

The Role of Digital Journalism in Framing the Issue of Child Marriage in Jordan

Rasha Zaid Salhab Altamimi

University of Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

child marriage,
underage marriage,
early marriage,
digital journalism,
violence

ABSTRACT

There is a dearth of academic studies focusing on the role of mass communication in combating issues related to child marriage. The present study examines the role of the Alrai news website in framing the news about early marriages in Jordan in terms of providing information that contributes to raising awareness of this issue and identifying the motives that prompted the Jordanian legislation to allow marriage for those under 18 years of age. The study examines whether child marriage causes an increase in the rate of psychological and physical abuse of girls while tracking the causes of the prevalence of child marriage in Jordan. It also monitors the role of news platforms in covering the contributions of human rights activists in providing solutions and suggestions to limit the spread of this issue and empower girls to overcome the consequences of marriage at an early age. A descriptive approach using quantitative content analysis was adopted to examine the press's role in framing the issue of child marriage in 2019, 2020, and 2021. The results of the frame analysis for Al-Rai news website showed that victims of child marriage are exposed to physical and psychological violence, deprivation of education, early divorce, unplanned pregnancy, restricting girls' freedom of choice, employment, and economic empowerment. This shows the position of the Al-Rai newspaper website towards the issue of child marriage, focusing on the multiplicity of negative effects of this type of marriage and reducing the focus on the negative effects of it. Moreover, the reasons for the enactment of the Jordanian legislation stating the legal age for marriage to be 15 years were found to be obscure.

1. Introduction

The electronic press is a reflection of society. It helps in communicating the latest issues relating to the public, informing them of what happens around the world (Anggraeni, 2018), owing to the impressive speed of news transmission in this medium (Warren, 2007). Early marriage is one of the important social issues that is debated extensively, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, Vietnam, and India (Suhariyati et al., 2019). The statistics presented in the study by Wodon et al. (2020) indicate

*Corresponding author E-mail address: rasha-s1984@hotmail.com

Cite this article as:

Altamimi, R. Z. S. (2023). The Role of Digital Journalism in Framing the Issue of Child Marriage in Jordan. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 6(2): 22-37. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jarss.v6i2.780>

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that 59.4% of girls were married before 18 years of age in Bangladesh, 40% in India, 18.7% in Pakistan, 17% in Indonesia, 16.5% in Egypt, and 42% in Nigeria. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defined a child as a human being under the age of 18 (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 1990). Meanwhile, child marriage is defined as a marriage in which one or both parties marry before the age of 18 (Care, 2015).

The legal age for marriage in Jordan is 18. However, the Civil Status Law allows, with the approval of the Chief Justice, to authorise in special cases the marriage of those who have reached 15 years of age, according to certain conditions determined by the judge (Mrayan & Obeisat, 2021), and aligning with the benefits and interests of the fiancée. It also requires that the suitor is competent to support the fiancée and that the age difference between them does not exceed 15 years (Aljazeera, 2018). The Jordanian Personal Status Law, on the other hand, was amended to increase the legal age for marriage from 15 to 16 years (Shaheen et al., 2022). The report of the Higher Population Council indicated in 2015 that the number of girls under the age of 18 who married in Jordan was 414,358, a figure that included Jordanian and Syrian girls residing in Jordan, in addition to other nationalities. Further, the report also indicated a total of 5,650 divorce cases resulting from early marriage in 2010–2015 (Arefah et al., 2017).

Another study on the influence of family violence and child marriage on the unmet need for family planning in Jordan indicated that only 6% of females aged 15–19 years were married in Jordan and that girls and boys between 15 and 17 years of age may marry in Jordan with the permission of a judge (Clark et al., 2017). Meanwhile, a statement by the Jordanian Women's Solidarity Institute Association (Sigi) indicated an increase in child marriage contracts in 2020 in which one or both spouses were in the age group 15–18 years; a total of 7,964 contracts were issued for underage girls and 194 contracts for minor boys (The Jordanian Women's Solidarity Institute Association [Sigi], 2021).

On other hand, Manahil Siddiqi and Margaret Greene highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic forced families to face severe economic pressures, in addition to girls being forced to drop their education due to school closures; this increased the risks of early and forced marriage (Siddiqi & Greene, 2021). A study conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child marriage forecasted an estimated rise of 10 million cases of child marriages over the next decade (Yukich et al., 2021).

A study conducted on the prevalence of child marriage among female Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon identified poverty and the need for protection and security as the factors that contribute to the spread of early marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan. The study stressed that Syrian refugees face difficult economic and living conditions that force families to marry off their daughters at a young age (El Arab & Sagbakkenb, 2019). Additionally, the families also fear that their daughters will be raped or sexually harassed and, consequently, they consider marriage to be the safest solution to preserve their honour (Shaheen et al., 2022). Moreover, the consequences of child marriage include girls' withdrawal from school, social isolation, poor mental health, untimely pregnancies, and poor maternal and child health (Siddiqi & Greene, 2021).

As child marriage, or early marriage, is a widespread issue in Jordan, several Jordanian digital media platforms have tackled this concern by presenting news content covering its different aspects, including the cause of early marriage, its consequences, solutions, and suggestions provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to end this phenomenon. However, over the course of my research, I noticed a difference in the approaches adopted to address this issue, which was rooted in the policies and agendas of the media outlets. These

are framed by officials of press institutions, as they are responsible for shaping news content frameworks to convince the public regarding their position on this issue.

