
AN ASSESSMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LEBANON: AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women is a violation of the basic human rights. Yet it is a recurring problem causing millions of women and girls to suffer disproportionately from violence in war and in peace, at home and in the community. The paper investigates the awareness level within the Lebanese society of the different types of violence exerted on women, the latter reaction and attitude to this violence, whether as a watcher or a participant, as well as the level of trust in the Lebanese authorities as supporters of victimized women.

This paper defines what violence is, explains its process, components, impact, as well as its applications. With 121 valid questionnaires, a quantitative analysis is performed to support the objectives of the research. Results are interesting; the awareness level of the society outperforms the pessimistic expectations of a third world country. Yet, societal and legal Lebanese norms remain a challenge to resolve.

Key words: Awareness, women, VAW, rights, violence, Lebanon

1. Introduction

Violence against women continues to attract attention of researchers worldwide. According to WHO (2013), “it is not a new phenomenon, nor are its consequences to women’s physical, mental and reproductive health. What is new is the growing recognition that acts of violence against women are not isolated events but rather form a pattern of behavior that violates the rights of women and girls” (p. 1). The term “violence against women –VAW- means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations, 1993, Para 14).

“From ancient times up to the present day she has been an object of rape and barter, and quite often, for sexual purposes, held in the most horrible slavery. During the Middle Ages innumerable women were persecuted for witchcraft, subjected to the most cruel tortures, dragged to the scaffold to be beheaded, or burnt alive at the stake” (Cronau, 1919). Some people claim that violence against women has been accepted, disregarded and legally sanctioned throughout history. King and Rabil (n.d.) contend that the movement to eradicate violence against women is the “result of the backdrop of a three-thousand-year history of the derogation of women rooted in the civilizations related to Western culture: Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian. Negative attitudes toward women inherited from these traditions pervaded the intellectual, medical, legal, religious, and social systems that developed during the European Middle Ages” (p. 1).

Violence against women is still exerted and is noted everywhere in the world. However, emphasized attention is drawn to the third world countries where some forms of violence prevail with no effective legal and societal measurements taken to stop the cruelty; like wife burning, honor killing, rape, battering, etc...

Living free from violence is a human right, yet according to Amnesty USA (2015), “millions of women and girls suffer disproportionately from violence both in peace and in war, at the hands of the state, at home and in the community. Across the globe, women are beaten, raped, mutilated, and killed with impunity” (Para 1). Therefore, it is time for women to stand for their rights. “The more they retreat inside their shell, the more ready are the predator’s outside to seal that shell and suffocate the very life out of them” (Soyingbe, 2014, Para 20).

Men too have to be drawn into the movement against violence. Attitudinal change in society is required if women are to live in the world as free human beings without fear.

Governments in developed countries like the United States of America, Canada, and Europe have formulated laws supporting the punishment of exerted violence. Women are well aware of their rights and do not fear to bring any befallen abuse to light; however, such laws are still not available in the third world countries, and in case they exist, they contain many pitfalls; women- especially in the Arab countries, lack confidence in the legal authority to prevail over the societal attitude towards them. This fact is reflected in the increased rate of VAW reporting by the Lebanese media and news. . The United Nations and non-profit organizations supporting women are working on educating the Lebanese about women’s right so as to raise their voice and condemn violence exerted on the latter.

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether the Lebanese society is aware of the different forms of violence exerted on women, the attitudes of Lebanese citizens towards this violence, and how will they react when such violence comes to their notice.

2. Literature Review

In the broadest sense, according to Feminist.com (2002), “violence against women is any violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity, or freedom of movement through individual acts and societal oppression” (Para 11). Also, the Newfoundland and Labrador Government in Canada (2014) defined violence and other forms of abuse as, “a pattern of behavior intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. While violent offenders are most often known to their victims (intimate or estranged partners and spouses, family members, relatives, peers, colleagues, etc.), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers” (Para 1). Furthermore, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women states that “violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men” (United Nations 1993, Para 6).

The World Health Organization-WHO (2012) contends that ‘Gender-based Violence-GBV’ is often used to highlight that much violence against women is rooted in gender inequality, and that it perpetuates women’s subordinate legal, social or economic status in society (p. 2). At the global level, the most common forms of violence against women are depicted in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1:

- A. Intimate partner violence (Domestic Violence) and other forms of family violence;
- B. Sexual violence;
- C. Female genital mutilation (FGM);
- D. Femicide, including honor and dowry-related killings;
- E. Human trafficking, including forced prostitution and economic exploitation of girls and women; and,
- F. Violence against women in humanitarian and conflict settings.

Exhibit 1: Forms of violence (WHO 2012, p.2)

2.1 Process

To understand the general view of the topic, the researchers have started by explaining how the cycle of violence takes place. The cycle of violence is a pattern or process that occurs in abusive relationships. In most cases, the perpetrator is an intimate partner; however, the cycle of violence can sometimes be incurred by family members, employers, peers and others. According to the website Domestic Violence Info. (2006), the cycle of violence against women progress through three phases. These are:

1. Tension building phase,
3. Explosion phase, and
3. Honeymoon phase.

Details are depicted in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2:

1. The tension-building phase: During this phase, abusers often verbally harass their partners. They are afraid that their partners will leave them, and become more possessive, jealous, and aggressive. During this phase, partners may do anything to keep the peace. The passivity of the abused to go along with whatever the abuser wants nurtures the abuser's tendency to violence. Some victims may try and set the abusers off in order to get the abuse over with. Partners often make excuses for abusers' behavior.
2. The explosion phase: This phase involves acute battering. Abusers are extremely unpredictable and often seem to be out of control. Abusers blame their partners for the abuse and may fail to confine their abusive behavior to the home. Abuse may not necessarily be physical. It can involve humiliation or intimidation as well. Partners are left to passively accept the abuse and often minimize the extent of the abuse to themselves or to others who may question them.
3. The honeymoon phase: During this period, abusers are calm, loving and apologetic for their actions, promising their partners that 'it will never happen again.' Partners often feel guilty about harboring the idea of leaving the abuser. The abused/victims often hope that the abuser will change.

Exhibit 2: The cycle of violence (Domestic Violence Info., 2006, Para 1-3)

Despite the seemingly hopeful behavior, as an aftermath of the last phase of the cycle, the cycle of violence usually repeats itself. In some cases, the third phase completely disappears over time, and the cycle is reduced to no more than the tension build-up and explosion phases.

