-	-	11.2%	20.9%	-	-
8.	Eldoseri et al., 2017	4.5%	-	5%	9.2%	-	-
9.	Halawi et al., 2017	40.5	50.2	43.5	50.2	42.8	46.3

10.	Sari et al., 2016	83.3	43.3	20%	-	-	-
11.	Wali et al., 2020,	63%	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix 5 Letter of Approval from University Ethics



Downloaded: 09/03/2020
Approved: 06/03/2020

Turki Alqurashi
Registration number: 180154733
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Programme: Nursing and Midwifery

Dear Turki

PROJECT TITLE: Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective
APPLICATION: Reference Number 032067

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 06/03/2020 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 032067 (form submission date: 06/03/2020); (expected project end date: 01/09/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1074603 version 3 (06/03/2020).
- Participant consent form 1074604 version 2 (25/02/2020).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Kate Chadwick
Ethics Administrator
Health Sciences School

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix 6 Research Proposal



The University Of Sheffield.

Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective

Turki Alqurashi

Research Proposal

Health Sciences School

Division of Nursing and Midwifery

The University of Sheffield

1

Background

In Saudi Arabia (SA), marriage is the only way a couple can legally live together (Coker 2018). Marriage is traditionally arranged by tribes or families (Long 2005, Zuhur 2011) and individuals are encouraged marry their cousins or any relatives to further strengthen family ties (Zuhur 2011). With regards to marriage and issues that are related to marital life, intimate partner violence (IPV) may fundamentally affect the quality of the marital life and the partner may experience a variety of social, psychological, or physical problems. IPV is a form of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women. GBV is 'an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females' (The Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2005 p. 7). Another common term is domestic violence (DV), which reflects the traditional view of violence between individuals in generally heterosexual relationships (Wallace 2015) where the abusers are male and the victims are female. While the issue of DV has always existed, the attention was brought to the issues in 1970s, when women's rights groups advocated for action against DV (Wallace 2015) and consequently attracted the attention of scholars to study the issue. Research on the topic increased social awareness of DV, and people began to grasp the various forms of violence involved, their effects on victims, the characteristics of perpetrators and victims and the role of abusive partners. In 2000, the term 'IPV' emerged (Wallace 2015). IPV '… refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship' (WHO 2012, p. 1). The term 'IPV' also captures a wider array of violent phenomena than 'DV' and acknowledges that violence can happen in any intimate personal relationship irrespective of gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

IPV can take many forms including sexual, physical and psychological violence and stalking (Centers for Disease Control [CDC] 2015).

Sexual violence: refers to any 'forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion' (WHO 2012, p. 1). It includes rape, vaginal, oral or anal sex by physical coercion or any painful, humiliating or unwanted sexual acts (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety 2019).

Physical violence: is the most common type of IPV and may involve beating, kicking, hitting or slapping of one's partner and/or the use of physical force to inflict pain, cause disability, injury or even death (WHO 2012).

Psychological violence and stalking: psychological violence is mainly inflicted through controlling behaviours (National Institute of Justice [NIJ] 2007). Various acts include belittling, intimidation, threats of harm, insults, constant humiliation and threats to take away children (WHO, 2012). Stalking-only recognised as a crime recently-refers to the act of closely, constantly checking another person's activity and movement as a repeated behaviour to make them feel insecure and intimidated (NIJ 2017).

The historical context of IPV in SA is difficult to piece together for various reasons except the modern part. Stories shaping the historical context of SA started emerging only recently now that Saudi women can leave the country. Not until 2013 did SA criminalise IPV, in no small part due to an organised media campaign (Nabbout 2018). The media deserve much credit for changing the mindsets of Saudis regarding women's treatment and moving authorities to enforce protective legal measure. The advertisement that ran in 2013 in the April 17 and 18 editions of Saudi national newspapers became an important landmark in a history of women's rights in SA heavily laced

