

The Role of Jordanian Print and Digital Journalism in Addressing Human Rights: A Study of Journalists' Social Responsibility and Press Agenda Setting

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Received: 15/2/2025
Revised: 27/2/2025
Accepted: 15/6/2025
Published online: 23/7/2026

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Citation: Aldamen, Y. (2026). The Role of Jordanian Print and Digital Journalism in Addressing Human Rights: A Study of Journalists' Social Responsibility and Press Agenda Setting. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 53(10), 10806.
<https://doi.org/10.35516/Hum.2026.10806>

Abstract

Objectives: This study investigates the role of Jordanian journalism—both in its print and digital forms—in the coverage of human rights issues. It specifically examines how Jordanian journalists conceptualize their professional roles and responsibilities in relation to human rights reporting. The study is anchored in Social Responsibility Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory, both of which emphasize the necessity of maintaining a balance between press freedom and societal obligations.

Methods: The target population consisted of journalists working for Jordanian print newspapers and digital news platforms. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants, resulting in the distribution of 180 questionnaires. Of these, 177 were returned and deemed valid for analysis, representing a response rate of 98.3%.

Results: The findings reveal that Jordanian journalists are cognizant of their potential to influence policymaking in the area of human rights. The data indicate a general inclination among journalists toward adopting an advocacy-oriented approach to human rights coverage. Participants perceive themselves as active contributors to the broader mission of defending democratic values and promoting human rights. The study also identifies key differences between print and digital journalism, with the latter demonstrating a more assertive and immediate approach to human rights reporting, largely due to its dynamic nature and relative independence from the structural constraints affecting traditional print media. Additionally, the findings underscore the critical importance of strengthening legal protections and professional support mechanisms to enhance journalists' capacity to positively impact society.

Conclusion: The study concludes by advocating for a re-evaluation of existing media policies and legal frameworks to ensure the unfettered exercise of freedom of expression. Such reforms are deemed essential for enabling journalists to fulfill their role as custodians of democracy and human rights.

Keywords: Human rights coverage, Jordanian press, digital journalism, Jordanian journalists, social responsibility, agenda setting.

دور الصحافة الأردنية المطبوعة والرقمية في تغطية حقوق الإنسان: دراسة حول المسؤولية الاجتماعية للصحفيين وتحديد أجندة الصحافة

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ملخص

الأهداف: تستكشف هذه الدراسة دور الصحافة الأردنية، سواء المطبوعة أو الرقمية، في تغطية قضايا حقوق الإنسان، مع التركيز على كيفية فهم الصحفيين الأردنيين لأدوارهم ومسؤولياتهم تجاه هذه القضايا. وتعتمد الدراسة على نظرية المسؤولية الاجتماعية ونظرية الأجندة الإعلامية التي تبرز الحاجة إلى توازن بين حرية الصحافة والمسؤولية الاجتماعية.

المنهجية: تكون مجتمع الدراسة من الصحفيين في الصحف المطبوعة والمواقع الإلكترونية الإخبارية الأردنية. وتم اعتماد أسلوب العينة العمدية لاختيار العينة: حيث تم توزيع (180) استبانة وعند استرداد الاستبانات كان هنالك (177) استبانة صالحة للتحليل بنسبة ردد كانت 98.3%.

النتائج: تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن الصحفيين الأردنيين يدركون تأثيرهم المحتمل في التأثير على صناعة القرار المتعلق بحقوق الإنسان. وتُظهر النتائج أن الصحفيين يتبنون بشكل عام موقفاً يُفضّل الانخراط في مناصرة حقوق الإنسان، ويرون أنفسهم كجزء من مهمة أوسع للدفاع عن القيم الديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان. كما تبرز الدراسة الفروق بين الصحافة المطبوعة والرقمية في تغطية هذه القضايا. تميل الصحافة الرقمية إلى تبني نهج أكثر جرأة وسرعة في تناول قضايا حقوق الإنسان بسبب طبيعتها الديناميكية وقدرتها على تجاوز القيود التقليدية التي قد تواجهها الصحافة المطبوعة. كما أكدت أهمية تمكين الصحفيين من خلال تعزيز الحماية القانونية والدعم المهني لتحسين قدرتهم على التأثير بشكل إيجابي في المجتمع.

الخلاصة: تخلص الدراسة إلى ضرورة إعادة النظر في السياسات الإعلامية والتشريعات لضمان ممارسة حرية التعبير بشكل كامل دون تدخلات تقيد هذه الحرية ما يمكن الصحفيين من لعب دورهم كحماة للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان.

الكلمات الدالة: تغطية حقوق الإنسان، الصحافة الأردنية، الصحافة الرقمية، الصحفيين الأردنيين، المسؤولية الاجتماعية، ترتيب



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الأجندة.

Introduction

Journalism has gone through different stages over the centuries, starting with the print press in the sixteenth century, where newspapers emerged as the main medium of communication since around 1700. The eighteenth century saw magazines while the twentieth century saw radio and television and the twenty-first century saw the Internet. These developments have led to an expansion of the range of available news and an increase in the speed of its circulation, which has enhanced the ability of journalism to shape public opinion and open new channels of information (Martin & Copeland, 2003, p. 2). While technological advancements have made information more accessible. The rapid digitalization of news has enhanced the debate of the function of journalism in a democracy versus the detrimental effects of social media and digital news platforms on the ethical responsibilities of journalists.

Jordan's emergence into print media began with the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1920. After the announcement of Emirate's founder Prince Abdullah I bin Al Hussein, media outlets became necessary to represent the new nation's goals while increasing citizen's understanding. This led to the creation of the weekly newspaper which was named *Al-Haq Ya'lu* (Al-Mousa, 2021). A multitude of other printed newspapers emerged. Jordanian Journalism progressed significantly over the years with the constant increase of newspapers published, which were further classified into daily, weekly, and even monthly publications. In 1932, *Al-Difaa* newspaper was published and help to politically and culturally mobilize the Jordanian citizens. These efforts led to the creation other influential newspapers in the kingdom like *Al-Rai* and *Al-Dustour*, which had a major part to fulfill in the social and political conversations within the kingdom. In February 2025, Jordan's Media Commission (2025) reported that the total number of licensed periodical print newspapers totaled up to 19. The press in Jordan continue to operate with government censorship and restrain which has crippled its operations. The development of certain media laws has on occasion limited journalistic freedoms, giving rise to fears of self-censorship by journalists.

The press is one of the most prominent tools for promoting democracy, and plays a vital role in enabling people to express their criticisms and problems, convey them to decision-makers, and influence public opinion. The mission of the press is not limited to reporting what is happening around us, but extends to include criticism, awareness, guidance, and defending human rights, in addition to exposing violations and calling on the concerned parties to investigate them, which makes it an effective tool for influencing society and bringing about the desired change. The press is also considered the "fourth estate" and one of the most important means of democracy that allows citizens to voice their concerns and hold officials accountable. However, the press's ability to fulfill this role depends on the extent of press freedom, journalistic integrity, and the level of public trust in media institutions. In Jordan, concerns about media ownership, political influence, and external pressures on journalists raise questions about whether the press can genuinely serve as an independent watchdog.

Digital media are individual and collective productions the blogosphere social media mainstream digital media and alternative journalism websites (Franklin, 2012). Digital journalism, which delivers content in written, audio, and visual formats via the Internet, has become a dominant force in today's media landscape. As per the Jordanian Press and Publications Law established in 1998, printed material is characterized as: "Any form of publication where meanings, words, or ideas are documented in any manner, including digital or technological methods" (Jordanian Press and Publications Law, 1998). The shift to digital journalism, while groundbreaking, has also raised issues about reporting accuracy, the emergence of clickbait journalism.

The 1990s witnessed the beginnings of digital journalism. The Swedish publication *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, first founded in 1867 as *Helsingborgs Tidning*, debuted its online content in 1990, positioning it as a trailblazer in digital journalism (Gustafsson & Rydén, 2010). In the Arab world, digital journalism emerged with the launch of "*Asharq Al-Awsat*" as the first Arab digital newspaper in 1995, followed by the Lebanese newspaper "*An-Nahar*" in 1996. Other prominent digital newspapers such as "*Al-Hayat*" and "*As-Safir*" emerged in the same year. The year 2003 saw the launch of "*Shabab Misr*," the first Egyptian digital newspaper (Ali El-Din, 2015).