2.2 Forms of violence

VAW often reflects an imbalance power between the victim and the abuser. The Newfoundland and Labrador Government in Canada (2014) identified nine distinct forms of violence and abuse; these are listed and explained herein.

2.2.1 Physical Violence

Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control another person's actions. It includes using physical force which results in pain, discomfort or injury; or any other rough treatment; assault with a weapon or other object; threats with a weapon or object; deliberate exposure to severe weather or inappropriate room temperatures; and, murder (Para 4).

2.2.2 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity. It includes, but is not limited to, cognitive abuse and degrading, verbal abuse, and physical force a person to commit sexual acts without consent (i.e., kissing, grabbing, fondling) (Para 7).

2.2.3 Emotional Violence

Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless. It includes, but is not limited to, name calling; blaming all relationship problems on the abused; preventing visitation, destroying possessions; jealousy; humiliating and intimidating the abused; threatening; and, causing fear to gain control (Newfoundland and Labrador Government, 2014, Para 8).

2.2.4 Psychological Violence

Psychological violence occurs when someone uses either verbal or physical threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control. It includes, but is not limited to, threatening to harm the other person or his/her immediate family and relatives; stalking / criminal harassment; destruction of personal property; inappropriately controlling the person's activities; treating a person like a child or a servant; withholding companionship or affection (Para 9).

2.2.5 Spiritual Violence

Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, demean, dominate or control that person. It includes, but is not limited to, preventing the person to follow his/her preferred spiritual or religious tradition, or forcing a spiritual or religious path or practice on another person (Para 10).

2.2.6 Cultural Violence

Cultural violence occurs when an individual is emotionally or physically harmed as a result of practices that are part of his/her culture, religion or tradition. It includes, but is not limited to, committing "honor" or other crimes against women, where they are especially physically harmed, shunned, maimed or killed for any reason that leads to a failure in personal relationships. Furthermore, cultural violence may be reflected through one of these ways:

- "Execution or stoning;
- Banishment;
- Abandonment of an older person at hospital by family;
- Female circumcision;
- Rape-marriage;
- Sexual slavery; and,
- Murder" (Para 11)

2.2.7 Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual. It includes, but is not limited to, cursing; name calling; recalling a person's past mistakes; expressing negative expectations and distrust; threatening violence against a person or his/her family members; and, withholding important information (Newfoundland and Labrador Government, 2014, Para 12).

2.2.8 Financial Abuse

Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without that individual's consent or the abuser misuses these resources. It includes, but is not limited to, the illegal or improper use of financial or physical resources; misuse of power to allow employment or education; the abusing of the other's bank accounts and income; forging signatures; not paying bills; and abusing cohabitation expenses (Para 13).

2.2.9 Neglect

Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility for providing care or assistance of an individual but does not. It includes, but is not limited to, physical neglect by disregarding necessities of daily living; abandonment in a public setting; and, not remaining with a person who needs help. It also includes medical neglect by ignoring special dietary requirements, and not providing needed medical attention (Para 14).

Women against Abuse NGO (2012) added another type of violence namely “Technological Violence”. This form of abuse includes the use of technology to control and stalk a partner. It can happen to persons of all age categories, although more common among teenagers who use technology and social networking to interact in a manner often unmonitored by adults.

Examples include: “hacking into a victim's email and personal accounts; putting tracking devices into a victim's cell phone so that the abuser knows his/her location at all times; manipulation of social networks and violation of information privacy; recording or filming the victim's conversations with other people without their consent or knowledge” (Para 2)

2.3 Benefits

The benefits of this study are manifested in that the more the topic is researched, discussed, and published, the more women will have the courage to stand up and say “NO to Violence”. It is time to cease the suffering, and start by educating people about Human Rights, where women’s rights to be treated humanely, away from violence. According to Moore & Mclaughlin (2014), the Violence against Women Act (VAWA), first authorized in 1994 in the United States, “created and supported *comprehensive, effective and cost saving* responses to the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking” (Para 1). The authors contend that VAWA programs, administered by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, have dramatically changed federal, tribal, state, territorial and local responses to these crimes (ibid).

Moore & Mclaughlin (2014) in their research reported that since 1994, “there has been as much as a 51% increase in reporting by women and a 37% increase in reporting by men. The number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34% for women and 57% for men and the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased to 53%” (Para 3).

Sjoberg and Friedman (2010) state in their research in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women known as (UNIFEM), that violence prevention is a ‘smart’ investment, with multiple payoffs and savings; “in Australia, it is estimated that the National Plan of Action could save \$23,673 for each woman prevented from experiencing violence. In the United States of America, the 1994 VAWA program cost \$1.6 billion over the first five years while saving \$14.8 billion on direct and indirect expenses related to health care and survivor services, police response, lost productivity, reduced quality of life and death” (p. 6). Moreover, the research contends that “countries with greater equality between women and men tend to have lower levels of violence against women, based on the leading global indices for gender equality” (p. 3). Furthermore, the same research shows that the “economic empowerment of women can serve as a protective factor against gender-based violence, through access to assets and decent employment that enable women to prevent and escape abusive relationships and exploitative situations” (p. 4).

However, the positive actions undertaken in developed countries by far exceed the actions undertaken in the Middle East – specifically in Lebanon, which are moving on a slower pace.

In an initiative to denounce violence against women within the Lebanese community, the nationwide

campaign of TV, radio and billboard advertisements launched during the 16 days of activism to end violence against women campaign in 2012, sponsored Muslim and Christian religious leaders in Lebanon to unite to call for an end to gender violence in Lebanon.

“Violence against women is a sin that is unacceptable by religious doctrine and by logical reasoning!”

"Jesus Christ denounced acts of violence against women... so why would you be violent against women?"

Those were the exact words of the Vice President of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council Sheikh Abdel Amir Kabalan and the Patriarch of the Melkite Catholic Gregorios III Laham, respectively. These messages endorse a culture of respect for the dignity of women, rejection of all forms of violence, condemnation of violence as sacrilegious and illogical; decrees that made stronger through the citation of holy that reflect the fact that religion is against gender violence (International Medical Corps, 2012, Para 2).