with gender inequality (Speiser, 2015). Less than three months after the advertisement, the Saudi Council of Ministers passed a legislation placing any form of abuse, in the workplace or at home. Hence, the law forced courts to mete out 12 months prison sentence coupled with fines of 50,000 SAR (= $ 3,300) to men convicted of IPV in SA (Speiser 2015). In addition, Saudi women had no way of making themselves heard before SA established IPV reporting centre in 2016 (Nabbout 2018). In its first three days alone, the centre received 1,890 reports related to IPV (Nabbout 2018). Most recently and as part of Saudi vision 2030, 'Saudi Arabia's sweeping plans to overhaul its economy in coming years are matched by proposals for social transformation that extend to ways of tackling IPV, increasing city park space and reducing road deaths' (McDowall 2016, p. 1). In regard to IPV, 19 million SAR will be spent on raising awareness about IPV as well as 9 million SAR on IPV services (McDowall 2016).

Aims and objectives

This study focuses on the topic of intimate partner violence IPV in SA. IPV in SA is a complex phenomenon and previous studies in this area have used quantitative approaches including surveys. It is worth noting that studies have used the quantitative approach to define IPV in the context of socially and economically developed countries and as such these definitions may not be relevant or appropriate for Saudi context. As SA has a unique culture and norms specific to this society, it would be reasonable to avoid applying the definition of IPV coming from other countries to the Saudi population. There is a need to understand the subjective perspectives of Saudi men and women about IPV and what it means to them. At the same time, to tackle the issue of IPV it is important to involve men in the preventive efforts. There is a need to explore Saudi men's definitions of IPV to understand what behaviours they qualify as physical, emotional or sexual IPV. Such a study will allow exploration of understanding of social processes underpinning the phenomenon and developing culturally specific explanations of IPV in SA. The following research questions will guide this research:

- What are the perspectives of Saudi men about violence in intimate relationships and how do they define it?
- What is the meaning of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the reasons for and associated factors of IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?
- What are the coping and prevention strategies for IPV from the perspective of Saudi men?

Methodology

The identification of a suitable research methodology is vital for answering the research questions, as well as for reflecting the related epistemological and ontological perspectives of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Previous research has not properly elucidated IPV through the perspectives of Saudi men, and we don't know enough about Saudi men's attitudes, perceptions, and practices with regard to IPV. To highlight the current status of this research problem, I intend to apply an exploratory research procedure to explore 'what, 'why', and 'how', using a qualitative research approach.

Research frameworks

The social problem of IPV can be better understood through the application of an intensive and logical method for understanding its inbuilt factors and features. Thus, grounded theory (GT) is the most suitable method for this research. Charmaz (2014) states that GT is a practical framework, as it is an organised and logical, yet adjustable, manifestation of the qualitative

framework. Among numerous versions of GT, I have chosen constructivist grounded theory (CGT) for this study. CGT will help to search out the social situations highlighting the issue of IPV, especially from the standpoint of Saudi men to generate a theory grounded in data that leads to understanding how Saudi men define IPV.

Participants and sample

I plan to conduct 25 interviews, as this sample size seems sufficient to satisfy the study's aim. However, the proposed sample size is hypothetical, as the selection of participants in CGT relies on the theoretical saturation of the data. A theoretical sampling approach will be used and any Saudi man (single, married, divorced or widowed) over the age of 18 will be eligible to participate in the study. it is important to search out the topic particularly from the viewpoint of ordinary people who may or may not have experienced IPV. Considering the integrity and strength of the Saudi family culture, some members may not have experienced IPV, but they might have observed such domestic events in their neighbourhood or their own tribe. Therefore, exploring how the events relating to IPV occur in ordinary families is paramount, as this will help in constructing culturally specific understandings of IPV.

