



**An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in Cyberbullying  
Comments Targeting Jordanian  
Social Media Influencers**

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تحليل لاستراتيجيات عدم التأذب في تعليقات التتمر الإلكتروني التي  
تستهدف المؤثرين الأردنيين على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي

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## Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis, titled “An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in Cyberbullying Comments Targeting Jordanian Social Media Influencers” by researcher **Muthanna Basem Darweesh Al-Bouti** and was successfully defended and approved on 20-11-2025

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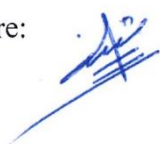
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## **Acknowledgment**

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**Muthanna Al-Bouti**

## **Dedication**

**To my dear parents** - you have loved, sacrificed and guided me, and everything that I have accomplished is based on your love. I will be, ever grateful to you because you taught me how to be persistent, humble, and how to be upright.

**To my beloved wife** - your unwavering support, patience, and encouragement have been my daily bread in this trip. I would like to thank you very much because you stayed by me during all my hardships and rejoiced with me when I achieved anything.

It is yours as well as mine.

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**An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in Cyberbullying Comments  
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**Abstract**

This study analyzes the impoliteness strategies utilized in cyberbullying remarks aimed at the five leading Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. This study fills a vacuum in the research, as there is limited understanding of the linguistic construction of impoliteness in online aggression within the Jordanian context, especially on visual platforms like Instagram. A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating quantitative research to ascertain the prevalence of each impoliteness technique with qualitative interpretation to elucidate the operational dynamics of these strategies in conversation. The comments were examined through Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness framework to ascertain the predominant manifestations of verbal hostility and the impact of gender on how they are used. The results further show that impoliteness online is influenced by gender-embedding, with expectations of masculinity and honour leading to stronger verbal attacks and influencing the ways that commenters build up to aggression. These patterns show that cyberbullying in Jordan is not a digital behaviour, but a manifestation of wider social hierarchies and cultural tensions that manifest so clearly in their dealings with public figures. The results demonstrate that insults constitute the predominant method of impoliteness, utilized more by both genders than any alternative technique, but with variations in the specific sub-types adopted by each. The data indicate that female commenters predominantly focus on specific insulting forms, whereas male commentators demonstrate more types of impoliteness strategies, including combinations of forms. The study underscores the necessity for additional research in other Arab nations and recommends broadening future investigations to examine the cultural, psychological, and societal implications of online impoliteness.

**Keywords:** impoliteness strategies, cyberbullying, Jordanian social media influencers, Instagram, theory of impoliteness.

## تحليل لاستراتيجيات عدم التأذب في تعليقات التتمر الإلكتروني التي تستهدف المؤثرين الأردنيين على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي

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### الملخص

تُحلّل هذه الدراسة استراتيجيات عدم التأذب المستخدمة في التعليقات العدوانية التي تستهدف أبرز خمسة مؤثرين أردنيين على منصة إنستغرام. وتسعى إلى سد فجوة بحثية واضحة، إذ ما يزال فهم البناء اللغوي لعدم التأذب في سياقات العدوان الإلكتروني داخل البيئة الأردنية محدودًا، ولا سيما على المنصات المرئية مثل إنستغرام. وقد تم اعتماد منهج مختلط يجمع بين التحليل الكمي لرصد انتشار كل تقنية من تقنيات عدم التأذب، والتحليل النوعي لتفسير الآليات الخطابية التي تعمل من خلالها هذه الاستراتيجيات في التفاعل الإلكتروني. وتم تحليل التعليقات بالاستناد إلى إطار كالبير (2011) لعدم التأذب بهدف تحديد أكثر أشكال العدوان اللفظي شيوعًا وفهم أثر النوع الاجتماعي في طريقة توظيفها.

وتُظهر النتائج أن عدم التأذب في الفضاء الرقمي يتأثر بالبنى الجندرية، حيث تؤدي توقعات الذكورة والشرف إلى تصعيد حدة الهجمات اللفظية وتشكيل الأساليب التي يبني من خلالها المعلقون عدوانهم. وتشير هذه الأنماط إلى أن التتمر الإلكتروني في الأردن لا يُعد سلوكًا رقميًا فحسب، بل يمثل تجليًا لبنى اجتماعية أوسع وتوترات ثقافية تظهر بوضوح في الخطاب الموجّه إلى الشخصيات العامة.

وتبيّن النتائج أن الإهانات تُعد الأسلوب الأكثر استخدامًا من قبل الذكور والإناث مقارنةً بأي استراتيجية أخرى، مع وجود اختلافات في الأنواع الفرعية التي يفضلها كل منهما. إذ تميل المعلقات إلى تركيز الإهانات في أشكال محدّدة، بينما يُظهر المعلقون الذكور تنوعًا أكبر في استراتيجيات عدم التأذب، بما في ذلك الأنماط المجمعّة. وتؤكد الدراسة الحاجة إلى توسيع البحث في دول عربية أخرى، فضلًا عن توسيع نطاق الدراسات المستقبلية لاستكشاف الأبعاد الثقافية والنفسية والاجتماعية لعدم التأذب في الفضاء الإلكتروني.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** استراتيجيات عدم التأذب، التتمر الإلكتروني مؤثرين أردنيين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، إنستغرام، نظرية عدم التأذب.

## Chapter One

### Background of the Study

#### 1.0 Introduction

Language plays a vital role in expressing our emotions and attitudes toward others. These expressions can be either positive or negative. Positive language conveys respect and politeness, while negative language reveals disrespect and impoliteness.

Several scholars have sought to distinguish between the opposing concepts of politeness and impoliteness. For Umbar (2019), politeness means a person who has respectful behavior despite the way he/she writes and talks. It further means speaking or behaving in a manner that is pleasant and socially acceptable to the recipient (Kornelaieva, 2019).

However, impoliteness is defined as a type of linguistic behavior which threatens the hearer's social identity and face (Culpeper and Hardaker, 2017). It further sets a set of communicative strategies employed to cause disharmony, conflict, and to attack the face of others (Ambarita et al., 2023). Psychologically, the reinforcement of impoliteness online is aided by certain cognitive and affective mechanisms that influence the behaviour of users behind the digital screens. Previous studies indicate that mediation suggests that anonymity, weakened social cues, and perceived distance of mediated communication produce what Suler (2004) characterizes as the online disinhibition effect, where participants are more likely to experience the loss of control and the willingness to display hostility. This gives negative feelings, which might be anger, frustration, or resentment, freer expression than in face-to-face communication. Furthermore, cognitive distortions, such as hostile attribution bias, prompt users to unintentionally perceive ambiguous online messages as deliberately provocative,

which leads to the intensification of aggressive responses (Lapidot-Lefler and Barak, 2012). Online profiles are another type of group that strengthens aggressive behaviour due to social reinforcement and polarisation (Wright et al., 2018). These psychological processes point to online impoliteness as not only a linguistic, but also an emotional arousal, and a distorted social cognition phenomenon in online interactions. The purpose of impoliteness is to create tension and disrupt the relationship between people during social interactions (Kecskes, 2017).

The purpose of impoliteness lies in producing disharmony among interlocutors in social interactions (Kecskes, 2017).

Having differentiated between politeness and impoliteness, it is necessary to state that this study is concerned with impoliteness, particularly in the cyberbullying of the top five Jordanian social media influencers. This focus reflects a growing cultural visibility of these influencers, whose large audiences and public roles make them the first targets of online aggression. Given their great reach, commentators make frequent use of their posts as vehicles to air either personal judgments or social frustrations, and culturally based expectations. In this sense, the behaviour of commentators then becomes a useful indicator of broader social attitudes in Jordan. This focus is justified by the increasing visibility and influence of these figures in shaping public discourse in Jordan, making them frequent targets of online hostility. Their massive audiences and incessant presence on social media make it an environment where impolite behavior is more pronounced than ever, letting us study researchers see definitely identifiable patterns of verbal aggression. Moreover, an analysis of impoliteness directed to high-profile influencers gives insight not only to broader social attitudes but also to the power relations and cultural norms within digital communications in Jordan (Boyd, 2014; Aboujaoude et al., 2015). Within this context, it is worth mentioning that impoliteness encompasses several

manifestations, including verbal abuse, sarcastic remarks, exclusionary behavior, offensive jokes, and cyberbullying (Nishimura, 2019).

Cyberbullying means using information and communication technology to harm and harass an individual or group of individuals in a repetitive, hostile, and deliberate manner (Farley et al., 2018). Cyberbullying, which is the aim of the study, is considered one of the manifestations of online impoliteness. Cyberbullying denotes impoliteness, which means negative comments that imply hatred on social media (Ali et al., 2021). Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) indicate that cyberbullying implies hostility and aggression to the recipient, which reflects impoliteness. Both impoliteness and cyberbullying are pervasive in social media platforms (Teneketzi, 2022).

Cyberbullying is a social phenomenon that emerged since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Al Qudah et al., 2020). Cyberbullying results from the extensive usage of online means, leading to the emergence of offensive actions (Zakuan & Saian, 2022). Its rapid expansion over the years is tightly related to the accelerated growth of digital technologies, the widespread accessibility of smartphones and the increasing dependency on social media platforms for communication. As online interactions became more frequent, immediate and anonymous, opportunities for harmful behaviour were on the rise. Studies show that the levels of anonymity, less accountability, and constant connectivity increase aggressive online practices and make hostile interactions easier to initiate and sustain (Espelage & Hong, 2017; Kowalski et al., 2014). These factors have collectively led to a significant increase in the occurrence of cyberbullying in different societies. Accordingly, cyberbullying becomes a social phenomenon due to technological advancement, which facilitates social communication (Al-Makanin et al, 2018).

Cyberbullying consists of two words, namely, cyber and bullying. The former is related to social media, whereas the latter is related to aggression and hatred (Ali et al., 2021). Several studies (Pang et al., 2023; Al Qudah et al., 2020) define cyberbullying as one of the negative forms of online hostility, which occurs across digital platforms, such as online forums, messaging apps, and social media platforms. Cyberbullying means using information and communication technology to harm and harass an individual or group of individuals in a repetitive, hostile, and deliberate manner (Farley et al., 2018). Cyberbullying includes using digital communication like emails, comments, direct messages, and social media posts to engage in a harmful attitude (Akinmusuyi, 2023).

An array of studies (Shaikh et al., 2020; Cáceres-Reche et al., 2019) maintain that cyberbullying contains repeated and deliberate threats, harms, or embarrassments used against an individual or group of individuals on social media platforms. Cyberbullying includes using digital communication like emails, comments, direct messages, and social media posts to engage in a harmful attitude (Akinmusuyi, 2023).

In addition to the linguistic dimension, cyberbullying in the social media sites of Jordan takes on a strong gendered dimension among the commentators. Online interactions often mirror offline gender hierarchies and research on digital forms of aggression in Arab societies reveal that while women disproportionately face insults linked to morality, appearance, and honour, men are often attacked through challenges to their authority, competence, or masculinity (Abu-Lughod, 2022; Al-Khalidi, 2023). These patterns are clearly visible in the comments analysed in this study: the structure, severity, and frequency of impoliteness vary depending on the gender of both the sender and the target. Therefore, an analysis of gender as a mediating factor is important in understanding the social logic behind the production and interpretation of impoliteness in the Jordanian digital sphere.

An array of studies (Shaikh et al., 2020; Cáceres-Reche et al., 2019) maintain that cyberbullying contains repeated and deliberate threats, harms, or embarrassments used against an individual or group of individuals on social media platforms. According to Gan et al. (2024), cyberbullying involves negative behaviours such as stalking, outing, masquerading, flaming, denigration, exclusion and harassment. To begin with, stalking is the practice of sending threatening or intimidating messages in order to cause distress and fear (Çakar-Mengü and Mengü, 2023). In addition, outing is the sharing of someone's sensitive or private information and images without his/her consent (Cáceres-Reche et al., 2019). Another type of cyberbullying is masquerading: it happens when a person dresses as someone else on the internet to manipulate the working relationships or reputations of others (Shaikh et al., 2020). Furthermore, flaming is also defined as the posting of insulting or hostile messages in order to provoke conflict or anger (Shaikh et al. 2020). Similarly, denigration involves the spread of harmful or false statements to harm one's credibility or public image (Shaikh et al., 2020). Cyberbullying also involves exclusion, which is separating an individual from an online activity or group in order to marginalize him/her (Cáceres-Reche et al., 2019). Lastly, harassment refers to the action or practice of sending harmful, offensive, or threatening messages to a target; in some instances, it involves the distribution of harmful rumors, repeated unwanted attacks, or the deliberate and inherent intimidation of the target (Shaikh et al., 2020). Thus, cyberbullying is one of the negative impacts of social media (Field, 2018). It has an adverse and prolonged psychological impact on social media users (Oladimeji, 2022). Akinmusuyi (2023) states that cyberbullying includes an array of negative online attitudes, such as insults, threats, and harassment, that can considerably affect individuals' emotional and mental well-being. The impact of cyberbullying on targets is not physical

but rather psychological, by triggering negative feelings, such as depression, low self-esteem, and even the risk of suicide (Mikhaylovsky et al., 2019).

Putri (2023) indicates that cyberbullying is a common phenomenon among children and teenagers who become victims of cyberbullying. Such cyberbullying victims can respond to cyberbullying using various strategies, including blocking perpetrators of cyberbullying, taking legal action against them, seeking counselling, flagging and reporting offenders, and promoting their online security (Ogolla et al., 2023).

Cyberbullying is not limited only to children and teenagers, but also occurs among athletes and celebrities, such as social media influencers. Social media influencers are people who achieve public recognition and a large following on the internet, either based on their expertise in a certain subject or because they've cultivated credibility and trust among a particular community. The nature of the influencers studied in this study likewise influences the form and intensity of cyberbullying they experience. All five influencers have an extensive number of followers and operate in highly visible digital niches with frequently curated lifestyles, travel content or personal narratives. Such visibility creates parasocial intimacy while also drawing more attention from the general public (Delbaere et al., 2021; Chae, 2023). Influencers in Jordan act not only as entertainers, but as symbolic figures who represent desirable modern lifestyles, economic mobility, and visibility as cultural, and are thus polarising subjects. This combination of fame, accessibility and perceived privilege creates a fertile ground for impoliteness, as commentators use cyberbullying to challenge, ridicule or morally judge these public figures. Understanding the socio-cultural positioning of influencers is, therefore, critical to understanding why they become concentrated targets of online aggression. Social media influencers make regular posts regarding the topic on their preferred social media

platforms (Delbaere et al., 2021). They generate a large number of followers who write comments on their posts (Gómez, 2019). These comments might be positive or negative (Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda, 2022). The positive comments denote recognition, admiration, appreciation, and politeness (Sudaryat and Widyastuti, 2020). The negative comments, on the other hand, denote hatred and impoliteness (Stoll et al., 2020). These comments that are posted by the followers against social media influencers are so-called cyberbullying (Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021).

These distinctions are important because the comments made towards influencers constitute a visible record of public attitudes and social tensions in digital communities. Influencers, because they have a broad reach and are online around the clock, can often be a point where societal judgments, biases and frustrations are voiced openly. Examining both positive and negative comments helps unravel how audiences build or destroy the public image of influencers, and why some figures receive hostility more than others. Moreover, negative comments are of central significance in understanding how the phenomenon of impoliteness is instantiated in online contexts, making them a valuable source to analyse cyberbullying patterns, power relations and cultural norms in Jordanian social media environment (Boyd, 2014).

Cyberbullying is prevalent among social media influencers. Hassan et al. (2018) suggest that cyberbullying is more common with celebrities such as social media influencers because they are open to the world, have a large number of followers and are in the spotlight; people ridicule them constantly. Their lives, opinions, and personal choices are displayed in a highly public digital space, and that provides more opportunities for users to assess, judge, and respond to their content. Moreover, the parasocial relationships that followers create with influencers commonly lead to unreal

expectations, envy and resentment that can exacerbate hostile online behaviour (Reich, 2018; Chae, 2018). The combined value of celebrity status, perceived privilege, and constant public scrutiny makes influencers especially susceptible to aggressive and impolite remarks. In cyberbullying, social media influencers, social media users indulge in negative techniques of impoliteness the most, which represent a form of hostility and envy (Indrawan, 2018). Moreover, the cultural context of Jordan only increases these patterns. Jordanian norms of masculinity place a significant emphasis on honour, self-control, dominance and public reputation: these values are ingrained in larger Arab patriarchal systems (Massad, 2020; Amireh, 2023). When these norms are carried over to digital communication, it often becomes expressed as toxic masculinity, a phrase used to describe the aggressive enforcement of gender expectations through shaming and intimidation or symbolic dominance. In the comments examined, insults that call into question a man's strength, his honour or his sexual reputation gain heightened force because they contradict deep cultural expectations about manhood. This cultural lens is therefore crucial in order to interpret the significance of why certain impoliteness strategies, especially personalised negative vocatives and gendered insults, are highly severe in the Jordanian online context.

However, in Jordan, little is known about cyberbullying social media influencers in terms of the types of impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying social media influencers and the topics that are commonly addressed in cyberbullying social media influencers. Therefore, this study is conducted to address this issue by investigating the types of impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying by social media influencers and the comments that are commonly addressed by Jordanian males and females in cyberbullying social media influencers.

## 1.1 Cyberbullying Jordanian Social Media Platforms

In Jordan, the widespread use of technology and social media platforms propelled Jordanian users to use these platforms as an arena to express their feelings, particularly their negative feelings that are commonly conveyed under the umbrella of cyberbullying. This pattern can be explained by several interrelated factors: the increase in internet and smartphone penetration has made social media a dominant form of communication and self-expression; the perceived anonymity and physical distance lowers inhibitions and social accountability, making it easier for users to express frustration or hostility; and the relative lack of effective monitoring or enforcement of online norms has allowed negative behaviour to proliferate unchecked. Empirical research supports this: for instance, in a recent study of cyber-bullying among Jordanian university students, the rates of online harassment were high, and it was found that social media usage was a key factor leading to cyber-bullying (Al-Shatnawi et al., 2024). Additionally, studies conducted on a school level showed that many teenagers in Jordan are exposed to cyberbullying, which has been associated with psychological and social stress (Ameera & Elashi, 2022). Tayeyh (2023) argues that cyberbullying is a common phenomenon in Jordan that occurs on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Tayeyh, 2023). Darawsheh (2023) maintains that cyberbullying emerged among Jordanian users in general and Jordanian university students in particular due to their excessive reliance on social media platforms for academic and social interactions.

There are several manifestations of cyberbullying in Jordan, including cursing and contempt, images and news about others, publishing jokes that violate general manners, publishing misleading messages, slander, and ridicule and discredit (Al-Darawsheh et al., 2021).

Cyberbullying in Jordan occurs mainly among children and young adults. When it comes to age groups, children and young adults tend to experience cyberbullying (Wang et al., 2019). As for children, the Children of Jordan (2020) points out that Jordanian children's victims of cyberbullying at extremely high rates, accounting for 64%.

About young adults, cyberbullying negatively affects the Jordanian youth's mental well-being, where 10.5% are perpetrators and 13.5% of them are victims (Al-Badayneh et al., 2024). Other negative impacts of cyberbullying on Jordanian youths are exemplified in skipping school and lowering their grades (Al-Darawsheh et al., 2021).

Jordanian victims of cyberbullying tend to experience depression, anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem, which heighten the vulnerability of self-harm and the development of suicidal thoughts (Al-Shatnawi et al., 2024). In his study, Darawsheh (2023) indicates that cyberbullying affects Jordanians, manifesting in feelings of mood swings, anxiety, isolation, and decreased academic performance.

Owing to the negative impacts of cyberbullying, it has been recognized as a legal, health, and social problem (Angwaomaodoko, 2024). To counteract this issue, the Jordanian government enacted 2015 the cybercrime law that covers malicious rumors, bullying, physical abuse, and sexual exploitation (Maghaireh, 2024). Such cybercrime law enables the victims to report a crime at a police station or through 911 services (Al-Shatnawi et al., 2024). More recently, a new *Cybercrime Law No. 17 of 2023* has been issued, which replaces previous laws and adds more specific provisions regarding online harassment, defamation, threats, and privacy breaches due to increased concerns about digital harm by the state (Al-Sarayreh, 2024). The revised legislation enhances the institutional framework that underlies reporting and monitoring of cyber offences, and this has boosted awareness among the populace and improved victimization to seek

formal help whenever they are targets of online aggression (Al-Darawsheh et al., 2021; Lahiani and Al-Khaza'leh, 2023).

Other solutions for cyberbullying can be achieved by seeking help from friends, adults, online communities, and social media platforms (Ademiluyi and Park, 2020). According to Al-Brashidiyah (2020), there are other significant means of combating cyberbullying, such as firm parental upbringing adaptation strategies, individual and personal skill development, preventive intervention programs, school intervention and awareness programs about cyberbullying, and peer-led anti-cyberbullying programs. Darawsheh (2023) claims that this social phenomenon can be mitigated by performing preventive measures, establishing awareness programs, and providing institutional support, particularly for Jordanian students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Due to the rise of social media as a widely used means of self-expression and communication, social media influencers have taken a central role in expressing digital culture and opinion in Jordan. Thus, cyberbullying has made most social media influencers its victims. Therefore, offensive, aggressive, and rude remarks are directed to most social media influencers. This kind of impoliteness may fluctuate between blunt insults to subtle mockery. In response, most social media influencers report professional, social, and psychological difficulties. Even though the phenomenon of cyberbullying has been discussed in the literature on social media influencers, there is minimal information about the phenomenon of impoliteness strategies in cyberbullies among social media influencers in Jordan. The current study aims to fill this knowledge gap by examining the language used in this destructive interaction. Consequently, the current research seeks to

explore what cyber aggression is and the impoliteness tactics employed by male and female social media influencers in Jordan who engage in cyberbullying.