Digital journalism in Jordan started in 2001 with the inauguration of the "*Al-Madina Al-Riyadiya*" site, focusing on

sports news and operating until 2002. In 2004, the "Zad Al-Urdun" news site was established, and then "Ammon" was introduced in 2006. The rise of digital journalism in Jordan persisted with the launch of numerous online news outlets including Saraya News Agency, Khabarni, Ram Online, Al-Susana, Sama Al-Urdun, Jarasa, Jafra, Akhbar Al-Balad, Jabd, Ayla News, Amman Post, Akhbaruna Net, Kul Al-Urdun, Watana News, and more (Al-Dbaisi, 2020). As per figures from the Jordanian Media Commission, the count of licensed websites hit 133 by the close of February 2025, illustrating the competitive and vibrant character of the digital media environment in Jordan (Jordan Media Commission, 2025). The convenience of digital journalism has resulted in an overflow of information, making it hard to separate reliable journalism from false information.

Journalism, whether print, digital formats, or via social media, holds a vital position in influencing society in political, social, health, and cultural areas. Moreover, it plays a critical role in promoting and safeguarding human rights by highlighting civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. However, the degree to which the media in Jordan can function as a powerful instrument for democracy relies on the legal and political context in which it exists. Press freedom continues to be a debated topic, as restrictive media regulations, censorship, and government influence still present obstacles to journalistic autonomy. Although Jordanian journalism has progressed considerably, additional reforms are essential to guarantee that it can completely fulfill its democratic role and maintain its crucial function in promoting awareness of human rights matters (Amnesty International, 2023).

Study Problem

The press has become a major factor in the twenty-first century in promoting and protecting human rights, bringing about legal and political changes, shaping public opinion, and influencing social and cultural reality, whether positively or negatively, especially in Jordan where independent and digital media platforms have highlighted issues such as freedom of speech, gender rights, and political reforms (Reporters Without Borders, 2023; Amnesty International, 2022).

The role of the press and media is noticed in major events such as the Arab revolutions and many political events, which prompts us to explore how the press, whether printed or digital, dealt with human rights issues. The research problem is to evaluate how local news in Jordan deal with human rights issues.

According to Amnesty International Report (2023) a percentage of 64% of human rights news in the media focuses on civil and political rights, while economic, social and cultural rights are ignored or under-represented at the local level. Studies indicate that Jordanian media coverage of human rights issues is often characterized by imbalance, as it focuses more on civil and political rights while neglecting economic and social aspects (Abu Hashem, 2024). This is due to several factors, including the nature of the editorial line of local newspapers and the influence of media legislation. According to a report by the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) in Jordan, 60% of journalists face restrictions when trying to cover sensitive human rights issues (NCHR, 2023).

This study aims to assess how local newspapers in Jordan address human rights issues and examine the media's role in raising public awareness and advocating for human rights within society. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate the impact of media coverage on promoting justice and equality (Sakr, 2013). The need for this study arises from the growing importance of understanding the role of local newspapers in defending human rights, particularly amid the increasing violations of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Based on this, the study's objectives are as follows:

- Identifying newspapers' priorities in presenting civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.
- Identifying the most commonly used journalistic genres in covering these issues.
- Identifying the level of social responsibility and the level of commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics by journalists in covering human rights issues.

Based on the above-mentioned study objectives, the study questions are summarized as follows:

1. What are the priorities of newspapers in presenting civil and political rights compared to economic, social and cultural rights?
2. How does media agenda-setting influence the selection and prominence of journalistic genres in reporting on human

rights issues?

3. To what extent do local newspapers adhere to the principles of social responsibility when covering human rights issues?

Hypotheses

Based on its objectives and research questions, the hypotheses of the study are:

H1: Local newspapers prioritize civil and political rights differently compared to economic, social, and cultural rights in their coverage.

H2: Media agenda-setting influence the selection and prominence of Specific journalistic genres in reporting on human rights issues in local newspapers.

H3: Local newspapers demonstrate varying degrees of adherence to social responsibility principles in their coverage of human rights.

Importance of the study

The study tries to act as a guide for journalism and media scholars and students by exploring the role of print and digital journalism in Jordan in influencing the agenda for human rights discussions, especially in raising public awareness and promoting the rights of Jordanian citizens.

The study also tries to help in reaching a more accurate understanding of the contribution of print and digital journalism in defending human rights, which helps decision-makers in the fields of print and digital journalism in drawing up media policies and strategies, and determining the priorities of the media agenda that should be focused on to defend human rights through the opinions of media professionals and media officials.

The study as well tries to contribute to shedding light on shortcomings in media coverage of human rights issues, and providing recommendations to improve media performance in line with the principles of social responsibility and standards of journalistic professionalism, which contributes to enhancing public awareness and building an informed public opinion on human rights issues.

Literature Review

Agenda-Setting and the Role of Digital Journalism in Jordan

Victoria et al. (2024) studied, in return, how the Jordanian media system has been impacted by digital media, especially with regard to public media, credibility, and social responsibility. The study explained how the shift to digital media was crucial to the existence of media institutions and how digital change has been redefining journalistic conventions. However, it did not directly study how digital media platforms influence framing and prioritizing human rights issues in Jordanian media.

Ahmad et al. (2023) examined how Jordanian television journalists use social media platforms to shape their news agenda and selection. Their study concluded that social media, particularly X (Twitter), significantly influences journalists' ranking of events, and audience interest has a substantial role in shaping media agendas. The study highlighted editorial policy's duty to make sure that they are correct but did not examine the impact directly of such online agenda-setting tools on reporting of human rights stories. It is therefore lacking in knowledge about how social media agenda-setting influences reporting of human rights stories.

Journalistic Objectivity and Challenges in Digital Journalism

Al-Zoubi et al. (2024) explored the challenges for Jordanian reporters in maintaining objectivity on social media. They employed thematic analysis to determine two main barriers: a lack of well-defined policies distinguishing between personal and professional opinions and the characteristics of social media communication. While the study contributed to the existing body of knowledge about journalistic ethics online, it did not especially emphasize how these barriers affect the precision

and balance of human rights coverage in Jordanian reporting.

The Role of Journalism in Addressing Social Issues

The digital journalism tends to adopt a bolder and faster approach in dealing with human rights issues compared to the print press, which faces greater restrictions due to censorship and traditional laws. Aldamen (2017) proposed increasing awareness among journalists on the human rights act and expanding reporting space on human rights. It did not examine how journalists respond to political and institutional constraints in reporting on human rights violations.

Altamimi (2024) was interested in the Jordanian digital journalism function in reporting on violence against women. The study set out to determine whether Jordanian digital media used feminist-sensitive reporting but were predominantly neutral to victims and aggressors. Though this research establishes a significant aspect of human rights journalism, it does not examine how journalists approach editorial constraints while reporting on broader human rights themes such as freedom of expression, political repression, or workers' rights.

Obeidat and Al Zyoud (2022) explored the Jordanian media role in combating violence in society. In their research, while media practitioners believe that journalism helps face social violence, its actual impact is moderate. The study suggested that more efforts from the media are needed to raise awareness and develop ethical values. Yet, it did not broach the manner in which media professionals place abuses of human rights within these frames of violence of society, falling short in an examination of whether Jordanian media actually links violence to broader human rights discourses.

Media Framing of Human Rights Issues

At the national level, Abuhasirah and Salameh's (2024) study analyzed media framing of environmental issues in Jordanian online newspapers. The study found that Jordanian media framed environmental issues mainly in terms of "strategy," "responsibility," and "human concerns" frames. Although this study was on environmental news coverage, it is reflective of the way Jordanian media frames social issues. Yet it does not analyze whether the same framing devices are applied to human rights issues, nor does it examine whether particular types of human rights violations receive more or less coverage.

At the international level, studies such as Aldamen & Abdul Jaleel, (2024) found that the purpose of the media agenda is to shape public opinion by promoting particular viewpoints and ideas. The representation of populist governments, symbolic elites, and a media agenda intended to sway public opinion with particular beliefs and viewpoints are all shaped by this process of media framing (Aldamen, 2023). Whereas Sahu & Ahmad (2018) report that Indian newspaper media emphasize stories on human rights but with negative reporting. As well as, Brandle (2018) observed that news on American and British media is seldom reported credibly as matters of human rights. These findings raise questions about whether Jordanian journalism has the same trends in framing human rights reporting. Bailliet's study (2013) analyzed the role of Al Jazeera English in advancing public knowledge of human rights violations. The research confirmed that media coverage significantly influences perceptions of democracy, peace, and security and can attract the world's attention to human rights crises, particularly in the Global South. However, the study was founded on an international news organization rather than Jordanian journalism. The Women's Rights Programs (2012) researched how the Internet facilitated the advancement of women's rights globally. It concluded that digital spaces have made women more involved in political decision-making and supported greater advocacy for an end to gender violence. As much as this research highlights the efficacy of digital media in advancing women's rights, it does not address how Jordanian journalism utilizes digital spaces in reporting on gender. Nwankwo's study (2011) was on how the BBC documentary *Chocolate: The Bitter Truth* contributed to raising awareness of child labor and human rights violations in the cocoa industry. The study emphasized the utilization of investigative journalism in revealing human rights violations, yet it did not investigate how Jordanian local media organizations carry out the same investigative work.

