

Socio-economic Constraints Jordanian Women Had Encountered as a Result of COVID-19 Pandemic, and Coping Mechanisms

Aydah M AbuTayeh¹

¹ Al Hussein Bin Talal University, Maan, Jordan

Correspondence: Aydah M AbuTayeh. Tel: 962-3217-9000 Ext.: 8248. E-mail: aydah.abutayeh@ahu.edu.jo

Received: August 26, 2021

Accepted: September 9, 2021

Online Published: September 29, 2021

doi:10.5539/ass.v17n10p63

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v17n10p63>

Abstract

This research paper sheds light on what Jordanian women had to endure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, since the imposition of the full lock-down and shelter-in-place order in March of 2020. The paper primarily aims to identify socio-economic constraints Jordanian women encountered during this period, and to explore the coping mechanisms women had adopted. A total of 480 women had partaken in this study; who were randomly selected from different regions in Jordan.

The findings suggest that women had suffered more from social constraints as opposed to economic ones, the foremost of which was directly pertinent to the outbreak. This includes increasing household chores and caregiving work, due to the long time women had to stay home, in addition to the burdens of applying health safety precautions and online learning. As for economic constraints, women had specifically suffered from declining income and increasing financial burdens in general.

Statistically significant differences in favor of the lower age groups, families with more children and less monthly income, women working in the government sector, and women residing in the Badia* regions have been detected.

The findings also indicated that the most prominent mechanisms that helped women cope with the constraints are prayer, participation in the public debate about the pandemic, and self-sufficiency. It was also found that such coping mechanisms are more correlated to economic as opposed to social constraints.

Keywords: COVID-19, constraints, online learning, unpaid work, household chores, lockdown, coping mechanisms

1. Introduction

As unprecedented as COVID-19 is in human history, the World Health Organization had declared it a global pandemic on 11/3/2020. Despite its direct death toll; causing more than 3 million mortalities and infecting several other millions around the world, its direct and indirect implications, however, on socio-economic life are no less dreadful than death itself; in light of the expectations that its aftermath will perpetuate for many years to come.

Natural disasters and health crises often reveal gender dimensions that show different male-female responses thereto (Boncori, 2020). Although the COVID-19 death rate among males is higher than among females, according to global statistics, gender differences appear in other socio-economic aspects and quality of life. (Chen et al., 2020). Women are often the most affected in these aspects, as they are among the most vulnerable social groups in most human societies.

According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 had changed the entire way of life, creating a social legacy that will lead to further social change. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, new social practices and life styles have emerged (Alon et al., 2020). Our normal way of life has changed forever, and social distancing has become the new normal. (Karus et al., 2020).

Gender norms that are based on gender discrimination in different societies have long been reflected in various

* The people of the Jordan Badia are living in an area of 73,000 km², There are approximately 319 settlements (villages, towns, and cities) scattered throughout the three regions of the Badia (North, Central, and South). The Bedouin are suffering from Poverty it can be largely attributed to The large family size (7 members) The high rate of illiteracy, Limited income sources. www.badiafund.gov.jo

household chores and caregiving activities. Estimations by the World Bank suggested that women perform more than 75% of all such work worldwide. (ILO, 2018: xxix). This situation makes it very likely that women will take on a disproportionate share of the increased extra caregiving duties during the crisis. (Zsuzsa et al., 2020).

In fact, the COVID-19 crisis had only deepened pre-existing gender inequalities, which were further exacerbated by quarantine and lock-down measures. This has revealed new weakness in socio-economic systems that amplified the effects of the pandemic on women more than men. (United Nations, 2020).

According to UNESCO, the most significant implication of COVID-19 is the widespread closure of schools and universities around the world since February 2020; affecting nearly 1.7 billion learners at all levels of education. (UNESCO, 2020a).

With a view to prevent the spread of the virus, most countries have moved to imposing full lock-downs, curfews, and shelter-in-place orders, in addition to cancelling mass events. Countries have also imposed restrictions on mass transportation and travel. (Usher, 2020).

Similar to the rest of the world, the Jordanian government had also imposed a full lock-down and home quarantine on 3/21/2020, which lasted for more than six continuous months. Despite the fact that; subsequently, the lock-down was reduced to a curfew and some sectors were allowed to open up, school and university education was still in a complete moratorium from the beginning of the crisis until September 2021. During this period, homes became a vital space for all family members, and from it all life, practical and educational activities stemmed. This space is perceived by society as women-exclusive; where women exercise their basic roles.

To understand the roles and responsibilities of women in the Jordanian context, one must take a whole-of-society approach to the analysis. The Jordanian society fosters a traditional social structure; dominated by tribal networks that are underpinned by a kinship system. (Mahmoud, 2009). Most families in the Jordanian society are still fixated on a hierarchical patriarchal system, which views women and men as affiliates; not as independent individuals. Such affiliation gives men roles of power and control, and on the other hand relegates the majority of women roles to the home (Barakat, 2009).

Despite the Kingdom's official recognition that advancing women in the public sphere is a crucial modernization step, conservative voices in society demand preservation of the traditional role of women as housewives (Massad, 2001). Moreover, the family, through the process of socialization, carefully inculcates these traditional roles in children's mentality. The state's formal education curricula also perpetuate the traditional gender roles in the school textbooks; which portray women in the private sphere as housewives (Al Emam, 2015).