KAFA, a Lebanese non-profit organization established in 2005, is committed to the achievement of gender-equality and non-discrimination, and the advancement of the human rights of women and children. Their extensive campaigns on human and women rights have led the Lebanese Government to establish a new law for Domestic Violence in April 2014 (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Despite its flaws, the law is considered a step forward towards humanity and ceasing of violence against women.

2.4 Constraints

Violence against women is a serious problem. “In a survey into domestic violence, abused women reported that what they had suffered was systematic, deliberate, and at the extreme, life threatening” (Amnesty International, p. 10). It may lead to fatal results like homicides and suicides. According to WHO (2013), there is a clear need to scale up efforts across a range of sectors, both to prevent violence from happening in the first place and to provide necessary services to women experiencing violence. Exhibit 3 depicts many facts about violence against women as researched by WHO.

Exhibit 3:

* Overall, 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. While there are many other forms of violence that women may be exposed to, this already represents a large proportion of the world’s women; most of this violence is intimate partner violence.

* Worldwide, almost one third (30%) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. In some regions, 38% of women have experienced intimate partner violence.

- Globally, as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners.

- Women who have been physically or sexually abused by their partners report higher rates of a number of important health problems. For example, they are 16% more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby. They are more than twice as likely to have an abortion, almost twice as likely to experience depression, and, in some regions, are 1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV, as compared to women who have not experienced partner violence.

- Globally, 7% of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner. There are fewer data available on the health effects of non-partner sexual violence. However, the evidence that does exist reveals that women who have experienced this form of violence are 2.3 times more likely to have alcohol use disorders and 2.6 times more likely to experience depression or anxiety.

Exhibit 3: Facts and figures from WHO’s report (WHO, 2013, p. 2)

According to WHO (2013), “this report unequivocally demonstrates that violence against women is pervasive globally and that it is a major contributing factor to women’s ill health” (p. 36). On this issue, WHO recommends education as a major factor in eradicating violence against women, since education on the subject matter reduces a lot of what has been depicted in Exhibit 3 and the possible negative consequences. Primary prevention in school-based programs to prevent violence within dating relationships has shown effectiveness (WHO, 2013).

But to be able to curb violence, a whole socio-cultural belief and behavior need to be “upgraded” to reach the conviction of gender equality. Mutangadura (n.d.) explained in his draft paper about violence against women in Africa that negative customary norms persist irrespective of the provisions of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN basic human rights. “One of the biggest challenges is attitudinal change on the part of communities that hold on to cultural practices that form violence to girls and women such as early marriage or wife beating” (p. 9). Mutangadura recommends the following steps:

1. Governments must run public awareness campaigns on the value of children, through public education, and promoting equal treatment of girls and boys.
2. Instill in boys, through education as of the primary education stages, the respect for girls and women.
3. Instill in boys from the earliest age, through education, that male responsibilities in the family life include the respect and the prevention of violence against women and children.
4. Traditional and religious community leaders hold the responsibility to sensitize and create awareness creation on the importance of valuing each other’s rights (ibid).

Governments have a major role in the adoption of a proactive stance to deal with violence against women. There are schools to build, job centers to establish to help, and rehabilitation centers to support women, and laws to punish and imprison assaulters. . Yet, all of the aforementioned need large amount of money to be funded. Hence the question arises, “How is it possible to do so if the countries in question are facing serious financial crisis?” At the 36th Annual Women’s Aid National Conference held in the United Kingdom (2010), Theresa May stated that within the same year, “Britain had the highest annual borrowing of any country in the G20; higher than Argentina and South Africa; Indonesia, Italy and India”. So, what is it left for lesser developing countries, where the National Financial deficit is much higher?

Pickup, Williams and Sweetman (2001) mentioned that the “obstacles to women in freeing themselves from violent situations or relations are not simply economic, but relate to contractual relations in the family and household, as well as powerful norms sanctioned by community and state institutions” (p. 28) . While, Newfoundland and Labrador Government (2014) highlighted many other challenges that may hinder women’s attempts to escape violence. Exhibit 4 shows these challenges.

Exhibit 4:

1. Victim-blaming attitudes (“What did *you* do to make them angry?”),
2. Belief that the violence is their fault,
3. Economic necessity,
4. Lack of awareness of available resources and supports,
5. Feelings of isolation from friends, family and community supports,
6. Cultural, religious and/or family pressures to stay together,
7. Fear of retaliation from the violent perpetrator,
8. Threats of harm against children, other loved ones and pets,
9. Desire to provide children with a two-parent home,
10. Fear of separation from children,
11. Fear of being alone,
12. Fear of deportation without the violent perpetrator’s support or sponsorship,
13. Hope and belief that the violent perpetrator will change,
14. Love and concern for the violent perpetrator’s well-being,
15. Fear the violent perpetrator may commit suicide if they leave each other,
16. Fear the perpetrator may be imprisoned if violence is reported to police,
17. Feelings of shame and guilt, and
18. Depression

Exhibit 4: Challenges to escaping violence (Newfoundland and Labrador Government, 2014, p.1)

2.5 Exposure

Social media are abundantly publishing and promoting slogans about gender equalities and calls to stop violence against women to reach the maximum number of people around the globe for support. In commemoration of the Beijing Platform for Action, held 20 years ago in

China, Nicole Kidman, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador started a journey towards empowerment and gender equality. Kidman (2014) addressed the crowd by saying, “Imagine a bold plan for a world without discrimination, in which women and men are equal partners in shaping their societies and lives. Let’s picture it!” On the other side, UN Women (2015) contends that, among other issues, the group “works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; empowerment of women; and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security” (Para 5).

Many other non-profit humanitarian organizations are supporting women all over the world to help end this violence, among which the World Health Organization (WHO) (2014); this organization in collaboration with a number of partners, is building the evidence base on the size and nature of violence against women in different settings, and is supporting countries' efforts to document and measure this violence and its consequences. This is central to understanding the magnitude and nature of the problem at a global level and to initiating action in countries; it is strengthening research and research capacity to assess interventions to address partner violence.

In the United States, the Office on Women’s Health (OWH), in partnership with Futures without Violence, has selected five health sites that serve native communities and six states to continue a public health initiative designed to improve the health and safety of women and children. One such initiative is *Project Connect: A Coordinated Public Health Initiative to Prevent Violence against Women* is supported by OWH and funded through the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Women’s Health, 2015).