Participants will be recruited from two cities in SA and these are Mecca and Taif, which are in Makkah province. The populations of Mecca 'have been infused for centuries by descendants of foreign Muslims who had come for the pilgrimage and stayed' (Metz 1993, p. 62), such as the Indonesian, African, Indian, Hadrami, and Persian (from Aden, or Hadramaut) populations (Metz 1993). However, the population of Taif city consists of indigenous Bedouins (The Saudi Network, no date). The reason for choosing this geographically and culturally diverse sample is that the participants might have different understandings and observations of IPV. At the same time, the objective of variation can be better served if participants are chosen from different areas and cultural backgrounds. This strategy will help in developing a theory relating to the issue of IPV. Thus, I plan to recruit my participants from UQU in Mecca city and as well as the outpatient departments of PHCC in Taif city. These two very diverse settings will allow me to recruit participants from varied socioeconomic background and walks of life. Universities recruit individuals for various jobs and therefore will provide access to individuals working as cleaners and helpers up to those working as a professors or higher managerial positions. The primary care centre, the participants may either be coming to avail services themselves or for their family members.

Data Collection

Considering the sensitivity of the issue, one-to-one in-depth interviews are considered the appropriate data collection method for this study, as they will allow for a deep exploration of participants' perceptions. I have developed a semi- structured interview guide based on findings from the literature review, as well as the three-part approach to in-depth interviewing. Using the three-part approach will help to chart a reasonable course of discussion from the common and general questions to the particular and sensitive ones. The first part of the interview will ask participants about demographic Information, such as age, marital situation, education and occupational level, children and home. The second part will inquire about the details of the participant's perceptions related to the subject under study. For example, I will ask the participants non-intrusive questions about their marriage and good relationships. The third part aims to help participants to reflect on the meaning of the topic. For instance, asking questions about IPV will enable me to note their perceptions and definitions of IPV.

The interview guide, demographic information form, information sheet, consent form, and invitation flyer will be translated into Arabic. As the interview will be taken in Arabic, the interview will then be transcribed and translated into English for ease of analysis.

Pilot Testing of a Qualitative Interview

I will conduct 1-2 pilot interviews. These interviews will be conducted to determine the length of interview, the suitability of the interview guide. Also, the translated version will be analysed to check whether it meets the research objectives. This will allow the participants to have an easier time in indicating their answers based on the reliability of the translation, to get critical suggestions and assessments in regard to its validity, design, and, questions arrangement, and to determine whether the question can be understood. The data from pilot interviews may or may not be used in final analysis. The decision regarding this will be made in the research supervisory team meeting.

Evaluating Qualitative Research

Validity and reliability highlight the exactness and commonality of a research work (Bryman 2008). However, validity and reliability in quantitative research cannot be addressed by the same method as in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Since this study will use CGT, I will use the evaluation criteria that suggested by Charmaz (2014), which includes Credibility, Originality, Resonance, and Usefulness.

Data analysis

CGT is a commonly used methodology with its own process for data analysis (Charmaz 2014). Within CGT, analytic coding, memo writing, constant comparison, and theoretical saturation are critical components that lead to theory development. Data analysis will be performed using NVivo, a computer-assisted application that is beneficial for creating memos and writing data (Welsh 2002).

Ethical considerations

I understand that this study will address a sensitive topic. I consider that maintaining participants' well-being and ensuring no harm is one of the ethical core in this study. Also, this study will be done in adherence to the Data Protection Act. Therefore, any information by participants will be strictly confidential and anonymous. Access to the information gathered during the study will be only by members of the research team. Furthermore, pseudonyms and codes will be used during transcription and analysis instead of real names. Finally, this project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by Division of Nursing and Midwifery.

Appendix 7 Invitation Flyer

The University Of Sheffield.

Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective



What are your views on marriage? What roles do husbands play in marital life? How do people in marriage behave towards one another?

We are interested in the views of adults (men) over the age of 18 years whether or not they are married.

If you are interested in taking part in this research, we would like to interview you, in Arabic, for 45-60 minutes at a time arranged at your convenience.