Within this context, it is expected that the lock-down and home quarantine in these exceptional circumstances had amplified the already existing pressure on women; by intensifying the roles and responsibilities they perform, which manifest in housekeeping, supervising children's online learning, raising the children, household chores, and applying health precautions. Therefore, the research problem can be determined by examining the constraints caused by COVID-19 pandemic to Jordanian women; from both the social and economic aspects. The researcher believes that this research is uniquely important in contributing to the development of a general framework on how women have suffered and been affected by the COVID-19 ramifications; both socially and economically. The researcher hopes that such finding would benefit relevant official and civic institutions to improve their interventions and assistance programs, especially that respondents represent different regions of Jordan.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the (social and economic) constraints Jordanian women had encountered during the lock-down and shelter-in-place order due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What coping mechanisms had women adopted to deal with the constraints of the pandemic?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation between the socio-economic constraints and the coping mechanisms women had adopted?

2. Literature Review

Arab countries have so far failed to transcend beyond the patriarchal system that defines social structures on the basis of patriarchal authority. This is in spite of the fact that most of these countries do recognize women's rights; by improving their access to education and employment, and seeking to integrate them into the public sphere. Nevertheless, all of these efforts combined weren't able to make a big-enough dent in the reality of the social structure. The problem is deeply rooted in the very foundations of Arab societies in general, and the Jordan

society in particular. In this setting, the status of women; whether in employment or within the family as an integral unit of society, is shaped by the man in his authoritative capacity, who assigns her very diverse tasks, specifically in the home, or what so-called “her world” (Barakat, 2009).

Undoubtedly, Arab women fought a great struggle to bring about a change in the existing social situation, and to break the stereotype of Arab women as being submissive and without will. Case in point; the most recent movement in Saudi Arabia that emerged strongly during the Arab uprising; leading to many democratic developments, especially in the area of women's rights (Asl, 2020). However, we cannot claim that the Arab women's movement created a profound change in the basic structure of society and the family, as the traditional structure remains, where the woman's relationship with men, the family, and society at large is not a reciprocal one, but rather conspicuously subject to male domination.

The reality of the matter is that the traditional structure has produced two distinct worlds in which the two sexes play their roles without encroachment into the world of the other. For example, conventional wisdom is that for a man to stay at home among women who are busy in their domestic work is unmanly (Hamdawi, 2000).

This traditional pattern of gender roles distribution, particularly in the family and the home, have yielded significant imbalances during the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically on women. As indicated by ESCWA's report on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020) on gender equality in the Arab region, women will bear the brunt of pandemic aftermath; in light of the fact that; on average, women spend 5 times more time on unpaid than men, which is the highest rate among all regions of the world, and are also the most vulnerable to poverty and job loss. Additionally, the pandemic constraints deepen women vulnerability, which would likely drag the rate of domestic violence along with it, which already affects 37% of women in Arab countries. This is the reason why the report recommends that prejudices and social norms against Arab women in the public and private spheres be factored into any response measures.

In Jordan in particular, most women seek employment in the jobs that fit within their social and family duties. Therefore, most of the Jordanian women in the workforce are concentrated in the public sector, especially in education. Local reports about the pandemic have shown that women suffer economic and psychological constraints more than men (ESC, 2020). This even worsened by the increase in violence incidents for economic reasons; related to poverty and the high cost of living, especially in the poorest and least educated regions of the south, as shown by Khataybeh study, 2021. With the above in mind, this article is based on the gender theory; in its theoretical framework. Gender is a socio-cultural concept; rooted in biological sex, where male and female dos and don'ts are shaped by cultural ideals and social institutions (Connell, 2002). This concept is used to ascribe roles, status, and incorporeal prominence of the individual being a male or female in a society (Lorber, 1994). These roles and positions are socially constructed; where the social context defines relatively fixed composes of roles and responsibilities for both women and men (McRobbie, 2009).

Any gender-based construct would usually create structural gender inequality and maintain it in social reality through socialization (O'Hagan et al., 2019). From feminist perspective, gender inequality against women is linked primarily to confining their role in the private sphere; especially within the family as a housewife who has to do household chores (Haney, 2000).

The feminist thinker Kate Millett, explains that the source of discrimination against women in societies that foster the concept of power-based relationships comes from the permeation of patriarchal ideology (Levit, 1998).

According to the feminist doctrine, despite the diversity of societal cultures worldwide, none of them had attempted to ascribe non-traditional roles to women that would enhance their participation outside the family's limitations (Schneir, 1994).

This article assumes that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the magnitude and the variety of constraints affecting Jordanian women, especially those associated with the traditional women roles within the society, which are perceptively limited to household chores and family care. As an unprecedented situation, the pandemic and the subsequent measures, most notably the full lock-down and the shelter-in-place order, have exacerbated this dynamic. The literature reviewed in this research confirm that traditional gender division of labor is widely practiced, which makes women in all societies bear the greater part of the social caregiving burden in the family. For example, a research by (Maarefvand et al., 2020) examined constraints associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in the Iranian society; through an online survey during the peak of the virus outbreak, aiming to assess constraints and constraint levels. 3787 Iranians participated in the survey, the majority of whom were females (67.4%), and it revealed that constraints were significantly higher on females, especially in the age group between 30 and 39 years, and among housewives.

Additionally, work-from-home arrangements during the lock-down lead to rearrangement of parenting duties unequally among mothers and fathers in Italy, according to (Manzo & Minello, 2020) study. This has exacerbated the “caregiving crisis” in light of the intense burdens as a result of lock-down and home quarantine.