Research Gap

Most of the existing studies study general media trends but not necessarily how Jordanian journalism addresses specific human rights issues such as press freedom, political oppression, rights of refugees, and labor rights. There is little research on comparing print and digital media in Jordan in terms of their approaches to reporting on human rights. It is not yet clear

whether electronic news is more capable of advancing human rights than print. Few existing studies examine how audiences in Jordan consume and understand human rights reporting. Knowledge of public reception can offer some clues as to whether or not media translation results in sociological or policy shifts. There is little academic research concerning how Jordanian journalists frame human rights issues beyond isolated issues like gender violence against women. Investigating whether and how journalists employ specific framing strategies, such as conflict, responsibility, or advocacy frames, would contribute to our understanding of the role of the media in the human rights discourse.

What makes this study distinguished from the previous study

Unlike previous studies that have addressed media coverage of human rights in general or in international contexts, this study focuses specifically on the Jordanian press, whether printed or digital, and its role in addressing human rights issues. The study covers all forms of rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural), which gives it comprehensiveness compared to other studies that focused on only one aspect. Most previous studies have addressed the media in general or focused on one type of it, while this study is distinguished by analyzing the differences between the print press and the digital press in covering human rights.

The role of Jordanian print and digital media in human rights is a not-yet-explored research area despite its impact on public debate. Whereas previous studies have examined digitalization, agenda-setting, objectivity, and social responsibility, none of them address human rights reporting directly. Future studies must examine how Jordanian journalists frame human rights topics, under what conditions, and how effective journalism is in influencing public perception and policy on human rights topics. These gaps will enhance our knowledge of the role of media in promoting human rights in Jordan further.

Theoretical Framework

Social Responsibility Theory: it emerged in the United States as a response to criticisms of the freedom of the press theory, and was first presented in the Hutchins Commission Report in 1947. This theory aims to create a balance between freedom of the press and social responsibility, especially in liberal societies. The obligation to society requires the press to follow professional standards such as truthfulness, objectivity, balance, and accuracy, while avoiding publishing content that might lead to crime or violence (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). After World War II, there was a shift towards understanding that freedom of the press should be linked to specific responsibilities towards society. These responsibilities included providing media coverage that reflects the diversity of opinions and ideas in society, ensuring that all groups and intellectual currents are represented (Siebert et al., 1956). Journalism, according to this perspective, should be multi-vocal and responsive to the expectations of the public with high levels of performance.

This study is based on the social responsibility theory, which emphasizes the obligation of the media to provide content that promotes social values and justice through a balance between freedom and responsibility (Nerone, 1995). The social responsibility theory is one of the fundamental theories that guide the work of journalism and the media, especially with regard to covering human rights issues. The roots of this theory go back to the Hutchins Commission Report in 1947 (Blanchard, 1977) which aimed to re-evaluate the role and impact of journalism in society. The theory is based on the idea that freedom of the press comes with a great social responsibility, and the press should operate according to ethical standards that ensure balance, accuracy, and objectivity. This theory also means that freedom is not just a right but also a duty and a responsibility. The theory emphasizes the oversight role of public opinion, and stresses the need for the media to operate within a legal and institutional framework that allows for a plurality of opinions and reflects the intellectual and cultural diversity of society. The public expects high-level performance from the media, and media professionals must be accountable not only to their institutions but to society as a whole (Siebert et al., 1956).

Agenda Setting Theory: It suggests that the media influences the public and directs its attention towards certain issues which influences what individuals think and believe is important (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This theory has its roots in Walter Lippmann's book "Public Opinion" (1922) that the media play a crucial role in shaping the public's perceptions and sometimes presents false representations of reality, which greatly influences the formation of public opinion. It is based on the reciprocal relationship between the media and the public, where the media determines the political, economic, and social

priorities that should concern society.

Agenda-setting theory was founded on the work of McCombs and Shaw (1968). The theory showed that the issues that the media focused on and the increased public interest in those issues were related. Emphasis and focus are shifted from the media's agenda to the public's agenda during the prioritization process (McCombs 1968; McCombs 2005; Shaw et al., 1977). Level two of the Agenda Setting Theory is media framing. The way the media frame and present different issues has a big impact on how the public thinks and feels about them (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1991; Entman, 1993). Information about global phenomena is disseminated to the public in large part due to media coverage.

Methodology

The approach followed in this study is the descriptive approach using the quantitative method, which is one of the most important scientific research methods, and is characterized by the use of statistical and quantitative methods in collecting and analyzing data. This approach aims to describe phenomena and determine the relationships between them, test hypotheses, and build scientific theories. It also relies on quantitative data that are collected using a questionnaire to answer the study questions (Creswell, 2014).

Study population

It consists of journalists in local Jordanian newspapers and websites.

Study sample

A purposive sampling method was used to select sample members, whereby journalists are selected based on specific criteria related to the field of study. This method is a non-probability sampling method, used deliberately to select the most appropriate individuals for the research. A number of (180) questionnaires were distributed, and when the questionnaires were retrieved, as shown in Table (1) there were (177) questionnaires valid for analysis, with a response rate of 98.3%, which is an acceptable rate in humanities research, as they formed the final sample of the study.

Table 1: Characteristics of the study sample

Demographic Data	Categories	Number	Percentage%
Gender	Male	128	72.3%
	Female	49	27.7%
	Total	177	100.0%
Age	Under 26 years	20	11.3%
	26-36 years old	69	39.0%
	37- 47 years old	53	29.9%
	More than 47 years	35	19.8%
	Total	177	100.0%
Educational level	Bachelor's Degree	114	64.4%
	Intermediate Diploma	21	11.9%
	Master's Degree	20	11.3%
	Less than Diploma	15	8.5%
	PhD Degree	4	2.3%
	Higher Diploma	3	1.7%
	Total	177	100.0%
Number of years of experience	Less than 5 years	49	27.7%
	From 5-10 years	51	28.8%

Demographic Data	Categories	Number	Percentage%
	From 11-15 years	25	14.1%
	More than 15 years	52	29.4%
	Total	177	100.0%
	Printed newspaper	125	70.6%
Newspaper type	Website/ Electronic Newspaper	52	29.4%
	Total	177	100.0%

The demographic data indicates a significant gender disparity, with 72.3% of the sample being male and only 27.7% female. The underrepresentation of women in journalism could also influence the type of news covered, particularly in areas related to gender issues and human rights.

In terms of age, the largest age group is 26-36 years (39.0%), followed by 37-47 years (29.9%), suggesting that the field is dominated by young to mid-career professionals. The relatively low percentage (11.3%) of journalists under 26 indicates that younger individuals may face barriers to entering the profession, possibly due to limited opportunities or the need for more experience. The presence of 19.8% of journalists over 47 shows that journalism remains a long-term career option for some, though the lower representation suggests possible career shifts or retirements.

In terms of educational level, the majority of journalists (64.4%) hold a bachelor's degree, which aligns with journalism being a profession requiring formal education but not necessarily postgraduate specialization. The relatively low percentage of master's degree holders (11.3%) and intermediate diploma holders (11.9%) suggests that advanced academic qualifications are not a common requirement in the field.

Study Tool

The questionnaire was used as a tool for the field study due to its suitability to the nature of this study for the purpose of collecting information and data and answering the questions to be studied. To achieve the study objective related to knowing the attitudes of Jordanian journalists towards the role of print and digital journalism in defending human rights issues. A questionnaire consisting of three parts was designed: Part One: Social Characteristics. Part Two: Coverage of print and digital journalism of human rights issues in Jordan. Part Three: The level of Jordanian print and digital journalism' showing their social responsibility towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues.

Validity and reliability of the study questionnaire

1- Face validity (verification of arbitrators):

The validity of the questionnaire in its initial form was confirmed by presenting it to (5) arbitrators with experience and specialization in the relevant topic. After the questionnaire was returned, their amendments and suggestions were studied. In light of this, the opinions of the arbitrators were taken into account and the necessary amendments were made, which consisted of deleting some paragraphs and adding others, in addition to amending the linguistic wording of some paragraphs.

2- Reliability of the study questionnaire

After verifying the consistency validity of the study questionnaire, the stability coefficients were extracted using the Cronbach Alpha, Omega McDonald equation, and the results were as shown in Table (2).