Based on my investigation, I found that other news websites in Jordan lack the ability to address the issue of child marriage in different periods of time compared to the Al-Rai website in terms of their vision and approach towards covering the facts of the child marriage issue, which did not exceed one or two news stories in one year. Contrary to the Al-Rai website, which published several news articles on child marriage that are sufficient to conduct a quantitative analytical study on them.

Hence, it is necessary to discover the perspectives of Al-Rai Jordanian press regarding the issue of child marriage in relation to the frameworks developed by journalists. Correspondingly, the research question that drives the present study is as follows: How does the Jordanian news website Al-Rai frame the issue of child marriage in Jordan? From this question several sub-questions follow:

- Q1. Are there statistically significant differences in the volume of news items that covered early marriage issues through the Al-Rai website between the years 2019, 2020, and 2021?
- Q2. Are there statistically significant differences in tackling identifying child marriage issue through the Al-Rai website between the years 2019, 2020, and 2021?
- Q3. Are there statistically significant differences in tackling the cause of child marriage through the Al-Rai website between the years 2019, 2020, and 2021?
- Q4. Are there statistically significant differences in tackling the positive and negative effects of early marriage through the Al-Rai website between the years 2019, 2020, and 2021?
- Q5. Are there statistically significant differences in proposing solutions for child marriage in Jordan through the Al-Rai website between the years 2019, 2020, and 2021?

The purpose of this study is to verify the role of the electronic press in tackling the issue of early marriage in Jordan in terms of framing news related to different aspects of the issue. It attempts to define the motives that prompted the Jordanian Parliament to enact this early marriage law and determine the position of the websites in raising awareness in the society about either the effectiveness of early marriage in protecting girls under 18 from delinquency or its role in causing an increase in the rate of psychological and physical abuse of girls. Additionally, the study also examines the role of the electronic press in framing the contribution of NGOs and human rights advocates in Jordan in raising awareness about the dangers of early marriage for girls by providing solutions aimed at eliminating this issue.

My investigation of the role of mass communication in tackling child marriage revealed a scarcity of academic studies specialised in this issue. A quantitative study about the print media and child marriage in Nigeria conducted by Nancy Nwaolikpe Onyinyechi in 2018 aimed to verify how the print press frames child marriage in Nigeria. The study concluded that the Nigerian press did not sufficiently shed light on child marriage issues, as the news stories failed to address the effects and consequences of child marriage and obscured the means of reducing and controlling the issue. The press also failed to highlight the reasons for the spread of this issue. Furthermore, the stories covered were at the level of individuals and not for the purpose of reform. They were not a representation of the Nancy Nigerian government's viewpoint, and the problem was not considered in relation to sustainable

development. Finally, the study recommended that the print media should contribute more to educating the masses (Onyinyechi, 2018).

On the other hand, academic studies concerning the influence of the media in addressing issues of early marriage or child marriage in Jordan have not been attempted to date, which makes the present study the first of its kind in presenting the role of the electronic press in framing issues related to child marriage in Jordan. This study is distinguished from Nancy Nwaolikpe Onyinyechi's in that it investigates the content of Jordanian news website to address the issue of early marriage, while the study by Nancy Onyinyechi (2018) was focused on the content of the Nigerian press, although both of the study adopt a quantitative approach to analysing media frameworks to address the issue of early marriage. This study sheds light on the role of news websites in researching the reasons for the legalisation of child marriage in Jordan, diagnosing the cause of getting married before the age of 18, and presenting proposed solutions to stop this type of marriage. Meanwhile, Nancy Nwaolikpe Onyinyechi's study did not address these aspects in the analysis categories. On the contrary, it was more concerned with analysing traditional and cultural issues, child human rights, and distribution, demonstrating the prominence of child marriage coverage in Nigerian newspapers.

Moreover, despite the similarity between Nancy Nwaolikpe Onyinyechi's study and my own research in monitoring the percentage of newspaper treatment of the consequences of this type of marriage across the categories of analysis, it did not address the showing of these consequences in detail in the quantitative analysis process, which contradicts the study method in terms of tracking the quantitative treatment of these consequences in online news in Jordan in a way more detailed manner.

2. Method

This study uses content analysis that underlies the survey method in the descriptive approach, i.e. it activates the method of analyzing the content of communication media with a systematic, objective, and quantitative technique to measure variables (Kerlinger, 1973).

Quantitative content analysis is a systematic and replicable measurement of communication symbols to which numerical values have been assigned according to valid measurement rules, where statistical methods are used to describe communication content, draw conclusions about its meaning, and analyze relationships that include those values (Riffe et al., 2014). This approach is suitable for this study, since it aims to analyse how electronic journalism (Al-Rai) frames the issue of child marriage while processing the news quantitatively in the period 2019–2021.

Frame analysis is primarily used to analyse news discourse by constructing and depicting public discourse and negotiating public issues (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). It involves selecting the issues, tracking how they are interpreted through news coverage, and identifying the most important aspects of the issue that have been covered as well as those that have been neglected. It further involves analysing how the news content has been written using specific words and phrases that demonstrate the media outlet's standpoint regarding the issue and can, in turn, direct the public opinion (Anggraeni, 2018).

Robert Entman explains that media framing analysis shows how mass media influences public opinion, indicating that framing involves identifying some aspects of reality and making them more prominent in connected text news, where the framework highlights and emphasises certain aspects of the news story in an attempt to convey the desired message to direct and affect the audience. While an informed audience can understand the purpose behind this guiding effect, framing often serves to guide a careless audience's conclusions

about an issue, confirming that frame analysis is a common method employed in mass communication studies (Entman, 1993).

