



# Factors Influencing Women's Security in Society: Integrating Thematic Analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process with Emphasis on Social Well-being

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Received: 2024-07-03

Reviewed: 2024-07-16

Revised: 2024-08-11

Accepted: 2024-08-28

Published: 2024-09-10

## Abstract

**Background and Objective:** This study investigates the factors influencing women's security in society using a framework of Thematic Analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). By identifying and prioritizing these factors, the research contributes to the development of effective strategies to enhance the safety and well-being of women. This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining Thematic Analysis with the Analytic Hierarchy Process. Thematic Analysis was utilized to identify key themes and patterns in the existing literature and empirical data related to women's security. Subsequently, the AHP methodology was employed to prioritize these factors based on expert judgments and pairwise comparisons. Thematic Analysis identified key dimensions of women's security, with socio-economic factors (relative importance = 0.195) ranking highest, followed by legal and political factors (relative importance = 0.183). Other significant factors included institutional factors (relative importance = 0.136), cultural and social norms (relative importance = 0.124), community and family dynamics (relative importance = 0.102), technology (relative importance = 0.083), environmental factors (relative importance = 0.074), political and conflict-related factors (relative importance = 0.052), and health and well-being factors (relative importance = 0.051). This study highlights the multifaceted nature of women's security and emphasizes the importance of addressing various factors comprehensively. By integrating Thematic Analysis with the AHP framework, the study provides valuable insights into understanding and addressing the complex challenges faced by women in society.

**Keywords:** women's security, Thematic Analysis, Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP).

## How to cite this article:

Haji Z, Hashemianfar A, Haghghatian M. (2024). Factors Influencing Women's Security in Society: Integrating Thematic Analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process with Emphasis on Social Well-being. Management Strategies and Engineering Sciences, 6(2), 152-164.



## 1. Introduction

The importance of researching factors that influence women's security in society cannot be overstated. Women worldwide continue to face various forms of violence, discrimination, and insecurity in their daily lives [1]. Understanding the underlying factors that contribute to women's insecurity is crucial for developing effective policies, interventions, and support systems to address these issues [2]. Women's security in society is a multifaceted issue encompassing dimensions of safety, well-being, and empowerment. Despite significant progress in promoting gender equality and women's rights, women still face numerous challenges and threats to their safety in various parts of the world [3]. From violence and discrimination to economic inequality and lack of access to resources, women's security remains an urgent concern that requires attention and action from individuals, communities, governments, and international organizations [4].

One of the most prevalent forms of insecurity that women face is gender-based violence. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological violence imposed on women because of their gender. Domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and trafficking are just a few examples of the numerous ways women are targeted and victimized [5]. Gender-based violence not only causes immediate physical and emotional harm but also creates a cycle of fear, trauma, and disempowerment that can have long-term impacts on women's lives [6].

Moreover, women's security is closely linked to broader social, economic, and political factors. Gender inequality, discriminatory laws and policies, cultural norms and stereotypes, and economic disparities all contribute to women's vulnerability to insecurity [2]. As King and Hill (1997) have noted, in many societies, women are deprived of equal opportunities for education, employment, and participation in decision-making processes, leaving them economically dependent and socially marginalized [7]. This lack of agency and autonomy further exacerbates women's vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

Additionally, women belonging to marginalized and vulnerable groups face additional layers of insecurity stemming from intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression. Women of color, Indigenous women, refugees, migrants, and women with disabilities are disproportionately affected by violence, poverty, displacement, and exclusion [8]. Intersectionality highlights the overlapping identities and experiences that shape women's lives and underscores

the need for intersectional approaches to address women's security [9].

Efforts to enhance women's security must adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of insecurity and promotes gender equality and social justice. This includes strengthening legal frameworks and policies to protect women's rights, ensuring access to justice and support services for survivors of violence, promoting gender-sensitive education and awareness initiatives, and empowering women economically and politically [10, 11]. Additionally, there is a need to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes, promote positive masculinity, and engage men and boys as allies in combating gender-based violence [12].