Furthermore, (McLaren et al., 2020) study; which included the contributions of researchers from four countries: Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Australia to research the concept of gender-based distribution of burden in the field of work, reproduction, and community participation, concluded that the burden on women is exponentially rising, and that women will bear these exacerbated burdens for a long time, even after the pandemic has been long gone. Nevertheless, the state of lock-down and home quarantine due to COVID-19 had revealed the magnitude of the burden that women bear, with no statistically significant differences in these findings within the study population.

The complete lock-down in Nepal, which lasted from March 24, 2020 until June 14, 2020 has imposed other constraints on women; which mainly manifested in impeding access to maternity health care, suspension of all schools and colleges, and children being forced to spend their time at home, according to (Mahato et al., 2020) study.

Additionally, the pandemic had disproportionately affected the working conditions for academic women during the lock-down, compared to their male counterparts, according to a (Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2020) study. According to the study, women were disproportionately affected by higher rates in terms of their daily routine with children care, and household chores taking longer time after the pandemic.

The full lock-down has directly contributed to women increased burden of household chores more than men. In a study by (Kalaylıoğlu, 2020) it was found that there is an increase in household chores; such as “housekeeping”, “cooking and serving meals”. Findings of the study showed that 77.6% and 59.9%; respectively, of the women surveyed had seen an increase in household chores, compared to 47% and 23.9% of the men surveyed. House cleaning appeared to be the most time consuming activity for women; 56.1%, compared to 27% for men.

Furthermore, a literature review by (Fortier, 2020) revealed that women were affected negatively and disproportionately by socio-economic challenges caused by gender-based discrimination. Economic conditions; for example, had worsened as a result of COVID-19, as women's jobs are perceived to be of inferior priority as opposed to men's jobs, either because women work part-time, or due to a gender pay-gap. This makes women unfairly more susceptible to economic insecurity in the short and long runs; dragging the level of wellbeing down with it. In this context, (Kartseva & Kuznetsova, 2020) study have emphasized the gravity of the pandemic's impact on the Russian labor market and household income, especially in the fragile employment sector. The study anticipated that the COVID-19 pandemic would also lead to further deterioration of women economically; due to the expansion of the “unpaid care work” economy under these circumstance.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

480 Jordanian women; in the age groups from 20 years to 60 and above, have participated in this study. The sample covered different regions of Jordan. The study sample was obtained by the available sample method, without relying on the total statistical community framework. This sampling method was used due to time, cost, and effort considerations. (Al-Rofou', 2014)

3.2 Instrumentation

In collect data, the field research deployed a “Google Forms” based electronic questionnaire. The instrument consists of three sections:

(1) Demographic characteristics; (2) Constraints' measurement, which consists of 15 paragraphs, ten of which to measure social constraints and five to measure economic constraint. Some of these were mentioned in previous literature. (3) This part is related to coping mechanisms; and it consists of eight paragraphs.

The survey questions are uniform, while the answers to section I “socio-economic constraints” were recorded on a 4-point scale; ranging from 1- “No constraints” to 4 “significant constraints.” Answers to the “coping mechanisms” section were also recorded on a 4-point scale; ranging from 1 “never” to 4 “often.” The questionnaire was administered in the period between October 9th, 2020 and December 12th, 2020.

To validate the internal consistency of the instrument, the latter was presented to a group of experts in the field of sociology, metrology and evaluation in order to solicit their feedback; in terms of paragraphs' clarity, proper use of language, and relevance to the respective dimension. The experts were encouraged to modify or delete any paragraphs they deem inefficient, or to add paragraphs as they deem appropriate. Modifications were made to

the instrument accordingly

To validate the internal consistency of the scale, the latter was administered to a pilot sample consisting of (35) off-sample women. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between each of the scale items and the dimension to which the item belongs.

It was found that all items are correlated to the total degree of the dimension with a statistical significance, as the values of correlation coefficients for the three dimensions were, respectively, between (0.66-0.86), (0.76-0.91), and (0.48-0.82), which indicates valid internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The instrument's reliability was also validated by applying Cronbach's alpha formula a pilot sample; consisting of 35 women. The reliability coefficients for the dimensions were as follows: "0.92" for social constraints, "0.88" for economic constraints, and "0.79" for coping mechanisms; resulting in a total coefficient of 0.90. This is a high reliability indicator that allows for administration.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using (SPSS) software, utilizing several statistical methods. These included simple descriptive models to analyze the demographic characteristics of the study sample. Additionally, arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated for "socio-economic constraints", and for "coping mechanisms". The progressive scoring scheme was adopted as follows: (1-2 low; 2.1-3 moderate; and 3.1-4 high). Moreover, some tests were used to address the research objectives, including multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to compare of respondents' mean estimates of "socio-economic constraints", and "coping mechanisms"; depending on the qualitative variables: (age, marital status, number of children, level of educational, employer, monthly income per capita, monthly household income, and area of residence). Scheffé's test was also used to learn the significance of statistical differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Table 1. Characteristics of the study sample