### **1.3 The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study lies in its focus on the pragmatic and linguistic aspects of cyberbullying, particularly the impoliteness strategies employed in bullying social media influencers. By examining this phenomenon, the study contributes to the broader fields of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, especially within Jordanian and Arabic online communities. Besides, this study has an ethical significance because it aims at fostering awareness and sensitivity in responding to online aggression, such that the discourse is not characterized by the subjectivity of criticism and societal taboos but presents a clear scholarly approach. The findings may also help digital content developers and social media platform creators design more effective strategies for fostering respectful online engagement and mitigating online hostility. In line with this significance, the study addresses two key research questions regarding the types of impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying Jordanian social media influencers and the extent to which gender influences their frequency.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study lies in examining how impoliteness is linguistically expressed and constructed in cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers used to threaten, demean, or insult them within the social and cultural context of Jordan. This aim helps in elucidating the language patterns of cyberbullying. It further assists in exploring the types of impoliteness strategies frequently used. It also highlights how gender, public status, or culture influences online attacks. It raises awareness regarding online abuse in Jordan. It suggests guidelines and solutions for safer communication online.

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used on cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram were adopted by Culpeper (2011).
- To identify how gender affects the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram were studied.

### 1.5 Questions of the Study

There are two main questions that are aimed to be answered in this study concerning the nature of impoliteness in Internet communication. It initially discusses the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram, adopted by Culpeper (2011). It further discusses how gender affects the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying by the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram.

### 1.6 Definition of Terms

- **Impoliteness:** It is defined as an intentional act that aims to attack the faces of others, which occurs when a writer or speaker deliberately employs language that aims to attack the reader or listener (Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021). The researcher defines it as the impolite comments that denote hatred that are used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers.
- **Cyberbullying:** it is defined as the use of information and communication technologies, including cell phones, instant messaging (IM), emails, and digital polling sites, used to post damaging personal opinions to support repeated, deliberate, and aggressive behaviour by an individual or group to harm others

(Kaluarachchi et al., 2020). The researcher defines hostile and aggressive statements used by commentators on Instagram against the top five Jordanian social media influencers.

- Social media: In the context of this study, the term social media can be taken to refer to digital sources that allow users to socialize, exchange content and communicate openly. The term is mentioned here just as the general digital setting where cyberbullying takes place.
- Instagram: In the present study, Instagram is understood as the platform where the data were gathered, where the commentators share their negative or hostile statements about the top five Jordanian social media influencers.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The current chapter is divided into three sections: In the first, theoretical research on impoliteness theory by Culpeper is reviewed. The second one reviews the literature on bullying and cyberbullying, impoliteness on social media, and social media and cyberbullying social media influencers. The third section concerns the empirical research conducted on and about cyberbullying on social media and the impoliteness on social media.

#### **2.1 Review of Theoretical Framework Culpeper (2011)**

The impoliteness model by Culpeper (2011) provides a holistic framework for analyzing and understanding communicative behaviors that intentionally attack the face or the social identity of an interlocutor. Such a framework constitutes a counterbalance to the traditional impoliteness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) that focuses predominantly on mitigating face-threatening acts and maintaining harmony. Culpeper's (2011) model of impoliteness differentiates itself by investigating how language can be deliberately employed to cause offence or social harm. Culpeper acknowledges the role of aggression, conflict, and power dynamics in communication. According to Culpeper, there are numerous impoliteness strategies which she categorizes as direct or indirect verbal attacks. These strategies involve insult, including a personalized negative vocabulary, negative statements, negative references, and personalized negative references in the hearing of the target, and negative expressions, compressions, dismissals, threats, stinging criticism or complaints, silencers, message enforcements, and provocative or unappealing questions and presumptions.

The Culpeper model is applicable in various communicative contexts, particularly those involving power imbalance and conflict, like cyberbullying (Culpeper, 2011; Bousfield, 2008). The impetus that prompted the researcher to adopt Culpeper's (2011) approach lies in its ability to provide an in-depth classification of impoliteness strategies that simplifies the systematic investigation of hostile interactions. Besides, the applicability of such a model to distinct communication platforms such as social media demonstrates its ability to investigate the nuances of cyberbullying, where reduced accountability and anonymity often increase the prevalence of impoliteness (Bousfield and Locher, 2008; Hardaker, 2010; Fukushima, 2015).

Therefore, Culpeper's (2011) model is suitable for examining the types of impoliteness strategies used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. Culpeper's (2011) model concentrates on the contextual interpretation and intentionality, which permits researchers to differentiate the explicit and implicit derogatory remarks and comments. The advantages of this model lie in its ability to differentiate among various impoliteness strategies and provide concrete examples, which facilitate empirical analysis. However, several studies (Locher and Watts, 2005; Bousfield and Locher, 2008) argue that Culpeper's (2011) approach has some disadvantages that are manifested in oversimplifying complicated interactions and potential challenges in coding and classifying culturally specific or ambiguous expressions of impoliteness.

The application of Culpeper's framework to investigate Jordanian discourse on Instagram provides a structured lens to pinpoint the types of impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying, like negative expressions and insults, among others. It further highlights the comments that are commonly addressed among Jordanian males and females in the

cyberbullying of the top five Jordanian social media influencers. In addition, such a model supports an understanding of the impact of the contextual and cultural factors on the use and reception of impoliteness strategies among Jordanian users on Instagram (Kádár and Haugh, 2013; Kádár, 2017).

## **2.2 Review of Theoretical Literature**

### **2.2.1 Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Bullying traces back to early childhood socialization processes where aggression and power imbalances are first observed (Olweus, 1993). Several studies (Olweus, 1973; Heinemann, 1972) state that bullying emerged in the 1970s in Scandinavia. Following that, researchers began to carry out studies on this topic (Zych et al., 2015). However, this issue did not attract widespread attention until the 1990s, when it started gaining popularity in the media (Ortega, 2006). Following that, increased attention was given to this issue after reports of suicides emerged among adolescents who were bullied by their peers (Zych et al., 2015).

Bullying is defined as any undesirable aggressive behavior by interlocutors who are partners or siblings, which includes a perceived or observed imbalance, which is recurrently repeated or is highly probable that it will recur (Gladden et al., 2014). Bullying is regarded as a complicated psychological and social phenomenon that occurs all over the world without exception (Khliestova and Chorna, 2020). Bullying involves repetitive and intentional aggression of people towards other people who are physically and psychologically weaker (Siddique et al., 2023). The persistence and development of this phenomenon are increased by a group of bystanders who intensify the occurrence of this phenomenon (Staub, 2017). Bullying is often referred to as social or relational bullying (Chester et al., 2017). Bullying is a behavior that seeks to harm others either verbally,

psychologically, or physically, in which these actions might cause trauma, depression, or fear (Zakiyah, 2017). Moreover, Bullying has a negative impact on individuals in terms of affecting their inner self by exposing the victim to psychological damage, such as low self-esteem and depression, that might prompt the victim to commit suicide (Valenzuela-García et al., 2023).

There are two forms of bullying, namely, direct and indirect bullying. In this respect, Yanti (2018) indicates that direct bullying might take the form of physical or verbal abuse. However, indirect bullying has a terrible impact on the victim. However, Malihah (2018) suggests that bullying is divided into four forms, namely, physical, verbal, indirect, and online bullying. He adds that physical bullying entails harming an individual's possessions or body. However, verbal bullying involves threats, testing, or name-calling (Malihah, 2018). Indirect bullying means spreading social exclusion or rumors, while online bullying means bullying and threatening others through messaging apps, social media, or digital platforms.

Bullying occurs either physically or electronically, where the former means traditional bullying, while the latter means electronic bullying, i.e., cyberbullying (Lefi and Sghaier, 2024). Accordingly, bullying is classified into two types, namely, traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Li et al., 2024). The former means face-to-face bullying that includes relational, verbal, and physical forms (Johansson and Englund, 2021). The latter is considered a new type of bullying that occurs due to technological development (Kamel et al., 2021).

This study is concerned with cyberbullying, which traces back to the emergence of online social platforms and digital communication technologies that have facilitated new forms of aggression and harassment (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Cyberbullying, which means a shift from offline to online bullying, occurs due to the inappropriate usage of

technological means among social media users during their social interaction with others (Indrayani et al., 2019). Among all the aforementioned bullying forms, such as physical, verbal, indirect, and relational, this study concerns itself specifically with cyberbullying as the form that is most relevant to online communication and, by extension, to the impoliteness strategies discussed through the example of Jordanian Instagram comments.

Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that is social and associated with the use of the Internet (Cho and Yoo, 2017). Thus, cyberbullying takes place online through the use of digital devices and platforms (Kibe et al., 2022). Cyberbullying is a common phenomenon that occurs even before the emergence of social media (Hassan et al., 2018). Cyberbullying is defined as an act of bullying that is commonly pervasive in social media, particularly in the comment section, where users exercise the freedom to post and respond to others' comments (Indrawan, 2018).

Cyberbullying entails sending aggressive and hostile messages through social media that are intended to be harmful to the victims, i.e., those who are exposed to bullied behavior (Sobkin and Fedotova, 2021). Agrawal and Awekar (2018) propose a comprehensive definition of cyberbullying as the use of cell phones, electronic devices, or the Internet to post or send images or texts intended to embarrass or hurt another person. The statistics indicate that between 10% to 40% of internet users are subjected to cyberbullying (Whittaker and Kowalski, 2015). According to Abaido (2020), cyberbullying is a social problem that includes bullying, unjustified aggressiveness, intimidation, and harassment that occurs by using digital devices by a social media user and the victim, yet the impact of the harassment persists and spreads rapidly over time.

Several studies (Menesini et al. 2012; Englander et al. 2017) define cyberbullying as a phenomenon that entails harming another individual or group repeatedly through digital

or electronic means, which is considered one of the most significant societal issues. Cyberbullying occurs when a person uses a connected device or the internet to send photos or messages that are intended to embarrass, hurt, or harm others (Yanti, 2018). According to Ijachi (2019), cyberbullying means an aggressive act that is performed by one individual or a group of individuals to hurt other powerless individuals through social media platforms.

There are several manifestations of cyberbullying. To support this claim, Akinbogun (2016) states that cyberbullying is one of the harassment aspects that takes place on social media platforms. Cyberbullying has three manifestations, namely, physical, verbal, and emotional. As Kub and Feldman (2015) put it, physical bullying is related to pushing and hitting, while verbal means taunts and insults, whereas rational is considered an indirect aspect of aggression, which includes the detrimental impact of peer interactions like disseminating rumors to promote isolation and exclusion. Moreover, Çakar-Mengü and Mengü (2023) indicate that chat rooms, video games, websites, email, phone messages, and instant messaging fall under cyberbullying manifestations. As Bohang (2017) put it forward, cyberbullying encompasses writing negative comments on particular posts, mocking others, and writing impolite personal messages.

It is worth mentioning that cyberbullying is a common practice among young adults and adolescents (Akinbogun, 2016). To support this claim, bullying statistics (2015) point out that the majority of young adults and adolescents are considered perpetrators or victims of online bullying. Cyberbullying occurs when cyberbullies attack victims for several reasons, including gender, religion, and race (Sittichai and Smith, 2018). An example of cyberbullying is manifested in using swear words that threaten the victim's face (Hua et al., 2019). Another

example of cyberbullying is manifested in posting hurtful comments on social media to intimidate, harass, or demean the victim (Sittichai and Smith, 2018).

By posting these hurtful comments, cyberbullies inflict considerable harm on their victims. . To support this claim, Abaido (2020) claims that cyberbullying is regarded as one of the major instances of technology abuse that has negative and deadly impacts on the victims. The negative impacts of cyberbullying on social media users are exemplified in depression, sleeping and eating disorders, substance abuse, anxiety, and low academic performance (Lee et al., 2023). Along similar lines, Kowalski et al. (2014) maintain that cyberbullying has severe consequences on the victims that are exemplified in having negative psychological outcomes, including emotional and somatic problems, suicide ideation, loneliness, decreased self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, cyberbullying is a cruel behavior which is conducted intentionally to humiliate the victim by spreading or sending things that are intended to vilify the victim (Çakar-Mengü and Mengü, 2023). Therefore, cyberbullying is considered one of the social aggression behaviors on social media or digital technologies (Sobkin and Fedotova, 2021). Based on the above, it can be inferred that cyberbullying causes psychological distress that is manifested in anxiety, stress, sadness, and depression. This distress is exacerbated by the unique features of online settings where damaging content can be viewed, widely distributed, and stored indefinitely. Cyberbullying is distinct from other forms of bullying because victims are often constantly exposed to aggrieved messages and cannot fully distance themselves from digital spaces, thereby exacerbating their emotional burden. Cyberbullying is also distinct from the other forms of bullying in that the anonymity provided by social media platforms gives perpetrators the confidence to be more overt about their hostility toward their victims, making them feel powerless and socially isolated. Such constant psychological pressure can make changes in the victim's ability

to function daily as well as academically and in personal relationships, as well as their overall well-being.

### **2.2.2 Social Media Platforms and Cyberbullying**

In 1994, the social media concept was first employed in online media in Tokyo, known as Matisse (Bercovici, 2010). These platforms are defined as digital applications, services, and platforms designed around the integration of public communication, interpersonal connection, and content sharing (Burgess et al., 2017). Social media platforms are considered an umbrella concept, which covers a scope of Internet-based applications, such as video- or image-sharing sites, micro-blogs, blogs, and social network sites (SNS), which permit social media users to distribute and network their content (Bengtsson and Johansson, 2022). Kaupe (2019) defines social media as computer-mediated communication where individuals create their content, observe and engage with content created by their friends or other social media users. Furthermore, social media means using technologies to enable users to share and create user-generated content (Yanti, 2018). Furthermore, social media allows users to interact with others to share information and communicate with them (Özkent, 2022). Additionally, social media is a concept which is commonly employed to describe new types of media that increase users' engagement and interactive involvement (Moran et al., 2020).

Social media encompasses a distinct set of online platforms, such as video sharing, social gaming, collaborative projects, business networks, blogs, and enterprise social networks (ESN) (Aichner and Jacob, 2015). Along similar lines, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media platforms as several Internet-based applications that are anchored on the technological and ideological foundation of Web 2.0, which allowed the exchange as well as the creation of user-generated content.

There are a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Instagram, among others (Swathi and Sujatha, 2022). Likewise, Jacobsen (2021) indicates that social media consists of distinct forms, such as social bookmarking, rating, video, photographs or pictures, podcasts, wikis, microblogging, social blogs, weblogs, and forums.

Both Facebook and Instagram are considered the most commonly used social media platforms (Bresnick, 2021). However, Baruah (2012) argues that people tend to use Twitter and Facebook to socialize and interact with each other.

Social media platforms facilitate human communication and interaction (Tiwa, 2019). Similarly, Yanti (2018) points out that social media platforms facilitated the virtual interaction of individuals by providing an arena for communication without the need for face-to-face interaction, along with sharing communication remotely

In our contemporary era, social media platforms constitute an integral part of our lives (Livingston et al., 2014). Social media platforms are one of the critical communication channels employed by individual consumers to use information and knowledge, express opinions, share ideas, distribute materials, and create content (Nordin, 2023). Based on the above, it could be argued that social media platforms constitute an integral part of our daily lives, i.e., such social interaction is bound to happen despite an individual's intention to use social media platforms or not.

As a consequence, there are several benefits of social media, including increasing people's interaction and communication with friends, gaining new knowledge, quick access to information, and keeping in touch with family members, friends, and parents, among others (Lenhart et al., 2015). Along similar lines, Jalal et al. (2021) suggest that social media platforms enable social media users to yield information that might affect

their culture, perspectives, and lifestyles. Moreover, social media enables its users to share stories and experiences, form virtual social bonds, communicate, collaborate, and interact with others (Rifauddin, 2016). In addition, Muthi'ah et al. (2022) maintain that social media platforms are used by individuals to make connections, share thoughts, opinions, and information. Interestingly, social media platforms can be used by children, teenagers, and the elderly (Aini and Apriana, 2019).

Moreover, social media platforms have revolutionized how individuals communicate with each other and altered how society receives and accesses information (Mishnick and Wise, 2024). As a consequence, social media is beneficial for people to meet new individuals, socialize with them, and to promote themselves by using large agencies (Ab Rashid et al., 2022).

However, the intense and excessive use of social media has negative impacts, exemplified by limiting social media users' opportunities to engage in constructive activities, such as community and extracurricular events (Jiang and Peterson, 2012). Moreover, social media addiction increases the individuals' interaction with strangers who have harmful intentions (Sasson and Mesch, 2014). Social media users' interaction with strangers might lead to deviations in language, often manifesting as hate speech or cyberbullying (Putri, 2023).

To elaborate, hate speech is defined as a communication activity which occurs by specific groups or individuals concerning a topic that might offend other groups or individuals (Chetty and Alathur, 2018). Hate speech is regarded as a freedom of expression, which includes a criminal motive (Petruhevska, 2019). Hate speech in linguistic studies manifests in various forms, including vocabulary, language style, pragmatic utterances, and sentence patterns (Elsherief et al., 2018). On the other hand,

cyberbullying is regarded as one of the possible risks of depending on online technologies (Farley et al., 2018). Cyberbullying is further an indirect manifestation of the cultural system (Hong et al., 2018). It is further considered an instance of symbolic violence (Wicaksono, 2018).

Similarly, Barlett et al. (2018) point out that social media users might use social media platforms to harm others, i.e., cyberbullying. More importantly, the constant interaction with and exposure to social media increases social media users' susceptibilities to particular online interactions that might put their psychological and emotional well-being at risk (Abaido, 2020).

This study is concerned with Instagram, a social media platform that is defined as a video-taking and photo application, which allows users to apply digital filters, upload photos and videos, and share them with others (Damanik and Wandini, 2020).

Instagram is considered one of the most common social media platforms (Tiwa, 2019). Instagram is defined as a social media application that connects users based on their geographic location (Boy and Uitermark, 2017). Mishnick and Wise (2024) indicate that the number of Instagram social media users has surpassed 2 billion, who are aged between 18-24. Instagram is more of a visual medium, which makes it different from other text-focused platforms (Cilliers and Viljoen, 2023).

Instagram enables its users to share their photos and videos as well as to apply digital filters (Thelwall and Vis, 2017). Similarly, Muthi'ah et al. (2022) contend that Instagram enables users to share their photos, videos, experiences, and perspectives by allowing its users to write comments to share their thoughts freely.

It is worth mentioning that the merit of Instagram in enabling social media users to comment on others' photos, achievements, videos, and so forth has both pros and cons. To support this claim, Yanti (2018) believe that the freedom of comments and expression might have negative consequences that are exemplified in the form of actions, opinions, comments, and statements that might hurt others, that are called cyberbullying. A similar assertion was made by Bohang (2017), who states that Instagram is commonly used to cyberbully others by harassing, threatening, or degrading others online. Along similar lines, Santosa (2020) states that cyberbullying is considered one of the negative impacts of social media that is commonly observed on Instagram since it is considered a source of hate campaigns due to the emergence of gossip accounts.

### **2.2.3 Cyberbullying and Impoliteness on Social Media**

It is widely acknowledged that the cultural norms and values have a notion of what is polite and impolite. Politeness is concerned with performing acts that are considered face-saving; however, impoliteness is the opposite of politeness, which means performing acts that are regarded as face-threatening (Santosa, 2020).

This study focuses on impoliteness; thus, this section highlights the definition of impoliteness and its occurrences on social media platforms. Impoliteness is considered a field of pragmatics, which has gained considerable popularity in recent years (Nishimura, 2019). Impoliteness means an act that intentionally seeks to attack others, which occurs when a writer or speaker employs harmful language intentionally to face-attack the recipient (Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021). According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness is defined as a negative attitude or behaviour that is construed and identified from the context of the words. Impoliteness means an action in a communication form that seeks to threaten the face of the interlocutor (Culpeper, 2008). Accordingly, impoliteness is

considered conversational rudeness that might result in interpersonal conflict and face-threatening situations (Kamalu and Fasasi, 2018).

As Culpeper (2016) put it, impoliteness is defined as a strategy that attacks an individual, causing social conflict. Accordingly, impoliteness is concerned with the behavior of individuals in a particular context (Kecskes, 2017). It is defined as the act that is regarded as offensive in a particular situation (Acheampong and Kwarteng, 2021). Impoliteness is a strategy designed to attack a person and cause disharmony and social conflict (Saragih and Murni, 2021). Likewise, Culpeper (2005) states that impoliteness means a communicative strategy which aims to attack the listener's face, thus causing disharmony and social conflict. It can be argued from this definition that impoliteness means the acts that are deliberately performed to attack others to foster discord.

Impoliteness encompasses the negative attitudes that might lead to negative behavior in a particular context of social interaction (Anindia, 2024). Culpeper (2011) further states that impoliteness means a negative attitude or behavior that is construed based on the context of the utterance. Impoliteness can be observed in any behavior revealed by the language user, such as bullying, which is commonly pervasive in schools, daily conversation, office interaction, and any social gathering (Mantasiah et al., 2020).

Impoliteness is commonly observed in social media platforms that allow for social interaction and freedom of speech (Ambarita, 2024). There are several reasons that prompt social media users to use impolite expressions, including serving collective purposes, entertaining the viewers, and venting negative feelings (Ningsih, 2018).

#### **2.2.4 Social Media and Cyberbullying Social Media Influencers**

On social media, there are a variety of social media influencers who generate a large number of followers, including the enthusiastic, engaged individuals and haters (Hassan

et al., 2018). According to Ab Rashid et al. (2022), social media influencers are social media users who have established a recognized expertise on a particular issue or those who have gained recognition for their expertise in a particular topic. As Duffy (2020) put it forward, social media influencers are defined as a group of diverse digital content creators who have a high number of followers.

Social media influencers make regular posts concerning the topic on their favored digital communication platforms, resulting in a large number of enthusiastic followers (Abidin, 2019). The role of social media influencers is exemplified in inspiring followers and providing advice related to food, fashion, and social issues, among others; thus, they act as role models (Duffy, 2020). Social media influencers create posts regularly regarding a particular topic on their favorite social media platforms that attract a large audience who are interested in what the influencers seek to convey (Kay et al., 2020).