Furthermore, addressing women's security requires coordinated and collaborative efforts involving governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and communities. Hamber et al. (2006) argue that this necessitates investing in prevention, intervention, and response strategies that prioritize women's safety, dignity, and rights [13]. It also requires fostering a culture of accountability and zero tolerance for violence against women, where perpetrators are held responsible for their actions and survivors receive the necessary support and resources to rebuild their lives.

Research into the factors influencing women's security has spanned various contexts and frameworks, highlighting challenges and offering solutions to mitigate risks. Forsdike et al. (2024) explored public transportation service providers' perspectives on women's safety against sexual violence in transit. Their findings reveal a tendency among these providers to avoid acknowledging safety concerns and a reluctance to inform the public about safety deficits in transportation systems [14]. In a different setting, Madjidian et al. (2024) assessed the impact of a mass media consumer awareness campaign on food safety behavior among women in Dire Dawa and Harar, Ethiopia. They found that the campaign positively influenced women's food safety behaviors and behavioral determinants, emphasizing the potential of targeted awareness interventions [15]. Kamatchi and Zade (2024) proposed an AI-based security framework to enhance women's emotional and personal safety. Their advanced AI mechanisms address concerns related to emotional well-being and safety, utilizing AI technologies for effective threat response [16]. Complementing this, Bora and Nagpure (2024) introduced V-Safe-Anywhere, an AI and IoT-enabled wearable designed to enhance women's safety. This technology offers real-time monitoring,

emergency alerts, and proactive risk assessment features, facilitating confident and secure navigation in various environments [17]. Similarly, Carpentieri et al. (2023) demonstrated how digital data could support urban planning initiatives to create safer urban environments for women, with a case study from Naples exemplifying its practical applications [18]. Zhang et al. (2023) examined how the spatial configuration of informal settlements impacts women's safety, focusing on human-scale measurement in Changsha, Hunan Province, China. Their research highlights the significant role of urban design and layout in ensuring women's security, emphasizing the need for thoughtful urban planning [19]. Naved et al. (2022) developed an AI-based security system aimed at enhancing women's safety by leveraging artificial intelligence to identify and prevent potential threats, presenting a promising approach to addressing safety concerns in various settings [20]. Harman et al. (2021) investigated the implications of COVID-19 vaccination efforts on women's security, particularly focusing on how vaccine access and vaccination campaigns influenced women's health, economic security, and overall well-being. Their study underscores the necessity of gender-sensitive vaccination strategies to address women's unique vulnerabilities [21]. Razavi (2021) explored the role of female security experts in the U.S. government's counterterrorism efforts, highlighting how women's expertise shapes national security policies and practices while challenging conventional notions of security and expertise [22]. Punjabi et al. (2018) introduced a smart security system for women and children, equipped with advanced technologies to address their unique safety needs and vulnerabilities [23]. Bhandari (2017) examined the relationship between women's status and global food security, emphasizing the importance of addressing gender inequalities in agriculture, nutrition, and food distribution to improve women's security [24]. Helen et al. (2017) designed a smart watch focused on enhancing women's safety through IoT technology, incorporating features such as GPS tracking and emergency alerts to aid women in emergency situations [25]. Kirby and Shepherd (2016) emphasized the significance of women's roles in peace and security efforts, advocating for a renewed focus on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to ensure meaningful participation and protection [26]. Paradkar and Sharma (2015) developed an innovative safety system that integrates multiple features and technologies to provide comprehensive protection for women [27]. Baud and Smyth (2014) examined women's responses to economic changes in the context of security,