In 1993, Robert Entman introduced a methodology for framing the news in his paper "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," in which he identified four main types of frameworks for analysing media content:

1. Identifying a specific issue.
2. Diagnosing the cause of that issue.
3. Making an ethical judgment and evaluation about the issue.
4. Proposing solutions for that issue.

In accordance with Entman's paradigm, I have defined four frame categories based on the information presented via selected news articles. These categories can be used to analyse how the issue was covered and presented to the audience and to explore the hidden orientation behind the news text quantitatively:

1. **Identify child marriage issue:** This frame includes a detailed explanation of news content that provides information about the legal age for marriage for those under 18 years of age by focusing on the justification of the Jordanian Parliament for issuing this law. In addition, providing sufficient statistics related to the spread of this phenomenon in Jordanian society. Further, it also delineates the demographics of the society in which this phenomenon is spread.
2. **Diagnosing the cause of child marriage issue in Jordan:** This frame includes highlighting the reasons behind adolescents marrying before reaching the age of 18 in Jordan.
3. **Effects of early marriage:** This frame describes the judgment and evaluation of electronic newspapers regarding the issue of underage marriage in Jordan by revealing their approach to tackling the positive or negative effects of early marriage on society.
4. **Proposing solution for child marriage:** This frame highlights newspaper coverage of the roles of child and human rights practitioners in addressing this phenomenon by providing solutions that contribute to raising awareness about the dangers of underage marriage. It also foregrounds the services they provide to help victims of early marriage.

Regarding the study sample, I have selected a purposeful sample consisting of 31 news articles about child marriage published on the Al-Rai news website during 2019–2021. Al-Rai is a daily national Jordanian newspaper which is considered moderate and widely circulated in Jordan. In addition, I chose these articles within this period because they present the facts that match the frame categories of the issue of child marriage based on Robert Entman's frames, which are : 1)The problem, 2) the causes, 3) the judgment and evaluation, 4) solutions.

In terms of the study tools, I have designed a questionnaire to analyse the content of the Al-Rai website in the period 2019–2021 regarding child marriage. To check the level of the reliability of the study tool, I executed a post-study test using the Holsti method as follows:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where M in the above-mentioned equation refers to the number of symbolic decisions accredited by data analysts, where N1 + N2 refers to the total number of symbolic decisions.

For this purpose, a number of data analysts were trained to individually analyse 10% of the chosen contents of the study sample of Al-Rai website and were provided with the final result of the analysis questionnaire.

It was found that the number of decisions agreed upon by both analysts was 40 decisions out of the 50 units. As a result, the application of the Holsti equation comes as follows:

$$\frac{40 \times 2}{50 + 50} = \frac{80}{100} = 80\%$$

As shown in the equation, the reliability level is 80%, so the tool used is applicable. The results of Mao's study suggest that if a value of between 70 and 80% is achieved, the results are accepted. This value indicates the stability of the analysis. In contrast, a percentage below 70% is too low to be accepted. If the value is 85% or more, the stability of the analysis is high and accepted if this percentage is 70–75% (Mao, 2017).

Accordingly, I utilized several procedures of the study as follows:

- 1- Examining all available previous research related to the study.
- 2- Examining publications on the Al-Rai website that are related to the study.
- 3- Content analysis questionnaire testing.
- 4- Executing statistical analysis.
- 5- Writing the final results and conclusion.

Moreover, I used the statistical package for social sciences and humanities through the statistical program (SPSS). In order to collect the data obtained from the content analysis form, frequencies and percentages were extracted, in addition to using the Chi-Square test (Chi^2), which is a statistical method assessing the goodness of fit between observed values and those expected theoretically, and this measurement was correlated with the significant level or (P) = (Sig.) value, which is the probability of the error resulting from the statistical differences, the corresponding values of confidence level = (0.95), relying on figures to clarify the significance of statistical differences, in order to accurately achieve the study objectives and questions (Dahiru, 2008).

3. Results

The controversy over early marriage in Jordan has prompted the electronic press to address this issue as news content that handles specific news frames that were built based on the Al-Rai website's vision through the use of the frame categories presented in Robert Entman's methodology. Accordingly, I will analyse the issue of marriage quantitatively as it is discussed in the news, which involves identifying the problem, its causes, solutions, judgment, and suggestions for community reform. A quantitative survey has been designed to monitor the frequency of news coverage of child marriage issues by the frame categories that will be presented below using SPSS Software.

Regarding the first sub-question, the result showed as follows:

Table 1.
Volume of News Coverage of Child Marriage in Jordan

Volume of News Coverage of Child Marriage in Jordan							Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Volume of News Coverage of Child Marriage	Time								
	2019		2020		2021				
	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	%			
	16	51.6	5	16.1	10	32.3	2	5.871	0.053

Table 1 shows that the percentage of news coverage of child marriage in 2019 was 51.6%, and it decreased to 16.1% in 2020. While the percentage of the news coverage of this issue in 2021 increased to 32.3%. In addition, the Chi2 value = 5.871, and it is not significant at the level of (0.05), which means there were no statistically significant differences in the quantity of tackling child marriage over the three years, and Figure 1 shows this below.