In 2011, the Avon Foundation for Women expanded its support of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Women by funding a total of \$125,000 as grants to five non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

with an understanding that the five beneficiary NGOs from Eastern Europe, South America, Africa and the Middle East should use the grants to fund research and development projects that are focused on ending violence against women in their countries (AVON Foundation, 2011).

KAFA, a Lebanese NGO established in 2005, has a mission to work towards eradicating all forms of gender-based violence and exploitation of women and children through advocating for legal reform and change of policies and practices, influencing public opinion, and empowering women and children. KAFA combines in its work the various methods of lobbying, action-research, publication, training and awareness raising, and supporting the victims (KAFA, 2015a).

3. Methodology

This research is exploratory in nature; the researchers used a mix approach, that is, both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis explored the concept in Lebanon by using historical reviews reported in secondary data to further explain the unstructured problem of violence. However, once the problem was defined, a detailed structured survey questionnaire was distributed to participants to gather their opinions and assess their attitudes towards the subject. The quantitative approach is used to test different hypotheses derived from the theoretical background (Hejase & Hejase, 2013).

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The research aims to

- . Investigate whether the Lebanese society is aware of the different forms of violence exerted against women.
- . Assess the attitudes and reaction of Lebanese citizens towards violence against women.
- . Assess the level of confidence available in the legal, societal, and religious authorities.

Survey questions were close ended using: Likert Scale and Multiple Choice. The Likert Scale questions are opinions' questions that usually invite the respondent to rate his/her level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The scale is usually an odd number of verbal terms with a neutral in the middle (Hejase & Hejase, 2013). The researchers have opted for the five points scale. As for the Multiple Choice questions, they are usually provided as an opportunity for the respondent to select among a set of alternatives; the responders had to option to choose one best answer.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections, namely, technical knowledge, attitude assessment, implementation issues, and demographics section. In addition to an ethical statement that assures the confidentiality of the answers to the questionnaire and that these answers shall only be used for academic purposes related to the topic of violence against women. The starting question was a dichotomous question so as to check the familiarity of the respondent with the topic of violence against women.

Questions 1 to 19 assessed the respondents' "Technical Knowledge", "Attitude", and "Implementation or application" issues as related to actions against violence. Whereby, the researchers assessed respondents' stance toward different types of men's behavior towards women; the effectiveness, trust and support of the roles played by the Lebanese law and the Non-profit Organizations for women protection when in distress. Similarly, part of the questions challenged the respondents to the way they would react if they were the

victims of violence, if they heard about the maltreatment of a friend (or maybe relative), and if they have witnessed a live maltreatment of a woman in public. Questions 20 to 26 were about the respondents' demographics.

The survey questionnaire was probed with a group of ten respondents consisting of instructors and graduate students. Their comments were constructive and few changes were instituted, therefore, adding initial validity to the questionnaire.

3.2 Sample Size

The target sample was 150 participants. The researchers distributed 175 questionnaires; a number above the requested target to compensate for any possible non-respondent. The questionnaires were distributed conveniently, based on the respondents' willingness to participate, targeting students at the Lebanese American University (LAU), the Lebanese International University (LIU), random selection of people walking at Bliss Street (Hamra district in Beirut), and random selection of people walking into Dunkin Donuts (also in Beirut). Since the later covered areas in Beirut, purposive sampling targeted married people at work covering the five areas of Lebanon. Out of the 175 distributed and mailed surveys, 121 questionnaires were filled and are valid, making the active response rate to be 69.14%. There were 28 half-filled questionnaires, 18 questionnaires with completely skewed responses, either all agreed or disagreed irrespective of the statements, and, 9 more questionnaires were missing section two; hence, the last three groups' results are invalid.

4. Results and Findings

Once respondents filled the questionnaires, the researchers processed the data using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software, to analyze the descriptive results of the findings. Descriptive statistics deal with condensing the all data into simple representative numerical quantities or plots that can provide better understanding of the collected data and its corresponding structure (Hejase & Hejase, 2013, p.272). In addition to the Descriptive Statistics, the researchers used Cross Tabulation, Bivariate Analysis and Regression techniques.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1 Demographics

Results show that 56% of the respondents are females while 44% are males. 55.8% of the respondents have a Bachelor's degree, 35% have a Master's degree, 5.8% have high school or lower degrees, and 3.3% of the respondents hold "Other" degree. The "Other" refers to Bachelor of Engineering, PhD, and a minority of Technical School (TS).

Also, 75% of the respondents are working full time, 16.4% are not working, and 8.6% are part-time employees. As for yearly income, results show that 31.1% of the respondents earn a yearly income between \$18,001 and \$30,000. 26.45% of the respondents have a yearly income between \$6,001 and \$18,000; 16% of the respondents earn a yearly income that does not exceed the \$6,000; 14.2% of the respondents earn a yearly income between \$30,001 and \$42,000; and finally, 8.5% of the respondents earn a yearly income that exceeds \$42,000.

Furthermore, 49.1% of the respondents are married, 48.2% are single, and 2.7% are divorced or separated. Also, 35% of the respondents are between 20 and 27 years old; 24.8% are between 28 years and 34 years old; 22.2% are between 35 years and 41 years old; 12% are between 42 years and 48 years old; and, 6% are over 48 years old. As for their place of resident, 40.3% of the respondents live in Beirut, 22.7% live in the South, 18.5% reside in Mount Lebanon, 14.3% live in East Lebanon, and 4.2% live in the North.

4.1.2 Knowledge Area

Knowledge area covers questions 1 through 4, and questions 8 through 10.

Results show that out of the 121 respondents, 70.25% (85/121) of the respondents have not (or none of their acquaintances) been a victim of violence, while 29.75% (36/121) confirmed being themselves victims of violence. Also, 80% of the respondents agree (with 47.5% as strongly agree and 32.5% as Agree) that “Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is a form of violence”; while 10% are undecided; and, the remaining 10% disagree (with 6.67% Disagree and 3.33% Strongly Disagree). It is worth mentioning that the researchers grouped positive outcomes and negative outcomes together within the Likert scale statements for simplicity.

Furthermore, results show that 88.43% of the respondents agree that “Threatening or causing fear to control a woman is a form of violence”; while 7.44% are undecided; and, the remainder disagreed.