exploring strategies to enhance women's economic security and resilience to structural changes and economic challenges [28]. Goldblatt and Lamarche (2014) analyzed women's rights in the context of social security and protective measures, identifying gaps and barriers in women's access to economic and social rights [29]. Ellerby (2013) addressed the complexities of including women in peace processes and the gendered dynamics of security, advocating for gender-sensitive approaches that recognize women's diverse experiences and needs [30]. Cockburn (2013) explored the intersections of war, security, women, and gender, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive security and peacebuilding strategies to address the unique impacts of conflict on women [31]. Reardon (2013) highlighted women's perspectives on global peace and security, challenging dominant narratives and stressing the importance of incorporating women's voices and priorities in security discussions and policymaking [32]. Khan (2013) analyzed the effectiveness of existing legal measures for women's security in India, identifying areas for improvement and emphasizing the need for robust legal frameworks to protect women's rights and safety [33]. Meertens (2010) analyzed the security challenges women face in Colombia due to forced displacement, revealing the disproportionate impact of displacement on women's safety, economic stability, and social support networks [34]. Beth (2009) argued for the recognition of women's right to social security as a fundamental human right, essential for combating poverty, inequality, and gender-based discrimination [35]. Hudson (2009) examined the securitization of women's rights and gender equality, exploring how framing these issues as security concerns can both advance and limit efforts to promote women's rights [36]. Aoláin (2009) analyzed how patriarchal structures influence women's security in internationalized transitional justice processes, calling for transformative gender-based approaches to challenge power imbalances and prioritize women's rights and safety [37]. Hamber et al. (2006) identified shifting narratives and discourses around women's security, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and feminist perspectives in shaping security agendas [13]. Nussbaum (2005) examined the intersections of violence, security, and women's capabilities, highlighting the need for comprehensive approaches to address gender-based violence and promote women's empowerment [38]. Caprioli (2004) explored tensions between democratic principles, human rights, and women's security, calling for gender-sensitive approaches in democracy and human rights promotion [39].

McKay (2004) presented a feminist analysis of women's roles in human security and peacebuilding efforts, emphasizing the importance of women's experiences and agency in conflict resolution and reconciliation [40]. Taylor (2003) argued for the centrality of women's security in the concept of human security, stressing the link between gender equality, peace, and development agendas [41]. Ecevit (2003) examined the intersections of women's labor rights and social security, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive labor laws and social protection measures to ensure women's economic security [42]. Shoemaker (2001) emphasized the need to address internal conflicts and promote women's rights as integral to international security agendas. Lynch and Atkins (1988) revealed how women's travel patterns are influenced by safety concerns, affecting their mobility and access to public spaces [43]. Lastly, Dobert and Shields (1972) explored women's security experiences in traditional and evolving African contexts, underscoring the complexity of security challenges faced by African women and the need for context-specific interventions [44].

In conclusion, ensuring women's security is not only a human rights issue but also essential for achieving sustainable development, peace, and prosperity for all. By addressing the root causes of insecurity and promoting gender equality, we can build a world where women are free from violence, discrimination, and fear and can realize their full potential as equal and empowered members of society. This article aims to explore the factors influencing women's security in society by integrating Thematic Analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Thematic Analysis will be used to identify and examine key factors affecting women's security, while AHP will prioritize these factors based on their relative importance. By combining these two analytical approaches, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay of factors influencing women's security in society.

## 2. Methodology

The proposed research methodology comprises two stages for identifying and prioritizing factors, as shown in Figure 1. First, a literature review and Thematic Analysis method are employed to identify and categorize influential factors from a global perspective. Subsequently, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method is used to prioritize these influential factors through pairwise

comparisons conducted by a group of experts. The following subsections describe the steps involved in each stage.

The study procedure consists of two main phases: identifying the factors affecting women's security and prioritizing these factors using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). In the first phase, an extensive review of the existing literature related to women's security was conducted. This review aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Subsequently, Thematic Analysis was employed to identify influential factors and organize them systematically. All identified factors were then categorized into major groups to create a structured framework for further analysis.

In the second phase, the AHP method was utilized to establish the relative importance of the identified factors. First, a pairwise comparison questionnaire was developed for both the main and subcategories. Experts were invited to respond to these questionnaires, providing their judgments on the relative importance of each factor. The collected data were analyzed to determine the relative weights and rankings of the factors, ensuring a systematic prioritization using the AHP method. This approach facilitated a clear understanding of which factors are most crucial for enhancing women's security in society.