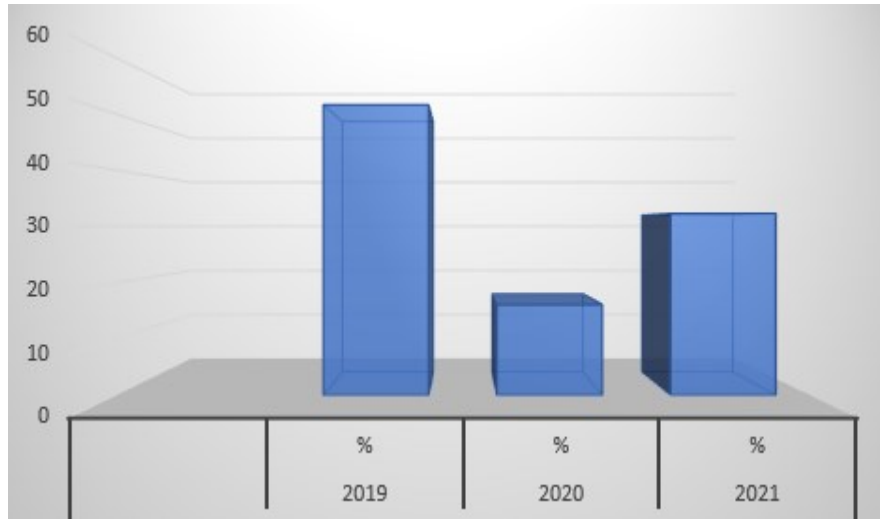


Figure 1. Number of News Covering Child Marriage

Regarding the second sub-question, the result showed that:

Table 2.

Quantitative Survey of the First Framing Category of the Al-Rai Website

Frame Category	Time						Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Identify Child Marriage Issue	2019		2020		2021				
	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	%			
Explanation of the Legal age for marriage under 18 years of age	4	57.1	2	28.6	1	14.3	2	2.000	0.368
Justification of Jordanian Legislation	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	0.00	1.000
Index of Spreading these Issues	9	52.9	3	17.6	5	29.4	2	3.294	0.193

Table 2 shows that there were no statistically significant differences in the explanation of the legal age for marriage under 18 years of age on Al-Rai website regarding the time. In the year 2019 the frequency of explanations was about 57.1% in 2019, decreased to 28.6% in 2020 and 14.3% in 2021, Chi² value = 2.000, which is not significant at the level of (0.05).

It is noted from the results that the website did not address the issue of justification of Jordanian legislation in 2019, 2020, and 2021, with a Chi² value = (0.00), and it is not significant at the level of (0.05).

The index and statistics of spreading these issues have dealt with different proportions through the years of (study sample). In 2019 = 52.9%, 2020 = 17.6%, and 2021 = 29.4%, Chi² value = 3.294, and it is not significant at the level of (0.05) and Figure 2 shows that.

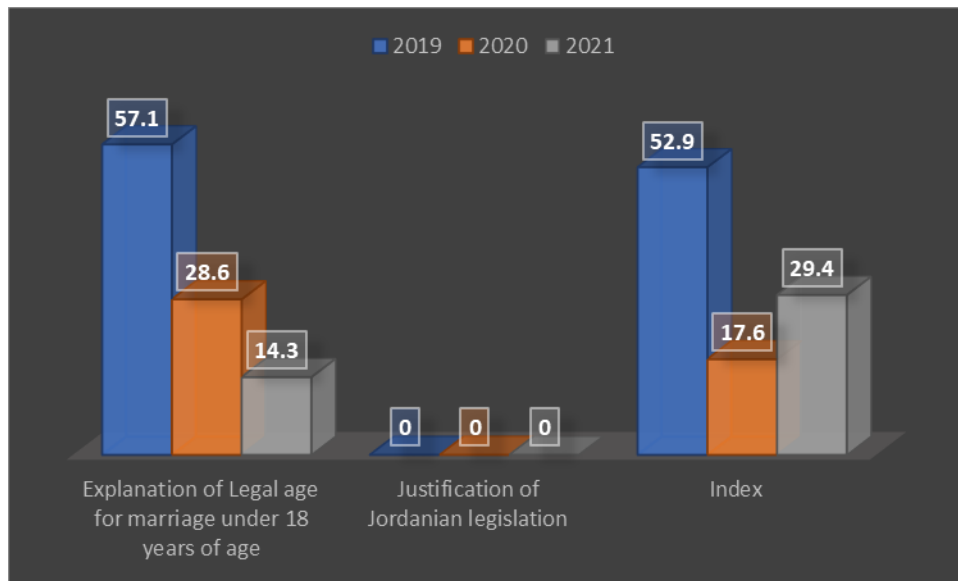


Figure 2. Identify Child Marriage Issue

Regarding the third sub-question, the result showed that:

Table 3.

Quantitative Survey of the Second Framing Category of the Al-Rai Website

Frame Category	Time						Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Diagnosing the Cause of Child Marriage	2019		2020		2021				
	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	%			
Seeking Protection and Security	2	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
Poverty or Economic Situation	6	66.7	2	22.2	1	11.1	2	4.667	0.097
Seeing Girls as a Burden	1	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
Failure to Study	1	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
Traditional Mentality and Customs	3	60.0	0	0.00	2	40.0	1	0.200	0.655
Family Disintegration	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	0.000	1.000
Ignorance	1	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
Kindship Marriage	1	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
The High Number of Syrian Refugees	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	0.500	0.779
COVID-19 Pandemic	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	100.0	---	---	---

Table 3 shows that there were many diagnosing the cause of child marriage, which was covered by Al-Rai website during 2019–2021 represented by seeking protection just in 2019 with 100%, and there was no reaction to this subject in 2020–2021.

The poverty or economic situation was mentioned in 2019 with 66.7%, decreased to 22.2% in 2020 and 11.1% in 2021, $\text{Chi}^2 = 6.447$ and it is not significant at the level of (0.05).

Seeing girls as a burden is one of the reasons for child marriage, but this topic was only addressed once in 2019, as well as for failure to study. It was addressed in 2019 by Al-Rai website.