Variable	No.	%	
Age	20-29	105	22
	30-39	175	36
	40-49	133	28
	50-59	59	12
	60and over	8	2
Marital status	Married	353	73
	Divorced	18	4
	Widowed	5	1
	Single	104	22
Number of children	3or less	189	40
	4-6	140	29
	7or more	15th	3
	None	136	28
Educational level	Grade school education	65	13
	University education	299	62
	Postgraduate	116	25
Monthly income / in JOD	Less than 200	46	10
	200- 400	114	24
	400-600	68	14
	600-800	40	8
	800-1000	32	7
	1000≤	50	10
	No personal income	130	27
Household monthly income / JOD	Less than 200	134	28
	200-400	155	32
	400-600	78	16
	600-800	29	6
	800-1000	43	9
	1000≤	41	9
	No household income	0	0

Employer	Government sector	193	40
	Private sector	82	17
	Self-employed	29	6
	Retired	21	5
	House wife	155	32
Residence area	Urban	324	68
	Rural	106	22
	Badia	50	10

The demographic characteristics of the study sample

Table 1 above shows that 36% of the respondents are in the age group of 30 – 39, then 28% are in the age group of 40 – 49. The highest percentage of participants went to the married group at 73%; with 40% of them having three children or less, 29% with 4 – 6 children, while married women with no children came very near behind at 28%. Speaking of majorities, 62% of respondents had a university education, with only 27% of them making no personal income. 24% of the respondents reported a personal income between 200 – 400 JODs. A little over third of the sample; 32%, reported a household income in the range of 200 - 400 JODs, and 28% reported that their household income is less than 200 JODs. Public sector employees formed the majority among respondents at 40%, while stay-home wives were at 32%. For the last variable, 68% of the respondents reported living in urban settings.

4. Results

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated to detect socio-economic constraints and coping mechanisms; as shown in Tables 2 and 3 below:

Table 2. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the socio-economic constraints dimension

Score	SD	AM	Paragraph	No.	Dimension
High	1.02	3.02	Family needs	3	Social constraints
Moderate	0.99	2.97	Family members adherence to health precautions to prevent infection (social distancing, disinfection, mask)	1	
			Supervising children’s online learning	5	
Moderate	1.28	2.95	Children's free time	8	
Moderate	1.20	2.80	The Internet connection is adequate for online learning	6	
Moderate	1.26	2. 71	Work from home	4	
Moderate	1.18	2.67	Access to essential health services	10	
Moderate	1.06	2.59	House space	2	
Moderate	1.12	2.50	Problems at work	9	
Moderate	1.77	2.47	Use of tutoring	7	
Moderate	1.06	2.70	Total		
Moderate	1.13	2.95	Financial obligations in general	13	Economic constraints
Moderate	1.10	2.94	Income	11	
Moderate	1.19	2.70	Debt I don't know how to pay off	12	
Moderate	1.15	2.31	My performance at work	15th	
low	1.17	1.96	I lost my job or part of it	14	
Moderate	1.08	2.57	Total		

1 – 2 low; 2.1-3 moderate, 3.1-4 high

The results showed that the overall score of social constraints on women due to the COVID-19 pandemic were

moderate (arithmetic mean 2.70, standard deviation 1.06), and the most significant social constraint was “Family needs” with a high score; (arithmetic mean 3.02, standard deviation 1.02). This is followed by "Family members' adherence to health precautions to prevent infection (social distancing, disinfection, mask)" to a medium degree (arithmetic mean 2.97, standard deviation 0.99). As for women’s economic constraints, it came at a moderate score (arithmetic mean 2.57, standard deviation 1.08), while the most significant economic constraint was “overall financial obligations”; which also scored moderate (arithmetic mean 2.95, standard deviation 1.13), followed by constraints related to “financial income” (arithmetic mean 2.94, standard deviation 1.10), while the economic constraints related to "loss of work or part of it" came in last with a low score. It’s worth noting that this finding does not necessarily lead us to believe that Jordanian women weren’t vulnerable to loss of work. Rather, the study was able to reach out to a sample the majority of which; (40%) were public sector employees; against 32% for stay-home wives, i.e. working in unpaid caregiving work. It’s a well-established fact that the Jordanian public sector never laid-off or furloughed any of its employees during the crisis, but only suspended monthly bonuses and salary raises. Naturally, this suspension had an adverse effect on personal and household income levels.

Table 3. AM and SD for the “coping mechanisms” dimension

Score	SD	AM	Paragraph	No
High	0.77	3.58	Prayer and supplication	2
High	0.87	3.13	Participation in public debates about the pandemic	3
High	0.96	3.07	Self-sufficiency in living	5
Moderate	1.03	2.82	Significantly reducing the household budget	7
Moderate	1.16	2.57	Becoming more inclined to isolation	8
Moderate	0.98	2.45	Exercising and performing physical activities	1
Moderate	1.04	2.25	Volunteering	4
Moderate	1.12	2.13	Constantly taking sedatives and tranquilizers	6
Moderate	1.03	2.75	Total	

As shown in Table 3 above, the overall score for the “coping mechanisms” dimension was moderate (with an overall the arithmetic mean of 2.75, and standard deviation of 1.03). The coping mechanism that scored the highest was "prayer and supplication"; (arithmetic mean of 3.58, standard deviation of 0.77). It was followed by “Participation in the public debates about the pandemic”; (arithmetic mean of 3.13, and standard deviation of 0.87). “Becoming more self – sufficiency” came in last; with an arithmetic mean of 3.07, and standard deviation of 0.96.