Fifteen experts, specifically sociology professors from various universities in Isfahan, were selected as research participants. The criteria for selecting these experts included their extensive knowledge and expertise in sociology, particularly on issues related to women's security in society. These experts were chosen to ensure that the data collected through the research questionnaires would be valid and comprehensive. Before distributing the questionnaires, detailed instructions were provided to the selected experts on how to effectively complete the pairwise comparison questionnaire. Their insights and expertise were crucial for identifying and prioritizing the factors affecting women's security in society. Once all 15 questionnaires were completed and collected from the specialists, the research data were extracted. The geometric mean of the questionnaires was calculated using Excel software, and a pairwise comparison matrix of the factors was constructed. The data were then processed using Expert Choice software, version 11. The pairwise comparison matrix among the influential factors needed to have an inconsistency rate of less than 0.1 to validate the questionnaires.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a decision-making method developed by Thomas L. Saaty in the 1970s. It has been widely used across various fields, including

business, engineering, healthcare, and social sciences, for prioritizing and making complex decisions involving multiple criteria and options. AHP provides a structured approach to decision-making by breaking down complex problems into a hierarchy of criteria and options and then systematically assessing and comparing their relative importance or priority. AHP allows decision-makers to incorporate both objective criteria and subjective judgments in the decision-making process, resulting in more informed and transparent decisions. Moreover, AHP offers a flexible framework that can accommodate different decision-making contexts and stakeholder preferences. After identifying the factors influencing women's security in society through Thematic Analysis, AHP is employed to rank these factors. In this process, the influential factors are considered as options within the standard AHP framework.

**Step 1: Data Collection via AHP Questionnaire on Influential Factors**

**Table 1.** Saaty Scale

Definition	Degree of Importance
Factor i and j are equally important	1
Factor i is slightly more important than factor j	3
Factor i is much more important than factor j	5
Factor i is significantly more important than factor j	7
Factor i is extremely more important than factor j	9
Note: 2, 4, 6, and 8 are intermediate values.	

**Step 2: Calculating Priority Weights for Each Factor**  
 First, a normalized matrix N for each aggregated matrix formed by the experts was calculated. Each element  $n_{ij}$  of N was computed as follows:

$$n_{ij} = \frac{a_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^h a_{ij}} \quad \forall i, j \in \{1, 2, \dots, h\}$$

Second, the relative weight of each factor was determined by averaging the row values in the normalized matrix. The weight of factor  $w_i$ , is computed as:

$$w_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^h n_{ij}}{h} \quad \forall i \in \{1, 2, \dots, h\}$$

**Step 3: Consistency Check for Each Pairwise Comparison Matrix**

To ensure consistency in the questionnaire responses, a consistency test was conducted for each pairwise

**Table 2.** Random Consistency Index (RCI)

Number of Factors, h	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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First, a questionnaire in the form of pairwise comparison matrices was designed for nine categories of factors and their subfactors. For h factors, an  $h \times h$  matrix (A) was created, where each element  $a_{ij}$  of the matrix represents the relative importance of factor i compared to factor j. In all cases where  $j=i$ ,  $a_{ij}$  equals one. The pairwise comparison is as follows:

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & \dots & a_{1h} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{h1} & \dots & a_{hh} \end{pmatrix}$$

Next, a panel of experts was invited to complete all pairwise comparison matrices using the Saaty scale shown in Table 1. Then, an aggregated matrix of all expert judgments was calculated using the geometric mean method. The aggregated matrices provide a holistic view that encompasses the perspectives of all experts, aiding in better generalization of the results.

comparison matrix (A) provided by the experts. Saaty (1990) used three measures for the consistency test: the Consistency Index (CI), the Random Consistency Index (RCI), and the Consistency Ratio (CR). First, CI for each matrix was calculated as follows:

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{max} - h}{h}$$

Second, CR was computed as follows:

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RCI}$$

where RCI can be extracted from Table 2 based on the number of factors in the pairwise comparison matrix.

RCI	0	0	0.52	0.89	1.11	1.25	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.49
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Finally, if  $CR \leq 0.10$ , the degree of inconsistency is considered acceptable. Otherwise, the values  $a_{ij}$  in the pairwise comparison matrix must be adjusted to eliminate inconsistency.

Step 4: Calculating Overall Weight for Each Factor  
The overall weight or ranking of each selected factor was determined by multiplying its weight by the weight of its category.