As for the mentality and traditional customs, they were the causes of child marriage, as the Al-Rai website mentioned this in 2019 with 60% and 2021 with 40%, and there was no reaction in 2020, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.200$, which is not significant at the level of (0.05).

Family disintegration is the cause of child marriage. It was addressed on Al-Rai website with a percent of 50% in 2019 and 2020, and there was no address in 2021, $\text{Chi}^2 = (0.00)$ and it is not significant at (0.05).

Ignorance is another of the causes of child marriages. It was addressed by Al-Rai website just in 2019 with (1) frequency of 100%. On the other hand, there was no address in 2020–2021. Al-Rai website dealt with the kindship marriage only in the year 2019 with 100% and there were no addresses in 2020–2021. Meanwhile, the high number of Syrian refugees was a reason for child marriage, the Al-Rai website addressed that in 2019 with (50%), (25%) in 2020 and 2021, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.500$ and it is not significant at level of (0.05), this proved there are no statistically significant differences in the volume of coverage online.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic was the reason for child marriage, as it turns out on the Al-Rai website, and it was found in 2021 with (4 frequency) of 100%, and Figure 3 shows that.

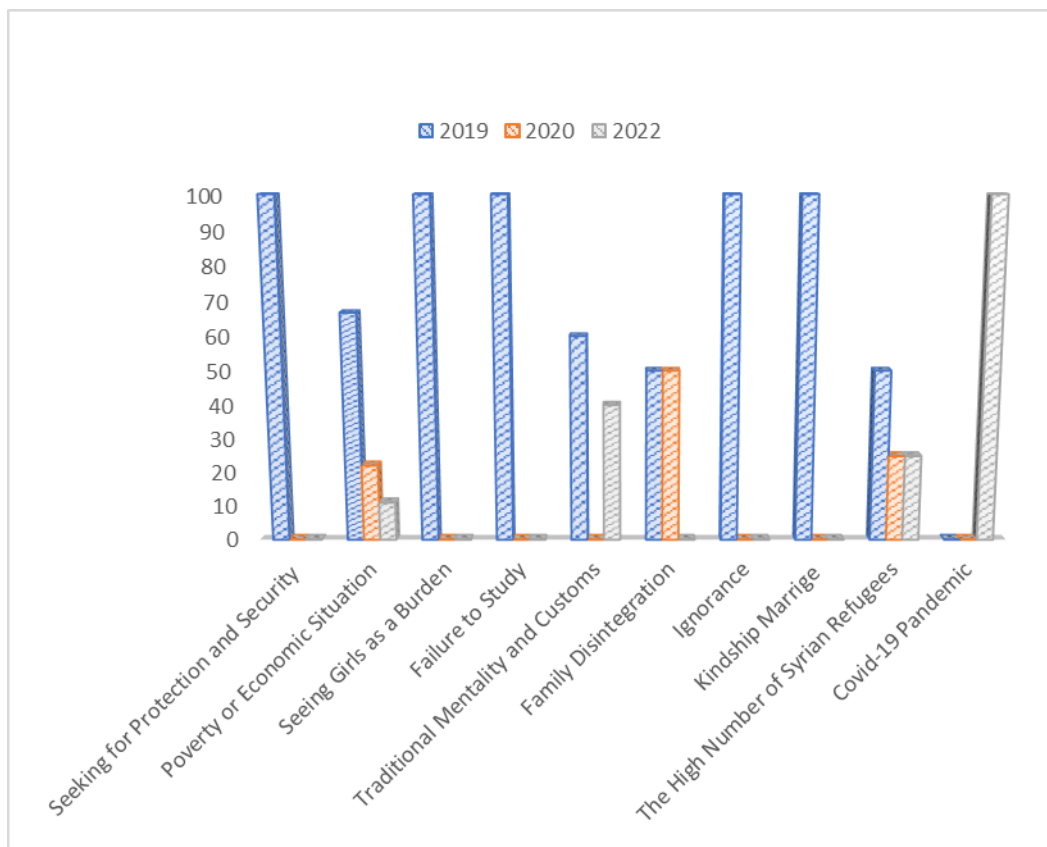


Figure 3. Diagnosing the Cause of Child Marriage

Regarding the fourth sub-question, the results showed that:

Table 4.

Quantitative Survey of the Third Framing Category of the Al-Rai Website

Frame Category	Time						Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Negative Effect of	2019		2020		2021				
Early Marriage	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	%			
Exposed to Physical Violence	2	28.6	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	0.286	0.867
Divorce	4	66.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	3.000	0.223
Deprivation of Education	6	60.0	2	20.0	2	20.0	2	3.200	0.202
Miscarriage	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---
Death During Childbirth	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	0.000	1.000
Exposing to Depression	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	50.0	1	0.000	1.000
Physical Health	4	50.0	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	1.750	0.417
Mental Health	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	50.0	1	0.000	1.000
Unplanned Pregnancy	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	0.500	0.779
Restricting girls' Freedom of Choice	3	75.0	0	0.00	1	25.0	1	1.000	0.317
Restricting Girls from Job	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.00	1	0.000	1.000
Employment and Economic Empowerment									
Low Rate of Women's Economic Participation	1	50.0	0	0.00	1	50.0	1	0.000	1.000
Frame Category	Time						Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Positive Effect of	2019		2020		2021				
Early Marriage	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	100%			
Protect Girl Honors' from Sexual Harrassment	2	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	---	---	---

The Al-Rai website, through tackling the news articles, touched on the subject of the negative effect of early marriage in Jordan. The result showed that child marriage caused exposure to physical violence in 2019 and 2020 with a percent of 28.6%, and that it increased in 2021 with a percent of 42.9%. Moreover, the $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.286$, with a significant level of more than 0.05.