Table 2: Reliability coefficients of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha and omega equations

Category	Omega McDonald	Cronbach's alpha
Journalists' attitudes towards civil and political human rights issues	0.945	0.945
Journalists' attitudes towards economic, social and cultural human rights issues	0.938	0.937
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	0.961	0.960
Total	0.978	0.978

The previous table shows that the stability values of the study tool axes were close in the stability scales, ranging between (0.937 -0.961). As for the study tool as a whole, its stability coefficient was (0.978), which are high stability coefficients according to (Santos, 1999). The study tools high stability coefficient and capacity to accomplish the study's goals in terms of evaluating and interpreting the findings and responding to its inquiries are demonstrated by the stability indicators.

Analysis of the Study Axes

A descriptive analysis was conducted for all study variables based on the data derived from the questionnaire, where frequencies and percentages were used in addition to the arithmetic mean and standard deviation to analyse the participants' answers. Print and digital journalism coverage of human rights issues in Jordan, and the determinants that affect that coverage:

1- The order of the civil and political rights according to the importance of newspaper coverage and defence

Figure (1) shows that the right to unionize and party is at the first position with a percentage of 11.4%, and the second position is the right to public office with a percentage of 11.3%. It is also seen that the right to freedom of the press and media is at the last position with a percentage of 10.6%. While the difference in percentage points between the highest (11.4%) and lowest (10.6%) may seem relatively small, it nonetheless represents a prioritization. The comparable numbers show that civil and political rights are all equally valued, but the slight underweighting of press freedom in media coverage is reflective of deeper structural and political truths. This indicates the need for increased balance in coverage by the media to ensure press freedom the attention it so duly deserves as one of the pillars in democratic states.

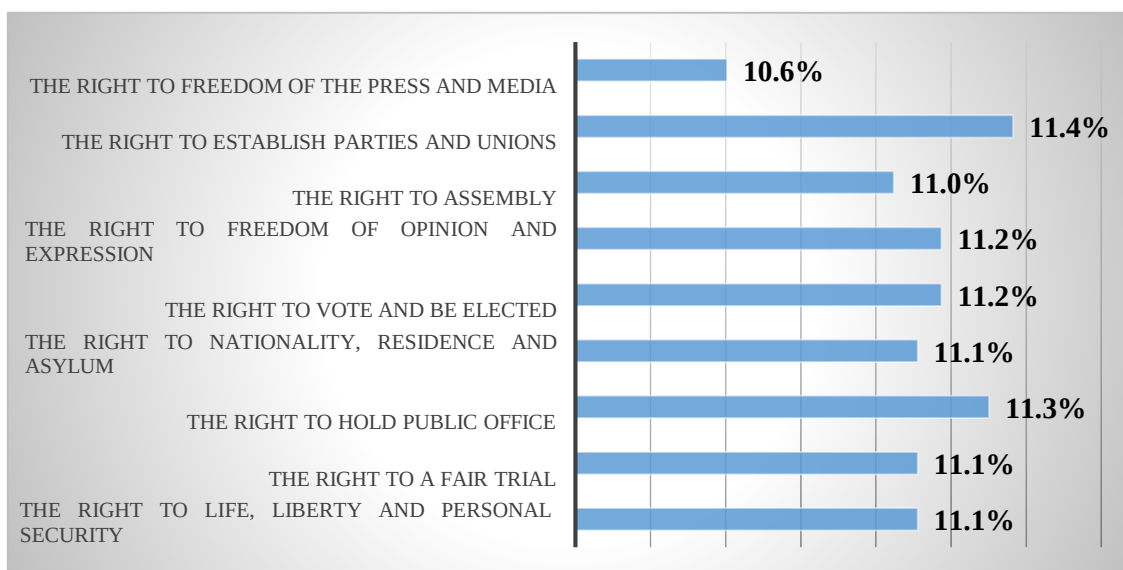


Figure (1): Percentages of civil and political rights according to the interest of newspapers in them

2- The order of the economic, social and cultural rights according to the importance of newspaper coverage and defence

Figure (2) shows the percentage of attention given by the media to economic, social and cultural rights. The results show that the right to a healthy environment, education, work and a decent standard of living were the highest economic, social and cultural rights given attention by local newspapers, with a percentage of 14.4% for each. Media coverage tends to reflect (and influence) what society sees as pressing concerns. The equal focus on these rights suggests they are key social priorities in the region or country. By reporting on these topics, newspapers play a watchdog role, urging governments to act or highlighting shortcomings.

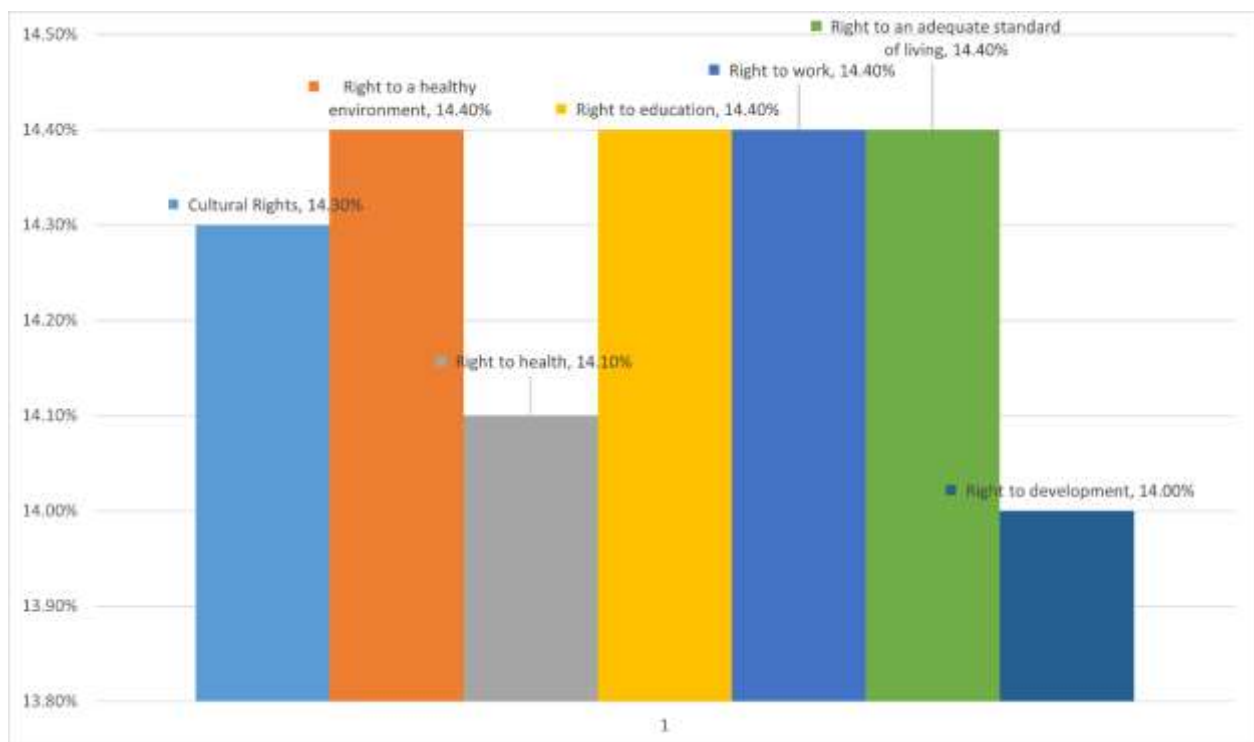


Figure (2): The percentages of economic, social and cultural rights according to the interest of newspapers in them

3- The most used journalistic genres in local newspapers the figure (3) shows the percentage of attention paid by the media to journalistic content.

According to the percentages, it appears that studies and translations rank first with 7.40%, indicating that this type of content receives more attention from newspapers. Shoemaker & Reese (1996) emphasize the "hierarchy of influences" in media content, showing how organizational and economic pressures shape editorial choices. However, "responses and corrections" and "letters to the editor (readers' mail)" were the least interesting content in local newspapers. McQuail (2010) emphasizes that meaningful reader feedback is often symbolic rather than substantive in controlled or commercialized media systems. Newman et al., (2017) found that reader comments and letters are frequently undervalued by editors despite their potential to boost trust and engagement.