### 3. Findings

To uncover the potential factors affecting women's security, a comprehensive review of relevant literature was conducted. The Scopus database was selected for this study due to its extensive coverage of published articles, surpassing other research databases like Web of Science and Google Scholar. The search strategy involved using two primary keywords: "women's security" and "women's safety." Additionally, the search was limited to scholarly articles written in English. More than 30 articles related to women's security were identified and used to determine the factors influencing women's security. Thematic Analysis was employed as the methodology to identify and categorize these factors. Thematic Analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify and analyze patterns, themes, and meanings within a dataset, typically derived from interviews, focus groups, or textual sources. Researchers systematically analyze data using Thematic Analysis to identify recurring themes or patterns that emerge throughout the dataset. These themes are then interpreted and examined to gain insights into underlying phenomena. In recent years, Thematic Analysis has gained popularity for its flexibility, allowing researchers to explore a wide range of research questions and topics. This method can be applied in exploratory and explanatory studies, serving as a versatile tool for qualitative research. Its history and application demonstrate its effectiveness in exploring and understanding factors shaping human behaviors and experiences. Consequently, 27 factors were identified and categorized into 9 distinct groups, as listed in Table 2. The 9 categories include:

**Political and Conflict-Related Factors:** This encompasses the broader political context, including governance structures, conflicts, and peacebuilding efforts that can affect women's security. Political instability, armed conflict, and

displacement can exacerbate gender-based violence and insecurity, necessitating targeted interventions and protective measures.

**Socio-Economic Factors:** This includes elements such as income levels, education, employment opportunities, and access to resources. Socio-economic factors play a significant role in determining women's security, as economic empowerment and financial independence can increase their ability to protect themselves from various forms of violence and exploitation.

**Legal and Policy Factors:** This refers to the existing legal frameworks and policies designed to protect women's rights and ensure their safety. It includes laws related to gender-based violence, discrimination, and access to justice. Effective legal and policy measures can provide the necessary support to ensure women's security.

**Cultural Norms and Social Norms:** This involves the attitudes, beliefs, and societal norms concerning women's roles, rights, and behaviors. Cultural and social norms can either promote or hinder women's security, depending on whether they perpetuate gender inequality, discrimination, or violence against women or support gender equality and respect women's rights.

**Institutional Factors:** This includes the effectiveness of institutions such as law enforcement agencies, judicial systems, healthcare centers, and social service providers in addressing women's security concerns. Strong and responsive institutions are crucial for providing support, protection, and justice for women who experience violence or insecurity.

**Community and Family Dynamics:** This refers to the relationships, support networks, and dynamics within families and communities that affect women's security. Strong social support systems and cohesive communities can contribute to women's safety, whereas factors like social isolation, domestic violence, and social unrest can undermine it.

**Technological Factors:** This involves the role of technology in shaping women's security, including access to communication devices, social media platforms, and safety applications. Technology can both enhance and threaten women's security, depending on how it is utilized.

**Environmental Factors:** This includes the physical and environmental conditions that impact women's security, such as access to safe housing, transportation, public spaces, and natural disasters. Environmental factors can influence

women's vulnerability to various risks, necessitating interventions to ensure their safety.

**Health and Well-being:** This includes women's physical and mental health, access to healthcare services, and

reproductive rights, all of which are integral to their overall security. Ensuring access to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, can contribute to women's empowerment and security.