Owing to their popularity, social media influencers are subjected to cyberbullying (Moffat, 2024). Consequently, cyberbullying occurs when a person or group of individuals send hate texts, pictures, or posts using digital technologies, web pages, electronic mail, and instant messaging platforms (Alim and Khalid, 2019). Similarly, Valenzuela-García et al. (2023) point out that social media users are constantly exposed to social media, where they can interact with the public using private messages, emails, polls, and comments. They add that their engagement exposes them to toxic critics and online harassment. The impact of cyberbullying on social media influencers

Cyberbullying has a negative impact on social media influencers. To support this claim, Maly (2020) maintains that the bashing activities of social media influencers expose them to cyberbullying. As a consequence, social media influencers take several stances against this social phenomenon either by forming or encouraging anti-bullying

organizations or initiatives or by ignoring the haters' comments by keeping on posting their personal daily lives and stories (Ab Rashid et al., 2022).

The literature indicates that social media influencers experience several forms of bullying; including masquerading, dissing, harassment, and outing (Hassan et al., 2018; Ab Rashid et al., 2022). To clarify, masquerading means pretending to be someone else to anonymously harass or intimidate them (Widiasih, 2019). Dissing, on the other hand, is defined as broadcasting or transmitting brutal information about others to ruin their friendship or reputation (Jean-Baptiste, 2021). Harassment occurs when a bully sends nasty and rude communications to a person or group of individuals, frequently in the form of cyberstalking, rude conversations, and perilous texting (Hua et al., 2019). Finally, outing entails publishing embarrassing material or private and sensitive information about others on the internet without the consent of the victims (Jean-Baptiste, 2021).

Moreover, Notar et al. (2013) state that social media influencers encounter four types of cyberbullying, namely, (1) impersonation, (2) flaming, (3) trolling, and (4) cyberstalking (Notar et al., 2013). First, impersonation, which means pretending to be someone else online to harm or deceive others (Lareki et al., 2023). Second, flaming, which is defined as an electronic brawl that occurs over instant messaging, social media accounts, or emails using aggressive language and vulgar imagery (Al-Ameedi and Al-Ghizzy, 2022).

Third, trolling, which results from creating offensive and controversial content material to bully, mock, deflect attention, and misinform the author of a social media post (Cabañes and Jonathan, 2018). Several factors trigger the emergence of trolling, such as the intention to deliver a particular message more directly to a targeted audience, jealousy, or dissatisfaction (Manuoğlu, 2020). Trolling fosters an environment that encourages or supports cyberbullying (Aydın et al., 2021). This is driven by the fact that a minority of social media users are oblivious

of the effect and the importance of their activities and words on social media (Connor & Carolina, 2020). Fourth, cyberstalking is defined as the repetitive use of digital platforms to threaten, monitor, or harass others (Can & Alatas, 2021).

Other types of cyberbullying encompass defamation, posting one's photos or private data without their approval, and using offensive remarks about someone or on one's digital profile (Jun, 2020; Kwanya et al., 2021). Chadwick (2014) mentions six types of cyberbullying; (1) harassment, which occurs when social media users send offensive language to the victim; (2) denigration, which entails spitting out the ugliness of the victim to damage their reputations; (3) flaming, which means a behavior when the speaker send frontal and harsh words through text messages to the victims; (4) masquerade, which occurs when the speaker hide his/her identity and pretends to be someone by creating fake account to send threatening messages to the victim; (4) pseudonyms, which entails creating a new account to vilify and insult the victim; (5) outing dan trickery, which means spreading the personal information or secrets of the victims that occurs when the perpetrator deceive the victim to steal information from him/her to reveal them on the Internet; and (6) cyberstalking, which occurs when the perpetrator defame and disturb the victim to cause drama.

### **2.3 Review of Empirical Literature**

This section is divided into three sections; the first one reviews the empirical studies on cyberbullying on social media, and the second section addresses the studies conducted on impoliteness on social media. The last section comments on the previous studies conducted on the topic under investigation. It further articulates the similarities and differences between this study and the previous studies to highlight the gap in the literature.

### 2.3.1 Studies on Cyberbullying on Social Media

Several studies (Indrawan, 2018; Barlett et al., 2018; Craig et al., 2020; Abaido, 2020; Oladimeji, 2022; Ab Rashid et al., 2022; Valenzuela-García et al., 2023) were conducted to investigate cyberbullying on social media. To begin with, Indrawan (2018) investigated the impoliteness strategies and the phenomenon of cyberbullying on Instagram in Indonesia. The case study was a gossip account entitled Lamb-Turah. The sample contained cyberbullying comments written by commentators against the victim, Jennifer Dunn. The study adopted Culpeper's (2005) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies. The data were analysed qualitatively. The results showed that negative comments were the most commonly used impoliteness strategies in the corpus, subsequent by bold on record. The study concluded that cyberbullying is meant to attack the victim using different types of impoliteness strategies.

Barlett et al. (2018) examined the use of social media as an instrument to reduce or facilitate cyberbullying perpetration by concentrating on anonymous and non-anonymous social media platforms. The study further presented practical recommendations for decreasing cyberbullying through social media policy and design. The data were collected using a systematic literature review by discussing case studies such as Megan Meier and Amanda Todd. Moreover, the study referred to previously conducted studies or surveys, such as Wright 2013, Whittaker & Kowalski 2015, and Pew Research Centre 2017. The data were analyzed using a narrative literature review and theoretical analysis. The results showed that cyberbullying on Instagram often manifested using indirect aggressive behaviors, including the spread of embarrassing content via posts or stories, exclusion, and harmful comments. More importantly, the findings showed that Instagram users were engaged in cyberbullying by exploiting features, such as visual content sharing, comments, and tagging, to target individuals.

Craig et al. (2020) investigated cyberbullying experienced by adolescents on social media in 42 countries by considering the effects of age, gender and nationality. The study investigated adolescents aged 11 to 15 years who were involved in the Health Behavior in School-aged Children study. The study sought to describe their involvement in their bullying behaviors in talking with strangers. To analyse the data, Poisson regression was used to estimate the relationships between social media use and cyber-bullying outcomes. The results showed that stranger-based, problematic, and intense social media use were associated with cyber-bullying more than with cyber-victimization. Interestingly, the study found that females were more vulnerable to cyberbullying than males. The study further found that the victims of cyberbullying were subjected to negative social and psychological outcomes because of the heightened exposure to harmful online interactions.

Abaido (2020) carried out a study on cyberbullying among university students in the United Arab Emirates on social media platforms. The study focused on the venues and nature of cyberbullying and the respondents' attitudes towards reporting cyberbullying rather than remaining silent. To this end, a total of 200 students participated in the study. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using statistical analysis. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents (91%) confirmed the existence of the cyberbullying act. Besides, the study found that cyberbullying was more common on Instagram compared to Facebook, with percentages (55.5% and 38%, respectively). Interestingly, the study found that the majority of respondents (47.6%) opted for taking action rather than remaining silent.

Oladimeji (2022) conducted a study on the factors affecting cyberbullying among adults aged between 18 to 30 years old on Instagram. To this end, the study focused on five constructs, namely, (1) Instagram usage, (2) vulnerability, (3) peer pressure, (4)

anonymity, and (5) Instagram features. The study adopted routine activity theory (RAT), which postulates that criminal acts can be effortlessly carried out by anyone who has the chance. To collect the data, the study used a questionnaire that was distributed to 201 Instagram users. The participants were recruited from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The data were analyzed quantitatively using Smart PLS. The study found that online vulnerability and peer pressure were among the most significant factors behind cyberbullying.

Ab Rashid et al. (2022) investigated the reasons that subject social media influencers to cyberbullying on social media. To this end, the study used a holistic online questionnaire to evaluate the type of cyberbullying. The questionnaire was distributed to 50 influencers in Malaysia. The study analyzed the data quantitatively using SmartPLS. The study revealed that cyberbullying has four dimensions, namely, flaming, trust, dissing, and harassment. The study further found that social media influencers in Malaysia were subjected to cyberbullying. The study found that social media influencers are vulnerable to cyberbullying because of public engagement and visibility, making them easy targets for online aggression.

Valenzuela-García et al. (2023) carried out an exploratory study to investigate the hate messages and online harassment encountered by social media influencers. To be specific. The study focused on the reactions, impact, and characteristics of cyber victimization among social media influencers. To do so, the study presented the results of two studies, namely, an online ethnography and a self-reported online victimization survey carried out among Spanish influencers. The results showed that (70%) of social media users. The study found that social media influencers react to cyberbullying by confronting aggressors, ignoring harassment, sharing experiences with close contacts, and

reducing personal content. The study further found that cyberbullying has a negative impact on social media influencers, including emotional distress, such as sleep disturbances, anger, and anxiety. Moreover, they encountered professional setbacks by avoiding collaboration.

### **2.3.2 Studies on Impoliteness on Social Media**

Several studies (Santosa, 2020; Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021; Muthi'ah et al., 2022; Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda, 2022; Ambarita et al., 2023; Putri, 2023; Anindia, 2024) were conducted to investigate the impoliteness strategies on social media.

Santosa (2020) investigated the impoliteness strategies and cyberbullying on Instagram in Indonesia. The sample consisted of @Lambe\_turah, which is one of the biggest gossip accounts on social media. The study adopted Culpeper's (2005) theory, which encompasses positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withheld politeness to analyze the data qualitatively. The study found that negative impoliteness was the most commonly used type of impoliteness, followed by bald on-record.

Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) carried out a study on the impoliteness and cyberbullying used by Nigerian adolescents on social media platforms, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp. To be specific, the study sought to achieve the following objectives: the first one was to identify the manifestations of cyberbullying through the usage of the English language. Moreover, the study sought to determine the linguistic features of cyberbullying in Nigeria. In addition, the study further aimed to determine the ideologies of cyberbullying. The sample consisted of (30) first- and second-year students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The study analyzed the data using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The study found that cyberbullying had distinct levels of linguistic analysis, including

semantic, syntactical, and grammatical levels. More importantly, the study found that cyberbullying reflected power imbalances in which bullies employ language to assert dominance. The study further found that cyberbullying has psychological impacts on victims, including feelings of humiliation, fear, and trauma.

Muthi'ah et al. (2022) investigated the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying by Indonesian social media influencers on Instagram using a qualitative approach. The study collected examples of cyberbullying on Instagram, highlighted the motives that prompt someone to bully others and the impact of cyberbullying on victims. The study found several reasons that prompted social media users to bully social media influencers, are disliking the presence and personality of others by using negative comments that are abusive and immoral, amusing others by mocking someone, along having bad characteristics, including jealousy of one's achievement, envy, and having a high level of self-confidence. The study further found several impacts of cyberbullying, including unpleasant feelings, keeping away from the social environment or friends, shutting up, feeling discriminated against or worthless, guilt, despair, stress, sobbing, upset, furious, and offended.

Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda (2022) carried out a study on the impoliteness strategies used by Joe Biden on Twitter during a press conference when against Peter Doocy (the journalist) when he asked if inflation proved to be a disadvantage for candidates during the midterms. The study collected 610 original tweets related to the topic under investigation that were analyzed using Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness. The results showed that the data contained negative expressions that sought to vilify and distort the image of Joe Biden and Peter Doocy.

Ambarita et al. (2023) conducted a study on the impoliteness strategies used by Instagram used by netizens by focusing on political comments. To achieve this objective, the study collected data denoting impoliteness strategies revolving around political comments from Facebook and Instagram. The collected data were analysed using a descriptive and qualitative approach through the lens of Culpeper's theory (1996). The study found 9 impoliteness strategies, namely, bald on record, negative, positive, sarcasm, off record, positive and bald on record, off record and sarcasm, negative impoliteness.

Putri et al. (2023) investigated how cyberbullying speech and impolite strategies in Indonesian on social media can violate the Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) Law. To this end, content analysis was used. In addition, a scrutinizing approach was used through Talk (Simak Bebas Libat Cakap/SBLC), Get Involved, Be Free, and Scrutinize as a basic stage. Besides, the study applied the note-taking technique as an advanced technique. The data are gathered from netizen captions and comments on Ayu Ting-Ting's haters' account on Instagram, which included hate speech and cyberbullying rendered by netizens on Instagram. To analyze the data, a content analysis approach was used. The results showed that two types of impoliteness strategies were pervasive, namely, positive and negative, with percentages 38% and 62%, respectively. The results showed various manifestations of negative impoliteness, including threatening or attacking the negative face of the interlocutor, mocking or ridiculing the interlocutor, scaring the interlocutor, and warning the interlocutor.

In their study, Anindia (2024) investigated the impoliteness strategies employed by haters on Mason Greenwood's Instagram account in Instagram using a qualitative and descriptive method through the lens of Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness. The study collected (20) impoliteness strategies, where (40%) of them were positive

politeness, (40%) of them were negative politeness, while (20%) of them were bald on record. Interestingly, the study found three functions for impoliteness, namely, entertaining functions (8) instances, followed by affective functions (7) instances, and subsequently by coercive functions (5) examples.

### **2.3.3 Comments on the Previous Studies**

This study shares similarities and differences with the previous studies. It resembles (Indrawan, 2018; Barlett et al., 2018; Craig et al., 2020; Abaido, 2020; Oladimeji, 2022; Ab Rashid et al., 2022; Valenzuela-García et al., 2023) in investigating cyberbullying on social media. Further, it is similar to the objective of (Santosa, 2020; Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021; Muthi'ah et al., 2022; Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda, 2022; Ambarita et al., 2023; Putri, 2023; Anindia, 2024) in investigating the impoliteness strategies of cyberbullying on social media. It resembles Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda (2022) in adopting Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness.

Moreover, it shares similarities with the previous studies in focusing on cyberbullying comments posted on Instagram (Indrawan, 2018; Barlett et al., 2018; Oladimeji, 2022) rather than Facebook and Twitter (Craig et al., 2020; Abaido, 2020; Ab Rashid et al., 2022; Valenzuela-García et al., 2023).

However, it differs from these studies in focusing on cyberbullying comments posted on Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (Anyanwu and Udoh, 2021; Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda, 2022; Putri, 2023) rather than Instagram (Santosa, 2020; Muthi'ah et al., 2022; Ambarita et al., 2023; Anindia, 2024).

Another difference between these studies and the current study lies in the fact that Oladimeji's (2022) study was conducted among young adults in South Africa, while Indrawan's (2018) study was conducted in Indonesia against Jennifer Dunn. Anindia (2024) was used by

haters on Mason Greenwood's Instagram account. Ambarita et al. (2023) focused on political comments. Barlett et al. (2018) focused on the role of social media in increasing or decreasing cyberbullying. Craig et al. (2020) addressed cyberbullying among teenagers on social media by focusing on age, gender, and nationality variables. Abaido (2020) examined the phenomenon of cyberbullying in the United Arab Emirates. Ab Rashid et al. (2022) examined the reasons behind cyberbullying of social media influencers. Valenzuela-García et al. (2023) concentrated on online harassment and hate messages encountered by social media influencers. Santosa (2020) addressed the impoliteness strategies and cyberbullying on Instagram in Indonesia.

Similarly, Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) investigated the impoliteness and cyberbullying used by Nigerian adolescents on social media platforms, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp. However, Muthi'ah et al. (2022) focused on impoliteness and cyberbullying by Indonesian social media influencers on Instagram. Marciotto Oliveira and Miranda (2022) focused on the impoliteness strategies used by Joe Biden on Twitter during a press conference when against Peter Doocy (the journalist) when he asked if inflation proved to be a disadvantage for candidates during the midterms. Ambarita et al. (2023) conducted a study on the impoliteness strategies employed by Instagram used by netizen by concentrating on political comments. By contrast, this study is concerned with the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers through the lens of Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies.

Another difference between the previous studies and this study lies in the fact that the previous studies adopted different taxonomies for addressing impoliteness, such as Culpeper's (2005) taxonomy of impoliteness that was adopted by Putri (2023), Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness strategies that was adopted by Anindia (2024) and Ambarita et al. (2023).

By investigating the types of impoliteness strategies and the topics that are commonly addressed by Jordanian commentators in cyberbullying social media influencers, this study bridges the critical gap in the literature by addressing a topic that has been overlooked in previous investigations. What so more, the adoption of Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies provides a comprehensive picture of the types of impoliteness strategies that are frequently used by commentators on Instagram in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodological approaches concerning the methodologies used for collecting the data. It introduces the methods, population, and sample of the study. Further, it highlights the instrument used for collecting the data and its validity. Besides, it mentions the data analysis, validity, reliability, and procedures of the study.

#### **3.1 Method of the Study**

This study investigates the impoliteness strategies that are used by Instagram users when they are engaged in cyberbullying top five Jordanian social media influencers. This study employs a mixed-method approach, which incorporates a quantitative and qualitative approach to identify the perspectives, performance, and behavior of impoliteness by Instagram users. Dawadi et al. (2021) point out that the mixed method provides a comprehensive picture of the issue by collecting numerical and thematic data. Quantitative data means the numerical data that can be measured and counted for statistical analysis (Sheard, 2018). According to Kang and Hwang (2021), qualitative data are concerned with collecting data by interviewing respondents, observing behavior, or examining documents. This study employs content analysis by gathering Instagram users' comments, which may also function as a behavioral indicator of the user and a valuable source of data. In the present study, interpretative analysis was used to represent the qualitative approach. The quantitative data in this study were in the form of frequencies and percentages.

### **3.2 Sample of the Study**

The population of the study consists of all impolite and cyberbullying comments posted by Jordanian commentators against the top five Jordanian social media influencers.

The researcher collected the data from one of the most common social media platforms, Instagram. In Jordan, Instagram is considered one of the most popular social media platforms that allows its users to write negative comments against celebrities or social media influencers (Ahmadi et al., 2022). Accordingly, Instagram can influence followers' perceptions of a particular person or topic by constantly exposing them to negative comments, which encourages similar comment patterns; thus, Instagram may function as a platform that fosters and amplifies hateful speech (Giles and Edwards, 2018). The number of cyberbullying comments that were collected is 100 comments from the top five Jordanian influencers who are the most popular and famous on Instagram, who have a large number of followers and views, to guarantee the comprehensiveness of the data. Besides, the translation of the comments gathered was also reconfirmed with a native Arabic speaker to ascertain the linguistic and cultural correctness.

The researcher identified the top five Jordanian influencers as illustrated below. They were selected on the basis of a combination of measurable indicators of online influence, such as their count of followers, consistency of audience engagement through posts (likes, comments, shares), and visibility through public Instagram trends in Jordan. These influencers also show a long-term impact on digital culture and public discourse with regard to high interaction rates and frequent appearances in sponsored content, collaborations, and media coverage. Together, these criteria ensured that the selected figures represent the most prominent and socially influential Jordanian personalities on Instagram.

1. *Anas Elshayib*, who has approximately five-point-eight million followers, follows a little over one thousand one hundred accounts, and has forty-three posts on his profile (43 posts, 5.8M followers, 1.111 following).
2. Joe Hattab, who has nearly five-point-seven million followers, follows about one thousand and forty-seven accounts, and has uploaded three hundred and seven posts (307 posts, 5.7M followers, 1.047 following).
3. Haya Awad, whose profile includes more than two thousand and forty posts, with five million followers and roughly four thousand one hundred and thirty-two accounts followed (2.040 posts, 5M followers, 4.132 following).
4. Wessam Qutob, who has around five-point-one million followers, follows approximately seven hundred and twenty-two accounts, and has published four hundred and twenty-three posts (423 posts, 5.1M followers, 722 following).
5. Ahmad Aburob, who has five million followers, follows about six hundred and eighty-seven accounts, and has posted three hundred and eighty-two items on Instagram (382 posts, 5M followers, 687 following).

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

A coding sheet was created using the theoretical framework, notably Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy, which consists of 9 impoliteness strategies. This coding sheet facilitates the identification and categorization of various methods seen in Instagram postings. The researcher reviewed the pages of the top five Jordanian social media influencers, then he read the negative comments written by Jordanians on Instagram against social media influencers. The study examined the posts of the top five Jordanian influencers and focused on those that exhibited the highest density of cyberbullying comments. The researcher excluded the comments that do not reflect cyberbullying.

After collecting the data, the researcher classified them according to Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy, which consists of 9 impoliteness strategies as shown in Table 3.1 below:

**Table 3.1: Culpeper (2011) Taxonomy of Impoliteness Strategies**

<b>Impoliteness Strategies</b>	<b>Sub-Types</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>1. Insult</b>	A. personalized Negative Vocatives	It is defined as insulting the characteristics or traits of the listener using direct and offensive expressions.	You are ugly.
	B. personalized Negative Assertions	It is defined as using negative expressions to assert negative characteristics or traits of an individual.	You are completely unreliable and irresponsible.
	C. personalized Negative References	It entails using derogatory or offensive language that is mainly targeted at an individual's identity, traits, or characteristics.	You are such a lazy fool.
	D. personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target	It is defined as insulting an individual indirectly by using third-person pronouns, offensive or derogatory statements.	The useless person.
<b>2. Pointed Criticism or Complaints</b>		It entails using explicit or direct statements to denote dissatisfaction, disapproval, or criticism to attack or harm one's face, whether his/her self-esteem or social standing. Such a strategy means using negative expressions to undermine or offend someone.	Your work is pathetic, completely below standards.
<b>3. Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions</b>		It is defined as using questions deliberately to accuse the victim in an uncomfortable and offensive	Why do you ruin my life?

Impoliteness Strategies	Sub-Types	Definition	Examples
		position by using implicit or explicit negative judgments.	
<b>4. Contdescension</b>		It is defined as communicating with others in a manner that denotes demeaning or belittling them by portraying the listener as inferior, immature, or incapable.	This is inhumane behaviour.
<b>5. Message Enforcers</b>		Such a strategy occurs when the speaker imposes authority or seriousness over the listener in a commanding and directive manner.	Finish the report by the end of the day. This is not optional.
<b>6. Dismissals</b>		It is defined as rejecting, ignoring, and disregarding a person and his/her contributions in a manner that denotes a lack of value and respect and undermines one's social standing to belittle the hearer.	I don't care about you.
<b>7. Silencers</b>		It is defined as actions or expressions employed to explicitly or implicitly stop someone from speaking to exert control or dominance in an interaction.	Shut up!
<b>8. Threats</b>		Such a strategy entails the deliberate use of threatening language or actions to attack one's face, such as social standing or dignity, by dominating, asserting power, intimidating, or violating	If you speak up about this issue, you have no idea what I will do.