76.03% are in agreement with the statement that “Using someone’s spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control is a form of violence”; while 17.36% are undecided; and, the rest disagree. 69.42% agree with the statement that “Violent behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment on childhood”, 23.14% are undecided, and 7.4% disagree.

71.1% of the respondents agree with the statement that “Violent behavior is related to misbelief in gender equalities”, while, 19% are undecided and 9.9% disagree. Finally, 66.94% of the respondents agree that “Miscommunication plays an important role in violence exerted against women”, while 23.97% are undecided, and the remainder 9.1% disagree.

4.1.3 Respondents’ Attitude

Attitude area covers questions 5, 6, and 16.

Results show that 78.51% of the respondents do not agree that Domestic Violence is sometimes justifiable; 7.44% are undecided; and, the remaining 14% agree with the statement.

77.68% of the respondents do not agree with the statement that “A husband is entitled, at some times, to exert violence against his wife”, while 9.917% are undecided and 12.4% agree. Moreover, 73.55% of the respondents do not agree that “My partner will not exert violence on me because the Lebanese law protects me”, 19.01% are undecided, and 7.4% believe the opposite.

4.1.4 Implementation

Implementation section covers questions number 7 and 11 through 19.

Results show that 31.67% of the respondents are undecided whether they would walk away without interference in case they witness a woman being beaten. 51.66% do not agree with the statement, and the remaining 16.67% would walk away. Also, 55.46% of the respondents do not agree that the Lebanese law protects female victims from violence. 27.73% are undecided, and the remaining 16.8% believe so. On the other hand, 33.9% of the respondents would not report maltreatment because they would risk humiliation;

25.42% would not report it because they would risk not being taken seriously; and, 13.56% would risk increased violence from their partner to reporting. Only 27.12% chose the “other” option where two different actions were reported namely, “Reporting the maltreatment”; and “not reporting the maltreatment in order to save their marriage or because they have children”.

Results also show that 75.83% of the respondents would NOT call the police and report maltreatment if they happen to witness such a treatment; while 24.17% would do so. Moreover, 60% of the respondents would not interfere if they witness maltreatment, while the remaining 40% would. In addition, 91.67% of the respondents would not volunteer to take the woman to a hospital in case of injuries, while 8.33% would do so.

Further results show that 97.5% of the respondents would not watch then report the incident to their acquaintances to express their feelings, while 2.5% would do so; 79.17% of the respondents would not continue their way as if they saw nothing in case they witnessed maltreatment, while 20.83% would walk away; 94.17% of the respondents would not take a photo of the maltreatment they witnessed and post it on social network then walk away, while 5.83% would do it; 85% of the respondents would not convince their friend to report maltreatment to the police, while 15% would recommend this option; 90% of the respondents would not report the maltreatment of their friend to women supporting NGOs, while 10% would report the maltreatment; 90% of the respondents would not talk or discuss the maltreatment of their friend with her husband or partner, while 10% will do that; 73.33% of the respondents would not try to convince their friend to ask her parents to interfere, while 26.67% would opt for this option; 63.33% of the respondents would not convince their friend to report her maltreatment to her husband’s parents, while 36.67% will convince their friend to do so; 93.33% of the respondents would not choose to calm their friend down and advise her to avoid upsetting her husband in the future, while 6.67% of the respondents would consider it; 42.02% of the respondents would personally choose to leave their husband in case they were maltreated, while 57.98% would not do it; 96.64% of the respondents would not call the police to interfere in case they were maltreated; but, 3.36% of the respondent would do it; 82.35% of the respondents would not fight back against their partner if they were maltreated, while 17.65% of the respondent would fight back.

Additional results show that if personally maltreated, only 29.41% of the respondents would calmly discuss the issue with their partner, while the remaining 70.59% of the respondents would not; 90.76% of the respondents will not ask their parents or their husband’s parents to interfere in case of maltreatment, and 9.24% of the respondents would do it; 97.48% of the respondents act upon their maltreatment and will “Do nothing because of love”. Only 2.52% will do anything; 67.77% of the respondents do not agree with the statement that the Lebanese law will punish the male partner if violence was reported to authorities. 21.49% are undecided about it and the remaining 10.74% believe in the Lebanese law; 54.54% of the respondent do not agree with the statement that NGOs supporting women have power to exert whenever the Lebanese Law might default, 27.27% are undecided, and the remaining 18.18% of the respondents believe it; and, 58.68% of the respondents do not agree that the religious authorities can support women if they are maltreated by their husbands, 22.31% are undecided, and the remaining 19% believe they can get the needed support. Table 1 is a summary of all the aforementioned results.

Table 1:

Actions toward Witnessing Mal-treatment: In General	Yes	No
Call the police and report maltreatment	24.2	75.8
Interfere to calm things	40.0	60.0
Volunteer to take the woman to hospital in case of injuries	08.3	91.7
Watch then report the incident to your acquaintances to express your feelings	02.5	97.5
Continue your way as if you saw nothing	20.8	79.2
Take a photo and post it on social network then walk away	05.8	94.2
Actions toward Witnessing Mal-treatment: In Case of a Friend	Yes	No
Convince her to report incident to Police	15.0	85.0
Report incident to NGOs that support women	10.0	90.0
Talk with your friend's husband / partner	10.0	90.0
Convince your friend to ask for her parents' interference	26.7	73.3
Convince your friend to report incident to her husband's/partner's parents	36.7	63.3
Calm your friend down and advise her to avoid upsetting her husband/partner	06.7	93.3
Actions toward Witnessing Maltreatment: If I were the Victim	Yes	No
Leave partner/husband temporarily or permanently	42.0	58.0
Call the police to interfere	03.4	96.6
Fight back against partner	17.6	82.4
Calmly discuss the issue with partner	29.4	70.6
Inform parents and/or his parents to interfere	09.2	90.8
Do nothing because I love him	02.5	97.5

Table 1: Summary of results

Finally, when respondents were asked what would be the reasons for not reporting maltreatment, depicted in Table 2, the following reasons were mentioned: fear of humiliation 33.9%; fear of not being taken seriously 25.4%; fear of increased violence; other reasons for example retaliation, divorce, taking children away, etc...