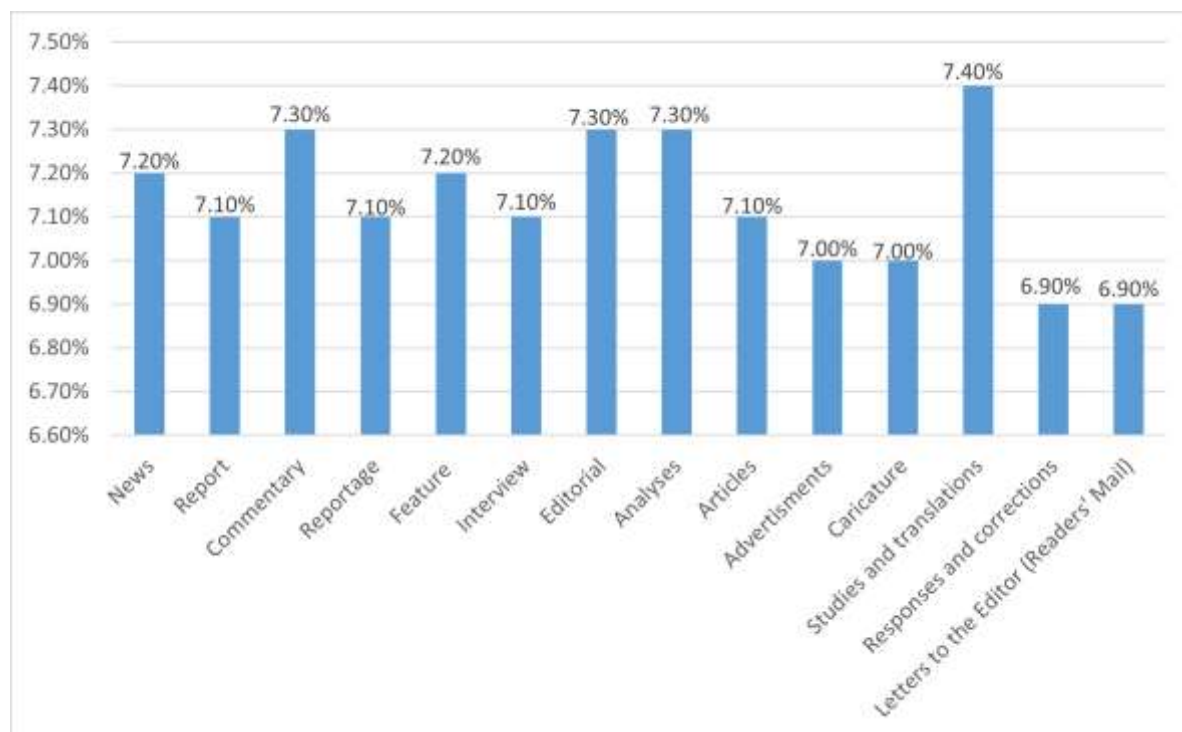


Figure (3): The percentages of the most popular journalistic genres in local newspapers

4- The level of Jordanian printed and digital newspapers' bearing of their social responsibility towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues

- The axis of the social responsibility of newspapers towards civil and political human rights issues

Table (3) shows the arithmetic mean and relative importance of the paragraphs of the social responsibility of newspapers towards civil and political human rights issues, where the paragraphs were arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic mean. It appears that the paragraph that states that the newspaper contributes to following up on various issues related to attacks on journalists and violations that affect media freedom in Jordan obtained the highest arithmetic mean at a rate of 3.89, with a standard deviation of 1.11, and a relative importance of 77.8%. The high average score and relative importance suggest that newspapers in Jordan are perceived as active monitors of press freedom violations, a role that likely stems from professional solidarity, institutional self-defense, and a desire to retain credibility. However, while the intention is commendable, the impact is constrained by broader structural limitations on press freedom.

In addition, the rest of the paragraphs appear with a gradual decrease in the arithmetic mean, but maintain relative importance levels ranging between 65.2% and 77.2%. While the general average of the social responsibility of newspapers towards civil and political human rights issues for all paragraphs is 3.61, and the standard deviation is 0.868, which indicates the existence of a relative balance in the newspapers' treatment of civil and political human rights issues in Jordan.

Table (3): The arithmetic means and relative importance of the paragraphs on the social responsibility of newspapers towards civil and political human rights issues, arranged in descending order

Paragraphs of the journalist's social responsibility towards civil and political human rights issues	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	relative importance
The newspaper contributes to following up on various issues related to attacks on journalists and violations affecting media freedom in Jordan.	3.89	1.11	%77.8
The newspaper covers the phenomenon of workers' protests and their demands.	3.86	1.094	%77.2
The newspaper contributes to defending violations that affect the freedom of opinion and expression of Jordanian citizens.	3.76	1.092	%75.2
The newspaper contributes to covering the issue of refugees in Jordan and allows for the presentation of their various problems.	3.75	1.102	%75.0
The newspaper contributes to monitoring elections and candidacy.	3.72	1.187	%74.4
The newspaper addresses the Jordanian citizen's right to freedom and personal security.	3.71	1.046	%74.2
The newspaper contributes to defending the human right to life as one of the rights guaranteed by the Jordanian Constitution.	3.66	1.061	%73.2
The newspaper covers all party events, festivals, demonstrations and sit-ins, whether in support of or against the government.	3.63	1.17	%72.6
The newspaper contributes to covering issues related to the citizen's right to establish and join parties, unions and associations.	3.54	1.128	%70.8
The newspaper contributes to covering citizens' complaints and mistreatment impartially.	3.51	1.183	%70.2
The newspaper contributes to publishing news related to the violation of the citizen's right to a fair trial.	3.49	1.244	%69.8
The newspaper contributes to defending the human right to hold public office.	3.37	1.186	%67.4
The newspaper publishes cases of administrative detention and their social and psychological consequences.	3.36	1.145	%67.2
The newspaper contributes to following up on various issues related to attacks on journalists and violations affecting media freedom in Jordan.	3.26	1.138	%65.2
Overall average	3.61	.868	%72.2

The arithmetic mean reflects the following (low level: from 1.00- 2.33, medium level: from 2.33- less than 3.67, high level: from 3.67-5.00).

- Social Responsibility of Newspapers towards Economic, Social and Cultural Human Rights Issues

The results of Table (4) indicate that the social responsibility of newspapers in Jordan toward economic, social, and cultural (ESC) human rights issues is moderate, with a general arithmetic mean of 3.56 and a relative importance of 71.2%. The highest-rated areas of newspaper engagement were issues related to education (M = 3.79, RI = 75.8%) and health (M = 3.75, RI = 75.0%). This pattern reflects a service-oriented model of reporting, where newspapers prioritize coverage of socially relevant but editorially safe topics.

Table (4): The arithmetic mean, standard deviation and relative importance of the paragraphs of the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards economic, social and cultural human rights issues, arranged in descending order

Paragraphs on the social responsibility of newspapers towards economic, social and cultural human rights issues	Relative importance	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
The newspaper contributes to following up on issues and problems related to education at all its stages.	%75.8	1.016	3.79
The newspaper contributes to publishing health-related news in all Jordanian hospitals.	%75.0	1.064	3.75
The newspaper contributes to publishing citizens' problems and concerns related to transportation.	%73.4	0.98	3.67
The newspaper contributes to defending the citizen's right to an adequate standard of living.	%72.4	1.081	3.62
The newspaper contributes to shedding light on the issues of poverty and unemployment and urging the creation of programs and solutions for them.	%72.2	1.077	3.61
The newspaper publishes real data on the reality of the right to development in Jordan.	%72.2	1.077	3.61
The newspaper contributes to publishing citizens' problems and concerns related to the environment and pollution.	%72.2	1.056	3.61
The newspaper contributes to defending the citizen's right to a fair distribution of development gains such as water and air quality.	%70.8	1.103	3.54
The newspaper contributes to evaluating government measures in the field of economic development and addressing the problems associated with it.	%70.0	1.051	3.5
The newspaper contributes to spreading awareness of environmental culture among Jordanian citizens.	%69.6	1.023	3.48
The newspaper contributes to highlighting cultural activities with the aim of encouraging official bodies to support cultural bodies, intellectuals and creatives.	%65.8	1.093	3.29
The newspaper contributes to publishing the achievements of literary, artistic and cultural creativity, freedom of scientific research and protection of intellectual property.	%65.2	1.216	3.26
The newspaper contributes to publishing citizens' problems and concerns related to transportation.	%73.4	0.98	3.67
Overall average	0.712	0.824	3.56

The arithmetic mean reflects the following (low level: from 1.00- 2.33, medium level: from 2.33- less than 3.67, high level: from 3.67-5.00).

1- The level of journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering human rights issues.

Table (5) shows the arithmetic mean and relative importance of the paragraphs on the level of journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering human rights issues, as they were arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic mean. The paragraph "The newspaper adheres to the provisions of the constitution and the law in defending human rights issues" tops the list with an arithmetic mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.024, and carries a relative importance of 79.0%. It is followed by the paragraph "The newspaper seeks the public interest in its coverage of human rights issues" with an arithmetic mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.952, and carries a relative importance of 78.0%.