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was calculated to detect statistically significant correlation between the “socio-economic constraints” dimension, and the “coping mechanisms” dimension; as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Pearson's correlation between “socio-economic constraints” and “coping mechanisms”

Dimension	Coping mechanisms
Social constraints	0.39**
Economic constraints	0.41**

**Statistical significance at ($\alpha \geq 0.01$)

A positive statistically significant correlation appeared between “socio-economic constraints” and the “coping mechanisms”. The values of the correlation coefficient for the two dimensions was (0.39) and (0.41), respectively. This suggests that the “economic constraints” have a higher correlation to “coping mechanisms” than "social constraints"; according to respondents.

In order to detect statistically significant differences between the respondents' average answers; in the “socio-economic constraints” dimension; arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated in relation to the qualitative variables; which yielded minor superficial differences to be detected. To verify the significance of differences, the multivariate analysis was utilized; as in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Multivariate analysis of respondents' average answers in the "social constraint" dimension; in relation to the variables

SV	SS	DF	MS	F. Col.	Statistical significance
Age	695.26	4	173.82	3.89	0.004
Marital status	168.69	3	56.23	1.26	0.288
Number of children	1011.11	3	337.04	7.55	0.00
Educational level	140.28	2	70.14	1.57	0.209
Employer	629.27	4	157.31	3.52	0.008
Monthly income per capita	247.78	6	41.29	0.925	0.477
Household monthly income	317.30	5	63.46	1.42	0.215
Area of residence	511.67	2	255.83	5.72	0.003
Error	20053.70	449	44.66		
Total	380,537.00	479			

*Statistical significance at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)

No statistically significant differences attributed to the variables (marital status, educational level, monthly income per capita, household monthly income) were detected. However, variable-related statistically significant differences appeared at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$); between the averages of respondents' answers in relation to (age, number of children, employer, area of residence). To find out the significance of these differences; multiple comparisons were conducted following Scheffé's method.

Table 6. Multiple comparisons using Scheffé's method for the variables (age, number of children, employer, and area of residence)

Variable	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60and over
Age	20-29	1.32	2.23	4.33*	11.94*
	30-39		0.91	5.64*	13.26
	40-49			6.56*	14.17*
	50-59				7.61
Number of children	3or less	4-6	7or more	No children	
	3or less	-3.27*	-5.49*	2.45*	
	4-6		-2.22	5.72*	
	7or more			7.94*	
Employer	Public sector	Private sector	Self-employed	Retired	Housewife
	Public sector	3.47*	2.93	10.44*	1.57
	Private sector		0.55	6.97*	1.89
	Self-employed			7.51*	1.35
	Retired				-8.87*
Area of residence	Urban	Rural	Badia		
	Urban	-4.58*	-5.74*		
	Rural		-1.16		

*Statistical significance at the significance at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)

Statistically significant differences were detected at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the "Social constraints" domain; in relation to lower age groups, and larger number of children. This means that the more children in the household the greater its susceptibility is to "social constraints". The same is also true for public servant women, and also for women

who live in Badia areas.

Multivariate analysis was used to identify the significance of differences in relation to the “economic constraints” domain, according to the study variables, as shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Multivariate analysis of respondents’ average answers; in the “economic constraint” domain, in relation to the study variables

SV	SS	DF	MS	F. Col.	Statistical significance
Age	49.51	4	12.38	0.81	0.52
Marital status	61.29	3	20.43	1.34	0.26
Number of children	66.17	3	22.06	1.45	0.23
Educational level	1.02	2	0.51	0.03	0.96
Employer	365.18	4	91.29	5.99	0.00
Monthly income per capita	91.57	6	15.26	1.003	0.42
Household monthly income	415.36	5	83.07	5.45	0.00
Area of residence	99.96	2	49.98	3.28	0.04
Error	6834.05	449	15.22		
Total	88819.00	479			

*Statistical significance at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)

No statistically significant differences were found in the “economic constraints” domain; in relation to (age, marital status, number of children, level of education, monthly income per capita). However, statistically significant differences were found at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between respondents’ average answers in relation to the variables (employer, household monthly income, and area of residence). In order to find out the significance of these differences, multiple comparisons were conducted following Scheffé’s method.

Table 8. Multiple comparisons using the Scheffé’s method of the variables (employer, household monthly income, and area of residence)

Variable	Public sector	Private sector	Self-employed	Retired	Housewife	
Employer	Public sector	0.14	-2.35	2.86*	-0.02	
	Private sector		-2.09	3.11*	0.11	
	Self-employed			5.32*	2.32	
	Retired				-2.99*	
Household monthly income	less than 400	400-800	800-1200	1200-1600	1600-2000	2000and above
	less than 400	0.86	3.21*	3.18*	4.29*	5.49*
	400-800		3.35*	2.31	3.43*	4.63*
	800-1200			0.03	1.08	2.28
	1200-1600				1.11	2.31
						1.19
Area of residence	Urban	Rural	Badia			
	Urban	-2.06*	-2.80*			
	Rural		0.74			

*Statistical significance at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)

Statistically significant differences were found at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$); in the “economic constraints” domain, in relation to the “employer” variable, and in favor of public servant women, as well as in relation to the

“household monthly income” variable; in favor of lower income households, and in relation to the “area of residence” variable; in favor of Badia.