Impoliteness Strategies	Sub-Types	Definition	Examples
		social norms to provoke discomfort or fear in the victim.	
<b>9. Negative Expressions</b>		It means using derogatory or hostile language to insult, demean, express hostility, or target the victim's self-esteem or social value. Such a strategy is commonly expressed by using ill wishes or curses.	You'll never amount to anything; you're just a failure.

The researcher identified and classified the data quantitatively in the form of frequencies and percentages based on Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy. Then the researcher interpreted and analysed the data qualitatively.

### 3.3.1 Validity of the Instrument

The researcher ensured the validity of this study using a rigorous and systematic data collection and analysis process. The study used Culpeper's (2011) well-established taxonomy of impoliteness strategies, which provides a valid framework for classifying and analysing impolite comments. The researcher ensured content validity by carefully choosing comments that particularly reflect cyberbullying. However, the non-offensive or irrelevant remarks were excluded.

### 3.3.2 Reliability of the Instrument

Having classified the comments in light of the two adopted paradigms, the researcher sent the Instagram comments to a colleague specialized in linguistics in order to classify these comments based on the adopted taxonomy. To verify the level of agreement between the two works, i.e. the analysis provided by the researcher and colleague, the inter-rater reliability was calculated. If any disagreement appears, the researcher and his colleague read the comment together, discuss it, and reclassify it. Hence, every disagreement was resolved scientifically based on the discussion in light of the adopted taxonomy.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results of The Study**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This chapter shows the results of the research after analyzing Instagram comments from the top 5 Jordanian social media influencers. The results are organized based on the two objectives of the study: identifying the impoliteness strategies employed in cyberbullying comments and examining the influence of gender on the frequency of the impoliteness strategies employed. The findings are examined quantitatively, in frequencies and percentages, and interpreted in terms of Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness.

#### **4.1 Results of the First Research Question: *What are the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram, adopted by Culpeper (2011)?***

This section presents an answer to the first research question regarding the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments employed by Jordanians on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. To answer this question, the study adopts Culpeper (2011) as illustrated in Table 4.1 below:

**Table (4.1) Impoliteness Strategies in the Comments Used by Commentators on Cyberbullying, the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers on Instagram**

<b>Impoliteness Strategies</b>	<b>Impoliteness Sub-Strategies</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1. Insult</b>	A. Personalised Negative Assertions	22	50%
	B. Personalised Negative References	12	27.3%
	C. Personalised Negative Vocatives	9	20.4%
	D. Personalised Third-Person Negative References in the Hearing of the Target	1	2.3%
<b>Total</b>		44	44%
<b>2. Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions</b>		21	21%
<b>3. Pointed Criticism or Complaints</b>		11	11%
<b>4. Negative Expressions</b>		9	9%
<b>5. Contdescension</b>		5	5%
<b>6. Message Enforcers</b>		3	3%
<b>7. Dismissals</b>		3	3%
<b>8. Insult+ Pointed Criticism</b>		1	1%
<b>9. Insult+ Contdescension</b>		1	1%
<b>10. Message Enforcers+ Pointed Criticism</b>		1	1%
<b>11. Negative Expressions + Dismissals</b>		1	1%
<b>Total</b>		100	100%

A closer inspection of Table 4.1 shows that there are 11 impoliteness strategies used by Instagram users in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. The percentages were calculated based on a total sample of 100 comments; therefore, each individual comment represents exactly 1% of the dataset. Insult occupies the highest rank with the percentage (44%). It is evident that 'insult' is divided into four sub-strategies,

namely, personalized negative assertions, personalized negative references, personalized negative vocatives, and personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target, with the percentages (50%), (27.3%), (20.4%), and (2.3%), respectively. Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions occupy the second rank with the percentage (21%). The third commonly used type of cyberbullying among the participants is ‘pointed criticism or complaints’, which makes up (11%). Followed by ‘negative expressions’, which constitute (9%). Subsequently, by ‘condescension’, which accounts for (5%). Each of the ‘message enforcers’ and ‘dismissals’ accounts for (3%). The least common types of impoliteness strategies are the combined types, namely, ‘insult+ pointed criticism’, ‘insult+ condescension’, ‘message enforcers+ pointed criticism’, and ‘negative expressions+ dismissals’, which equally amount to (1%). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy amounts to 5% as elaborated in the following examples:

**Example (21):** "عفكرة هادي قبة الصخرة يا جاهل" (By the way, that's the Dome of the Rock, you ignorant) (@a.h.med.5, 2025).

**Example (22):** "تشدش عمالك" (Don't strain yourself) (@yaqe\_en591, 2025).

The above examples No. (21) and (22) are intended to belittle the addressee. Both examples use a demeaning tone, which depicts the target as incapable or inferior. In the first instance, the insult "جاهل" [ignorant] is considered a direct negative vocative. It places the commentator as intellectually superior. In the second example, the mocking remark "تشدش عمالك" [don't strain yourself] intends to frame the victim sarcastically as incompetent or weak. Collectively, such expressions demonstrate the condescending attitude, which aims to decrease the self-worth of the recipient by simultaneously displaying the aggressor's superiority, which aligns with Culpeper's (2011) model of impoliteness.

Furthermore, by referring to the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy accounts for 3%, as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (23):** "عيب عليك" (Shame on you) (@aws.7020, 2025).

**Example (24):** "بدل كل هل تكاليف تبرعوا لناس فقراء" (Instead of all these expenses, donate to poor people) (@amany.abdullah17, 2025).

The above examples show how Instagram commentators use a directive and forceful tone, which pressures the victim into compliance. Such expressions serve as authoritative commands instead of neutral statements. They seek to impose a moral obligation by stripping the listener of autonomy. The example "عيب عليك" [shame on you] enforces a moral judgment, which obliges the listener to accept the blame. Likewise, the example "بدل كل هذه التكاليف" [instead of all these expenses] is considered a directive dictating how the listener should act. It undermines personal freedom of choice. These examples fall under the category of message enforcer type of impoliteness based on Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy. The speaker in these examples asserts authority and seriousness by steering and controlling the interaction toward compliance.

#### **4.2 Results of the Second Research Question: *How does gender affect the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used by Commentators in cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanians' social media influencers?***

This section presents an answer to the second research question regarding the impact of gender on the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying by commentators against the top five Jordanian social media influencers. To answer this question, the researcher separated the comments written by males from those written by females to articulate the similarities and differences between them in light of Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies. The following Table (4.2) highlights the

impoliteness strategies in the comments used by males on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers:

**Table (4.2) Impoliteness Strategies in the Comments Used by Males on Cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers**

<b>Impoliteness Strategies</b>	<b>Impoliteness Sub-Strategies</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1. Insult</b>	A. personalized Negative Assertions	10	43.4%
	B. personalized Negative References	8	34.7%
	C. personalized Negative Vocatives	4	17.4%
	D. personalized Third-Person Negative References in the Hearing of the Target	1	4.5%
<b>Total</b>		23	46%
<b>2. Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions</b>		7	14%
<b>3. Pointed Criticism or Complaints</b>		5	10%
<b>4. Negative Expressions</b>		4	8%
<b>5. Condescension</b>		3	6%
<b>6. Message Enforcers</b>		2	4%
<b>7. Dismissals</b>		2	4%
<b>8. Insult+ Pointed Criticism</b>		1	2%
<b>9. Insult+ Condescension</b>		1	2%
<b>10. Message Enforcers + Pointed Criticism</b>		1	2%
<b>11. Negative Expressions + Dismissals</b>		1	2%
<b>Total</b>		100	100%

As shown in Table 4.2, there are 11 impoliteness strategies used by males in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. Insult occupies the first rank with the percentage (46%). This strategy is divided into four sub-strategies, namely, personalized negative assertions, personalized negative references, personalized negative vocatives, and personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target, with the percentages (43.3%), (34.7%), (17.4%), and (4.5%). Followed by challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, which make up (14%). Subsequently, by ‘pointed criticism or complaints’, which accounts for (10%). The fourth commonly used impoliteness strategy by Jordanian males in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social

media influencers is ‘negative expressions’, which amounts to (8%). Condescension occupies the fifth rank with the proportion (6%). Each of ‘message enforcers’ and ‘dismissals’ occupies the sixth rank with the percentage (4%). The combined impoliteness strategies, namely, ‘insult+ pointed criticism’, ‘insult+ condescension’, ‘message enforcers+ pointed criticism’, and ‘negative expressions+ dismissals’, are the least frequently used impoliteness strategies by Jordanian males in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, with the percentage (2%) for each.

The following Table (4.3) highlights the impoliteness strategies in the comments used by females on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers:

**Table (4.3) Impoliteness Strategies in the Comments Used by Females on Cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers on Instagram**

<b>Impoliteness Strategies</b>	<b>Impoliteness Sub-Strategies</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	A. personalized Negative Vocatives	12	57.2%
	B. personalized Negative Assertions	12	57.2%
	C. personalized Negative References	4	19%
<b>Total</b>		21	42%
<b>2. Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions</b>		14	28%
<b>3. Pointed Criticism or Complaints</b>		6	12%
<b>4. Negative Expressions</b>		5	10%
<b>5. Condescension</b>		2	4%
<b>6. Message Enforcers</b>		1	2%
<b>7. Dismissals</b>		1	2%
<b>Total</b>		100	100%

Table 4.3 shows the impoliteness strategies in the comments used by females on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. Clearly, ‘insult’ occupies the highest rank with the percentage (42%). The ‘insult’ strategy comprises three sub-strategies: personalized negative vocatives and personalized negative assertions, each accounting for (57.2%), and personalized negative references, which

account for (19%). The second commonly used impoliteness strategy is 'challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions', which accounts for (28%). Followed by pointed criticism or complaints, which make up (12%). Subsequently, by 'negative expressions' that amount to (10%). Condescension occupies the fifth rank with the percentage (4%). The least commonly used impoliteness strategies are both 'message enforcers' and 'dismissals', accounting for (2%).

## Chapter Five

### Discussion, Conclusion, And Recommendations

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used by commentators on cyberbullying by commentators against the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram adopted by Culpeper (2011). It further outlines the impact of gender on the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. By the end of this chapter, a summary and recommendations for upcoming studies are provided.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the First Research Question: What are the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram, as adopted by Culpeper (2011)?**

The first research question is (What are the types of impoliteness strategies in the comments used by commentators on cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram, adopted by Culpeper (2011)?) To answer this question, it is important to clarify that the negative comments referred to earlier are specifically talking about the 100 cyberbullying comments that have been selected to serve as the sample for analysis. The following subsections show the most commonly used types of impoliteness strategies:

##### 5.1.1 Insult

Insult means an impoliteness strategy, which entails using derogatory or offensive language to attack an individual's social image, identity, or trait, whether directly or indirectly (Culpeper, 2011). This strategy seeks to damage the target's public face or self-esteem through verbal aggression. By referring to the data in Table 4.1, it is clear that

'insult' occupies the first rank with the percentage (44%). Insult impoliteness strategy is divided into four sub-strategies as elaborated below:

### 5.1.1.1 *Personalized Negative Assertions*

Personalized negative assertions are defined as a subtype of insult in which the speaker employs explicit negative statements to assert unfavorable traits or qualities regarding an individual, thus harming their reputation or personal image (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data on Table 4.1, this insult sub-strategy occupies the first rank with the percentage (50%), as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (1):** "انسان استغلالي" (exploitative person, researcher translation, 2025) (@jwrj.dhy,2025).

**Example (2):** "زيرو كرامه" (Zero dignity) researcher translation, 2025) (@arafahsanaa, 2025).

**Example (3):** صدقتي يا اخي اسلوبك في بعض الاحيان. تافه اتعلم الأسلوب من انس اسكندر. او على الاقل قدملوا المساعده" (believe me, brother, your attitude is sometimes petty. Learn manners from Anas Iskandar, or at least offer him help) (@ali\_4\_7mm, 2025).

The above examples are explicit verbal attacks, which assign unfavorable characteristics directly to the victim. As Culpeper (2011) states that verbal attacks fall under personalized negative assertions, which are a subtype of insult. This sub-strategy of insult occurs when the aggressor openly attributes undesirable characteristics to harm the victim's social image and face. In the above examples, the derogatory contents are not mitigated or implied but rather stated unambiguously and directly, which increases their face-threatening impact. In each of the above examples, the wording leaves little room for other interpretation.

It places the emphasis of Culpeper on explicitness and intentionality in impoliteness. In this study, the highest percentage of this impoliteness strategy shows that Instagram users opt for direct personal attacks when engaging in cyberbullying. The high percentage of this strategy emphasizes its prominence as a preferred form of online aggression. A possible explanation for this could be attributed to the low accountability and perceived anonymity on social media platforms. This result is in harmony with Indrawan (2018), who states that impoliteness strategies are frequently used on Instagram to attack the victim's traits.

#### **5.1.1.2 Personalized Negative References**

Personalized negative references mean using derogatory or offensive language to specifically direct an individual's identity, traits, or characteristics (Culpeper, 2011). This strategy entails damaging the person's self-worth or image by highlighting perceived flaws aggressively. By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this insult sub-strategy occupies the second rank with the percentage (27.3%) as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (4):** "شكذ جنت متابلك واحب فديو هاتك بس للاسف طلعت تروج للارهاب والدو عش" (I used to follow you so much and love your videos, but unfortunately, it turned out you promote terrorism and Daesh) (@sh15ja, 2025).

**Example (5):** "نجست المسجد الأقصى" (You defiled Al-Aqsa Mosque) (@mtym533, 2025).

In the fourth example, a commentator begins the sentence with a positive statement, 'I used to follow you and love your videos'. However, he quickly shifts to a strong personalized negative reference. This occurs by resembling the influencer's attitudes with Daesh and terrorism. Such an insult attacks the public reputation and moral character of the target, which are considered the main aspects of social identity, to cause maximum reputational harm.

In the fifth example, the commentator accuses the Jordanian influencer of defiling Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is one of the holiest sites in Islam. This comment was taken from a reel where the influencer was seen filming near the vicinity of Al-Aqsa, as part of a travel vlog, which was seen as disrespectful by some viewers. Including this brief description helps explain why such an accusation arose and how the religious sensitivity of the place impacted the reaction of the audience. This statement constitutes a severe religious and moral offence in the Jordanian context. It undermines the moral standing and the integrity of the influencer. Such an attack is heightened by its religious ramifications, which make it a deeply offensive personalized negative reference.

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness theory, both examples are a sub-strategy of insult, namely, personalized negative reference. In the above-mentioned examples, the aggressor employed targeted derogatory statements directed at the perceived actions, moral character, and identity of the influencer. These examples fulfil the criterion of Culpeper regarding intentional damaging of the target's social face. Furthermore, the comments reflect the power dynamic discussed by Culpeper in which public visibility and online anonymity of influencers enhance vulnerability to impoliteness. To elaborate, the shift in the third example from praise to condemnation heightens the perceived betrayal, which makes the attack more cutting. However, the religiously charged insult in the fourth example intensifies the offence by leveraging shared cultural values. These findings are in harmony with Putri et al. (2023), who stated that negative impoliteness often entails attacking or threatening the warning, mocking, or negative face of the interlocutor. These findings resemble the study's finding, where the commentator uses negative statements to threaten the social standing and moral integrity of the victim.

### 5.1.1.3 Personalized Negative Vocatives

Personalized negative vocatives are defined as direct insults, which employ vocative expressions to attack the victim's role, appearance, or personality (Culpeper, 2011). Such expressions seek to offend, belittle, or provoke the victims by calling them labels or names with negative implications. By referring to the data in Table 4.2, this insult sub-strategy occupies the third rank with the percentage (20.4%), as shown in the following examples:

**Example (6):** "شو هاد الي برجلك دبابة" (What's that on your leg, a tank?)

(@saedal\_aloosh, 2025).

**Example (7):** "يا قرن" (You horn) (@jehadabuyalo, 2025).

**Example (8):** "يا ديوث" (dayyouthYou cunt-) (@sends\_39, 2025).

In example (6), the social media user ridicules the physical appearance of social media influencers by denoting that his leg is excessively heavy or large by resembling it with a tank. The social media user bullied the social media user in a sarcastic manner with shaming and derogatory intent. According to Culpeper, this impoliteness falls under personalized negative vocatives by directly addressing the target with a metaphor that is intended to offend by attacking their physical appearance. Such an insult used exaggeration to heighten ridicule by making it a public face-threatening act. This finding is in harmony with Indrawan (2018), who states that negative comments, particularly mocking appearance, were the most common impoliteness strategies on Instagram.

In example No. (7), the social media user employs a direct vocative to resemble the target to an animal feature (horn). The Jordanian Arabic metaphor is an insult that shows disdain for the honor of a man and his masculinity. The term قرن (meaning spineless) is metaphorically used to suggest that the man does not mind other people seeing or touching his women, which is a terrible cultural violation in Jordan and the Arab world

as a whole. The abusive “ya qirn” يا قرن, therefore, describes the addressee as disgraceful and without a male counterpart, i.e. a man who exposes his women to the outside world, which is socially and morally inappropriate. This insult, as stated by Culpeper (2011), is a personalized negative vocative, which aims to label the victim explicitly and damage his/her face by ridiculing his/her physical attributes. Such offence is heightened because the insult is not abstract but connected to an imagined or visible flaw, thus enhancing its potential to shame in a public social media setting. This result is consistent with Muthi'ah et al. (2022), who indicated that mocking someone’s appearance for jealousy or amusement is a frequent cyberbullying motive.

In example No. (8), the insult directly attacks the listener’s social role and moral integrity. The word "ديوث" in the Arab cultural context is a highly offensive utterance, which implies that a person tolerates moral dishonor within his family, which undermines his social respectability, honor, and masculinity. The insult in this example targets the role identity instead of physical appearance. Such impoliteness is magnified because the utterance denotes profound cultural stigma, which makes it a face-threatening act, undermining the private and public image of the victim. This result aligns with Anyanwu’s and Udoh's (2021) findings, which revealed that cyberbullying demonstrates power imbalances and often uses language to humiliate or dominate through moral accusations.

#### ***5.1.1.4 Personalized Third-Person Negative References in the Hearing of the Target***

This subtype of insult occurs when a speaker criticizes or insults an individual indirectly by referring to them in the third person despite their presence (Culpeper, 2011). Such strategies emphasize the insult by integrating indirect aggression with the realization that the target hears the offensive mark. By revisiting the data on Table 4.1, this insult

sub-strategy occupies the fourth rank with the percentage (2.3%) as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (9):** "اللي زيك بدهم شهره بأي طريقة" (People like you want fame by any means) (@samahhasan91, 2025).

In the above example, the speaker indirectly refers to the hearer using a third person, although the hearer is intended to see the comment. This establishes a dual impact; the insult is commonly visible to others while simultaneously guaranteeing the victim perceives the offence. The speaker used the generalized third-person phrasing to intensify the impoliteness by denoting that the victim belongs to a disreputable category, i.e., those seeking fame through any means. Accordingly, it undermines their social standing and reputation. By referring to Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness theory, the indirect aggression here is coupled with the certainty that the victim hears the remarks. Thus, it fulfils the focus of the model on the manipulation of power dynamics and intentional face attack. The public nature of comments in a cyberbullying context, like Instagram, increases the social harm by combining visibility with indirectness. This finding is in harmony with Barlett et al. (2018), who stated that Instagram users often use indirect aggression through features such as tagging and comments.

### ***5.1.2 Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions***

It is defined as questions which place the victim in an accusatory or uncomfortable place, which often implies blame or criticism (Culpeper, 2011). Such questions are deliberately used to render explicit or implicit negative judgments, thus constituting a threat to the listener's social face or self-image (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy accounts for 21%, as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (10):** "يعني أنا مش فاهم كيف بتبليش بفيديو زي هيك و بلد و منطقه فيها طبيعه و حياه بجمع كل فيديوهاتك اللي سوتها بفيديو و بلد وحده ؟ يعني بدك تعطي من البدايه انطباع سيء؟"

(I just don't understand how you start a video like this in a country and area with nature and life, then compile all your videos into one about a single country? So, you want to give a bad impression from the start?) (@layt2005, 2025).

**Example (11):** "ليش شكلك كأنك صاحي من نوم" (Why do you look like you just woke up?) (@zaiineb\_me, 2025).

**Example (12):** "ليش منفس ابو الرب؟" (Why are you imitating Abu Rubb?) (@luluataya, 2025).

**Example (13):** "ليش بتطالع صوت وانت عم تاكل؟؟" (Why do you make noise when you eat??) (@mohamad\_katnoon, 2025).

The above examples (11-13) fall under the 'challenging or unpalatable questions' impoliteness strategy. Such a strategy places the influencer in an accusatory position by implying negative judgments. To elaborate, the Jordanian commentators question the motives and credibility of the influencer, implying that they intend to depict Jordan negatively. In examples No. (11) and (12), the Jordanian commentator shifts to direct personal attacks in terms of questioning the authenticity and physical appearance of the influence. In example No. (13), the Jordanian commentator introduced disgust with a presupposition about inappropriate behavior in terms of making noise while eating. Collectively, such comments challenge the competence, manners, originality, and appearance of the influencer, which are regarded as the main aspects of face and social identity. Such examples are not neutral inquiries; however, they are loaded questions that oblige the influencer into a defensive stance.

According to Culpeper (2011), these examples deliberately attack face instead of maintaining harmony. In the above examples, the reduced accountability and anonymity intensify the aggressiveness of these questions, which align with Culpeper's claim that impoliteness increases in power-imbalanced and conflictual situations. Such examples further denote that impoliteness is confrontational explicitly, which reinforces the classification of Culpeper of direct verbal attack, such as accusatory questions, negative assertions, and insults. This result agrees with Abaido (2020), who states that cyberbullying occurs more frequently on Instagram compared to other social media platforms, which aligns with the study's findings.