**Table 3.** Summary of Factors Influencing Women's Security

Main Factors	Sub-Factors	Description
Political and Conflict-Related Factors (Z <sub>1</sub> )	Participation in Political Processes and Decision-Making [2] (B <sub>11</sub> )	Women's participation in political processes and decision-making is essential for promoting gender equality, advancing women's rights, and addressing women's security concerns. Increasing women's representation in government, peacebuilding efforts, and conflict resolution processes can ensure that women's voices are heard and their needs are addressed.
	Impact of Conflict, Displacement, and Humanitarian Crises on Women's Security [34] (B <sub>12</sub> )	Women are disproportionately affected by conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises, facing heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and displacement. Protecting and supporting women in conflict-affected areas, ensuring access to humanitarian aid and protective mechanisms, and addressing the root causes of conflict are essential for promoting women's security and well-being.
	Access to Humanitarian Aid and Protective Mechanisms [39] (B <sub>13</sub> )	Women affected by conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises need access to humanitarian aid, protective mechanisms, and essential services to ensure their safety, dignity, and well-being. Humanitarian actors must prioritize women's needs, address gender-specific vulnerabilities, and ensure that humanitarian responses are gender-sensitive, inclusive, and responsive to women's security concerns.
Socio-Economic Factors (Z <sub>2</sub> )	Economic Empowerment and Financial Independence [3] (B <sub>21</sub> )	Women's ability to earn income and control financial resources is crucial for their self-sufficiency and security. Economic empowerment allows women to make choices about their lives, access essential services, and protect themselves from economic exploitation and dependency.
	Access to Education and Employment Opportunities (King & Hill, 1997) (B <sub>22</sub> )	Education and employment are key determinants of women's socio-economic status and security. Access to quality education and diverse job opportunities enhances women's skills, knowledge, and economic prospects, enabling them to achieve financial independence and contribute to their families and communities.
	Poverty and Socio-Economic Inequalities [35] (B <sub>23</sub> )	Women disproportionately face poverty and socio-economic inequalities, driven by systemic disparities and discriminatory practices. Poverty limits women's access to resources, opportunities, and services, increasing their vulnerability to various forms of insecurity, including violence, exploitation, and marginalization.
Legal and Policy Factors (Z <sub>3</sub> )	Gender-Sensitive Laws and Their Implementation [36] (B <sub>31</sub> )	Gender-sensitive laws and policies are crucial for protecting women's rights and addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. Effective enforcement of these laws and mechanisms is essential to ensure women's access to legal remedies and justice systems that uphold their rights and hold perpetrators accountable.
	Access to Legal Remedies and Justice Systems [33] (B <sub>32</sub> )	Access to justice is critical for women who experience violence or injustice. Women must have access to legal services, support services, and mechanisms for reporting and seeking redress for rights violations, including civil remedies, criminal prosecutions, protective orders, and compensation.
	Implementation of Policies Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights [1] (B <sub>33</sub> )	Comprehensive policies and strategies that promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and the elimination of discrimination are essential to address the root causes of women's insecurity. These policies must address structural barriers, promote women's participation and leadership, and ensure equal rights for all women.
Cultural and Social Norms (Z <sub>4</sub> )	Gender Stereotypes and Social Expectations [31] (B <sub>41</sub> )	Gender stereotypes and norms shape perceptions of women's roles, capabilities, and value, affecting their access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power. Challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting positive representations of women are essential for creating a culture of gender equality and respect.
	Cultural Attitudes Towards Women's Roles and Status [32] (B <sub>42</sub> )	Cultural attitudes towards women's roles, responsibilities, and status vary across societies and can impact their self-sufficiency, agency, and security. Cultural practices like child marriage, female genital mutilation, and honor killings perpetuate violence against women and girls, requiring culturally sensitive approaches to addressing women's security.
	Norms Around Violence, Consent, and Discrimination [38] (B <sub>43</sub> )	Norms around violence, consent, and discrimination influence experiences of insecurity and violence against women. Addressing harmful norms that justify violence against women or perpetuate victim-blaming is crucial for creating a safe and supportive environment for all women.
Institutional Factors (Z <sub>5</sub> )	Access to and Availability of Support Services (e.g., Shelters and Hotlines) [4] (B <sub>51</sub> )	Access to support services, such as shelters, crisis centers, counseling, and legal aid, is crucial for women experiencing violence or insecurity. These services provide essential support, protection, and resources to help women rebuild their lives and access justice.
	Effectiveness of Law Enforcement and Justice Institutions (Hamber et al., 2006) (B <sub>52</sub> )	Law enforcement agencies, courts, and justice institutions play a critical role in responding to and preventing violence against women. Effective investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of cases, along with sensitivity to the needs and rights of survivors, are essential for ensuring justice and accountability.
	Supportive Healthcare Services and Mental Health Care [11] (B <sub>53</sub> )	Access to healthcare services, including reproductive health, sexual health, and trauma-informed mental health support, is essential for women's well-being and security. Healthcare providers must be trained to recognize and respond to gender-based violence, trauma, and mental health needs sensitively and effectively.