Table 2:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Humiliation	40	33.1	33.9
Increased Violence	16	13.2	13.6
Valid Not being taken seriously	30	24.8	25.4
Other	32	26.4	27.1
Total	118	97.5	100.0
Missing 999	3	2.5	
Total	121	100.0	

Table 2: Reasons for not reporting maltreatment

4.1.5 Cross Tabulation

In an attempt to determine the relationship between two variables originating from the same research data, Cross is used. Cross tabulation organizes nominal, ordinal or classes of data by groups to form a joint frequency distribution. To accurately measure the correlation between two variables, it is important to pay attention to the degree of linear association, strength and sense. According to Hejase & Hejase (2013, p.436), the absolute value of the correlation coefficient determines the strength of the correlation. In this section, the researcher shall examine some of the relationships that help support the objectives of the research.

The first cross-tabulation aims to study the relationship between gender of the respondent and the knowledge of the question: “Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is a form of violence”; and, the attitude question that states. “A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife”, respectively. The purpose is to assess whether respondents are aware of the men’s verbal violence exerted on women and if they feel that men have the right to exert such violence.

Table 3:

Count		Gender of Respondents		Total
		Female	Male	
Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is violence	Strongly Disagree	0	3	3
	Disagree	3	5	8
	Undecided	6	5	11
	Agree	18	19	37
	Strongly Agree	38	18	56
Total		65	50	115

Table 3: “Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is a form of violence” * “Gender of Respondents” crosstab

Table 3, and grouping “strongly agree” with “agree” responses, shows that 56 females agree (48.7%) while 37 males agree (32.2%) to the statement that “Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is a form of violence”. Female respondents are more sensitive than men, most probably because they feel that they are victims most of the time. This also means that there still exist a proportion of men who do not consider this type of verbal violence as “Violence”. Statistically, the aforementioned relation is valid (Approx. Sig. = 0.007 less than $\alpha = 5\%$ measuring the level of confidence), whereby Pearson R shows a negative weak correlation ($R = -0.250$). The negative sign refers to the reverse codes used for the gender (2=Females; and 1=Male).

The significance of the correlation on the other hand is less than the 5% level of confidence Alpha; this means that both variables are significantly related, and thus, the null hypothesis stating that both variables are independent is rejected.

The second cross-tabulation aims to study the relationship between gender of the respondent and the attitude question saying that “A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife”.

Table 4:

Count		Gender of Respondents		Total
		Female	Male	
A husband is entitled at some times to exert Violence against his wife	Strongly Disagree	38	16	54
	Disagree	20	17	37
	Undecided	4	7	11
	Agree	2	10	12
	Strongly Agree	1	1	2
Total		65	51	116

Table 4: “A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife” * “Gender of Respondents” crosstab

Table 4 shows that 58 females disagree (50.0%) while 33 males disagree (28.44%) with the statement that “A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife”. Female respondents are more sensitive than men, most probably because they feel that they are victims most of the time. This also means that there are men who still believe that they have the right to exert violence against their wives. Statistically, the aforementioned relation is valid (Approx. Sig. = 0.000 less than $\alpha = 5\%$ measuring the level of confidence), whereby Pearson R shows a positive weak correlation ($R = 0.324$). The positive sign refers to the reverse codes used for the gender and the extent of agreement (2=Females; and 1=Male) and (1: SD; 2: D; 3: I; 4: A; and 5: SA).

The significance of the correlation on the other hand is less than the 5% level of confidence Alpha. This means that both variables are significantly related and support the afore-stated conclusion deduced from the correlation coefficient; thus, the null hypothesis stating that both variables are independent is rejected.

Table 5:

Count		Me: Do nothing because I love him		Total
		Yes	No	
Lebanese law protects female victims from Violence	Strongly Disagree	0	27	27
	Disagree	0	38	38
	Undecided	1	31	32
	Agree	2	17	19
	Strongly Agree	0	1	1
Total		3	114	117

Table 5: “Lebanese law protects female victims from Violence” * “Me: Do nothing because I love him” crosstab

Table 5 shows that 65 of the respondents disagree (55.6%) that the Lebanese law protects female victims from violence; yet, at the same time these same respondents negated the fact that they will do anything because of love— at least not going to the court of law because of mistrust in the latter. Statistically, the aforementioned relation is valid (Approx. Sig. = 0.031 less than $\alpha = 5\%$ measuring the level of confidence), whereby Pearson R shows a negative weak correlation ($R = - 0.199$). The negative sign refers to the reverse codes used for the extent of agreement (1: SD; 2: D; 3: I; 4: A; and 5: SA).

The significance of the correlation on the other hand is less than the 5% level of confidence Alpha. This means that both variables are significantly related and support the upper conclusion deduced from the correlation coefficient; thus, the null hypothesis stating that both variables are independent is rejected.

Table 6:

Count		The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the Violence act to authorities					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Lebanese law protects female victims from Violence	Strongly Disagree	18	6	2	1	0	27
	Disagree	6	23	6	3	1	39
	Undecided	4	13	13	2	1	33
	Agree	0	10	4	3	2	19
	Strongly Agree	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		29	52	25	9	4	119

Table 6: “Lebanese law protects female victims from Violence” * “The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the Violence act to authorities” crosstab

Table 6 shows that 53 of the respondents disagree (44.54%) that the Lebanese law protects female victims from violence; yet, at the same time, these same respondents disagree with the notion that the Lebanese Law will punish their partner if the violence act is reported to authorities. Statistically, the aforementioned relation is valid (Approx. Sig. = 0.000 less than $\alpha = 5\%$ measuring the level of confidence), whereby Pearson R shows a positive weak correlation ($R = 0.395$), therefore showing at least a qualitative association between the two variables in question. The significance of the correlation on the other hand is less than the 5% level of confidence Alpha; this means that both variables are significantly related and support the upper conclusion deduced from the correlation coefficient. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that both variables are independent is rejected.

4.1.6 Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate Statistics is the measure of association between two variables at a time (Hejase & Hejase, 2013, p.292). Bivariate statistics is just another tool beside cross-tabulation that helps to explain the sense and strength between the two variables under study. The level of significance or simply significance level " α " represents the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis. The higher the significance level α , the higher is the chance to reject a claim. The choice of the significance level for a hypothesis test is tied to what is known in statistics as Type I error, whereby, Type I error is the act of rejecting a null hypothesis when it is actually true. The higher the level of significance α , the higher is the possibility of rejecting a true null hypothesis. For example, if the confidence level is 95%, this means that the level of significance is 5%, meaning that there is 5% chance of rejecting an absolute true claim; i.e., null hypothesis. Thus, the level of significance is the probability of making Type I error.