### **5.1.3-Pointed Criticism or Complaints**

It means using explicit or direct language to express negative judgment, disapproval, or dissatisfaction toward someone (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy aims to undermine the social standing or self-esteem of the listener by attacking his/her character, behavior, or actions (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy accounts for 11%, as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (14):** "لهلا ما عرفت الهدف من محتواك غير تطلع من حفلة لحفلة شو قدمت شي هادف لجبل غير الخادش عن الحياء"

(Until now, I haven't figured out the purpose of your content other than going from one party to another. What meaningful thing have you offered to the generation besides indecent material?) (@abrar\_nouri6, 2025).

**Example (15):** "اسخف فايت شفته في حياتي" (The lamest fight I've ever seen in my life) (@moudar\_\_alwan, 2025).

**Example (16):** "مو هيك اليضرب فايت بنادي مصارعة من سوك الجمعة" (This isn't how a fight should be — go to a wrestling club in Souq Al-Jum'a) (@a112i3900, 2025).

**Example (17):** "نفس الكلام ونفس الاماكن شففتها عند فلوقر ثاني نفس الكلام بالضبط في اختلاف بسيط فقط او لا يوجد اختلاف معاد عدفنا من يقلد من"

(The same words and the same places I saw with another vlogger — exactly the same words, with only a small difference or none at all. We're back to asking who's copying whom) (@ba936582, 2025).

The above examples (14-17) show the use of pointed criticism and complaints by Instagram commentators against the top five Jordanian social media influencers. To elaborate, the Instagram commentator dismisses the efforts of the top five Jordanian social media influencers by indicating that their content is trivial. The commentator further ridicules the influencer's performance by indicating that he belongs in a wrestling club. Moreover, the commentator accuses the social media influencer of unoriginality. Taken together, such remarks delegitimize the influencers' credibility and express dissatisfaction by targeting both his/her character and content.

Culpeper (2011) indicates that this impoliteness strategy is considered face-attacking, which undermines the social standing or self-esteem of the influencer. Such examples align with Culpeper's concept that impoliteness is contextually motivated rather than being incidental, particularly in contexts like Instagram, where public visibility and anonymity amplify hostile discourse. The explicit criticism demonstrates the shift described by Culpeper from traditional politeness frameworks (Brown & Levinson, 1987) toward understanding language as a tool of power, conflict, and aggression.

In these examples, the Jordanian commentators express their dissatisfaction with the top five Jordanian social media influencers' content and character. Possibly, their dislike and jealousy of the top five Jordanian social media influencers prompted them to use abusive comments. Additionally, such remarks can also be attributed to the fact that the

actions or the content of the influencers may be perceived as breaking the social, cultural or religious norms of the Jordanian society, which place a strong emphasis on modesty, respect and morality in communication. Thus, the source of criticism can be personal hate or even envy, but also the common moralism, in which the commentators place themselves in the stance of cultural custodians. This result is consistent with Muthi'ah et al. (2022), who stated that dislike and jealousy of a public persona are considered the reasons behind using abusive comments.

#### 5.1.4 Negative Expressions

It means using derogatory or hostile language intended to demean, insult, or express aggression towards the listener (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy often encompasses ill wishes, curses, or offensive remarks, which target the social value or self-worth of the listener (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy amounts to 9%, as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (18):** "يلعنك على هل شكل" (Damn that look of yours) (@q\_u\_604, 2025).

**Example (19):** "الله يشل ايدك على هيك لكمة يارب" (May God paralyze your hand for such a punch) (@a7madwza, 2025).

**Example (20):** "انقلع معها على جهنم" "Go to hell with her" (@g\_hafez. hawat, 2025).

The above examples (18-20) share a common feature by using negative expressions that attack the self-worth or dignity of the victim by using direct curses or insults. Each of the above examples reflects hostility of the listener. To clarify, example No. (18) targets the appearance of the victim, whereas example No. (19) targets the physical ability of the victim. Finally, example No. (20) targets the social value or the general existence of the victim. These examples not only criticize or dismiss the victim, but they also reflect verbal aggression and ill wishes designed to cause psychological harm, devalue, or humiliate the

victim. Taken together, such examples demonstrate how Jordanian Instagram commentators in cyberbullying contexts use overtly personalized language, culturally resonant and derogatory.

According to Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy, the above examples fall under 'negative expressions', which are defined as intentional attacks designed to inflict damage on the social identity and face of the victim. Culpeper underscores that impoliteness is considered deliberate face-aggravation rather than being accidental, which is often increased in contexts of power imbalance or conflict, like cyberbullying. The above examples fit such a typology because they not only denote criticism but direct hostility, which combines ill wishes or curses. More importantly, Culpeper's framework illustrates why such comments align strongly in online contexts; the decreased anonymity and accountability of social media amplify the use of these expressions, which make them more severe and prevalent. The study's finding agrees with Craig et al. (2020) concerning the exposure of social media users to aggressive remarks and negative comments.

### **5.1.5 Condescension**

It is an impoliteness strategy, which entails speaking to someone in a demeaning manner to imply that the listener is incapable, immature, or inferior (Culpeper, 2011). It demonstrates an attitude of superiority, often employed to undermine the recipient's self-worth or assert dominance in a social interaction (Culpeper, 2011). Culpeper (2011) points out that impoliteness strategies often increase in contexts of conflict and power imbalance, particularly when speakers intend to cause social harm or offence. The above examples reveal how condescension serves as a dismissive remark and a negative assertion, which aligns with Culpeper's categorization of deliberate verbal attacks. These impoliteness strategies increased in online contexts such as Instagram because reduced accountability and anonymity amplify

the willingness of the aggressor to use hostile language. This aligns with Culpeper's assertion that impoliteness is not only a side effect of poor communication, but rather an intentional and strategic act inherited in contexts of aggression and dominance. The study's finding agrees with Santosa (2020) regarding the use of negative impoliteness and bald-on-record in cyberbullying victims on social media. However, total reliance on Culpeper's framework is a risk that tends to flatten out cultural and contextual nuances that appear in Jordanian Instagram discourse. While Santosa's findings and others like hers underscore the dominance of negative impoliteness, this remains an incomplete picture to explain specific sociocultural triggers that escalate certain strategies in the Arab digital spaces—especially and most prominently the religious, gendered, and honor-based dimensions that mar the data. In this respect, the present study diverges in presenting impoliteness as not only a linguistic choice but also cultural media through which Jordanian norms of shame, morality and gender hierarchy have been mediated.

#### **5.1.6 Message Enforcers**

It means an impoliteness strategy employed by speakers to assert seriousness or authority in a commanding and forceful manner (Culpeper, 2011). They aimed to pressure the listener and control the interaction into submission or compliance by undermining the autonomy of the listener (Culpeper, 2011). Culpeper (2011) indicates that message enforcer highlights how aggression and power are linguistically realized in hostile online contexts. Culpeper's framework implies how speakers use language to deliberately exert dominance and attack the listener's face. The above examples reveal how the speakers use explicit commands to impose their behavioral or moral expectations on influencers. They use message enforcers to intensify conflict and reinforce power imbalance. In social media, the reduced accountability and the anonymity make such forceful strategies more normalized and prevalent (Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield & Locher, 2008; Hardaker, 2010; Fukushima, 2015). This finding is consistent with Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) concerning

the use of cyberbullying as a means to assert dominance, which reinforces the hierarchical and coercive dimension observed in the Jordanian data.

### 5.1.7 Dismissals

It is defined as disregarding, ignoring, or rejecting an individual and his/her contributions in a manner that denotes devaluation or disrespect (Culpeper, 2011). It aims to belittle an individual's input or presence in the interaction and undermine his/her social standing (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this impoliteness strategy amounts to (3%) as shown in the following examples:

**Example (25):** "ما حد فاضيلك حل عنا" (No one has time for you, leave us alone) (@nals3idi, 2025).

The example above clearly depicts the use of dismissal by disregarding the victim's contribution and presence in a manner that denotes disrespect and devaluation. These comments decrease the worth of the interlocutor, driving them to the margins of interaction. The low percentage of dismissals might reflect the Jordanian tendencies towards using direct insults and negative expressions in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. According to Culpeper (2011) impoliteness model, dismissals are considered explicit strategies which deliberately attack the social identity of the addressee by excluding them from meaningful engagement and undermining their relevance. This demonstrates how aggression and power linguistically manifest in social media platforms, where anonymity encourages commentators to belittle others.

According to Culpeper (2011), dismissals constitute a part of a broader repertoire of impoliteness strategies, such as criticisms, threats, and insults. In the above examples, the Instagram comment trivializes the presence of the influencer and enacts social exclusion,

which is critical to cyberbullying contexts. Culpeper (2011) believes that impoliteness is not mainly considered rude but rather an intentional face attack, which damages the listener's standing in a particular context. Such dismissals in Jordanian Instagram discourse agree with Culpeper's emphasis on contextual interpretation and intentionality, demonstrating how users employ cutting and short remarks to foster hierarchies and silence targets. This finding is consistent with Muthi'ah et al.'s (2022) study, which indicated that bullying generally emanates from dislike, amusement, or jealousy. The Jordanian dismissals share this logic, as these comments are not only offhand but often serve to trivialize the presence of the influencers in an envious or mocking tone. They serve rhetorical functions of excluding the influencer in the conversational space, positioning them as insignificant or unworthy to be interacted with. The cause of this trivialization seems to be primarily mockery and envy, in which the commentator employs diminutive dismissal to metaphorically diminish the social value of the influenced through their prominence and achievement. Through this, dismissals in the Jordanian data are not just sudden terminations of intercourse but self-directed actions to impose superiority and control the social validity of the influencer.

#### **5.1.8 Insult+ Pointed Criticism**

Insults involve the use of offensive language or expressions that attack a person's characteristics, traits, or identity, either directly or indirectly. Their purpose is to undermine the target's social standing and self-image (Culpeper, 2011). On the other hand, pointed criticism means explicit expressions of dissatisfaction or disapproval sought to harm the listener's social standing or self-esteem (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy employs negative language to undermine, attack, or offend one's face (Culpeper, 2011). Taken together, they mean an impoliteness strategy that attacks an individual's actions or traits using disapproving or offensive language (Culpeper, 2011). They sought to harm the victim's social standing or self-

image directly. By referring to data in Table 4.1, this combined impoliteness strategy amounts to (1%) as elaborated in the following examples:

**Example (26):** "يا عيب الشوم ع هيك زلمه يسمح لحاله ينرمى عليه شبشب عشان كم لايك" (What a shame for a man to allow himself to have a slipper thrown at him just for a few likes) (@8\_\_jy7, 2025).

The above example reflects the use of a combined impoliteness strategy of insult and pointed criticism. To clarify, the expression "يا عيب الشوم" “, what a shame”, serves as a direct insult, which attacks the dignity and character of the individual. It further reflects using pointed criticism as in "يسمح لحاله ينرمى عليه شبشب عشان كم لايك" [allow himself to have a slipper thrown at him just for a few likes]. This impolite expression undermines the influencer’s social standing by depicting his actions as degrading. Collectively, this strategy operates to decrease the victim’s social value and self-image in a public space, aligning with Culpeper’s (2011) concentration on deliberate use of offensive language to damage face.

Based on Culpeper’s (2011) impoliteness framework, this strategy falls under ‘insults’ (negative references and vocatives to personal traits) and pointed criticism, which is exemplified in using explicit negative evaluations of actions. The slipper metaphor signifies strong cultural resonance in Arab societies. Besides, the use of being hit by a shoe is regarded as highly disrespectful. This shows that the examples are not only offensive but also culturally humiliating. Accordingly, the framework shows its strength in dissecting layered strategies of verbal aggression in cyberbullying contexts. This finding is consistent with Ab Rashid et al. (2022), who stated that cyberbullying commonly targets influencers’ personal choices and visibility. This trend is aligned in the

Jordanian example, where public figures are known for what their actions signify in society rather than for what they do.

### 5.1.9 Insult+ Condescension

This combined impoliteness strategy entails using direct offensive language to demean an individual's identity or trait, while simultaneously adopting a patronizing attitude or tone, which depicts the victim as incapable or inferior (Culpeper, 2011). Such a dual impoliteness strategy not only the character of the victim but also fosters his/her lower status in the interaction, intensifying the emotional and social harm. This combined impoliteness strategy, as revealed in Table 4.1, accounts for 1%, as shown in the following examples:

**Example (27):** "صدقني يا اخي اسلوبك في بعض الاحيان. تافه اتعلم الاسلوب من انس اسكندر. او على الاقل قدملوا. المساعده"

(Believe me, brother, your attitude is sometimes petty. Learn manners from Anas Iskandar, or at least offer him help) (@bldybnt57, 2025).

The above strategy is a combined strategy of insult and condescension. To elaborate, the direct insult is manifested through the word "تافه" [petty], coupled with adopting a condescending tone by informing the addressee to "اتعلم الأسلوب" [learn manners] by comparing the influencer unfavorably to another influencer, Anas Iskandar. Such a combined impoliteness strategy degrades the personal character of the victim and portrays him as in need of guidance and socially inferior, thus emphasizing a power imbalance.

Culpeper (2011) indicates that this discourse intentionally attacks the victim's face in which the positive face, i.e., desire for approval and the negative face, i.e., desire for autonomy, are violated. Insult directly attacks the identity of the victim, whereas condescension diminishes his agency by portraying him as incapable of competence or self-respect. The use of insult is exemplified in personalized negative assertions coupled

with a patronizing stance, thus increasing social harm and emotional harm. The use of impoliteness in this study might be attributed to the nature of Instagram, which gives the commentator the autonomy to criticize social media influencers. This result is in line with Abaido (2020), who found that Instagram is the main social media platform used for cyberbullying. It, nonetheless, does not cohere with the results of the earlier studies (Santosa, 2020; Muthi'ah et al., 2022; Putri, 2023), which found that the most pervasive types of verbal aggression on social media are negative expressions and insults. Nevertheless, this study found that both insult and condescension are used as a combined impoliteness strategy rather than relying on a single form of impoliteness to maximize social harm, which is consistent with Culpeper's emphasis on power dynamics and intentionality.

#### 5.1.10 Message Enforcers+ Pointed Criticism

This combined impoliteness strategy entails delivering a directive authoritatively and forcefully, while explicitly expressing dissatisfaction or disapproval with the listener's behavior (Culpeper, 2011). It occurs when the speaker criticizes the victim's actions in a manner that questions his/her decency and undermines his/her social image (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.1, this combined impoliteness strategy amounts to (1%) as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (28):** "اتق الله واستر امرأتك ما هذا" (Fear God and cover your wife — what is this?) (@ll.wardmhawish, 2025).

The above example is a combination of message enforcers with pointed criticism. To elaborate, the directive in "اتق الله واستر امرأتك" [fear God and cover your wife] functions as a message of enforcement, which is expressed forcefully and authoritatively. Moreover, the addition of "ما هذا" [what is this?] constitutes pointed criticism by explicitly

disapproving of the behavior of the target in a manner that undermines social image and questions decency. Such a combined strategy shows Instagram commentators in Jordan use religious and moral appeals as weapons of criticism to heighten social shaming. In this context, the invocation of religious and or ethical norms operates as a legitimising device for enhancing the force of the attack. By placing their criticism within broadly accepted moral frameworks, commentators have converted a personal rebuke into a socially sanctioned judgement. This rhetorical move strengthens the face-threatening act by suggesting that the influencer's behaviour is not only personally objectionable but it is also in violation of collective standards of propriety. Consequently, the effect of the shame is reinforced, since the offence is re-styled as a deviation from communal values rather than an individual lapse.

According to Culpeper's (2011) theory, this example shows how communicative acts can be designed deliberately to attack the identity and the face of the listener to wound rather than to disagree. Culpeper's (2011) theory acknowledges the role of power dynamics, conflict, and aggression, particularly in cyberbullying contexts in which reduced anonymity and accountability increase the probability of verbal hostility. Accordingly, the combined impoliteness strategy of message enforcers and pointed criticism consolidates the intent of aggression by inserting authority within condemnation, which aligns with Culpeper's taxonomy of impoliteness strategies like message enforcers, silencers, and pointed criticism. This finding agrees with Putri et al. (2023), who revealed that in social media, both positive and negative politeness occurred the most in the form of direct attacks like ridiculing, warning, and mocking. This implies that while message enforcement and criticism exist, they might appear less commonly opposed to more direct negative impoliteness.

### 5.1.11 Negative Expressions + Dismissals

Negative expressions and dismissals are defined as using derogatory or hostile language, like ill wishes or curses, to demean or insult the victim, while simultaneously undermining, ignoring, or rejecting their contributions or presence (Culpeper, 2011). Such a dual strategy increases the attack on the listener's social standing and self-worth by expressing both social exclusion and verbal hostility (Culpeper, 2011). This combined strategy amounts to (1%) as indicated in Table 4.1. The following example is illustrative:

**Example (29):** "روح انقلع نفل كل شي بسوريا ع الكذب والافتراء لعنك الله كنت احترمك وهلق بطلت تفوه"

(Go away! You moved everything about Syria to lies and slander. May God curse you.

I used to respect you, but now I don't — get lost) (@ywsfdrys45, 2025).

The above example shows how negative expressions such as "لعنك الله" [May God curse you] are combined with dismissals such as "روح انقلع" [get lost] to form a dual attack. Such a combined strategy expresses verbal hostility and undermines the social inclusion of the victim by stripping them of legitimacy and respect. Such an insult intensifies the conflict by combining religiously grounded ill-wishes with explicit rejection, increasing the damage to the self-worth and social standing of the victim. Culpeper (2011) indicates that impoliteness not only denotes insults but also attacks. The commentator, who combines negative expressions with dismissals, constructs an increased face-threatening act, which embodies both social exclusion and verbal hostility. Culpeper highlighted powerful dynamics, aggressions, and deliberateness in communication, particularly in the case of cyberbullying, where anonymity leads to more daring impoliteness. This example demonstrates how Instagram turns into a means to reflect aggression-displacing wishes and dismissals and negative vocatives to increase aggression. This finding agrees with Santosa (2020), who revealed that negative impoliteness was the dominant strategy on Instagram, which aligns with the presence of such strategies in Jordanian data.

## **5.2 Discussion of the Second Research Question**

The second research question is (How does gender affect the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used in cyberbullying by the commentators against the top five Jordanian social media influencers?). To answer this question, a total of 50 cyberbullying comments written by Jordanian social media users were collected from Instagram to identify the impact of gender on the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram based on Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies. This section is divided into two sub-sections; the first one (5.2.1) presents the impoliteness strategies used by males in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, whereas the second section (5.2.2) presents the impoliteness strategies used by females in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers.

### **5.2.1 Impoliteness Strategies in the Comments Used by Males on Cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers on Instagram**

This section discusses the findings related to the impoliteness strategy used by males in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram.

#### **5.2.1.1 *Insult***

Insult means using language deliberately to degrade, offend, or undermine an individual by targeting his/her characteristics, identity, or traits (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy might be expressed using either direct verbal attack or indirect derogatory remarks aimed to harm the individual's social value or dignity (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in Table 4.2, it is clear that 'insult' occupies the first rank with the percentage (23%). Insult impoliteness strategy is divided into four sub-strategies as elaborated below:

### 5.2.1.1.1 Personalized Negative Assertions

It means using explicit and direct statements, which attribute traits, behaviors, or negative qualities to an individual in a manner which attacks their identity (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy seeks to harm the social reputation or self-image of the hearer by asserting critical judgments or demeaning comments. By revisiting the data in Table 4.2, this impoliteness strategy occupies the first rank with the percentage (43.4%), as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (30):** "عمرک ما تصیر زلمة" (You'll never be a real man 😏) (@slymnlkhtyb39, 2025).

**Example (31):** "عندک انک انسان تافه" (You really are a petty person) (@nasrallhh\_badwann, 2025).

The above examples directly attack the identity of the listener by associating him with worthlessness and inadequacy. The example No. (30) explicitly targets masculinity, which is considered culturally loaded in Jordanian culture, in which a 'real man' is tied to social respect, honor, and strength. This comment questions the social role and the gender identity of the victim, which makes it a particularly powerful form of cyberbullying among male commentators. This scope is expanded in example No. (31) in the form of demeaning the entire character of the person, thus undermining their social reputation and self-image in front of an online audience. These examples show how explicit derogatory remarks not only serve as insults but also as tools to delegitimize and humiliate the victim and reinforce power imbalance.

Culpeper (2011) points out that personalized negative assertions are a subtype of insult impoliteness strategy, where language is deliberately employed to harm the social face of the interlocutor. Such examples align with Culpeper's (2011) typology of insults

as they directly attribute negative characteristics to the victim. In Jordanian Instagram, insult is considered especially significant as they exploit cultural concepts of gendered identity, such as the idea of being a real man, to increase the face-attack. These gendered cultural values increase the severity of insults because masculinity in Jordan is associated with honour, authority, and public credibility. When commentators attack a man's "real manhood", they are not just insulting his behaviour but undermining his standing in a deeply hierarchical social order where masculinity has come to be linked to dignity, protection of the family, and moral leadership. As a result, insults of this sort hit more acutely, in that they are aimed at both personal identity and socially recognised roles. This pattern reveals broader power relations in which masculinity serves as a standard of social worth, through which aggressors, particularly those who are male commentators, can assert their own power by calling the fulfilment of culturally prescribed gender relations into question in another man. The data, therefore, reflects the extent to which online aggression mirrors the hierarchy at work offline: in this case, gendered insults become a mechanism for policing behaviour, staying patriarchal expectations in place, and maintaining an element of symbolic power over those who fail, or appear to fail, to embody an expression of culturally centred masculinity. This aligns with Culpeper's concentration on intentionality and contextual interpretation, as the insults are designed to strike when identity is socially most vulnerable. In these examples, the Jordanian commentator used 'not a real man' and 'petty' to reflect their hatred towards the social media influencers. This result is similar to Muthi'ah et al. (2022), who found that the use of insult among social media influencers is used to demonstrate their dislike of the victim's achievements or personality.