To find out more, please call Mr Turki Alqurashi on +955552555317 KSA

Thank you for your help

Research Team:

- Mr Turki Saleem Alqurashi, PhD student, Division of Nursing and Midwifery, Health Sciences School, University of Sheffield, talqurashi1@sheffield.ac.uk;
- Dr Parveen Azam Ali, Senior Lecturer & Lead Supervisor, University of Sheffield, parveen.ali@sheffield.ac.uk
- Dr Sharron Hinchliff, Reader in Psychology and Health & Co-Supervisor, University of Sheffield, s.hinchliff@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 8 Vignette 1

(Male toward female scenario):
Ahmed and Fatimah have been married for three years. Usually, Fatimah takes permission from her husband to hang out with her friends. However, one day, they had an argument over Fatimah hanging-out with her friends last night. Ahmed asked Fatimah why she left home without permission from him. Fatimah said that she called his cellphone, but he did not answer. Ahmed said that he has been in a meeting and he could not answer her call, and she should have waited for his permission. Fatimah said this is not her fault; it is his fault, and she does not need any permission from him anymore and she can leave home whenever she wants. Ahmed wanted to teach her a lesson about respect, so he pushed Fatimah against a wall and slapped her causing a swollen eye and redness on the left side of her face.

Appendix 9 Vignette 2

(Female toward male scenario):

Ibrahim and Sarah have been married for two years. Ibrahim usually gets home from work around 3 p.m., but one day he did not arrive home until 11 p.m. Sarah is furious that Ibrahim did not call to say that he would be home late and has been wondering where he is. She called his cellphone, but he did not answer. When Ibrahim walked in the door at home, Sarah told him how upset she was. Ibrahim said that he had been in a meeting that ran late, and he could not answer the call. Sarah smelled another woman's perfume on his clothes, and she *suspected* her husband was cheating. Sarah asked Ibrahim if he was cheating. Ibrahim yelled at her and said, "shut up and just prepare the diner." Sarah lost her temper and then she picked up the dinner that she kept warm and thrown it at Ibrahim, which caused burns to his face.

Appendix 10 Interview Guide

Thank you for taking part in this study. Have you had the chance to read the Participant Information Sheet? I want to tell you that this study will be part of my PhD thesis, and your information will be strictly confidential and secure. This study aims to identify factors and processes through which social relationships within marital life develop and effect the in Saudi culture and society. This in turn will help identify strategies and solutions to improve these relationships, consequently improving the health and well-being of the family unit. You will be asked questions related to marriage and marital life and things that affect this life. You don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. However, you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give any reasons for why you no longer want to take part, and there will be no adverse consequences if you choose to withdraw. Do you have any questions before we start?

Demographic Information form (this will be completed by the researcher at the start of the interview)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Are you Saudi?
○ Yes ○ No</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">2. What is your age?
○ 18-20 years old ○ 21-25 years old ○ 26-30 years old ○ 31 -35 years old
○ 36 -40 years old ○ 41 -45 years old ○ 46 -50 years old ○ 51 year or older</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">3. What is your marital status?
○ Single
○ Married
○ Divorced
○ Widowed</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. What is your education level?
○ Less than a secondary (higher) school diploma
○ Secondary (higher) school diploma
○ Bachelors' degree
○ Master's degree
○ Doctorate</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">5. What is your occupational status?
○ Employed (○ Full time ○ Part time) ○ What occupation you have?
○ Unemployed
○ Student
○ Retired
○ Unable to work</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">6. Are married?</td></tr>
<tr><td>○ No</td><td>○ Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>• How many wives do you have?
○ One wife ○ Two wives ○ Three wives ○ Four wives</td></tr>
</table>

- **How long have you been in your marriage?**

(First marriage)	(Second marriage)	(Third marriage)	(Fourth marriage)
○ One year ○ Less than 5 years ○ Less than 10 years ○ Less than 20 years ○More than 20 years	○ One year ○ Less than 5 years ○Less than 10 years ○Less than 20 years ○More than 20 years	○ One year ○ Less than 5 years ○ Less than 10 years ○ Less than 20 years ○ More than 20 years	○ One year ○ Less than 5 years ○Less than 10 years ○Less than 20 years ○ More than 20 years

- **Do you have any children?**

○ No	○ Yes • How many children you have? ○ • Are they boys, girls, both? ○ • How old your children? ○