Meanwhile, tackling the volume of child marriage leading to divorce as a negative effect from the Al-Rai website showed 66.7% in 2019, and 16.7% in 2020 and 2021, respectively, $\text{Chi}^2 = 3.00$, and it is not significant at the level of 0.05.

Moreover, the website addressed the deprivation of education as a bad effect of child marriage in 2019, with a percent of 60%. In 2020 and 2021, with a percent of 20%, $\text{Chi}^2 = 3.200$ with a significant level of 0.202, which is not significant at the level of 0.05. The website did not address the issue of miscarriage, which can affect the wife as a result of child marriage. As for the topic of death during childbirth, it was addressed by Al-Rai website once in 2019 and once in 2020, with a percent of 50% for both, and it was not addressed in the year 2021, with $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.000$, and it is not statistically significant at a level of (0.05).

Exposure to depression came from Al-Rai website as an important topic related to child marriage, as the topic was presented in the years 2019 and 2021, at a rate of 50% for each, and the website did not take this issue into serious in the year 2020, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.000$ with significant (1.000) and its more than (0.05), which proves that there are no statistically significant differences in the treatment that early marriage causes exposure to depression across the site within three years. Physical health is an important issue during child marriage, as Al-Rai website dealt with this issue in the three years as a sample for the study, and the value was 50% in the year 2019, decreased to 12.5% in 2020, and increased to 37.5% in 2021, $\text{Chi}^2 = 1.750$, and it is not significant at the level of (0.05) among the three years.

Likewise, mental health can be affected as a result of child marriage, and Al-Rai website indicated this by 50% in 2019 and 2021, but the website did not address this issue in 2020, Chi^2 value = 0.000, and it is not significant at a level of (0.05).

Another negative effect of early marriage related to unplanned pregnancy, found in 2019 with a percent of 50%, 25% in 2020 and 2021 respectively, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.500$ which the significant level more than (0.05) which indicates that there were no statistically significant differences in covering that early marriage drove untimely pregnancy among three years through the Al-Rai website.

The results of the study indicated that a girl's freedom to choose her husband is restricted in 2019 with a percent of 75% and in 2021 with a percent of 25%, $\text{Chi}^2 = 1.000$ and it is not significant at a level of (0.05). On the other hand, the result showed there was no topic about this subject on the Al-Rai website in 2020.

In addition, restricting girls from employment and economic empowerment had a share of issues related to child marriage on Al-Rai website with a percent of 50% in 2019 and 2020, and there was no reaction on this subject in 2021, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.000$ with a significant level greater than (0.05). Moreover, Al-Rai website addressed the low rate of women's economic participation with a percent of 50% in 2019 and 2021, and the website did not tackle a subject related to this topic in 2020, $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.000$, and it is not significant at a level of (0.05).

Finally, tackling the protection of girls' honor from sexual violence such as raping or harrasment as a positive effect of early marriage through the Al-Rai website was 100% in 2019 and there were no addresses in 2020–2021. Figures 4 and 5 show this below.