### 5.2.1.1.2 Personalized Negative References

It means using offensive or derogatory language, which targets an individual's characteristics, traits, or identity (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy aims to devalue or belittle the hearer by making him/her the subject of ridicule or contempt through implied or direct references (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table (4.2), this impoliteness strategy occupies the second rank with the percentage (34.7%) as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (32):** "يزم دمك ثقيل وصبا بتجنن كيف حبتك مش عارفة" (Man, you're boring, and the girl is gorgeous — I don't know how she likes you) (@vt\_k13, 2025).

**Example (33):** "هاض مستواك كنادر على راسك" (This is your level — shoes on your head) (@jamesabdullah10, 2025).

The above examples (32) and (33) represent personalized negative references in which male Instagram commentators attack the social value or personal traits of Jordanian influencers. In example No. (32), the male commentator devalues the personality of the victim by stating that he is boring, while simultaneously comparing him unfavorably to a woman by questioning how she has fallen in love with him, implying that she is gorgeous. This reinforces male-to-male rivalry through ridicule and implicit emasculation. In example No. (33), the commentator degrades the victim's social status by associating him with humiliation and dirt, which is a culturally strong insult in Jordan. This is especially pertinent in light of Jordan's conservative sociocultural environment, in which notions of honour, purity and masculine dignity are closely linked with public respectability. Within this framework, masculinity implies the traditional values of authority, moral integrity, and social poise, and any insult which symbolically connects a man with impurity or humiliation has an enhanced power base. By evoking imagery related to "dirt," the

commentator is not simply taunting about physical appearance, but rather mocking the man's adherence to culturally-sanctioned masculine norms in a society where those norms are still deeply rooted. This adds to the face-threatening nature of the insult and taps into wider processes of social control in the conservative gender hierarchy of Jordan, more broadly. Collectively, such examples demonstrate how male commentators personalize attacks to decrease the social value of another male, often emanating from gendered concepts of respect, masculinity, and attractiveness.

Culpeper (2011) points out that personalized negative references are considered explicit insults targeting the identity and traits of the victim. Culpeper (2011) demonstrates how impoliteness deliberately damages face, that is commonly fueled by power dynamics. The male commentators on Instagram exploit reduced accountability and anonymity to heighten direct verbal attacks, thus increasing rivalry and aggression. The examples further show how gendered norms impact impoliteness. In the first example, the masculinity is questioned using contrast with a woman's desirability. This is not about "lust" but about cultural expectations in Jordan that an attractive woman would normally choose a man who is socially respected and seen as properly masculine. The insult infers that the man is not what he should be in these terms, and uses the woman's attractiveness to highlight his apparent deficiency. The insult in the second example depends on symbolic humiliation, "shoes on your head", demonstrating cultural values where face and honor are highly gendered.

This result agrees with Santosa (2020) and Indrawan (2018) regarding the prevalence of insulting and negative comments on Instagram. In this study, the use of personalized attacks suggests that insult is a cross-cultural pattern in cyberbullying.

### 5.2.1.1.3 Personalized Negative Vocatives

It is defined as offensive and direct labels or terms sought to insult an individual's personal traits, which is commonly expressed through aggressive or gendered language (Culpeper, 2011). Such vocatives are commonly employed to provoke or belittle the listener in a confrontational manner and to assert dominance (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data on Table (4.2), this impoliteness strategy occupies the third rank with the percentage (17.4%) as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (34):** "زلمة أبو كرش" (Pot-bellied man) (@x.a.g.\_10, 2025)

**Example (35):** "عاها" (Disabled) (@sh\_ja2009, 2025).

**Example (36):** "يا ديوث بتوري عرضك وشرفك للناس" (You cuckold, showing your honor and dignity to people) (@omar\_muhieddin, 2025).

The above examples No. (34-36) fall under personalized negative vocatives, which is a sub-type of insult. Example No. (34) "زلمة أبو كرش" [pot-bellied man] focus' on targeting the Influencer's physical appearance, through mocking his body shape. However, there is more than a physical reference to the insult. In Jordanian and broader Arab cultures, uttering the phrase "أبو كرش" does not simply refer to weight; it connotes a lack of self-discipline, laziness, and poor self-presentation: It can also indicate the man's failure to meet expected ideals of strength, fitness and control that are linked to masculine identity. For this reason, the insult is not only about the body, but also about the cultural expectations attached to manhood. In example No. (35) "عاها" [disabled] directly abuses the victim by undermining his/her mental/physical ability, and stigmatizes disability. In example No. (36), "يا ديوث بتوري عرضك وشرفك للناس" [You cuckold, showing your honor and dignity to people] strikes at honor and gender identity using one of the toughest insults to emasculate the victim and undermine his masculinity. Collectively, such instances

reveal that the impoliteness strategy is rooted in social-cultural notions of honor and masculinity, offensive, and gendered. The expressions are loaded vocatives rather than random insults, which seek to provoke humiliation against others, delegitimize the influencer's public identity, and assert male dominance. This finding is similar to Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) findings, which revealed that power imbalance in which language is weaponized to assert dominance.

#### **5.2.1.1.4 personalized Third-Person Negative References in the Hearing of the**

##### **Target**

It occurs when the speaker insults the listener indirectly by referring to him/her in the third person despite their presence by using demeaning or derogatory language (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy enables the speaker to attack the listener's traits or identity without addressing him/her directly to provoke humiliation or to assert power (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data on Table (4.2), this impoliteness strategy occupies the fourth rank with the percentage (4.5%) as indicated in the following example:

**Example (37):** "اللي زيك بس بدهم ينشهر" (People like you want fame by any means) (@kadupul\_19, 2025).

In the above example, the speaker does not address the victim directly with 'you', however, he reduces him to a demeaning classification into "people like you", by framing him as a stereotype and stripping individuality. Such indirect insult increases humiliation since the target hears himself being labelled as an object of scorn rather than an individual. This wording criticizes his characteristics and identity by defining the influencer as avidly seeking recognition and his superiority in the social ladder. This clarifies the emergence of gendered dynamics, by framing male commentators as seeking fame or attention drawing on cultural stereotype to decrease credibility and assert patriarchal dominance.

According Culpeper (2011), this impoliteness is considered as a deliberate act of face attack. The aggressor by choosing a third-person reference distances himself from the addressee, which both demonstrates power asymmetry and intensifies the insult. This agrees with Culpeper (2011) concept that impoliteness is not incidental but can be used systematically to humiliate, demean, and provoke. This strategy aligns with his categorization of indirect impoliteness since it avoids direct address while attaining social harm. This indirectness might socially be considered as an acceptable guise to perpetuate attacks against others, particularly when the visibility of the influencer is contested within public discourse. Possibly, the commentator aimed to humiliate the influencer by questioning his morality and reputation. This aligns with Indrawan (2018), who found that impoliteness occurred as negative remarks against prominent figures.

#### 5.2.1.2 Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions

It refers to impoliteness expressions that are deliberately used to place the victim in an offensive or uncomfortable position (Culpeper, 2011). They often denote direct or hidden negative judgments intended to embarrass, blame, or accuse the victim (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the second rank of the most commonly used types of impoliteness strategies among Jordanian males in cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers, with the percentage (14%) as demonstrated in the following examples:

**Example (38):** "ليه بتجعر" (Why are you screaming?) (@vil\_xah, 2025).

**Example (39):** "وين الرجولة وين الغيرة" (Where's the manhood, where's the sense of honor?) (@ishosh7\_, 2025).

**Example (40):** "ما بتغار عمرتك" (Don't you get jealous at all?) (@mohammemk, 2025).

**Example (41):** "انت راضي عن لبس مرتك؟" (Are you satisfied with what your wife is wearing?) (@essam.zohd, 2025).

The above examples (38-41) use challenging or unpalatable questions/presuppositions to attack the social identity or the identity of the victim. These comments are not isolated remarks, but rather operate as a pattern of targeted accusations, which revolve around gendered expectations of honor and masculinity. They explicitly or implicitly presuppose the influencer's failure to embody societal ideals of manhood, such as control over a wife's appearance, jealousy as a proof of honor, and self-control. Accordingly, the questions place the victim into a defensive place, depicting him as irresponsible, deficient, and dishonorable.

Culpeper (2011) points out that these comments intend to place the victim in an uncomfortable place using implied accusations. The questions are neither genuine inquiries nor neutral. They are loaded challenges framed as inquiries but aimed to undermine social identity and face. Culpeper indicates that impoliteness strategies are often associated with conflict, aggression, and power. In a Jordanian Instagram situation, such comments capitalize on cultural folklore around material power, family honor, and manhood, thereby increasing their offensiveness. This cultivates the notion that politeness is not a linguistic matter, but highly cultural and contextual. This supports Culpeper in his belief that contexts and intentionality play a role in the interpretation of impoliteness. This agrees with Valenzuela-García et al. (2023), who revealed the professional and emotional impacts of cyberbullying on influencers. In the current research, cyberbullying is exacerbated as the direct and indirect attacks target key elements of male identity that can cause deep reputational and psychological injuries.

### 5.2.1.3-Pointed Criticism or Complaints

It means using direct and clear language to express blame, disapproval, or dissatisfaction toward someone (Culpeper, 2011). This strategy aims to damage the social image or self-esteem of the listener by openly highlighting his/her shortcomings or faults (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the third rank of the most frequently used impoliteness strategy in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, with the percentage (10%) as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (42):** "ارقامك مبالغ فيها انخم" (Your numbers are exaggerated — you've been fooled) (@ka\_te\_0u0, 2025).

**Example (43):** "الصورة الرابعة بتخزي" (The fourth picture is disgraceful) (softly. dija, 2025).

**Example (44):** "فعلاً اشي يخزي" (Truly something shameful) (@djrmaas, 2025).

**Example (45):** "تلوث سمعي وصوتك سيء والفكره عاطله ، خليك ع البودكاست احسن" (Auditory pollution — your voice is bad and the idea is awful. Stick to the podcast, that's better) (@fati\_ma\_dms911, 2025).

The above examples (42-45) reflect a shared inclination of overt disapproval and direct blame. These examples did not use direct sarcasm or hints; however, they directly attack the victim's performance, abilities, and appearance. They highlight shortcomings in the influencers in a manner that threatens and humiliates their social image. These remarks suggest a gendered pattern in which men are engaged more frequently in derogatory, evaluative, and explicit criticism on Instagram against influencers.

Such examples align with Culpeper's (2011) pointed criticism or complaints strategy in which offenders openly highlight faults to damage self-esteem. This type of impoliteness embodies a direct method of attack, which differs from off-record or subtler

strategies. The explicit directness in such examples emphasizes Culpeper's assertion that impoliteness often increases in power dynamics, conflict, and aggression in communication. Male commentators in the gendered context use direct verbal aggression to assert dominance, which aligns with the framework's concentration on power imbalance and how social hierarchies emerge in hostile exchanges. This finding is consistent with Barlett et al. (2018), who revealed that Instagram's affordances, including comments, tagging, and visual ridicule to hostile expression, which agrees with the use of straightforward criticism among males.

#### 5.2.1.4 Negative Expressions

Negative expressions are defined as the use of derogatory or hostile language aimed at expressing anger, demeaning, or insulting the hearer (Culpeper, 2011). It often encompasses ill wishes or curses which harm the social value or self-esteem of the victim (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the fourth rank, with the percentage (8%) as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (46):** "يزم الله يسمك" (Man, may God poison you) (@faisal\_smadi12, 2025).

**Example (47):** "انشالله سم" (Hopefully poison) (@m.y2468, 2025).

**Example (48):** "الله يخزيكو" (May God disgrace you all) (@ziad.rabi7, 2025).

The above examples clarify how Jordanian males used derogatory language to curse or demean the victim. The first two examples used individual directed curses, which invoke poison. The third example, "الله يخزيكو" [may God disgrace you all], expands the attack to a collective to intensify the social harm. Curses that are group-directed target the individual influencer and expand the insult to the wider community linked with them, amplifying the shame. Collectively, such examples illustrate a pattern of curse-based and

aggressive expressions that agree with Culpeper's (2011) description of negative expressions as direct verbal assaults aimed to damage the hearer's self-esteem and face.

Here, the use of Culpeper's (2011) framework is effective because it categorises explicitly ill-wishing remarks as deliberate strategies of offence, which enable us to see them as systematic impoliteness strategies rather than random emotional outbursts. The above expressions, in light of this model, are intentional and explicit; their religious undertones, such as invoking Allah, intensify how cultural norms are used to intensify the severity of the insult. The use of these curses among male commentators reflects how males' online aggression might manifest through derogatory, collective, and bold expressions instead of the subtler forms. This finding is similar to Craig et al. (2020), who highlighted gendered differences and vulnerability in cyberbullying, demonstrating that males commonly enact dominance through confrontational and hostile language.

#### 5.2.1.5 Condescension

Condescension means acting or speaking toward others in a manner that belittles or demeans them, depicting the victim as immature, incapable, or inferior (Culpeper, 2011). It conveys a sense of superiority, which undermines the dignity of the recipient (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the fifth rank as revealed in Table 4.2, with the percentage (6%) as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (49):** "متى بدك تكبر وتعقل يولد" (When will you grow up and act mature, boy?) (@ptec40, 2025).

**Example (50):** "خلص ياخي نشهرتو وصار معكم مصاري وانت انسان محتواك جميل وقوي خليك بل يلي بتفهم في ليش التقليل من نفسك"

(Enough, my brother — you've become famous and made money, and you're someone whose content is beautiful and strong. Stick to what you're good at; why belittle yourself?) (@nana\_ghannoum, 2025).

The above examples of condescension demonstrate a demeaning tone masked within corrective remarks or advisories. Example No. (49) infantilizes the influencer by calling him 'boy' to strip away his dignity and maturity. On the other hand, example No. (50) depicts the influencer as someone who is incapable of properly assessing his own worth. Therefore, he needs corrective guidance from the commentator. Collectively, these comments demonstrate that male critics employ condescension as a method of policing to establish power and dominance and present themselves as more mature, rational, and competent than the influencer.

According to Culpeper (2011), condescension agrees with strategies like personalized negative vocatives and personalized negative assertions, which attack the social image of the victim by undermining their maturity or competence. More importantly, Culpeper indicates that impoliteness often emerges in power imbalance contexts. The above examples show how male commentators use cyberbullying to assert dominance. Such superiority is communicated in "ولد" [boy] and "خليك بل يلي بتفهم فيه" [stick to what you are good at] highlights the intersection of face-attack, aggression, and power that Culpeper's framework is tailored to capture. This finding agrees with Valenzuela-García et al. (2023), who revealed that cyberbullying against influencers frequently results in professional disruption and emotional distress. In this study, condescension, which is less overtly aggressive than threats or insults, still plays a corrosive role in terms of eroding the influencer's self-image gradually by portraying them as perpetually inferior.

### 5.2.1.6 Message Enforcers

Message enforcers are defined as imposing seriousness or authority on the listener through a directive and commanding manner, emphasizing the speaker's dominance or ensuring compliance (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the sixth rank as indicated in Table 4.2, with the percentage (4%) as demonstrated in the following examples:

**Example (51):** "يا احمد هذا الترنند حرام" (Ahmed, this trend is forbidden (haram))

(@redamhk692012, 2025).

**Example (52):** "اتق الله يا اخي احمد" (Fear God, my brother Ahmed) (@raw\_836, 2025).

The above examples No. (51) and (52) show how male commentators on Instagram impose authority using religious and moral imperatives. Such expressions not only advise the influencer 'Ahmed' but also compel him to conform to dominant religious and social norms, asserting the commentator's dominance. Such examples show how message enforcers function as directive speech acts tailored to constrain the behavior of the target by appealing to moral, communal, or religious authority. These examples, according to Culpeper (2011), fall under message enforcers, where males often invoke authority through morality and religion to shame or discipline peers.

Culpeper's (2011) model clarifies how such comments are considered as deliberate acts of impoliteness rather than neutral moral reminders, which exploit social expectations and power dynamics. The concentration on morality and religion situates such comments within a cultural framework where invoking '*harm*' positions the commentator above the target. Thus, the comments reinforce dominance. It differs from the politeness theory provided by Brown and Levinson (1987), which concentrates on face-saving and harmony. However, the intended *harm* of such strategies is acknowledged by Culpeper. In the above examples, the *harm* is manifested in undermining the social

identity of Ahmed by introducing him as a character who violates religious or communal norms. Since male commentators use this strategy to assert social control and to police behavior, they reflect how authority is enacted linguistically in patriarchal online settings. In the above examples, peer enforcement of religious morality illustrates how cultural pressure emerges in online aggression. This finding is consistent with Oladimeji (2022), who revealed that vulnerability and peer pressure are the main drivers of cyberbullying.

### 5.2.1.7 Dismissals

Dismissals are defined as acts of disregarding, ignoring, or rejecting an individual and his/her contributions in a manner that denotes a lack of respect or value; thus, belittling the victim and undermining his/her social standing (Culpeper, 2011). This impoliteness strategy occupies the seventh rank as indicated in Table 4.2, with the percentage (4%) as demonstrated in the following examples:

**Example (53):** "يرجل روح انقلع" (Man, get lost) (@nnaana.7, 2025).

The above example is a vivid instance of dismissals, where the commentator rejects and disregards the influencers in a manner that strips them of respect or value. Dismissals are different from insults, which directly attack personal attributes such as 'stupid' or 'ugly'. However, dismissals undermine contribution and presence. They reduce the social standing of the target by suggesting that they should not even exist in the interaction. In such a case, the utterance "يرجل" [man] adds a gendered nuance as it underscores masculine authority while simultaneously belittling another male. This shows how Jordanian male commentators often employ dismissals as strategies that are power-laden to humiliate influencers and assert dominance publicly. Such an act is considered face-threatening and direct with no attempt at mitigation or politeness.

Culpeper (2011) indicates that dismissals are explicit strategies of social harm in which the speaker damages the victim's face intentionally by rejecting or ignoring him/her. This agrees with Culpeper's (2011) concentration on power dynamics in communication. Dismissals reject the right of the target to be heard, reinforcing gendered superiority and hierarchical relations. The explicitness in "روح انقلع" [get lost] shows the directness Culpeper attributes to impoliteness. Besides, the instance shows the strength of the model in terms of its ability to differentiate strategies, such as dismissals, threats, and insults, where each serves a distinct social function. In this example, dismissals delegitimize the presence of the target instead of mocking his specific traits. In the above example, dismissals are hostile, direct, and bold. This aligns with Indrawan (2018), who found that Indonesian Instagram comments were dominated by bald on record strategies and negative comments.

#### 5.2.1.8 Insult+ Pointed Criticism

This combined impoliteness strategy combines the use of direct offensive expressions, which target the victim's traits of identity using explicit statements of disapproval or dissatisfaction (Culpeper, 2011). It attacks the personal characteristics of the victim and undermines his/her social standing and self-esteem through overt criticism (Culpeper, 2011). This combined impoliteness strategy amounts to (2%) as revealed in Table 4.2. The following example is illustrative:

**Example (54):** "يا عيب الشوم ع هيك زلمه يسمح لحاله ينرمى عليه شيشب عشان كم لايك" (What a shame for a man to allow himself to have a slipper thrown at him just for a few likes) (@abdo\_\_311, 2025).

The above example combines insult with pointed criticism, where the insult is manifested in the overt offensive expression as in "يا عيب الشوم ع هيك زلمة" [ what a shame

for such a man], which attacks the target's social worth and masculinity. This is fostered by pointed criticism by ridiculing him for compromising his identity in favor of online popularity (a few likes). Collectively, such linguistic acts decrease a man's social standing, honor, and personal traits. This is defined by the main aim of impoliteness, by damaging identity and face through explicit disapproval. In this example, the gendered dimension is critical; the comment emanates from cultural expectations of how a "real man" should act. By mocking the man's tolerance of humiliation for trivial online validation, the commentator increases the insult through gender-based social norms to reinforce hegemonic masculinity as a benchmark.

The comment shows how aggression and power are enacted in online settings in which are enacted in online settings, where decreased accountability promotes bolder attacks. Further, Culpeper indicates that impoliteness often exploits cultural and contextual cues. This study exploits the cultural significance of masculinity in Jordanian society. The example reveals how combined strategies might enhance more than either strategy alone, insulting personalises the offence. However, pointed criticism legitimizes it by considering the target's act like accepting slipper-throwing for likes as socially unacceptable. The results revealed that the self-presentation of the influencer on Instagram provoked an attack on both his personal traits and dignity. This result agrees with Muthi'ah et al. (2022), who revealed that motives like mocking the victims' personality or presence drive cyberbullying.

#### **5.2.1.9 Insult+ Condescension**

This strategy combines the characteristics of the listener with communicating in a demeaning manner that depicts him/her as incapable or inferior (Culpeper, 2011). It increases the attack against the victim by diminishing the status of the victim through

belittling behaviour and ridiculing his/her personal traits (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.2, it is clear that this impoliteness strategy accounts for 2% as demonstrated in the following example:

**Example (55):** "صدقني يا اخي اسلوبك في بعض الاحيان. تافه اتلعم. الاسلذب من انس اسكندر. او على الاقل قدملوا. المساعده"

(Believe me, brother, your attitude is sometimes petty. Learn manners from Anas Iskandar, or at least offer him help) (@shahinaz. alkaaby, 2025).

The above is a combination of insult and condescension. The commentator demeans the mindset of the victim and directs him to seek to learn manners from another influencer to give an implication of his inability and inferiority. This exacerbates the attack by positioning the victim as in need of guidance and inadequate to reinforce dominance through ridicule. The above comment, when interpreted through

Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness model reflects both insult, which is manifested in a negative assertion regarding the victim's character. It further reflects condescension, which is embodied in demeaning instruction that depicts the victim as inferior. The above comment, which is posted by a male Jordanian, denotes conflict and power. To clarify, the male Jordanian exercises linguistic dominance to belittle a social media influencer. This agrees with Culpeper's concentration on the role of contextual aggression and intentionality in shaping offensive discourse. This study revealed that Jordanian males assert superiority by ridiculing influencers. This agrees with Anyanwu and Udoh (2021), who revealed that cyberbullying is manifested in power imbalances in which aggressors employ language to assert dominance.