To detect the statistically significant differences between the average answers of respondents in the “coping mechanisms” domain; in relation to the qualitative variables, arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated. Minor superficial differences were found. To verify the significance of differences; multivariate analysis was applied, as shown in Table 9 below:

Table 9. Multivariate analysis of the respondents’ average answers in the “coping mechanisms” domain; in relation to the study variables

SV	SS	DF	MS	F. col.	Statistical significance
Age	37.28	4	9.32	0.61	0.66
Marital status	18.39	3	6.13	0.40	0.75
Number of children	71.54	3	23.84	1.56	0.19
Educational level	61.97	2	30.98	2.03	0.13
Employer	26.95	4	6.74	0.44	0.78
Monthly income per capita	193.40	6	32.23	2.11	0.059
Household monthly income	221.33	5	44.26	2.89	0.014
Area of residence	47.92	2	23.96	1.57	0.21
Error	6860.69	449	12.28		
Total	239622.00	479			

No statistically significant differences were found in relation to the variables (age, marital status, number of children, educational level, employer, monthly income per person, and area of residence). However, statistically significant differences appeared at the level of ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the average answers of respondents; in relation to the variable (household monthly income) only. In order to find out the significance of this difference; Scheffé’s method of multiple comparisons was applied.

Table 10. Scheffé’s method of multiple comparisons for the variable “Household monthly income”

Variable	Public sector	Private sector	Self-employed	Retired	Housewife	
	less than 400	400-800	800- 1200	1200-1600	1600-2000	2000and above
Household monthly income	less than 400	0.15	1.32	0.21	2.88*	3.40*
	400-800		1.17	0.06	2.73*	3.25*
	800-1200			1.12	1.55	2.07
	1200-1600				2.67	3.19
	1600-2000					0.52

*Statistical significance at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)

Statistically significant differences were found at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$), in the “coping mechanisms” domain; in relation to “Household monthly income” variable in favor of higher income households. This means that lower income households adopt more “coping mechanisms”.

5. Discussion

This study endeavored to identify the socio-economic constraints Jordanian women had encountered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; whilst the lock-down and stay-home orders were in effect. The findings revealed that the overall score of women's constraints was moderate; while social constraints had more effects on women as opposed to economic ones. This finding concurs with the findings of (McLaren et al., 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020).

The findings have also revealed that there is a high degree of social constraints on women; linked directly to the virus outbreak. As a result of mass lock-down, women have suffered an increase in family needs. Additionally, homes became crowded places where all members of the family conglomerate at once for long periods of times; thus increasing the burden on mothers in meeting the family needs in terms of food, education, and recreation. Moreover, the pandemic situation had imposed new roles on women, such as the preventive role women had to often play to prevent infection. It is likely that these new obligations would consume more time and effort on the woman's part; adding even more stress. These findings concur with those of (Kalaylioglu, 2020), and (Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2020) (Maclaren et al., 2020), despite the difference in socio-cultural contexts.

Among the new constraints women have to encounter due to the pandemic, is supervising their children's online education; caused by the full lock-down which also included schools, prompting a swift shift to online education. Although women are often the ones responsible for monitoring children education under normal conditions, online education had, however, become a multiplier of load on women; especially that public education; in which the majority of Jordanian children are enrolled, did not take an online interactive modality, but rather distant learning platforms that delivered the lessons on national TV, while teachers corresponded with their students via social media; which means that the effort and time mothers exerted with children's education was unbearable. This result concurs with that of (Mahato et al., 2020) study.

These findings confirm the gender roles distribution in traditional societies, based on patriarchal authority, which places the largest burden of domestic chores on women. These roles and responsibility represent the women's status and prominence in the traditional society; according to the gender theory. Therefore, as an unprecedented situation, the pandemic had no effects on redistributing or influencing such roles in the Jordanian society.

With regard to economic constraints, the results suggest that women have suffered increasing financial obligations and declining financial income, as well as debt accumulated due to the pandemic. Although more than one - third of the study sample were public sector employees who didn't suffer loss of employment due to the pandemic, it is however safe to say that Jordanian working women have been already suffering past and continuing imbalances in their economic conditions as a result of wage gaps, lack of new job opportunities, and high unemployment. Official estimates for 2019 indicate that the unemployment rate among Jordanian women is 27%; compared to 17% for men, while the economic participation rate for women is 14%; compared to 54% for men. The gender wage gap had reached 13.6% and 14.2% in the in the public and private sectors respectively. These imbalances have significantly weakened the ability of women to face economic constraints, especially with the pandemic conditions. This finding seems consistent with (Fortier, 2020) & (Kartseva & Kuznetsova, 2020).

No statistically significant differences were detected in the "social-economic constraints" domain attributed to the "marital status, educational level, or monthly income per capita) variables. However, statistically significant differences were found at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) for women in the younger age groups. This finding is consistent with that of (Maarefvand et al., 2020); of which findings about the most vulnerable age group is discussed above. Additionally, positive differences appeared due to the "number of children", "employment at the public sector", and the" area of residence in Badia". These findings, related to the statistically significant variables of "household monthly income", "employer", and" area of residence" can be explained with the argument that despite that women who work in the public sector were not affected the loss of employment, inherently, however, it's quite difficult to make ends meet on a public sector salary; especially that the average monthly income of Jordanian families is (959) JODs; according to official figures for 2017. This average is quite low when compared to the high cost of living and services. Furthermore, Badia is one of the most impoverished regions of Jordan.