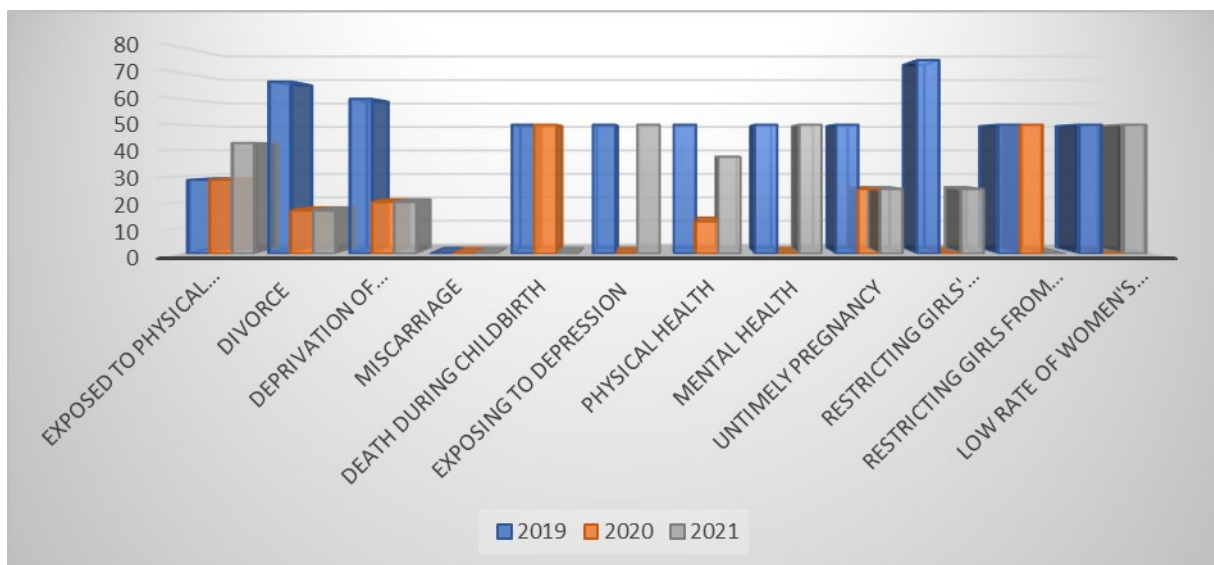


Figure 4. Negative Effect of Early Marriage

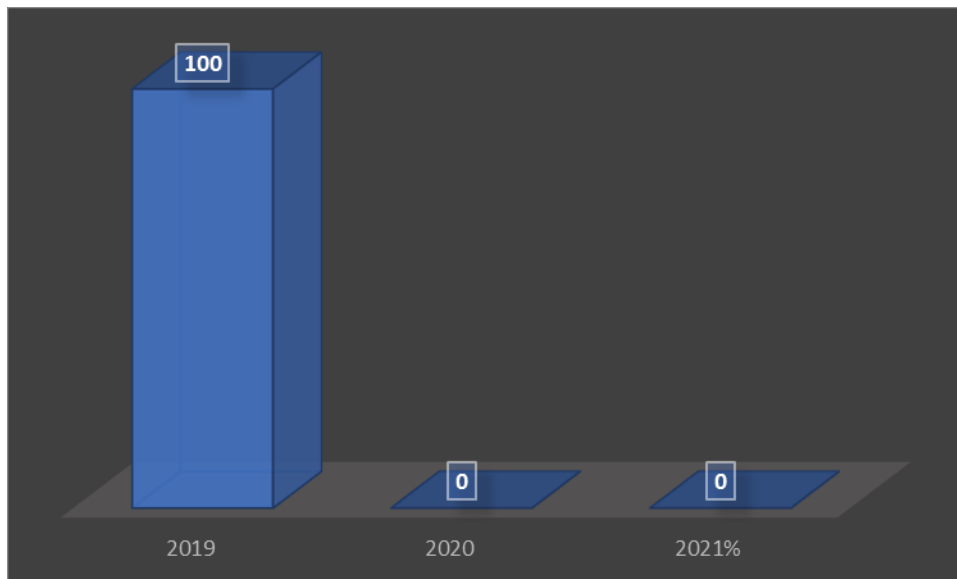


Figure 5. Positive Effect of Early Marriage

Regarding the fifth sub-question, the results read as follows:

Table 5.

Quantitative Survey of the Fourth Framing Category of the Al-Rai website

Frame Category	Time						Df	Chi ²	Sig.
Proposing Solutions for Child Marriage	2019		2020		2021				
	Frequent	%	Frequent	%	Frequent	%			
Awareness Program for Ending the Early Marriage	8	47.4	4	21.1	6	31.2	2	2.00	0.36
Media Campaign to End Child Marriage	2	66.7	0	0.00	1	33.3	1	0.333	0.564
Solutions and Assistance for Married Minors to Continue their Education	6	66.7	2	22.2	1	11.1	2	4.667	0.097
Claiming for Amending the Law (Raising the age of Early Marriage)	6	85.7	0	0.00	1	14.3	1	3.571	0.059

There were many suggestions for solutions to end child marriage (the roles of human rights activists) on Al-Rai website, represented in the awareness program for ending early marriage in 2019, such as setting courses, conferences, meetings, lectures, and awareness seminars to increase awareness about the danger of this issue with the highest percent of 47.4%. In 2020 the percent of tackling this frame decreased to (21.1%) and in 2021 the percent increased to 31.6%, Chi² = 2.00 and it is not significant at the level of (0.05) in tackling the suggested and solutions for ending child marriage.

The second solution was releasing media campaigns to end child marriage on the Al-Rai website. The address reached in 2019 (66.7%) and in 2021 with a percent of (33.3%). Meanwhile the website has no subject related to this topic in 2020, Chi² = 0.333 with a significant value of more than (0.05), which proved that there are no statistically significant differences in the treatment of the media campaigns by Al-Rai over three years.

In terms of addressing the solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education, which received attention from Al-Rai website for the past three years, in 2019 the percentage of 66.7%, the percentage decreased to 22.2% in 2020 and 11.1% in 2021, $\chi^2 = 4.667$, which is not significant at the level of (0.05) in taking solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education through the website.

Finally, the claim to amend the law (raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years) received attention from the Al-Rai website, the highest being in 2019 with a percent of (85.7%) and the lowest being in 2021 with a percent of (14.3%). There was no any attention on this subject in 2020, $\chi^2 = 3.571$ and it is not significant at a level of (0.05). This means there were no statistically significant differences in amending the law by raising the age of early marriage among the period (2019–2021), and Figure 6 shows that.