This is consistent with Sakr's (2013) observation that journalists in the Arab world often rely on constitutional guarantees as a safeguard against political interference. Similarly, the high importance placed on the statement "The newspaper seeks the public interest in its coverage of human rights issues" (M = 3.90, RI = 78.0%) reflects the enduring influence of Social Responsibility Theory, which posits that the press has an ethical duty to serve the public good (Siebert et al., 1956). These findings align with Hanitzsch's (2011) cross-national study, which found that journalists in the Global South, including the Middle East, frequently view themselves as public service providers and defenders of social welfare. The consistent scores across all statements in this dimension may also reflect the influence of journalism education, professional training, and exposure to international ethical standards (UNESCO, 2021). The results underscore that despite political constraints, Jordanian journalists maintain a strong normative orientation in their approach to human rights coverage.

Table (5): The arithmetic mean, standard deviation and relative importance of the paragraphs on the level of journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights, arranged in descending order

Paragraphs on the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics	Relative importance	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
The newspaper is committed to the provisions of the Constitution and the law in defending human rights issues.	%79.0	1.024	3.95
The newspaper seeks to serve the public interest in its coverage of human rights issues.	%78.0	0.952	3.90
The newspaper is committed to objectivity (neutrality and avoiding subjectivity) in issues related to the defense of human rights in Jordan.	%77.8	0.999	3.89
The newspaper is committed to credibility in covering all human rights issues.	%77.6	1.032	3.88
The newspaper refuses to disclose its sources of information on human rights issues.	%76.8	1.129	3.84
The newspaper does not just publish news that it receives about a case, but it also takes the initiative to contact the relevant people to verify and confirm the news and to provide the reader with details of the case.	%76.2	1.115	3.81
The newspaper is aware of external interference to influence its reporting of human rights violations.	%76.2	1.074	3.81
The newspaper rejects the media's role in covering up human rights violations.	%76.0	1.15	3.80
The newspaper relies on legal opinions and materials in its dealings with human rights issues.	%75.2	1.061	3.76
The newspaper is committed to balance in covering human rights	%75.0	1.031	3.75

Paragraphs on the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics	Relative importance	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
issues by presenting the viewpoints of all parties on the human rights issues it covers.			
The newspaper exercises self-censorship in its reporting on human rights issues.	%73.2	1.06	3.66
The newspaper is committed to covering all human rights issues without preference or discrimination.	%72.4	1.091	3.62
The newspaper works to defend its right to obtain accurate information about human rights violations.	%72.4	1.097	3.62
The newspaper follows up on issues related to human rights after coverage with the relevant parties and individuals.	%71.2	1.142	3.56
The newspaper rejects foreign interference when dealing with human rights issues.	%71.0	1.205	3.55
The newspaper does not mind covering human rights issues that have been covered by other media outlets.	%70.8	1.071	3.54
Journalists at the newspaper in which they work shall observe human rights principles and charters when practicing their journalistic work.	%66.6	1.222	3.33
The newspaper considers covering human rights issues a priority in its journalistic work.	%66.6	1.16	3.33
The newspaper works to spread the culture of human rights by mentioning legal articles and texts and citing similar cases.	%65.4	1.16	3.27
The newspaper works to educate and train journalists to deal with human rights issues.	%59.8	1.321	3.00
Overall average	0.728	0.837	3.64

The arithmetic mean reflects the following (low level: from 1.00-2.33, medium level: from 2.33-less than 3.67, high level: from 3.67-5.00).

Are there statistically significant differences in the social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues attributed to age and the number of years of experience in the field of journalism?

To answer this question, the variables were divided as follows:

First: Age of Journalists

Table (6): One-way variance test for the dimensions of the social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues according to the age of journalists

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	F value	Mean of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Source of variation	Significance level
Political human rights issues	5.825	4.052	3	12.156	Between groups	.001
		.696	173	120.345	Within groups	
			176	132.501	Total	
Economic human rights issues	2.740	1.807	3	5.421	Between groups	.045
		.660	173	114.103	Within groups	

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	F value	Mean of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Source of variation	Significance level
			176	119.524	Total	
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	5.136	3.361	3	10.082	Between groups	.002
		.654	173	113.203	Within groups	
			176	123.285	Total	

*There are differences between groups.

We note from the table above that the F value is (5.825) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) for the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil and political human rights issues, as it was statistically significant at the level of 0.05. From the above, we conclude that there are statistically significant differences in this dimension attributed to the age of the journalist. As for the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues, the F value was (2.740) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) at a significance level of (0.045), which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues attributed to the age of the journalist.

In addition, there are statistically significant differences in the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights, as the value of F was (5.136) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) at a significance level of (0.002), which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in this dimension according to the age of the journalist. To find out the source of the differences between the age groups of journalists in the dimensions of the social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues, the Scheffe post hoc test was used.

Table (7): Scheffe post hoc test to determine the source of differences between age groups of journalists

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Sample size	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Age groups	26-36 years old	37-47 years old	More than 47 years
Political human rights issues	20	3.81	.628	Less than 26 years old	.844	.177	.007
	69	3.85	.687	26-36 years old	-----	.028	.000
	53	3.51	.833	37-47 years old	-----	-----	.059
	35	3.17	1.147	More than 47 years	-----	-----	-----
Economic human rights issues	20	3.59	.610	Less than 26 years old	.475	.037	.405
	69	3.76	.745	26-36 years old	-----	.010	.514
	53	3.45	.793	37-47 years old	-----	-----	.244

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Sample size	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Age groups	26-36 years old	37-47 years old	More than 47 years
	35	3.32	1.037	More than 47 years	-----	-----	-----
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	20	3.81	.766	Less than 26 years old	.694	.100	.035
	69	3.89	.705	26-36 years old	-----	.004	.001
	53	3.46	.737	37-47 years old	-----	-----	.457
	35	3.33	1.085	More than 47 years	-----	-----	-----

*There are differences between groups $P \leq 0.05$

From the table above, we can see that there are statistically significant differences in the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil and political human rights issues between the following age groups (over 47 years, 26-36 years, and less than 26 years), where the significance level was (.007, .000, and .028) between them, which is less than (0.05). The source of the differences is attributed to the age group of 26-36 years, then to the group of less than 26 years, then from 26-36 years, depending on the arithmetic mean, where the arithmetic means were (3.85, 3.81, 3.51) respectively.

As the previous table shows, there are statistically significant differences in the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues between the age group of 37-47 years and each of 26-36 years and less than 25 years, where the level of significance was (.037 and .010) between them, which is less than (0.05). The source of the differences is attributed to the age group of 26-36 years, then to the group of less than 26 years, then from 37-47 years, based on the arithmetic mean, where the arithmetic means were (3.76, 3.59, 3.45) respectively. There are also statistically significant differences in the level of journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights between the following age groups (over 47 years, 26-36 years, and less than 26 years), where the significance level was (.035, .001, and .004) among them, which is less than (0.05). The source of the differences is attributed to the age group from 26-36 years, then to the group less than 26 years, then from 26-36 years, based on the arithmetic mean, where the arithmetic means were (3.89, 3.81, 3.46), respectively.

Second: Number of years of experience:

Table (8): One-way variance test for the dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues according to the number of years of experience

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Source of variation	F value	Mean of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Significance level
Political human rights issues	Between groups	8.484	5.665	3	16.994	.000
	Within groups		.668	173	115.507	
	Total			176	132.501	
Economic human rights issues	Between groups	3.160	2.070	3	6.209	.026
	Within groups		.655	173	113.315	

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Source of variation	F value	Mean of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Significance level
	Total			176	119.524	
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	Between groups	4.764	3.136	3	9.407	.003
	Within groups		.658	173	113.878	
	Total			176	123.285	

*There are differences between groups

We note from the table above that the value of F is (8.484) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) for the axis of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil and political human rights issues, as it was statistically significant at the level of 0.05. From the above, we conclude that there are statistically significant differences in this dimension attributed to the number of years of experience. As for the axis of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues, the value of F was (3.160) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) at a significance level of (0.026), which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the dimension of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues attributed to the number of years of experience.

These findings suggest that experience plays a crucial role in shaping journalists' understanding of the press's normative responsibilities. Senior journalists are more likely to internalize the watchdog and civic functions of the media, owing to greater exposure to press freedom challenges, legal restrictions, and engagement with human rights issues over time (Hanitzsch, 2007). In contrast, early-career journalists often lack the institutional support, confidence, or training necessary to approach rights-based reporting critically and may instead focus on technical or event-driven journalism (UNESCO, 2021). The sharper variation in perceptions regarding civil and political rights may be due to the direct impact these rights have on journalists' daily work and professional autonomy, making them more sensitive to violations (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). These results align with broader media research showing that journalistic values, ethical awareness, and role conceptions evolve significantly with experience and exposure to complex sociopolitical environments.