On the other hand, the findings suggest that economic constraints are more related to the previously indicated "coping mechanisms" than they are to social constraints. According to respondents' answers, religious-oriented (prayer) practices scored the highest among other coping mechanisms, followed by and socially-oriented practices (participation in the public debates about the pandemic), and finally simple economic practices; mainly (self-sufficiency) to help the family make ends meet.

It was also found that statistical significance of "coping mechanisms" is only attributed to the low household income variable, as families with low monthly income are more inclined to adopt coping mechanisms. Nevertheless, it must be noted that these coping mechanisms are not intrinsically practical solutions that would profoundly affect women's and their families, they are rather spontaneous mitigating techniques rooted in the religiously-oriented and more organically coherent society. It's worth noting here that official efforts to respond to the pandemic have failed to incorporate in its calculations the measures potential impacts on women; as one of

the most vulnerable groups. This leads us to say that women were already living under socio-economic constraints before the pandemic, but the latter's conditions and response measures have exacerbated these constraints; by increasing the responsibilities on women. This is perhaps what women will live with for a long time, in light of official disregard.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to identify constraints faced by Jordanian women as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the different societal cultural and normative contexts around the world, there is a common thread in all literature on women in crisis; namely, that women bear the brunt in family caregiving. What is certainly is that; as an unprecedented situation, the COVID-19 pandemic lead to an increase in the volume of such burden, especially in a lock-down and shelter-in-place context. This has caused constraints on women to amplify in the various social, economic and psychological manifestations. This is; undoubtedly, a clear sign of gender discriminatory that takes this dimension on a global scale.

The findings of the study revealed that economic constraints are more related than social constraints to the coping mechanisms identified in the study. These mechanisms exhibit themselves in simple religious, socio-economic practices. This could potentially indicate a lack of realistic economic opportunities and resources for women to meet their needs; which makes designing and implementing women-specific socio-economic assistance programs, such as cash transfers and vocational training, crucial.

The findings also showed that women have participated in public debates about the pandemic as one of the coping mechanisms to alleviate the stress, which is a healthy tendency. Notwithstanding this engagement, the Jordanian government had completely ignored women in this crisis; as women were not at all represented in the National Supreme Committee for managing the COVID-19 crisis.

Also, although Bedouin women are underrepresented in this study, statistical differences indicated that they suffer the most from the pandemic's constraints, which calls for more governmental and non-governmental attention to this category; in socio-economic programs.

The roles performed by women at home, made daily life possible for the family; and helped the latter socially and emotionally during these times of crises. Nevertheless, these roles are not reflected in power dynamics that could potentially promote women status in society; in light of the stringent traditions and norms in Jordan. Some local studies, for example, that went to identify the attitudes of Jordanian university students (boys and girls) towards women; revealed support for the stereotype that limits the woman basic role to household chores and child care (Abu Zaytoun et al., 2018; Nasarat et al., 2017). These mental stereotypes are part of the cultural and social construct of the Jordanian society; exercising rigorous guidance and control over one's behavior. Formal and informal socialization reproduces these stereotypes with the new generation, and thus it's crucial to make gender at the center of all social policies and different educational curricula.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Although this research had attempted to reach out to the largest possible number of Jordanian women from different regions and social backgrounds, some limitations presented themselves; as 68% of respondents live in urban settings, and 62% hold an undergraduate degree. Furthermore, the majority of respondents; standing at 40%, are public sector employees. The researcher wasn't able to reach under-educated or illiterate women to participate in the survey, as the instrument was based on "Google forms" and was filled-out electronically. This of course would require to respondent to be able to read and write, and be computer literate. It is likely that such skills are lacking with illiterate or undereducated women.

Additionally, Badia areas are inadequately represented in the study. Such regions are suffering steep economic problems, and without any supportive community institutions; which translates into more and larger constraints on this category of women.

Moreover, women working in the informal sector; which constitutes 44% of the total labor force, are also insignificantly represented in this study. The informal sector is 15% women; according to local official figures by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2012. Official forecasts indicate that the informal sector is the most affected by the pandemic constraints, thus it is essential to identify the socio-economic constraints on women in this sector.

The researcher recommends conducting an in- depth qualitative research to examine the effects, constraints, and threats from all aspects of life; as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a research should cover a larger sample of Jordanian women, including groups like divorced and widowed women.