- **What is the education level of wife/wives?**

(First wife)	(Second wife)	(Third wife)	(Fourth wife)
○ Less than a secondary school diploma ○ Secondary school diploma ○ Bachelors' degree ○ Master's degree ○ Doctorate	○ Less than a secondary school diploma ○ Secondary school diploma ○ Bachelors' degree ○ Master's degree Doctorate	○ Less than a secondary school diploma ○ Secondary school diploma ○ Bachelors' degree ○ Master's degree Doctorate	○ Less than a secondary school diploma ○ Secondary school diploma ○ Bachelors' degree ○ Master's degree ○ Doctorate

- **What is the occupational status of your wife/wives?**

○ Employed (○Full time ○ Part time)
○ Unemployed (Housewife)
○ Student
○ Retired
○ Unable to work

- **How you met and known your wife's family or your wife?**

○

7. Do you live in the family house (extended family)?

○ No	○ Yes • Tell me about the number and status of all people who live with you (e.g., members of the extended family, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins)

Semi-structured interview guide

Questions

- **Opening questions**
  1. Tell me about yourself
  2. Can you describe marriage life from your viewpoint?
  3. Can you describe the role of family (parents' of spouses) toward the marital life either positive or negative?
  4. Can you describe the role of the husband and wife in Saudi Arabia? What are the positive and negative characteristics of Saudi men and what are the positive and negative characteristics of Saudi women?
  5. Why do spouses get married? Can I know what is the purpose and aim of your marriage?
  6. How do you describe successful/ unsuccessful marital life? Happy/unhappy married life?
  7. You mentioned that you had been married for …... year/s. Can you talk about your married life until this moment? (for married, divorced or widowed).
  8. Can you talk about married life for your parents until moment? (for single men)
     (I will ask the following question if the participants have already mentioned about their marital life and if I feel they willing to share it with me; however, they will be informed that they don't have to answer them)

- **Questions related to the subject under study**
  1. Some marriages have a lot of disagreements, can you tell me what types of things do you think married couples argue about? (what usually happens? How long does these disagreements take? What kinds of things are they about? How they resolve these disagreements?
  2. Do you think that COVID impact the marital life in Saudi Arabia?
     (Again, I will ask the following questions if the participants have already mentioned about their marital life and if I feel they willing to share it with me; however, they will be informed that they don't have to answer them)
  3. It is common for some married couples to argue or quarrel, sometimes over the kids, money, work. Is that something that applies to you? If so, what sorts of things do you quarrel about? How do you resolve your differences?

- **Questions about subject under study**
  ***Questions number 1 and 2 are related to the vignettes**
  I have news story about two families, is it okay if I share it with you?
  1. What do you think about this story? What should Fatimah do in this situation? Do you think Fatimah deserved what happened to her? Who is fault in this situation?
  2. What do you think about this story? What should Ibrahim do in this situation? Do you think Ibrahim deserved what happened to him? Who is fault in this situation?
  3. What is the meaning of violence in marital life Might be better as: (Can you tell me what you think violence in marital life is and what violence in marital life means to you)?
  4. How prevalent do you think violence in marital life is in SA?
  5. What in your opinion constitutes abuse in marital life? Does it include violence? Physical or mental or sexual?
  6. Can you tell me about your views of violence in marital life?

  a. Type of violence
  b. Characteristics of violence

c. Reasons
d. Factors preventing and facilitating and hindering violence in marital life

7. What are situations would violence in marital life be acceptable? And why?
8. What do you think are the most important ways to prevent violence in marital life? How did you discover these ways and when?
9. Where did you see /witness/ violence in marital life for the first time? In your childhood/ your marriage (how this happened, when this happened, with who and why this happened. How did it make you feel?

(I will ask the following questions also if the participants have already mentioned about their marital life and if I feel they willing to share it with me; however, they will be informed that they don't have to answer them)

10. Would you describe any situation that occurred with your wife as violence in marital life? Why is that? (if the person refuses to answer question number 7, I will move to question number 12)
11. Tell me how it came about: what seems to 'trigger' violence in marital life?
12. How did you and your wife deal with the situation of violence in marital life?