In this section, the researchers explain the correlations that exist between the Level of Education and the knowledge statement that states: "Violent behavior is related to unbelief in gender equalities", and the Implementation statement that "NGO supporting women have power to exert whenever the Lebanese Law might default".

Correlations results show a negative Pearson correlation of -0.080; this indicates that there is a relatively low negative association between the Level of Education and Violent behavior as studied against unbelief in gender equalities. Moreover, the significance of the correlation is 38.6%, which is larger than the confidence level Alpha (5%); this implies that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that states that both variables are independent of each other because it is true. Education has nothing to do with the knowledge statement that "Violent behavior is related to unbelief in gender equalities".

Moreover, there is a relatively low positive association between the Level of Education and the Implementation statement that "NGO supporting women have power to exert whenever the Lebanese Law might default" since Pearson R is 0.233. However, the significance of the correlation is equal to 0.01, which is lower than the 5% confidence level Alpha; thus the null hypothesis stating that both variables are independent of each other is rejected.

What does the level of Education has to do with "NGO supporting women have power to exert whenever the Lebanese Law might default"? The relationship emphasizes that respondents with higher education follow up on news and events related to violence against women and are more in touch with circles of NGOs that are active in combatting such incidents. Furthermore, educated respondents are acquainted with some cases where the NGOs were successful.

According to Hejase & Hejase (2013), “Correlation does not imply causation”. The studied sample of the Lebanese population might have some wrong information which mistakenly led to find a correlation between the two variables, when in reality there is no correlation among them.

4.1.7 Regression Analysis

In the regression analysis, a predictive model is integrated into the data; this model is used to predict an outcome of the dependent variable from one or more independent variables (Field, 2005, p.144). According to Hejase and Hejase (2013) “a multiple regression model is needed when the researcher faces the scenario where more than one independent variable is causing variations in the dependent variable under study” (p. 478). Therefore, the next step is to construct possible relationships which may help assess and analyze the questions under discussion. Consequently, a number of elements were regressed against “the Domestic violence is sometimes justifiable” (dependent variable). A Stepwise Analysis was used to find out the individual contribution of each predictor (independent variables). Three independent variables are considered: (1) A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife; (2) Violent behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment in childhood; and (3) Lebanese law protects female victims from violence.

The regression model summary shows that all three independent variables account for 40.7% (R. Square =.407) of variability in “Domestic violence is sometimes justifiable”. Adjusted R square is .386 (less than the R square by .021). This shrinkage means that if the model were derived from the population rather than a sample it would have accounted for approximately 2.1% less variance in the outcome. R square value is the measure of how much of the variability in the outcome is accounted for by the variability of the predictors (Field, 2005, p. 154). Moreover, F ratio = 4.405 (Sig. p = 0.039 < 0.05).

ANOVA results show that the F ratio is high (F ratio of 19.872, p<.000), which means that the model significantly improved ability to predict the outcome variable. Besides, since significance results are less than .000, the probability of getting the F ratio by chance is almost negligible.

All the three elements “A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife” (Sig. P=.000), “Violent behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment in childhood” (Sig. P=.033), and “Lebanese law protects female victims from violence” (Sig. P=0.039), were statistically significant at the 5% level (as shown in Table 8).

Table 7:

Count	The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the violence act to authorities					Total	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Me: Call the police to interfere	Yes	1	3	0	0	0	4
	No	28	49	25	9	4	115
Total		29	52	25	9	4	119

Table 7: “Me: Call the police to interfere” * “The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the Violence act to authorities” crosstab

Table 8:

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.556	.629		2.473	.015
3 A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife	.463	.101	.422	4.578	.000
Violent behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment in childhood	-.264	.122	-.195	-2.160	.033
Lebanese law protects female victims from violence	.235	.112	.201	2.099	.039

a. Dependent Variable: Domestic Violence is sometimes justifiable

Table 8: Coefficients^a

Table 8 shows that “Domestic violence is sometimes justifiable” is significantly predicted by the husband’s attitude towards violence if he considers violence as a natural right. This shows a positive relationship (B=.463), indicating that as the husband promotes violence culture, in which the right for violence is natural, then domestic violence is justifiable and will increase too. Assuming that violence behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment in childhood also predicts domestic violence (B= -.264, negative sign due to reverse coding). Moreover, women’s disbelief that Lebanese law protects female victims from violence (as observed in Table 7, 77 out of 119 or 64.7% will not call the police because they do not believe the authority will punish the aggressor) predicts increase in domestic violence (B=.235).

Therefore, the final model is depicted as:

Domestic Violence is sometimes justifiable = β_1 (husband’s culture) + β_2 (maltreatment in childhood) + β_3 (Trust in Lebanese law).

= .463 (husband’s culture) - .264 (maltreatment in childhood) + .235 (Trust in Lebanese law).

All standardized betas are statistically significant with Sig. $p < 0.05$. It is worth mentioning that there is no statistical support for some other variables, including demographics (all Sig. $p > 0.05$).

4.1.8 Summary of Major Findings

Table 9 depicts a summary of findings whereby the highest means reflect the strong points describing the respondents’ stances toward the different scenarios presented.

Table 9:

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Saying or doing something to make a woman feel stupid or worthless is an act of violence	4.14	1.063
Threatening or causing fear to control a woman is an act of violence	4.31	0.874
Using someone's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control is an act of violence	4.04	0.970
Violent behavior is related to misbelief in gender equalities	3.86	0.907
Violent behavior is due to maltreatment or witnessing maltreatment in childhood	3.83	0.879
Miscommunication plays an important role in violence exerted against women	3.74	0.864
NGO supporting women have power to exert whenever the Lebanese Law might default	2.49	1.104
If I witness a woman being beaten, I walk away without interference	2.45	1.158
Religious authorities can support me if my husband is mistreating me	2.41	1.078
Lebanese law protects female victims from violence	2.39	1.035
The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the violence act to authorities	2.22	1.004
My partner will not exert violence on me because the Lebanese Law protects me	2.05	0.990
Domestic Violence is sometimes justifiable	1.96	1.136
A husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife	1.92	1.085

Table 9: Summary of Descriptive

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The main objectives of this paper are to investigate the level of awareness among a sample of Lebanese citizens – men and women about the topic of violence against women, their attitudes towards this act, and the confidence level they have in the Lebanese Law, NGOs and religious authorities for this topic support. The quantitative data analysis helped with the interpretation of the answers received by the respondents and opened the opportunity to further investigate other aspects to this research.