References

- Abu zaitoon, N., Abutayeh, A., & Al-khatib, W. (2018). The Youth: Values and Attitudes - A Survey Administrated on Students at Al Hussein Bin Talal University. *Canadian Social Science*, 14(6), 1-12.
- Al-Emam, D. (2015, February 5). Activists discuss genderstereotypes in school textbooks. *The Jordan Times*. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/y50o6>
- Alon, I., Matthew, F., & Li, S. (2020). Regime type and COVID-19 response. *FIIB Business Review*, 9(3), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2319714520928884>
- Al-Rufou', A. (2014). *An Introduction to Educational Statistics* (1st ed.). Dar Al-Raya for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan.
- Asl, M. P. (2020). Spaces of change: Arab women's reconfigurations of selfhood through heterotopias in Manal al-Sharif's *Daring to Drive*. *KEMANUSIAAN the Asian Journal of Humanities*, 27(2), 123-143. <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2020.27.2.7>
- Barakat, H. (2009). *Contemporary Arab Society*. Ministry of Culture, Amman, Jordan.
- Blasko, Z., Manca, A., & Papdimitriou, E. (2020). *How will the COVID-19 crisis affect existing gender divides in Europe?* EUR 30181 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, ISBN 978-92-76-18170-5 (online). <https://doi.org/10.2760/37511>
- Boncori, I. (2020). *The Never-ending Shift: A feminist reflection on living and organizing academic lives during the coronavirus pandemic*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12451>
- Chen, N., Zhou, M., Dong, X., Qu, J., Gong, F., Han, Y., & Zhang, L. (2020). Epidemiological and clinical characteristics of 99 cases of 2019 novel coronavirus pneumonia in Wuhan, China: A descriptive study. *The Lancet*, 395(10223), 507-513. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30211-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30211-7)
- Connell, R. (2002). *Gender*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Economic and Social Council. (2020). *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health, domestic and economic violence in Jordan by gender*. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/okhiy>
- ESCWA. (2020). *Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Gender Equality in the Arab Region: Policy Proposals*. United Nations. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/3jivb>
- Fortier, N. (2020). COVID-19, gender inequality, and the responsibility of the state. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10(3), 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i3.1305>
- Hamdaoui, M. (2000). The status of women and violence within the family in traditional Algerian society, *Insaniyat. The Algerian Journal of Anthropology and Human Sciences*, (10), 3-26. <https://doi.org/10.4000/insaniyat.8047>
- Haney, L. (2000). Feminist State Theory: Applications to Jurisprudence, Criminology, and the Welfare State. *Annual Review of Sociology*, (26), 641-666. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223460>
- International Labor Organization. (2018). *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. Geneva: ILO. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/jac7>
- Jordan Department of Statistics. (2017). *Household Expenditures and Income Survey*. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/eicjm>
- Jordan Department of Statistics. (2019). *Jordan in figures*. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/f5qtj>
- Kalaylıoğlu, Y. (2020). *The Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men: Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 Implications in Turkey*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/tplny>
- Kartseva, M., & Kuznetsova, P. (2020). The economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic: Which groups will suffer more in terms of loss of employment and income? *Population and Economics*, 4(2), 26-33. <https://doi.org/10.3897/popecon.4.e53194>
- Khataybeh, Y. (2021). Gender-Based Violence in Light of the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Descriptive Study on Jordanian Women. *Multicultural Education Journal*, 7(7), 478-485. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5137880>
- Kraus, S., Clauss, T., Breier, M., Gast, J., Zardini, A., & Tiberius, V. (2020). The economics of COVID-19: Initial empirical evidence on how family firms in five European countries cope with the corona crisis. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, 26(5),

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEER-04-2020-0214>

- Levit, N. (1998). *Reconstructing Images of Gender in Theory in the Gender Line: Men, Women, and the Law*. New York NYU Press.
- Lorber, J. (1994). *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Maarefvand, M., Hosseinzadeh, S., Farmani, O., Safarabadi Farahani A., & Khubchandani, J. (2020). Coronavirus Outbreak and Stress in Iranians. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(12), 4441. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124441>
- Mahato, P., Tamang, P., Simkhada, P., Shahi, P., Teijlingen, E. van., Aryal, N., & Regmi, P. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 during lockdown in Nepal. *Europasian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 2(Covid-19 Special Issue), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.46405/ejms.v2i2.91>
- Mahmoud, A. (2009). The Culture of the Jordanian Village. *Conference on National Identity and Culture and their Role in the Process of Reform and Modernization*. March 8-9 / 2008, Amman, Jordan, pp. 65-74.
- Manzo, L., & Minello, A. (2020). Mothers, childcare duties, and remote working under COVID-19 lockdown in Italy: Cultivating communities of care. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 10(2), 120-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820620934268>
- Massad, J. (2001). *Colonial Effects: The Making of the National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- McLaren, H., Wong, K., Nguyen, K., & Mahamadachchi, K. (2020). Covid-19 and Women's Triple Burden: Vignettes from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam and Australia. *Social Sciences*, 9(5), 87. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050087>
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and social Change*. Los Angeles, London: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607110140050804>
- Ministry of International Planning. (2012). *A panoramic study of the informal economy in Jordan*. Retrieved from <https://n9.cl/p8fzm>
- Nasarat, M., Abuzaiton, N., Abutayeh, A., & Aljaz, A. (2017). Jordanian Citizens Trends towards Women's Social, Economic and Political Rights in (Karak, Tafieleh, Maan) Governorates. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 7(4), 65-91.
- O'Hagan, C., O'Connor, P., Myers, E. S., Baisner, L., Apostolov, G., Topuzova, I., & Çağlayan, H. (2019). Perpetuating academic capitalism and maintaining gender orders through career practices in STEM in universities. *Critical Studies in Education*, 60(2), 205-225.
- Schneir, M. (1994). *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Tweissi, B. (2013). Societal Culture in Transit - An Analytical Critical Study. *National Culture Conference*. Ministry of Culture Publications, Amman, Jordan.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Empowering students with disabilities during the COVID19 crisis*. Retrieved May, 4, 2020, from <https://bit.ly/3bRDSRu>
- Usher, K., Bhullar, N., & Debra, J. (2020). Life in the pandemic. *Social isolation and mental health*, 29(15-16), 2756-2757. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15290>
- Yildirim, T. M., & Eslen-Ziya, H. (2020). The differential impact of COVID-19 on the work conditions of women and men academics during the lockdown. *Gender, work and organization*, 28(s1), 243-249. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12529>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).