12.What kind of support you or any couple (get/ want to get) when violence in marital life cannot be handled? Such as agencies or the internet, family or friends?

14. Is there anything that you might not talked/mentioned about violence in marital life during this interview?
15. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Thank you.

Appendix 11 Participant Information Sheet



The University Of Sheffield.

1. Research Project Title:
Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective

2. Invitation paragraph
You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?
To date, no research has been conducted to understand the dynamics of marital life from Saudi men perceptions. Thus, there is a need to explore how Saudi men define their social relationships and explore their views on violence or abuse and their effects and impact on marital life. The study will help identify factors and processes through which social relationships within a marital life develop and effect in Saudi culture and society. It will also help in understanding of how Saudi men define lack of understanding in marital life and marital violence and how does it effect their family. This in turn will help identify strategies and solution to improve these relationships consequently improving the health and well-being of the family unit.

4. Why have I been chosen?
We are inviting any Saudi men who are above 18 years of age, to take part in our study, and we hope to have around 25 Saudi men take part.

5. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason. You are also free to refuse to answer some or all the questions if you do not feel comfortable with those questions.

6. What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?
The research involves taking part in an individual interview with the researcher. Before interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions about the research and be asked to sign a consent form. The interview is expected to last approximately 1 hour, with refreshments available throughout. In the interview, you will be asked about your views regarding social and marital life, violence or abuse in intimate relationships, its causes and process.

Before the interview begins, we will also ask for your age, marital status, educational background, occupational status, number of wives and children, and status of all other people who live in your home (e.g., members of the extended family, such as grandparents).

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risk of taking part?
No physical, economic or legal harm is anticipated. However, you may feel tired because of the interview.

The interview will be stopped if you show any signs of being distressed or if you ask for it. Your wishes will be respected in all circumstances and without question. If you require help, you will be advised to seek professional help from your primary healthcare centre or from list of services for help and support with domestic violence.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct or immediate benefits of taking part in this study. However, there is a hope that the information gathered during this study will help us to identify the processes of intimate partner violence or abuse/marital violence or abuse in Saudi people. This in turn will help to identify various ways that could be used to help increase the culturally sensitive awareness of the Saudi about intimate partner violence or abuse and thus will help in preventing it.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

This study will be done in adherence to the Data Protection Act (2008). Therefore, any information by participants will be strictly confidential and secure. Access to the information gathered during the study will be only by members of the research team. However, if serious harm is disclosed during the interview, the following authorities will be informed (social protection unit in Saudi Arabia or the local police station in the UK).

10. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about marital life and marital violence), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is necessary for scientific research purposes.

11. What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The findings of this research will be presented in a short report and made available to all study participants. A detailed report of the research will form part of a PhD thesis, which will be available at the University of Sheffield's library. The results of the research may be published in journal and elsewhere. However, there will be the protection of individual participants from any form of publication. The raw data will be archived for five years from the date of submission of the thesis (October 2027). After the completion of the study, the research team will ensure that all data, in the form of physical or digital, will be destroyed appropriately.

12. Will the interview be recorded, and what will happen to the recording?

Yes, the interview will be tape recorded with your permission only. The audio recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

13. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised by the University of Sheffield and funded by Umm Al-Qura University.

14. Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

15. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by Division of Nursing and Midwifery.

16. What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact any member of the research team. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University of Sheffield's Registrar and Secretary to take your complaint further (see below).

17. Contact for further information

- Mr Turki Saleem Alqurashi, PhD student, Division of Nursing and Midwifery, Health Sciences School, University of Sheffield, UK. Cell Phone: +00966-552555317, email: talqurashi1@sheffield.ac.uk
- Dr Parveen Azam Ali, Senior Lecturer & Lead Supervisor, University of Sheffield, UK. Email: parveen.ali@sheffield.ac.uk
- Dr Sharron Hinchliff, Reader in Psychology and Health & Co-Supervisor, University of Sheffield, UK. Email: s.hinchliff@sheffield.ac.uk
- The University of Sheffield's Registrar and Secretary is Dr Philip Harvey. He can be contacted at the following address: Dr Philip Harvey, The Registrar and Secretary's Office, University of Sheffield, Firth Court, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK.