The majority of the respondents belong to an educated group of people who are aware of the violence and its related type as exerted over women; yet, the attitudinal and implementation aspects of the questionnaire were quite interesting. For example, 21.5% of the male respondents agreed with the statement that states that “I think a husband is entitled at some times to exert violence against his wife”, while 13.7% are undecided about it. It is worth mentioning that the overall percentage of male contribution to the survey is 42%; hence, if among the 42% male almost half of them believe in this statement, this might imply that if the questionnaire targeted male respondents only, the percentage would have been much higher. Also, 60% of the respondents would choose not to interfere if they find themselves witness to violence between a couple, where the man is maltreating the woman. Almost 92% of the respondents will not volunteer to take the woman to a hospital in case of injuries.

If a female friend is being maltreated, 85% of the respondents would not try to convince her to report to the police. 90% will not report it to NGOs supporting women; they will not even volunteer to talk with their friend’s husband or partner, and around 73% will not convince their friend to ask the family to interfere to put a stop to the violence.

It is curious to investigate the reason behind the aforementioned results. If the sample population is well aware of the magnitude of the problem, why wouldn’t they try to take action?

54.55% of the respondents disagree with the statement that “Lebanese Law protects female victims from violence”. 67.77% of the respondents disagree with the statement that “The Lebanese Law will punish my partner if I report the violence act to authorities”. 58.68% of the respondents disagree with the statement that “Religious authorities can support me if my husband is mistreating me”. 54.55% of the respondents disagree with the statement that “NGOs supporting women have power to exert wherever the Lebanese Law might default”.

It is obvious from the results that the Lebanese citizens will not seek refuge in the Law or their religious authority, or even ask the NGO to help in support against the violence exerted against women. Looking into the practices of the Lebanese, the researchers emphasize the following: Lebanese- women- still do not trust in the legal system because there were no laws against violence until very recently; they shy away from the religious authority fearing exposure and people’s bad mouthing on one side and the religious authority which will convince the female to keep quiet for the sake of her family and children, however seeking refuge with an NGO is starting to occur especially since the Lebanese NGO KAFA has voiced the unjust treatment and aggressively campaigned against violence toward women in the last years. But, when looking into strong actions against violence, the overall impact is still shy. Nevertheless, there is progress in closing a critical gap that has been highlighted in working on Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) as manifested in engaging men and boys (M&B) in the struggle to end VAW (KAFA, 2010, Para 1). Since 2007, the organization KAFA (Enough Violence and Exploitation) has worked on drafting and promoting the family violence bill. A coalition of 41 legal and women's organizations, including KAFA, has been pushing for legal protections against violence against women. Only a few countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, such as Jordan and Israel, have comprehensive laws on family violence (Daleel Madani, 2011). According to NowMedia (2014), “Lebanon's parliament passed a law making domestic violence a criminal offense, after a year-long campaign by civil society groups in a sectarian Arab country steeped in conservatism”. Since then, Harbi (2014) asserts that KAFA receives more than 2,600 calls to its domestic abuse helpline each year. Analysis of media reports done by KAFA shows that 25 women were killed by family members between 2010 and 2013, and four women have died as a result of family violence in Lebanon so far in 2014 (Para 12).

Furthermore, “progress in breaking the silence and spreading awareness against abuses has been achieved, as well as in legislating new protection mechanisms from family violence (the new Lebanese Law 293 for example), and partnering with state institutions in order to enhance the state’s response to family violence complaints (the Internal Security Forces for example); nonetheless, there is still a persistent need to work on challenging and changing patriarchal mentalities, structures, and laws (KAFA, 2015b, Para 2).

The current paper serves as an eye opener to researchers who are interested in studying violence against women, domestic violence and women abuse and the resultant incurred damage at the personal, societal and national levels as well as identifying remedies to be applied in a Middle Eastern country, while studying the case where the Lebanese government does not have a very clear policy or regulation of violence practices in its formal legal system. Moreover, this paper emphasizes the fact that universities and other institutions of higher education have the responsibility of creating awareness so as to enable their students, both males and females, to survive any hostile and threatening conditions, especially since they represent the future parents and effective workforce; they are to be ready to face hostile situations with responsibility and ethical behavior. Finally, this paper contributes and adds value to the literature, characterized as highly lacking in the current academic Lebanese women’s studies field.

Government, businesses, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations should join efforts to at least start an awareness campaign that may reach all ears in order to get the terms VAW, domestic violence, abuse, harassment and counter measures into the dictionary of every day words.

6. Limitations

The paper has many limitations highlighted as follows:

1. Results of this study cannot be generalized because the sample size is limited and does not constitute an optimal model that explains the Lebanese society.
2. The distribution of the survey was conveniently chosen and the results cannot be generalized to all types of people because the society is much more heterogeneous.
3. The topic is a phenomenon that also needs qualitative methods and not only quantitative to analyze. The respondents were limited to select an answer from preset questions with no option to write their own views about the subject.
4. Respondents included both genders. In fact, two questionnaires may have been prepared; one to be filled by males and the other by females. Some answers would have been more accurate if survey was split.

7. Future Research

Violence against women is a wide topic and many further researches should be conducted to fully explore the subject. This research identified many types of Violence against Women, yet the focus was mainly investigating domestic violence without emphasizing the other types. It is of importance to deeply explore the causes that could incite men to exert such violence – whether psychological, or societal, or maybe religious, etc... Similarly, the post-effects of violence on women are to be researched because it will give clearer insights into the humanitarian project that supports the victims. Conducting a research about the violence spread in the Arab countries, including Lebanon, would further help the understanding of the root causes and behavioral attitudes of the Oriental mentality. Finally, a thorough examination of the effectiveness of the Lebanese Law and the Non-Government Institutions in victim support is crucial to understand the reluctances of the Lebanese people to refer to the authorities.

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