In addition, there are statistically significant differences in the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights, as the value of F was (4.764) with a degree of freedom (3, 173) at a significance level of (0.003), which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in this dimension according to the number of years of experience. To find out the source of the differences between the categories of the number of years of experience in the dimensions of the social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues, the Scheffe post hoc test was relied upon.

Table (9): Scheffe post hoc test to determine the source of differences between the categories of the number of years of experience

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Sample size	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	The Number Years of experience	From 5-10 years	From 11 - 15 years	More than 15 years
Political human rights issues	49	3.84	.657	Less than 5 years	.998	.423	.000
	51	3.87	.796	From 5-10 years	-----	.333	.000
	25	3.54	.653	From 11 - 15 years	-----	-----	.229

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Sample size	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	The Number Years of experience	From 5-10 years	From 11 - 15 years	More than 15 years
	52	3.16	.018	More than 15 years	-----	-----	-----
Economic human rights issues	49	3.62	.755	Less than 5 years	.998	.508	.001
	51	3.80	.771	From 5-10 years	-----	.418	.000
	25	3.43	.687	From 11 - 15 years	-----	-----	.307
	52	3.33	.938	More than 15 years	-----	-----	-----
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	49	3.88	.774	Less than 5 years	.942	.511	.008
	51	3.78	.775	From 5-10 years	-----	.791	.041
	25	3.58	.699	From 11 - 15 years	-----	-----	.625
	52	3.32	.922	More than 15 years	-----	-----	-----

*There are differences between groups $P \leq 0.05$

From the table above, we can see that there are statistically significant differences in the axis of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues between the categories of the number of years of experience between more than 15 years and every less than 5 years and from 5-10 years, where the level of significance was (.000, .001) between them, which is less than (0.05). The source of the differences is attributed to the years of experience from 5-10 years, then to the category of less than 5 years, then more than 15 years, based on the arithmetic mean, where the arithmetic means were (3.80, 3.62, 3.33) respectively.

There are also statistically significant differences in the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights between the categories of number of years more than 15 years and 5-10 years, where the level of significance was (0.041) between them, which is less than (0.05). The source of the differences is attributed to years of experience from 5-10 years, then to the category of more than 15 years, based on the arithmetic mean, where the arithmetic means were (3.78, 3.33) respectively.

The data reveals statistically significant differences in perceptions of newspapers' social responsibility toward defending civil and political human rights, based on years of journalistic experience ($p = 0.000$). Journalists with 5–10 years ($M = 3.87$) and less than 5 years of experience ($M = 3.84$) expressed higher levels of agreement than those with over 15 years ($M = 3.16$). This suggests that early- and mid-career journalists may be more idealistic and professionally optimistic, influenced by journalism education and global discourses emphasizing human rights and press freedom (Hanitzsch, 2007). In contrast, veteran journalists may have developed more pragmatic or skeptical views, shaped by long-term exposure to institutional constraints such as censorship, legal threats, or editorial interference (Sakr, 2013). These findings are consistent with research showing that professional experience can either reinforce or erode normative commitments, depending on the media environment and political context (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). This generational gap underscores the importance of continuous training and support to sustain a rights-oriented journalistic culture.

Third: The type of newspaper in which you work officially

Table (10): Results of the (T) test for the two independent samples of the dimensions of the social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights issues according to the gender of journalists

Dimensions of social responsibility of newspapers	Newspaper type	Sample size	T value	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	degrees of freedom	Significance level	Comments
Political human rights issues	Printed Newspaper	125	4.076	.903	3.44	175	.000	Not statistically significant
	Website/ Electronic Newspaper	52		.625	4.00			
Economic, social and cultural human rights issues	Printed newspaper	125	2.478	.863	3.46	175	.014	Not statistically significant
	Website/ Electronic Newspaper	52		.674	3.79			
Journalists' commitment to professional and cognitive characteristics	Printed newspaper	125	3.473	.857	3.51	175	.001	Not statistically significant
	Website/ Electronic Newspaper	52		.689	3.97			

* Statistically significant

The table above shows that there are statistically significant differences in the axis of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending civil and political human rights issues attributed to the type of newspaper, where the significance level was (0.000) which is less than 0.05, and the source of the differences is attributed to the workers in an electronic website/electronic newspaper, based on the arithmetic mean, where their arithmetic mean was (4.00), which is higher than the average of workers in a printed newspaper, where their arithmetic mean was (3.44).

There are also statistically significant differences in the axis of social responsibility of newspapers towards defending economic, social and cultural human rights issues attributed to the type of newspaper, where the significance level was (0.014), which is less than 0.05, and the source of the differences is attributed to the workers in an electronic website/electronic newspaper, based on the arithmetic mean, where their arithmetic mean was (3.79), which is higher than the average of workers in a printed newspaper, where their arithmetic mean was (3.46).

In addition, there are statistically significant differences in the level of commitment of journalists to professional and cognitive characteristics in covering issues related to human rights, where the significance level was (0.001), which is less

than 0.05. The source of the differences is attributed to those working in an electronic website/electronic newspaper, based on the arithmetic mean, where their arithmetic mean was (3.97), which is higher than the average of those working in a printed newspaper, where their arithmetic mean was (3.51).

Discussion of the Results

Table 1 indicates that the majority of participating journalists do not hold advanced academic degrees, with only 2.3% possessing a doctorate and 1.7% holding a higher diploma. This suggests that Jordanian newspapers may prioritize practical journalistic experience over formal academic qualifications. The relatively low levels of advanced education among respondents raise important questions about the role of journalism schools and the availability of professional development programs in shaping journalistic standards in Jordan.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of journalists (29.4%) reported having over 15 years of professional experience, indicating the presence of a seasoned workforce with potentially deep-rooted understandings of journalistic ethics and reporting standards. Nearly an equal percentage (28.8%) reported 5 to 10 years of experience, suggesting a robust segment of mid-career professionals who may be instrumental in adapting journalistic practices to emerging digital trends.

The data also show a dominance of print journalism (70.6%) over digital journalism (29.4%). This highlights the continued influence of traditional media platforms in Jordan, despite the global pivot toward digital formats. While the presence of digital journalists reflects a gradual transition, the overwhelming representation of print media raises questions about the efficacy of each platform in covering human rights issues. Specifically, it invites further inquiry into whether digital platforms offer greater advocacy potential and public engagement in rights-based journalism. The significant representation of experienced journalists may enhance professional credibility; however, the notable presence of early-career journalists underscores the need for structured training and mentorship opportunities to ensure consistent quality and ethical standards in human rights reporting.

Figure 2 illustrates that economic, social, and cultural rights are perceived as fundamental concerns that resonate strongly with citizens' everyday lives. These rights are often portrayed in media coverage as directly influencing individuals' living standards and overall well-being. The reported proportion of 14.4% coverage dedicated to these rights suggests a relatively balanced media focus across diverse fields, such as education, health, and employment. This apparent evenness in distribution reflects an understanding of the interconnected nature of these rights—improvements in one area, such as education, may catalyze positive outcomes in others, including job opportunities and poverty alleviation.

Media attention to economic, social, and cultural rights is also shaped by external influences such as advocacy campaigns, public discourse, and national policy debates. Governmental agendas, civil society activism, and international development aid frequently spotlight issues like environmental sustainability, education reform, healthcare access, and poverty reduction. These recurring themes generate newsworthy content and elevate the media's engagement with such rights. In this context, media institutions may align their coverage with ongoing policy discussions, further reinforcing the public salience of these topics.

However, the study findings indicate that civil and political rights receive comparatively greater media coverage. Specifically, the right to establish political parties and unions ranks highest at 11.4%, followed closely by the right to hold public office at 11.3%, while press freedom follows with 10.6%. Although issues such as unemployment and poverty require sustained and in-depth reporting, their media prominence remains comparatively limited. Yet, when such issues do receive extensive coverage, they often command heightened public attention and policy response.

As Iyengar and Kinder (1987) argue, consistent media coverage plays a pivotal role in setting the public agenda, shaping perceptions of issue importance. Entman (1993) similarly asserts that media framing influences how audiences interpret and engage with social issues. When unemployment or poverty is framed as a structural problem requiring policy solutions, public support for reform tends to increase. Druckman (2001) further notes that issues with initially low salience, such as certain human rights concerns, depend heavily on media visibility to gain traction in the public and policy spheres. In the absence of such coverage, critical matters often remain marginalized.

Among economic, social, and cultural rights, education emerges as a clear media priority. The highest-ranking survey item, “The newspaper assists in tracking education issues and problems at all levels,” achieved an arithmetic mean of 3.79 and a relative importance of 75.8%. This suggests that education reporting is viewed as a core social responsibility of Jordanian newspapers, reflecting widespread societal concerns about access, quality, and reform in the education sector. Health follows as the second most emphasized topic, with the statement “The newspaper assists in publishing health news in all Jordanian hospitals” receiving a mean of 3.75 and relative importance of 75.0%. While health is a significant issue, it receives slightly less media priority than education.