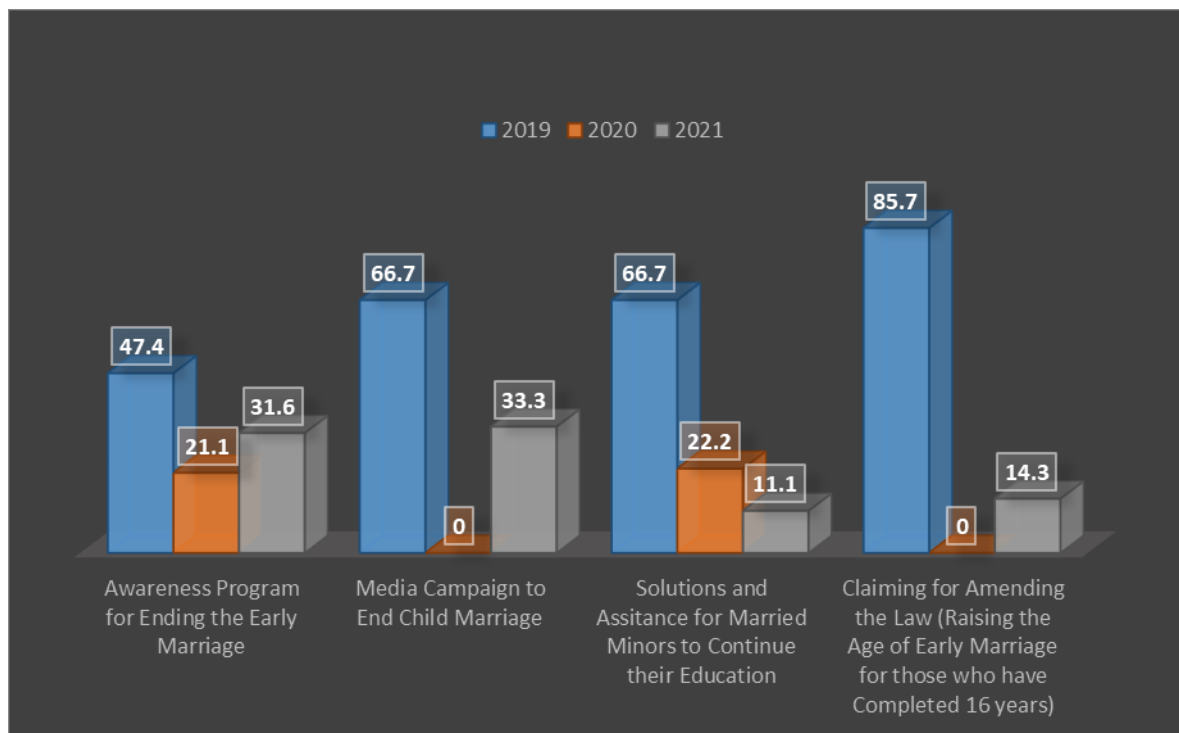


Figure 6. Proposing Solutions for Child Marriage

4. Discussion

This study aimed to verify the role of the online newspaper Al-Rai in framing the treatment of the issue of early marriage in Jordan from 2019 to 2021. It applied a combined descriptive and quantitative method to verify the position of the website towards the issue of early marriage by analysing the attributes of the news discourse and defining the media frame used according to Robert Entman's methodology, which delineates the following four frameworks:

1. Identifying a specific issue.
2. Diagnosing the cause of that issue.
3. Making an ethical judgment and evaluation of the issue.
4. Proposing solutions for that issue.

The sample of this study was a purposive sample chosen from Al-Rai Website publications which discussed child marriage issue through the past three years, of which there were 31 news articles.

In terms of data collection, I have designed a quantitative survey to analyse news frames related to the issue of early marriage in Jordan. The Holsti equation test was applied to verify the level of reliability of the study tool, which is a quantitative analysis.

The results showed that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of (0.05) among the three years under survey here, which means the convergence of the statistical results confirmed that the Al-Rai website has distributed its interest in addressing the issue in a close manner, despite the decline in coverage in 2020, which, as shown in one Figure 1, may be due to the quarantine during the spread of the Corona epidemic.

In terms of the frame analysis, the result of the first frame (identifying the child marriage) showed that there are no statistically significant differences at level of (0.05) in terms of explaining the issue of the legal age for marriage under 18 years in 2019, 2020, and 2021. When it comes to the justification of Jordanian legislation on early marriage, the result showed that the website did not address it, and it is not significant at the level of (0.05). In terms of tackling the index of spreading these issues within the period of the study, there are no statistically significant differences at level of (0.05). Accordingly, this indicates the proximity of the statistical results in the treatment of the first frame. Which means that the Al-Rai website has dealt with the volume of explanation of the issue of child marriage and the index of its prevalence in a similar way for the three years, except tackling the legal justification of the early marriage, which has been neglected.

Moreover, the quantitative results of analysing the second frame (Diagnosing the causes of child marriage) proved that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of (0.05) in terms of seeking protection and security, poverty, economic situation, seeing girls as a burden, failure to study, traditional mentality and customs, family disintegration, Ignorance, kinship marriage, the high number of Syrian refugees, and the COVID-19 pandemic. This proves that the site has given close attention to addressing the multitude of reasons why families turn to marrying off their girls at an early age.

The results of the statistical analysis of the third frame (effect of early marriage) showed that there were no differences in the statistical significance at the level of 5 in 2019, 2020, and 2021 regarding exposure to physical violence, divorce, deprivation of education, death during childbirth, exposure to depression, physical health, mental health, unplanned pregnancy, restricting girls' freedom of choice, restricting girls from employment and economic empowerment, and low rate of women's economic participation, except for miscarriage which was overlooked. This indicates that the Al-Rai website distributed its interest in treating the negative effects of early marriage in a homogeneous manner during the three years, while it was limited to treating one positive effect of marriage, namely the early protection of girls' honor from sexual violence in 2019 and neglecting to mention it in the following years, which gives an indication of the negative attitude of the opinion site towards this type of issue.

Concerning the fourth frame (proposing solutions for child marriage), the statistical results also showed no significant changes at the level (0.05) during the past years, regarding tackling awareness programs for ending early marriage, media campaigns to end child marriage, solutions and assistance for married minors to continue their education, and claiming to amend the law regarding raising the age of early marriage for those who have completed 16 years. This means that the site paid attention to addressing these points of solutions almost at a similar level.

Finally, based on the results of the research, it is recommended to intensify addressing the issue of early marriage in Jordan through news websites, especially to explain to the public

the reasons and justifications for legislating the Jordanian law for marriage before the age of 18 due to the lack of this axis on the Al-Rai newspaper website.

Moreover, given the scarcity of specialised scientific research in this field, I recommend the need to conduct more research on the role of mass communication in addressing the issue of early marriage in the Arab world, specifically in Jordan, to educate public opinion about the effects of this type of issue in light of its recent spread.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my supervisor, Dr Marta Fernández-Morales, who helped me conduct this study to fulfil the requirements of the doctoral program in Gender and Diversity at the University of Oviedo.

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