### 5.2.1.10 Message Enforcers + Pointed Criticism

Such a combined impoliteness strategy uses commanding or authoritative language to impose seriousness while delivering explicit disapproval or criticism (Culpeper, 2011). It increases the negative judgment by limiting the victim's ability to reject or challenge the criticism and asserting dominance (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.2, it is clear that this impoliteness strategy accounts for 2%, as indicated in the following example:

**Example (56):** "اتق الله واستر امرأتك ما هذا" (Fear God and cover your wife — what is this?) (@asalagamer, 2025).

The combination of message enforcers with critical messages demonstrates a male Instagram commentator taking a commanding and authorizing position as they can both engage in imposing sobriety and at the same time expressing their condemnation outright. The above example reveals how males combine religious authority with a critical stance to enforce cultural and moral standards. Such a combined strategy limits the victim's ability to challenge or resist the criticism. By extension, it heightens power disparity and exerts control. It exhibits a gender structure in which men are portrayed as enforcers of female conduct and propriety to reaffirm patriarchal control in the virtual realm.

Culpeper's (2011) model offers the theoretical basis to construe this discourse as a deliberate act of impoliteness, which exploits conflict, power dynamics, and aggression in communication. It differs from Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, which underscores mitigation and harmony. Culpeper's (2011) model illustrates how impoliteness strategies are intentionally weaponised to enforce social hierarchies and to damage face. The above example agrees with Culpeper's classification of strategies, which integrate message enforcement with criticism to amplify the social harm by introducing the target as both socially and morally deficient. This study showed that impoliteness is frequently used with coercive functions, which

restrict the victim's ability and assert dominance to resist criticism. This aligns with Anindia (2024), which revealed that impoliteness strategies are shaped by social and cultural contexts to reinforce power imbalance and expose targets, particularly females, to intensified personal and moral attacks.

#### 5.2.1.11 Negative Expressions + Dismissals

This combined impoliteness strategy entails using hostile or derogatory language to demean or insult a person, while simultaneously disregarding, ignoring, or rejecting their contributions or presence (Culpeper, 2011). Such an approach attacks the social value as well as the self-esteem of the victim and undermines his/her work by demonstrating a lack of respect or acknowledgement. By revisiting the data in Table (4.2), it is evident that this impoliteness strategy amounts to (2%) as demonstrated in the following example:

**Example (57):** "روح انقلع نقل كل شي بسوريا ع الكذب والافتراء لعنك الله كنت احترمك و هلق بطلت تفوه"

(Go away! You turned everything about Syria into lies and slander. May God curse you. I used to respect you, but now I don't — get lost) (@homseya\_muradeya, 2025).

The above example reflects the combined use of dismissals and negative expressions. The above comment is loaded with hostile and derogatory language that directly insults the credibility of the victim "الكذب والافتراء" [lies and slander] and personal worth "لعنك الله" [may God curse you]. It dismisses simultaneously his prior respect and presence "كنت احترمك و هلق بطلت تفوه" [I used to respect you, but now I don't — get lost]. This example reflects Culpeper's (2011) classification in which negative expressions degrade the face of the victim and dismissals erase their contributions or value. In this incident, the impoliteness strategy attacks the social worth of the victim in a way that robs them of admiration and recognition, an effective form of verbal aggression in a collectivist society such as Jordan, where honor and respect signify societal weight.

As Culpeper (2011) reveals, the relevance of the combination of this strategy of impoliteness is both informal dismissals (implicit disregard) and explicit disparaging statements (negative expressions). The theory lays emphasis on the fact that impoliteness can be effective when it comes to power dynamics as well as aggression. In the above example, the commentator asserts dominance by shifting the interaction from earlier respect (engagement) to explicit dismissal (rejection) to exacerbate the humiliation. Besides, the sensitivity of the model to cultural and contextual factors illustrates why such hostile comments emerge in Jordanian Instagram discourse, in which anonymity decreases accountability, and gender norms commonly legitimize male speakers adopting dismissive and aggressive tones to assert superiority. This agrees with Culpeper's assertion that impoliteness is not random but strategically used to damage the victim's self-esteem and social identity. The findings revealed that public comments increase aggressive male discourse in which impoliteness is employed to display dominance in front of a peer audience. This finding agrees with Abaido (2020) & Oladimeji (2022), who revealed that Instagram is a hotspot for cyberbullying, where platform features, vulnerability, and peer pressure are considered as enabling factors.

## **5.2.2 Impoliteness Strategies in the Comments Used by Females on Cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers on Instagram**

This section discusses the findings related to the impoliteness strategy used by females on cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram.

### **5.2.2.1 Insult**

Insult refers to any verbal act which attacks an individual's social standing, dignity, or self-esteem through derogatory or offensive language (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in

Table (4.3), it is clear that 'insult' occupies the first rank with the percentage (42%). Insult impoliteness strategy is divided into three sub-strategies as elaborated below:

### 5.2.2.1.1 personalized Negative Assertions

It entails making direct negative claims regarding an individual's behavior or traits to assert his/her shortcomings or flaws (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data on Table (4.3), this impoliteness strategy occupies the first rank with the percentage (57.2%) as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (58):** "انتي عندك نقص بشخصيتك و بدك علاج" (You have a deficiency in your personality and you need treatment) (@yousseffdhfh, 2025).

**Example (59):** "بالك كتير فاضي" (You have way too much free time) (@n\_shaaheen, 2025).

**Example (60):** "شيء ممل وتقليد بهيل" (Something boring and a silly imitation) (@titanic116, 2025).

In the above examples (58, 59, and 60) share a common feature i.e., personalized negative assertions, which directly target the female influencers' content, behavior, or character. These examples have a derogatory and explicit nature of the remarks that are not disguised or mitigated. These examples attack the victims' personality and identity as in "انتي عندك نقص" [you have a deficiency in your personality and you need treatment] and lifestyle or behavior as in "بالك كتير فاضي" [too much free time], and creative/ productive output as in "شيء ممل وتقليد بهيل" [something boring and a silly imitation].

Taken together, they demonstrate how female commentators use negative claims to belittle or delegitimize other women's visibility or social presence on Instagram. This implies that cyberbullying not only attacks the public persona of the influencer but further expands to deeply personal judgments.

Culpeper (2011) points out that personalized negative assertions are considered a direct impolite strategy to attack the interlocutor's positive face, like their desire to be

appreciated and valued. It differs from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, which focuses on mitigation and harmony. Culpeper focuses on social harm and intentional offence. The provided instances reflect this by explicitly undermining the content quality and the personal traits of the influencer. Culpeper also highlights the aspect of conflict and power. In this case, female commentators demonstrate symbolic power, positioning themselves as social or moral experts on criticism of influencers, characterizing judgments with derogatory language as a form of exclusion and control. The results of the study support the argument made by Culpeper that the use of impoliteness is higher in anonymity and accountability contexts such as Instagram.

This result agrees with Anyanwu and Udoh (2021), who revealed that cyberbullying is used to assert dominance and reflect power imbalances. This dominance is gendered, where female commentators place themselves above the influencers by decreasing their worth, thus emphasizing social hierarchies within female communities online.

#### 5.2.2.1.2 personalized Negative Vocatives

It is defined as addressing an individual using demeaning or offensive labels, which insult his/her identity or personal characteristics (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data on Table (4.3), this impoliteness strategy occupies the first rank with the percentage (23.8%) as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (61):** "عوي بترتاحي" (bark and you'll feel better) (@nazek.jamal, 2025).

**Example (62):** "يا هبله" (You fool) (@dianabizad, 2025).

**Example (63):** "يا معاقه" (You are an awkward person) (@asmakashkash, 2025).

The above examples (61-63) fall under personalized negative vocatives in which insults directly target the listener's personal characteristics or identity. According to Culpeper (2011) model, such expressions are considered face-attacking acts rather than

neutral criticisms, which are deliberately tailored to demean the target on social media. The influencer's status is reduced to animalistic imagery to a non-human status in example No. (61) "عوي" [bark]. However, utterances like "هبله" [fool] and "معاقة" [awkward] attack physical, mental, and intelligence abilities of the influencer. Both of these terms are considered gender-sensitive domains in Arabic culture. This implies that women commentators actively engage in reinforcing socially loaded stereotypes, which weaponize gendered insults and undermine other women in the digital space.

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness model indicates that impolite language often increases in context of conflict and power imbalance. Instagram, which is regarded as asymmetrical dynamic between anonymous and semi-anonymous commentators and visible influencers, creates fertile ground for these strategies. In the above examples, female commentators used direct impoliteness to assert symbolic power over influencers, who remain vulnerable to hostile discourse, despite their visibility. The above instances align with Culpeper's classifications of negative expressions and insults by showing how language is employed to cause deliberate social harm in a setting in which accountability is reduced. This finding agrees with Craig et al. (2029), who found that females are often more vulnerable to cyberbullying than males. However, the present study found that females act as perpetrators, using impoliteness in a gendered manner. Such duality underscores the dual role of women as both aggressors and victims in online spaces.

#### **5.2.2.1.3 Personalized Negative References**

It refers to using offensive or derogatory language that seeks to humiliate the victim's characteristics, traits, or identity (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy directly targets the victim's self-image to insult or demean him/her (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data

in Table (4.3), this impoliteness strategy occupies the third rank with the percentage (19%) as demonstrated in the following examples:

**Example (64):** "لما التفاهة والفضاوه والمصاري يجتمعو مع بعض" (When pettiness, idleness, and money come together) (@malakkk3\_\_, 2025).

**Example (65):** "ما اتقل من دمك الا دمه" (the only thing heavier than your presence is his) (@a.r.e.e.j.\_xi\_, 2025).

**Example (66):** "ما اتقل دمكم" (How boring and unpleasant you both are) (@omar\_ibrahiim0, 2025).

**Example (67):** "كيف متحملين ثقالة دم بعض يمااا بيض" (How can you stand each other's unpleasantness — so lame. 🙄🙄🙄) (@ildk\_abood1, 2025).

The above examples (64-67) show how female commentators on Instagram use personalized negative references to undermine the social image of the victim. In example No. (64), the commentator equates the victim with idleness and pettiness by attributing personal flaws to materialism. In example No. (65), the commentator intensifies the insult using a direct negative comparison. In example No. (66), the commentator explicitly insulted the victims by indicating that both of them are boring. In example No. (67), the commentator combines personal attack with egg emojis and sarcasm to amplify mockery using multimodal cues. Collectively, the above insults highlight "ثقالة دم" [boring] as a pervasive semantic theme, which is a culturally loaded notion in Jordanian Arabic, connoting being socially unpleasant, rejected, or unbearable. The repeated usage indicates the framing of derogation as a gendered pattern of speech tailored to attack women's attractiveness and social accountability rather than isolated remarks.

Culpeper (2011) indicates that personalized negative references are intentional and direct face-attacks, which target identity. The above examples align with this type of

impoliteness by attacking personal traits, including heaviness of presence, unpleasantness, and pettiness, as well as social worth by using mockery through emojis and sarcasm. The insults are aggressive and intentional; they are not mitigated, but rather intensified through emoji play, metaphor, and repetition. The examples denote power dynamics, i.e., cyberbullying through Instagram offers females a platform for reduced accountability and anonymity by empowering them to ridicule or challenge public female influencers (Culpeper, 2011; Bousfield & Locher, 2008; Hardaker, 2010). The use of insults on social media platforms differs from traditional face-to-face settings in which women might soften criticism, where female users are engaged in aggressive directness, denoting that online contexts violate the cultural norms of politeness. Accordingly, Culpeper's framework provides a lens for seeing how gendered impoliteness is manifested in cyberbullying contexts, particularly in cultures in which public women are harshly judged on their behavior and appearance. This result agrees with Muthi'ah et al. (2022), who found that bullying motives often emanate from disliking personality and presence, which directly reflected in the above examples that ridicule the social presence of the influencers.

#### 5.2.2.2 Challenging or Unpalatable Questions and/or Presuppositions

It means using questions deliberately to make the victim feel uncomfortable by making explicit or implicit negative judgments (Culpeper, 2011). Such questions are tailored to undermine, provoke, or accuse the listener (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy amounts to 28% as elaborated in the following examples:

**Example (68):** "وليش هيك شانقه حالك وحدي الله" (And why are you choking yourself like that? Say "there is no god but Allah" 🤔) (@hasnaehanaoui, 2025).

**Example (69):** "عند شايفة حالك مشهورة؟ مين أصلاً بيتابع محتواك؟" (Do you really think you're famous? Who even follows your content?) (@tarfa\_ra, 2025).

**Example (70):** "أهلك راضيين عن الي بتنزلي!" (Are your family okay with what you're posting?) (@alalamiareej, 2025).

**Example (71):** "هو في حد بحترم بطلع هيك قدام الناس!" (Is there anyone respectable who would appear like this in front of people!) (@roro\_abady\_, 2025).

The above instances (68-71) show how female Instagram commentators use unpalatable or challenging questions to unpalatable questions to undermine Jordanian male influencers. Such questions denote implicit negative judgments concerning morality, social respectability, behavior, and appearance. To elaborate, the commentator in example No. (68) trivializes the self-presentation of the influencer by mocking her religious compliance. In example No. (69), the commentator attacks directly the influencer's perceived popularity and self-worth. In example No. (70), the commentator invokes familial honor to shame the influencer. In example No. (71), the commentator equates the influencers' actions with the loss of social respectability. Collectively, these instances show the mobilization of gendered expectations in cyberbullying, where women are policed not only for fame and visibility but further for adherence to cultural values of family respect, honor, and modesty. The aggressive function more as rhetorical accusations and less as genuine inquiries tailored to impose social control.

According to Culpeper (2011), this discourse is considered an intentional impoliteness in which questions are designed to attack and discomfort the face of the victim. It differs from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, which aims to mitigate threats. However, Culpeper focuses on how language is used deliberately to harm. The above examples align with this category since they presuppose the immorality, disrespectability, or lack of fame of the

influencer. Further, the power dynamics of gender are vivid, where female commentators practice social power by invoking cultural scripts of shame, thus emphasizing gendered expectations within Jordanian society. This shows how impoliteness operates at the individual level and the collective gender policing. This outcome agrees with the findings of the previous studies, which revealed that influencers are easy targets because of public engagement and visibility. In Jordan, such visibility intersects with cultural norms regarding women's behavior, which intensifies the policing impact.

### 5.2.2.3-Pointed Criticism or Complaints

It means conveying explicit statements of disapproval, criticism, or dissatisfaction in a manner that attacks the individual's social standing or self-esteem (Culpeper, 2011). Such a strategy employs negative expressions to intentionally offend or undermine the recipient (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy accounts for 12%, as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (72):** "الوقت غير مناسب لهيك صور" (The timing isn't right for such photos) (@skysamarabt, 2025).

**Example (73):** "ما حبيت" (I didn't like it) (@winkatgfd, 2025).

**Example (74):** "شو هالمسخرة" (What is this nonsense?) (@fatima\_ak\_moh, 2025).

**Example (75):** "مبالغة كبيره لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله" (Huge exaggeration — there is no power and no strength except through God) (@nermeen\_ri, 2025).

The above examples illustrate a clear pattern of complaints or pointed criticism. The examples, such as "الوقت غير مناسب لهيك صور" [the timing isn't right for such photos] and "ما حبيت" [I didn't like], render dissatisfaction using blunt disapproval. Other phrases like "شو هالمسخرة" [what is this nonsense] and "مبالغة كبيرة لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله" increase the criticism into moral and ridicule judgment to dismiss the act of the influencer and to

undermine his/her social standing. Collectively, such examples show how exaggeration markers, dismissals, and negative expressions are used in manners that attack the self-esteem of the influencer, which aligns precisely with the description of Culpeper of impoliteness as an intentional act of social harm.

Culpeper's (2011) model underscores how pointed criticism and negative expressions function as verbal attacks, which erode an individual's social identity and face. The remarks of the female commentator align with such a framework as they transform disapproval or disagreement into face-attacking strategies. More importantly, the gender aspect of such usage is obvious; women use such strategies not in private but rather in public digital arenas in which impoliteness becomes an instrument to assert social judgment and moral authority. This reveals how cyberbullying discourse is articulated by both gendered performance and cultural norms of critique. This result aligns with Craig et al. (2020), who found that females were more vulnerable to cyberbullying, which agrees with the current study's findings, revealing that females are not just victims but also active perpetrators of harsh criticism in influencer contexts.

#### 5.2.2.4 Negative Expressions

It is defined as the deliberate use of hostile, demeaning, or derogatory language to express hostility or insult, often targeting the social value or self-esteem of the victim through curses or ill wishes (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy constitutes 10% as illustrated in the following examples:

**Example (76):** "مافي حفلة ليكشفو عن اسمه!! الله يثبت علينا العقل والدين يارب" (There's no party for them to reveal his name!! May God keep our minds and faith steadfast, O Lord) (@fadia.alqadi, 2025).

**Example (77):** "وعلة ان شاء الله" (Hopefully a curse on you) (@somaalawadhy, 2025).

**Example (78):** "تذبذير أوفر يعنى. منكوا لله سودتوا عيشتنا" (@taqwa\_sheyab, 2025).

Such excessive waste... may God hold you accountable — you've made our lives miserable

The above examples (76, 77, and 78) fall under the negative expressions type of impoliteness used by female Instagram commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. In example No. (76), the impoliteness is conveyed using sarcasm combined with a religiously framed ill wish, depicting the target as shameful or irrational. In example No. (77), the impoliteness is expressed explicitly and directly through curse words, which embody the most demeaning and hostile form of negative expression. In example No. (78) mirrors a combination of divine invocation and criticism to intensify blame. Collectively, such examples demonstrate how women use direct curses, exaggerated complaints, and religious invocations to project moral superiority, undermine the victim's social image, and delegitimize influencers.

Culpeper (2011) indicate that such examples fall within negative expressions in the form of deliberate uses of demeaning, hostile, or derogatory language sought to diminish the self-esteem or social value of the target. In this study, female commentators used religious references as contextual intensifiers to embed insults within culturally resonant frameworks. This embodies Culpeper's concentration on intentionality and contextual interpretation. Impoliteness here is considered a deliberate communicative act of social intentionality rather than accidental. Besides, the examples show how power dynamics emerge online in which anonymity encourages female commentators to express hostility in a manner that might be restricted in face-to-face settings. This finding is consistent with Putri (2023) regarding the dominance of negative impoliteness on social media. In

this study, negative expressions were in the form of curses and insults among female-driven online aggression.

### 5.2.2.5 Condescension

It occurs when the speaker communicates in a demeaning manner that the victim is immature, inferior, or incapable, thus undermining his/her dignity (Culpeper, 2011). By revisiting the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy amounts to (4%, as indicated in the following examples:

**Example (79):** "فزلكة و عالم فاضية" (Showing off and people with nothing better to do) (@zahraa\_saheb\_, 2025).

**Example (80):** "شكلك مش فاهمة انو الناس بتضحك عليكي مش معك" (You clearly don't realise that people are laughing at you, not with you) (@suha\_moh11, 2025).

**Example (81):** "واضح انك بتحاولي تلفتي الانتباه لأنك مش واثقة بحالك" (It's obvious you're trying to get attention because you're not confident in yourself) (@maroyou\_ma, 2025).

The examples above fall under the condescension type of impoliteness. These examples illustrate how female commentators on Instagram use impoliteness to demean influencers by casting them as insecure, ignorant, and superficial. These examples take the form of condescension rather than simple insults. They frame influencers as lacking self-awareness or maturity. These strategies undermine the dignity of the victim by positioning her as unworthy of respect and socially inadequate.

Culpeper (2011) suggests that condescension operates as a direct verbal attack, in which the aggressor explicitly portrays the target as incapable or inferior. Such examples attribute undesirable qualities, including insecurity, vanity, and ignorance, directly to the influencer. Such comments further reveal power dynamics, i.e., female commentators

assert dominance by questioning the influencer's self-worth and intelligence. Accordingly, it reestablishes superiority within the online hierarchy. The pervasiveness of such a strategy shows how condescension is considered a gendered instrument of cyberbullying, particularly when females target other females in judgmental or competitive contexts such as Instagram. These findings agree with Indrawan (2018) and Santosa (2020), who both stated that impoliteness and negative impoliteness dominate Instagram discourse by delegitimizing or ridiculing the victim.

#### 5.2.2.6 Message Enforcers

It is defined as imposing seriousness or authority over the listener in a directive and commanding manner to assert dominance in communication (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy accounts for 2%, as elaborated in the following example:

**Example (82):** "شو هاد المحتوى عيب عليك؟" (What is this content? Shame on you) (@noor\_al\_ajarmah, 2025).

**Example (83):** "اسكتي احسنلك كل ما تحكي بنفضحي حالك اكثر" (Better for you to stay quiet — the more you talk, the more you expose yourself) (@sabrina.sab25, 2025).

**Example (84):** "انت عار على الشعب الأردني" (You are a disgrace to the Jordanian people) (@shireen\_zs, 2025).

The above examples constitute a message-enforcement sequence that includes police morality, silences the target, and leads to collective shaming. In example No. (80), "شو هادا المحتوى عيب عليك؟" [what is this content? Shame on you] initiates normative judgment "عيب" [shame] in a directly gendered manner by indicating that the influencer has violated the feminine respectability. In example No. (81), "اسكتي احسنلك" [it is better for you to stay quiet], where a bald imperative "اسكتي" is second feminine is coupled with a threat-like

presupposition of reputational harm "كل ما بتحكى كل ما بتفضحي حالك أكثر" [the more you talk, the more you expose yourself]. In example No. (82), "انتي عار على الشعب الأردني" [you are a disgrace to the Jordanian people] amplifies pressure by invoking national identity by shifting from individual fault to collective stigma.