In contrast, other domains within economic, social, and cultural rights receive limited attention, potentially due to a lack of urgency or insufficient advocacy infrastructure. In line with agenda-setting theory, the prioritization of particular rights by the media often mirrors prevailing policy interests and public concerns. Therefore, the visibility of education and health in media discourse highlights their perceived relevance in national development narratives.

The findings support Hypothesis (H1): Local newspapers prioritize civil and political rights differently compared to economic, social, and cultural rights in their coverage. The study confirms that civil and political rights receive more extensive media attention, underscoring an uneven prioritization that may shape both public awareness and policymaking agendas.

Table 4 underscores the role of Jordanian newspapers in upholding their social responsibility by covering economic, social, and cultural human rights issues. The data indicate that education and healthcare are the most prioritized topics, as reflected in their high arithmetic means and relative importance. According to Social Responsibility Theory (Siebert et al., 1956), the media bears an ethical obligation to inform the public and contribute to the promotion of societal welfare. However, within Jordan’s semi-authoritarian media landscape, this responsibility is often exercised selectively and with caution (Sakr, 2013).

The overall moderate mean across human rights topics may be attributed to several structural constraints. These include limited press freedom, insufficient training in rights-based journalism, and editorial hesitancy in addressing politically sensitive or systemic issues, such as poverty, labor rights, and environmental justice (UNESCO, 2021). These limitations hinder the media’s ability to engage deeply with broader human rights concerns beyond the relatively safe domains of education and health.

The findings align with the principles of Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which suggests that media influence public attention by selectively emphasizing certain issues. Topics that align with institutional norms and societal acceptability are more likely to be highlighted, while more controversial or disruptive issues may be sidelined. Thus, while Jordanian newspapers demonstrate some degree of social responsibility—particularly in reporting on health and education—the overall moderate engagement reflects the need for enhanced legal protections, professional capacity-building, and institutional reforms to enable more impactful and comprehensive human rights journalism.

Figure 3 presents the distribution of journalistic genres used in human rights reporting, with percentage values ranging from 6.90% to 7.40%. The “Studies and Translations” category ranked highest at 7.40%, suggesting its frequent use or perceived importance. “Analyses,” “Editorials,” and “Commentaries” each recorded 7.30%, indicating strong reliance on opinion-based formats to engage audiences in human rights discussions. Similarly, genres such as “News” and “Features” (7.20% each), and “Reports,” “Reportages,” and “Articles” (7.10% each), show consistent use across the board, reflecting their stable role in day-to-day journalism.

In contrast, “Advertisements” and “Caricatures” had slightly lower percentages (7.00%), while “Letters to the Editor” (6.90%) received the least attention. This lower engagement may suggest that public participation through reader contributions is not as prominent in the context of human rights journalism.

Agenda-Setting Theory supports these findings by emphasizing the media’s role in determining not what to think, but what to think about. Issues that receive consistent and prominent coverage are more likely to shape public concern and drive policy discussion.

The results support Hypothesis (H2): Media agenda-setting influences the selection and prominence of specific journalistic genres in reporting on human rights issues in local newspapers. The consistent use of editorials, commentary, and analytical pieces in discussing human rights themes highlights their instrumental role in shaping both media narratives and public understanding.

The findings of the study indicate that Jordanian newspapers take their social responsibility seriously, particularly in relation to education and healthcare, which are key human rights topics. However, the results also suggest that other human rights issues, such as labor rights, political liberties, and refugee concerns, may receive less attention in the media.

Table (9) highlights the significant role that journalists' years of experience play in shaping their views on newspapers' social responsibility regarding civil and political human rights. The p-value of 0.000 (which is below the 0.05 threshold) indicates that experience has a statistically significant impact. The group of journalists with 5-10 years of experience is the most enthusiastic in believing it is the newspaper's role to protect civil and political human rights. These journalists likely hold idealistic views about the protective role of journalism, yet they also possess enough experience to understand the complexities of the media landscape.

In contrast, younger journalists (those with less than 5 years of experience) may still be influenced by journalistic ethics and advocacy principles learned during their training. Their motivation may stem from their relative inexperience with the institutional pressures, editorial censorship, and political influences that tend to affect more seasoned journalists. On the other hand, experienced journalists (with more than 15 years of experience) exhibit the lowest perception of newspapers' social responsibility in defending civil and political rights, as evidenced by their lower mean score of 3.16. This may reflect a greater skepticism regarding the true role of newspapers in protecting such rights, possibly due to their personal experiences with censorship and the influence of political and institutional pressures.

The theory of social responsibility posits that the media should adhere to professional standards such as honesty, objectivity, and balance while also bearing responsibility toward society. The study's results revealed an average level of commitment among Jordanian newspapers to social responsibility regarding human rights issues. The average scores were 3.61 for civil and political rights and 3.56 for economic, social, and cultural rights, indicating a moderate level of commitment. Issues like defending freedom of opinion and expression, addressing complaints, highlighting poverty and unemployment, and promoting environmental awareness were among the most prominent topics covered by the Jordanian press.

However, the study also indicated that Jordanian journalists face significant challenges in exercising their roles freely due to political and economic pressures, which can affect their ability to report on human rights issues impartially. Some newspapers may even fail to adhere fully to impartiality because of external interventions and the political leanings of media institutions. The findings further revealed statistical differences in journalists' commitment to social responsibility. Younger journalists (aged 26-36) showed a greater interest in human rights issues compared to their older counterparts. Additionally, journalists working in digital journalism demonstrated a higher commitment to social responsibility than those working in print media.

The findings supported Hypothesis (H3): Local newspapers exhibit varying degrees of adherence to social responsibility principles in their coverage of human rights. The study found an average level of adherence to these principles, influenced by external pressures. Newspapers with a stronger commitment to social responsibility were more likely to advocate for justice and equality. The study also suggests that Jordanian newspapers prioritize education and healthcare as part of their social mission, reflecting their commitment to social responsibility. Nevertheless, economic and political pressures significantly impact the extent to which newspapers uphold social responsibility in human rights reporting. Digital media appears to be more daring in its reporting compared to print media, likely due to fewer restrictions.

Limitations

Although the study offers insights into the attitudes and practices of Jordanian journalists, it is limited by its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research could employ content analysis of media

outputs or ethnographic methods within newsrooms to triangulate findings (Patton, 2015). Comparative studies with other countries in the MENA region could also help delineate regional patterns and exceptions.

Implications

Further studies could explore whether female journalists face challenges in career advancement. The predominance of mid-career journalists suggests stability in the profession, but the low percentage of younger journalists raises concerns about the pipeline of future media professionals. The high proportion of bachelor's degree holders suggests that journalistic practice in Jordan is largely built on undergraduate education, but there may be limited incentives for pursuing higher education in the field. Younger and mid-career journalists may still view journalism as a tool for human rights advocacy, while more experienced journalists see limitations in how much newspapers can actively defend such rights. The declining perception among senior journalists may signal disillusionment with media institutions and their ability to challenge political and social structures.

Understanding these differences can help media organizations, policymakers, and journalism educators address challenges in reporting on civil and political rights. Future research should investigate whether political and institutional factors influence newspapers' selection of human rights news.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate a moderate but uneven commitment among Jordanian journalists to human rights coverage, shaped by professional experience, media type, and institutional conditions. While the prioritization of civil and political rights reflects historical and political realities, the marginalization of economic, social, and cultural rights presents a critical challenge for media development. To foster more inclusive and balanced reporting, media organizations, journalism schools, and civil society actors must collaborate to strengthen journalistic capacity and press freedom within a socially responsible framework.

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends the following:

- Enhancing media independence by implementing legal safeguards for journalists, ensuring their ability to report on human rights issues freely and without the risk of external pressures or legal repercussions. This includes enacting and enforcing laws that protect press freedom, preventing arbitrary arrests or lawsuits against journalists, and establishing judicial mechanisms to uphold their rights in cases of legal disputes.
- Increasing the focus on economic, social and cultural rights in the media agenda, to ensure balanced coverage of all aspects of human rights.
- Providing training programs for journalists on professional ethics and social responsibility standards to ensure fair coverage of human rights issues.
- Human rights issues with low levels of awareness and interest may require more effective media interventions to increase awareness and knowledge about them.
- The media should focus on presenting information in a way that allows the public to understand the issues in depth and thus enable them to form informed opinions and participate effectively.
- Media and policy makers can use this information to address gaps in awareness and interest, and enhance the role of media as a tool for development and social change.

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