Finally

We appreciate that you have taken time to read this sheet of information. You will be given with a signed and dated copy of a consent form, and a copy of this information sheet to keep. The research team will also keep second copies of these documents for the research project records.

Thank you for taking part in this research.

Appendix 12 Informed Consent Form

The University Of Sheffield.

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Marriage and marital life, including marital abuse, from the Saudi men's perspective

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understand the information sheet dated …. /…../…. and the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)	☐	☐
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed with an audio recording. I understand that should I be invited to a subsequent interview or research activity, I have the right to decline further involvement.	☐	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.	☐	☐
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I give permission for the anonymised and confidential transcript that are created from my interview to be deposited the University of Sheffield's library and at White Rose Research Online depository so it can be used for future research and learning.	☐	☐
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.	☐	☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 13 Services for Help and Support with Domestic Abuse



DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR HELP AND SUPPORT WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE IN UK

PARSON CROSS DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT
PO Box 1539
Sheffield S6 1YQ
Tel: 231 6300
Helpline: 285 4484
A community based project providing a telephone helpline and support service for women in the Fox Hill, Parson Cross, Southey, Shirecliffe, Shiregreen, Ecclesfield and Longley areas. They also offer a weekly self-help 'Women Talking to Women' group, and a specialist support service for the children of their service users.

SOUTH EAST SHEFFIELD DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT (SESDAP)
PO Box 2032
Sheffield S2 1XE
Tel: 241 6501
Helpline: 241 6500
A community based project also offering a helpline, support, drop-in and weekly women's self help group in the Fairleigh, Woodhouse, Handsworth, Mosborough, Waterthorpe, Hackenthorpe, Beighton, Birley, Darnall and Tinsley areas.

BURNGREAVE DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT
PO Box 3574
Sheffield S3 9WX
Tel: 272 0901
Helpline: 272 6021
A community based project in the Burngreave area, providing a helpline and support to women affected by domestic abuse.

SHEAF DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT
PO Box 3055
Sheffield S2 3YG
Tel: 249 8881
Helpline: 0800 073 8882
A community based project covering the Sheaf Valley area, providing a helpline and support to women or men affected by domestic abuse.

DOMESTIC ABUSE FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE
100 London Road
Sheffield S2 4LR
Tel: 296 0222
City-wide service providing longer term resettlement support to women affected by domestic abuse, in their own homes

The University Of Sheffield.

DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR HELP AND SUPPORT WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE IN Saudi Arabia

SERVICES IN TAIF CITY

SOCIAL PROTECTION
Al Khalidiyyah,
Taif 26521, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: +966 12 732 5030
A government centre was established to receive communications from victims of abuse and domestic violence in order to guide them towards the nearest point or place to receive the necessary assistance in any region of the Kingdom.

Marriage and Family Development organisation
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
Shihar
Taif 26513, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: +966 12 742 7170
A non-profit organisation providing marriage and family counselling.

A STABILITY CENTRE FOR FAMILY COUNSELING
Shihar
Taif 26513, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: +966 12 740 0002
A non-profit organisation providing marriage and family counselling.

SEVICES IN MECCA CITY

SOCIAL PROTECTION
Az Zahir
Mecca 24222, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: +966 12 542 1159
A government centre was established to receive communications from victims of abuse and domestic violence in order to guide them towards the nearest point or place to receive the necessary assistance in any region of the Kingdom.

PURITY CENTRE FOR FAMILY TRAINING AND COUNSELING
Al Khadra
Mecca 24267, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: +966 12 523 3309
A non-profit organisation providing family counselling and training.

FAMILY COUNSELING CENTRE
Telephone: +966 8001160303
A non-profit organisation providing a free telephone family and marriage consultations