Collectively, these examples progress from norm invocation, silencing, and identity-level degradation, which is a feature of message enforcers, imposing seriousness and authority to compel compliance and assert dominance. They demonstrate female-to-female policing through using consistent feminine morphology. In other words, women commentators enforce gender norms on women influencers.

Culpeper (2011) illustrates this cluster as stacking of strategies, negative evaluations and assertions "عار، عيب" [shame, stigma] as well as message enforcers and silencers through the imperative verb "اسكتي" [shut up]. It is further considered personalised negative references, which escalate to group-based denigration authority and the threat of reputational loss, which aligns with Culpeper's concentration on contextually anchored face-attacks, aggression, and offence in conflictual settings such as social media (Culpeper, 2011; Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield & Locher, 2008; Hardaker, 2010; Fukushima, 2015). Further, the moral-order dimension aligns with ritual and relational expectations around sanctioning and offence (Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Kádár, 2017). The low percentage of message enforcers in this study indicates that other impoliteness strategies, such as insults and negative impoliteness, are more pervasive. Similarly, Indrawan (2018) and Santosa (2020) found that bald-on-record and negative impoliteness are commonly used on Instagram.

### 5.2.2.7 Dismissals

It means disregarding, ignoring, or rejecting an individual and their contributions in a manner that devalues him/her and undermines his/her social standing (Culpeper, 2011). By referring to the data in Table 4.3, this impoliteness strategy amounts to (2%) as demonstrated in the following example:

**Example (85):** "ولا بتكلي بيضة 😏" (And you cannot even cook an egg 😏)  
 (@souly\_salwa, 2025).

Dismissals mean a degradation of an individual's contributions and belittling them in a manner that devalues their social standing (Culpeper, 2011). The dismissive comment in example No. (85) undermines the target domestic ability of a female by ridiculing her by demonstrating a stereotypical role associated with gender expectations. The use of sarcastic emojis increases the mockery by signaling that her worth is trivialized to a basic household skill. It is not a neutral dismissal but operates within gendered power relations. It reinforces the idea that female influencers are easy targets for belittlement, particularly when they step into public digital spaces.

According to Culpeper (2011), the dismissals strategy demonstrates a form of direct impoliteness in which the speaker intentionally undermines the social identity of the addressee. It differs from Brown and Levinson's (1987) concentration on preserving harmony; Culpeper demonstrates conflict and aggression, demonstrating how social norms and power, like gender roles, might shape impoliteness. The dismissals here exemplify how cyberbullying violates cultural expectations, where women are attacked disproportionately through gendered stereotypes. This finding agrees with Craig et al. (2020), who found that females were more vulnerable to cyberbullying. This agrees with

the way dismissals in this study target women with remarks associated with social expectations and femininity.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study adopted Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness to investigate the types of impoliteness strategies used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers by collecting 100 cyberbullying comments on Instagram. The study found that Silencers and threats impoliteness strategies were not used by commentators on Instagram in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, which could be attributed to the preference for more direct, visible, and confrontational strategies that immediately display hostility rather than implicit intimidation.

However, the study found that insults and especially personalized negative assertions, personalized references, and personalized vocatives were quite frequently used by commenters on Instagram in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, potentially connected to the fact that targeting characteristic ends, physical personhood or noble traits can be more easily performed under the circumstances of anonymity and low accountability. Interestingly, the lowest frequency type of insult on comments on Instagram in cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers use third-person negative forms personalized in the hearing of the target, as these forms are perhaps not very effective in such settings to maximize the online humiliation the commentators seek.

The second common type of impoliteness strategies is challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, which might be related to their ability to disguise aggression as curiosity while still undermining credibility, competence, and appearance. The third common type of impoliteness strategies is pointed criticism or complaints,

which takes the form of overt judgments of content, behavior, or originality and might be related to audience expectations of influencers' productivity and authenticity. The fourth frequently observed type of impoliteness strategies is negative expressions, which take the form of curses, ill wishes, or hostile remarks; a possible explanation of this finding could be attributed to the cultural resonance of such expressions in Arabic discourse and their immediate emotional impact.

Condescension is the fifth frequently observed type of impoliteness strategies, which takes the form of belittling remarks and mocking directives; this finding could be justified by the hierarchical framing of commentators positioning themselves as superior or more knowledgeable. Both message enforcers and dismissals were rarely used by commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers, which could be attributed to their less dramatic effect compared to insults and criticisms in generating public shaming.

The use of combined impoliteness strategies was found in the data in form of combining 'insult + pointed criticism', 'insult + condescension', 'message enforcers + pointed criticism', and 'negative expressions + dismissals', which amounted to (1%) per each; this could be attributed to the occasional overlap of hostile intentions where commentators simultaneously attack personal identity and actions to maximize harm.

Regarding the impoliteness strategies in the comments used by males on cyberbullying, the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram revealed that insults occupied the highest rank. Insults, particularly personalized negative assertions, personalized negative references, and personalized negative vocatives, respectively, were frequently used by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers on Instagram. They are expressed in direct insults to masculinity, honor,

and individual characteristics such as "عمرک ما تصیر زلمة" *'you never will be a real man'*, "عندک انک انسان تافه" *'boring and worthless'*, or "زلمة أبو کرش" *'pot-bellied man'*, which publicly demean identity. This could be attributed to the strong cultural salience of gendered honor in Jordanian society, where undermining masculinity and status is a powerful way to shame and delegitimize.

However, the least type of insult by commentators is personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target. These take the form of indirect attacks such as "اللي زيک بدهم شهرة بأي طريقة" *'people like you want fame by any means'*, which avoid direct address while humiliating the target. This can be explained by the preference for the bold, face-to-face confrontation in Jordanian male discourse, so indirect strategies are less effective and, consequently, less common.

The second common type of impoliteness strategies by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers is challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions. These take the form of "وين الرجولة وين" *'Where's the manhood, where's the honor?'* or "انت راضي عن لبس مرتک؟" *'Are you okay with what your wife is wearing?'* This is due to the reliance on cultural expectations of manhood and honor, where rhetorical questions are weaponized to imply failure of masculinity and family control.

Pointed criticism or complaints occupied the third rank of the impoliteness strategies used by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. They are expressed in direct judgment, such as "ارقامک مبالغ فيها انکم" *'your numbers are exaggerated'* or "الصورة الرابعة بتخري" *'the fourth picture is disgraceful'*. A possible explanation of this finding could be attributed to Instagram's affordances that

encourage visible judgment and the cultural acceptability of direct critique among males as a means of asserting dominance.

Negative expressions occupied the fourth rank of the impoliteness strategies used by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. These take the form of curses like "يوم الله يسمك" 'may God poison you' or "الله يخزيكو" 'may God disgrace you all'. A possible interpretation of this observation is connected with the cultural and religious resonance of the invocation of divine punishment, which intensifies the force of insult, conveying the collective contempt.

Condescension was the fifth employed impoliteness strategy by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. These take the form of infantilizing or patronizing remarks such as "متى بدك تكبر وتعقل يولد؟" 'When will you grow up, boy?' or "خليك باللي يلي تفهم فيه" 'Stick to what you're good at'. A possible explanation of this finding could be related to the hierarchical social structure in which older or self-perceived superior males exercise authority through belittlement masked as advice.

Both 'message enforcers' and 'dismissals' occupied the sixth rank of the impoliteness strategies used by male commentators in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian social media influencers. These take the form of directive imperatives like "اتق الله، يا أخي" 'fear God, Ahmed' or dismissive rejection such as "يرجل روح انقلع" 'get lost'. A possible explanation of this finding could be related to the use of religious and moral authority to legitimize dominance and the cultural preference for direct rejection as a way of silencing opponents.

The least commonly used types of impoliteness strategies by Jordanian males were the combined impoliteness strategies, including 'insult+ pointed criticism', 'insult+ condescension', 'message enforcers+ pointed criticism', and 'negative expressions+

dismissals'. These combined impoliteness strategies take the form of multi-layered attacks such as "يا عيب الشوهم عهك زلمة يسمح لحاله ينرمى عليه شيشب عشان كم لايك" '*what a shame for a man... allowing slipper-throwing for likes*' or "روح انتقل...لعنك الله" '*get lost... may God curse you*'. A possible explanation for this finding could be attributed to the higher cognitive and rhetorical effort required to combine strategies, making them less frequent but more severe in impact when used.

As for the impoliteness strategies used by females in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian commentators, the study found that seven impoliteness strategies were used, namely, insults, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, pointed criticism or complaints, negative expressions, condescension, and message enforcement.

Three types of insults were used, namely, personalized negative vocatives, personalized negative assertions, and personalized negative references. They take the form of derogatory and explicit remarks that directly attack personal traits, behaviors, and identity features of the influencer without mitigation. A possible explanation of these results could be attributed to the fact that Instagram provides anonymity and reduced accountability, which empowers female commentators to use harsher and more direct forms of insults as symbolic power to undermine other women's visibility and social standing. This doesn't necessarily mean that because of the anonymity, there is an aggressiveness, but rather that because of it, there is an activation of existing social tensions, with the characters simply being able to more openly express them. In Jordanian society, women must typically move in and around powerful norms related to reputation, modesty, and competition for social respectability. Online anonymity lowers the social risk of articulating these tensions, therefore, making harsh criticism more visible. The data supports this distinction in that many of the insults used by women focus on

appearance, morality and femininity - all of which have a lot of cultural value and lie at the heart of how women are evaluated in offline environments. These patterns indicate that the online environment is a release point for pressures that already exist, rather than generating hostility around it.

Psychologically, factors such as internalised social comparison, perceived competition and a desire to police other women's behaviour may motivate female commentators to engage in harsher impoliteness. Research on gendered aggression suggests that women may, especially in conservative societies, resort to indirect or reputation-based attacks as a way to uphold social norms and in defense of their own position. The pattern of the comments shows that many attacks are directed at the influencer's morality, appearance, or perceived attitude. These areas hold a relative amount of weight in the way that women are evaluated by Jordanian society. As a result, an attack upon them is an effective tool that allows commentators to challenge a woman's sense of respectability and undermine her social standing.

However, personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target type of insult were not used by female commentators. This might be so because the type of interactions on Instagram is direct and immediate, thus the references made in second person (you) are more effective than those made in third person. This preference brings to focus the urgency of confrontation on the internet, where women choose to get to the point by attacking instead of offering couched criticisms.

Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions were the second commonly used type of impoliteness strategies by females in cyberbullying the top five Jordanian commentators, which take the form of rhetorical questions designed to shame, accuse, or trivialize the influencer's morality, family honor, or social respectability. This

may be due to societal expectations within the Jordanian community that require women to be harshly criticized on virtue, dignity and family concerns. Female commentators weaponize these cultural scripts as tools of social control and moral policing.

The fourth most frequent form of impoliteness strategies used by females when performing the cyberbullying of the top five commentators in Jordan is negative expressions, which are intended to be curses, religiously infused ill wishes, and sarcastically directed statements that discredit the identity or activities of the influencer. This may be viewed as a consequence of the place of religion and morality discourse in Jordanian culture, which adds power to insult by evoking divine responsibility or malevolence, giving protection to swear words morally.

The fifth employed impoliteness strategy by the female respondents is condescension, where they make a form of belittling statements that depict the influencer as immature, ignorant, insecure, or superficial. A possible explanation of this finding could be justified by the fact that condescension allows commentators to frame themselves as socially and morally superior, reaffirming hierarchical dominance and reinforcing the notion that influencers lack self-awareness or credibility in the public sphere. This is consistent with psychological research demonstrating that people tend to use demeaning language to assert dominance and preserve a high social status, particularly in competitive or status-threatening situations (Fast & Chen, 2009). Social comparison theory suggests further that individuals may engage in derogating others for the purpose of protecting or elevating their own self-worth, especially when the target person is perceived to be socially visible or successful (Festinger, 1954; Vogel et al., 2014). Moreover, online environments magnify such tendencies, since the minimization

of social cues coupled with the de-emphasis of accountability are conducive to making superiority-seeking behaviors more frequent and extreme (Suler, 2004).

The least commonly used types of impoliteness strategies by females are both 'message enforcers' and 'dismissals,' which take the form of direct imperatives, silencing acts, shame labels, and sarcastic rejections of the influencer's worth. This could be attributed to the fact that these strategies are less frequent because they require a higher degree of explicit authority and confrontation. Instead, females tended to favor insults and rhetorical accusations, which are easier to normalize in online discourse and align more with cultural scripts of indirect yet powerful moral policing.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

This study provides a number of recommendations for future research. It would be helpful to replicate the study in other Arab countries (such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) as well as in non-Arab contexts, so as to see if the specific content of direct insults, religious references, and gendered notions of honour are exclusively prominent in Jordan or are part of broader regional patterns. Expanding the data to include a broader range of influencers from different fields (e.g., education, comedy, politics, fashion) and extending the analysis to different platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and X (Twitter) may help to understand whether platform design does affect the kinds of impoliteness strategies used. Longitudinal research is also suggested to monitor the change of discourse around cyberbullying over time, especially with influencer scandals, cultural debates or periods of political tension. To reinforce gender-based comparisons, future studies should consider impoliteness strategies of different gender identities, instead of restricting the analysis to a binary framework. Incorporation of further theoretical models, such as Goffman's facework, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, or Bousfield's typology,

could add to the analytical spectrum and reveal the results through the lens of theory and how they differ based on the theoretical model adopted. It is also increasingly important to also extend the study to explore the psychological and emotional impacts of particular strategies of impoliteness to influencers; in collaboration with psychologists, it may be possible to examine the psychological impact of insults and accusatory comments on stress, resilience and self-esteem. Examining how audiences, including neutral observers, fans and followers, interpret and respond to these strategies would further clarify the social dynamics surrounding cyberbullying. Comparative work between online and offline interactions is also recommended, as it may indicate whether online anonymity enhances directness or simply mirrors existing cultural norms in face-to-face communication. Finally, current research efforts should more explicitly link linguistic findings with practical and policy implications that can assist in informing influencer training programmes, anti-cyberbullying initiatives and digital literacy campaigns that are sensitive to the cultural and gendered dimension of impoliteness in Jordan.

### **5.5. Limitations of the Study**

Based on the importance of this research, it is important to clarify the methodologies and conceptual boundaries which dictate the scope of this study. The focus of the investigation is limited to the analysis of the types of impoliteness strategies used by Jordanians against cyberbullying social media influencers, and all data is collected exclusively from comments posted on Instagram. The data set was gathered over a 2-months period, which limits the findings to the linguistic practices at play over that specific timeframe. Additionally, the study involves only the top five Jordanian social media influencers; consequently, the results cannot be generalised to influencers outside this group, nor to users operating on other platforms. The research also restricts itself to comments written by Jordanian male and female commentators, i.e. patterns of

impoliteness that are cross-cultural or non-Jordanian are not included. From a theoretical perspective, the study utilizes Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy of impoliteness, thus ruling out alternative models or frameworks that may yield different analytical outcomes. These limitations are together a defining characteristic of the study, which establishes the parameters in which the findings can be interpreted within the context of the research.

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## Appendix

### Cyberbullying Comments Used by Commentators in Cyberbullying the Top Five Jordanian Social Media Influencers

#### Cyberbullying Social Media Influencers on Instagram (TOP FIVE)

انس الشايب-ANAS ELSHAYIB

Instagram: Anas\_alshayb

Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
Male	5.8 M	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CiS6F0GKy82/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CiS6F0GKy82/</a>	شو هاد الي برجلك ديابة
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CiS6F0GKy82/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CiS6F0GKy82/</a>	عمرك ما تصير زلما 😏
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	لهلا ما عرفت الهدف من محتواك غير تطلع من حفلة لحفلة شو قدمت شي هادف لجيل غير الخادش عن الحياء
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	نجست المسجد الأقصى
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	عفكرة هادي قبة الصخرة يا جاهل 😏
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	ياقرن
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	ياديوت
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	نجست الاقصى يا زلمه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCQVPKAWkm/</a>	تشدش عحالك 😏😏
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	يلعن لك هل شكل
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	زلما ابو كرش 😏😏
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	عاها

Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	الله يشل ايدك على هيك لكمة يارب
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	اسخف فايت شفته في حياتي
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9tt72BHNO/</a>	مو هيك الليضرب فايت بنادي مصارعة من سوك الجمعة
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CnZ-95rr0qP/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CnZ-95rr0qP/</a>	ليش حلقت حواجبك 🤔 مو حلو حرام
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Cp-pshyyS_4/">https://www.instagram.com/p/Cp-pshyyS_4/</a>	انت عند نقص بشخصيتك و بدك علاج
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Cp-pshyyS_4/">https://www.instagram.com/p/Cp-pshyyS_4/</a>	عندك انك انسان تافه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CqJMR3vSfkd/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CqJMR3vSfkd/</a>	انسان استغلالي
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CqJMR3vSfkd/">https://www.instagram.com/p/CqJMR3vSfkd/</a>	متى بدك تكبر وتعقل !!! يولد
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CrG5-z6S_Yy/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CrG5-z6S_Yy/?img_index=1</a>	لا صارحه انس تغير 🤔🤔 صار رجال
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CrG5-z6S_Yy/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CrG5-z6S_Yy/?img_index=1</a>	🤔 ولا بتكلي بيضة
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/</a>	الكرامه بتبكي 🤔🤔 بزايه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/</a>	Go to hell with her.
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/</a>	🤔🤔 زيرو كرامه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/</a>	عوي بترتاح
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKFZ6gvPWkj/</a>	واقع ساقط

## Cyberbullying Social Media Influencers on Instagram (TOP FIVE)

**Joe Hattab**

**Instagram: joe\_hattab**

Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
male	5.8 M	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B2rR3t1BiHX/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B2rR3t1BiHX/</a>	صدقني يا اخي اسلوبك في بعض الاحيان. تافه اتلعم. الاسلذب من انس اسكندر. او على الاقل قدملوا. المساعدة
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DLVCIJoJiEs/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DLVCIJoJiEs/</a>	يعني أنا مش فاهم كيف بتبلش بي فيديو زي هيك و بلد و منطقته فيها طبيعه و حياه بجمع كل فيديوهاتك اللي سوتها بفيديو و بلد وحده ؟ يعني بدك تعطي من البدايه انطباع سيء؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DIeKtGDJ8Qq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DIeKtGDJ8Qq/</a>	روح انقلع نقل كل شي بسوريا ع الكذب والافتراء لعنك الله كنت احترمك و هلق بطلت تفوه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DIeKtGDJ8Qq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DIeKtGDJ8Qq/</a>	نفس الكلام ونفس الاماكن شفتها عند فلوقر ثاني نفس الكلام بالضبط في اختلاف بسيط فقط او لا يوجد اختلاف معاد عدفنا من يقلد من
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DEH59H1I8FN/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DEH59H1I8FN/</a>	شكد جنت متابعتك واحب فديو هاتك بس للاسف طلعت تزوج للاحباب والدوعش

## Cyberbullying Social Media Influencers on Instagram (TOP FIVE)

أحمد أبو الرُّب Ahmad Aburob

Instagram: aburob

Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
male	5.1 M	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	عفكرا نظرتك بتخوف 🤔
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	ياديوث بتوري عرضك .. وشرفك للناس
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	عيب عليك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	اتق الله واستر امراتك ما هذا
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	ليش شكلك كأنك صاحي من نوم
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	ليش منفس ابو الرب؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ9dQXfswuh/?img_index=1</a>	انتا ميذر
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/</a>	يزم الله بيسمك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/</a>	ارقامك مبالغ فيها انخم
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/</a>	ليش بتطالع صوت وانت (٥) عم تاكل؟؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/</a>	مأنتقل دمك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKMHiglSyXq/</a>	نشالله سم
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3</a>	احلى من شكلك الطبيعي
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3</a>	يا احمد هذا الترنند حرام
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3</a>	اتق الله يا اخي احمد
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3</a>	يزم دمك ثقيل وصبا بتجنن كيف حبتك مش عارفة
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=3</a>	ما حدا فاضيلك حل عنا
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=4">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfgkU8/?img_index=4</a>	الصورة الرابعة بتخزي 🤔🤔🤔
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DHMzap9tvHZ/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DHMzap9tvHZ/</a>	ليه بتجعر
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	سبعك مقل هيبتك
<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	وين الرجولة وين (٥) الغيرة		

Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	ما بتغار عمرتك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	انت راضي عن ليس مرتك؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	فعلاً اشي يخزي
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	كثير عليك الشيشب..لانك فعلا قليل هييه
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	الزلم ماتت
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	آلله، يرحم ايام ما كانوا الرجال الهم هييتهم وكيانهم هلا ينضرب بالكندره. منشان التفاعل ي عيب الشوم
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	يا عيب الشوم ع هيك زلمه يسمح لحاله ينرمى عليه شيشب عشان كم لايك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	يعني ما خجلتو من حالكم خلصت الترنادات يعني
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	يزم مثقل دمك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	هاي الثقة ضربتك كندر وين رجولتك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	هاض مستواك كندر على راسك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	يا عيب العيب راضي ع حالك تنلش بالكندره؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	مبسوط ع حالك يعني وهي قاليبتك مسخرة؟؟
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	ما ارخصك
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	الله يخزيكو
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/DFsmQiWMjZK/</a>	قليل عليك الكندره







Gender	Number of Followers	Source	Comments
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	شيئ ممل وتقليد بهبل
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	مبالغة كبيرة لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	تبذير أوفر يعنى..منكوا لله سودتوا ﴿٤﴾ عيشتنا
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	انتو احرار اعملوا شو مابدكم بس راعوا مشاعر العالم باستعراضاتكم وتبذيركم وتقومي بالسلامة حبيبتني شو دخلنا احنا بها الاستعراض شكله نقص مو عارفين شو تعملوا الله يهدي بالكم
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	زمن التفاهة والاستعراض كأنه انجاز عظيم وفي حرب وإبادة وتجويح لاخواننا بغزة لاحول ولا قوة الا بالله
		<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/">https://www.instagram.com/p/C-0IEaNpCfw/</a>	زمن التفاهه