Community and Family Dynamics (Z <sub>6</sub> )	Supportive Social Networks and Community Cohesion [5] (B <sub>61</sub> )	Supportive social networks and community cohesion play a vital role in promoting women's security and well-being. Strong social ties, mutual support, and solidarity can provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging and safety for women.
	Family Dynamics and Relationships [43] (B <sub>62</sub> )	Family dynamics and relationships can both support and undermine women's security. Healthy and supportive family relationships can provide love, care, and protection, while dysfunctional or abusive relationships can perpetuate violence, control, and exploitation.
	Exposure to Violence and Trauma in the Community or Family [6] (B <sub>63</sub> )	Women's security is affected by their exposure to violence and trauma in their communities or families. Addressing community-level factors, such as social violence, gang activity, substance abuse, and social disintegration, is essential for creating safe and supportive environments for women and girls.
Technological Factors (Z <sub>7</sub> )	Use of Technology for Safety and Communication [17] (B <sub>71</sub> )	Technology can be a double-edged sword for women's security. While it provides opportunities for safety, communication, and access to information and resources, it also poses risks, such as online harassment, cyberbullying, and surveillance. Promoting digital literacy, online safety, and privacy protection is essential to mitigate these risks.
	Risks Associated with Online Harassment and Cyberbullying [45] (B <sub>72</sub> )	Online harassment, cyberbullying, and digital abuse are common forms of violence against women, with serious consequences for women's mental health, safety, and well-being. Addressing these risks requires coordinated action by governments, tech companies, civil society, and communities to prevent and combat online violence.
	Access to Digital Resources for Education and Empowerment [15] (B <sub>73</sub> )	Digital resources, such as online education, information, and support services, can empower women by providing access to knowledge, skills, and opportunities for socio-economic advancement. Ensuring equal access to digital resources and bridging the digital divide is essential for promoting women's empowerment and security.
Environmental Factors (Z <sub>8</sub> )	Safety of Public Spaces and Transportation [46](B <sub>81</sub> )	Women's security is influenced by the safety of public spaces and transportation systems. Improving lighting, infrastructure, and security measures in public areas and transport hubs can enhance women's safety and reduce the risk of harassment, assault, and violence.
	Urban Planning and Design Considerations (e.g., Lighting, Walkability) [47] (B <sub>82</sub> )	Urban planning and design can impact women's security by creating environments that are safe, inclusive, and accessible to all. Designing streets, buildings, and public spaces with safety, visibility, and walkability in mind can contribute to women's security and well-being.
	Exposure to Environmental Hazards and Natural Disasters [48] (B <sub>83</sub> )	Women's security is also affected by exposure to environmental hazards and natural disasters, which can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Women are often disproportionately affected by climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation, necessitating gender-sensitive approaches to disaster preparedness.
Health and Well-Being (Z <sub>9</sub> )	Access to Reproductive Health Services and Family Planning [49] (B <sub>91</sub> )	Access to reproductive health services, including family planning, maternal care, and sexual and reproductive health services, is essential for women's health, autonomy, and security. Ensuring universal access to reproductive health services can empower women to make informed decisions about their bodies and reproductive rights.
	Mental Health Support and Trauma-Informed Care [21] (B <sub>92</sub> )	Women affected by violence, trauma, or other issues need access to mental health support and trauma-informed care to address their psychological and emotional needs. Providing culturally sensitive and gender-responsive mental health services can help women recover from trauma and experience a sense of safety and well-being.
	Impact of Health Inequalities and Diseases on Women's Security [50] (B <sub>93</sub> )	Health inequalities and diseases can impact women's security by exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Women may face barriers to accessing healthcare, including discrimination and lack of resources, which can affect their health and well-being. Addressing health inequalities and ensuring healthcare access is essential for women's security.

To prioritize the factors influencing women's security, a pairwise comparison questionnaire was designed. In this questionnaire, the factors were compared in pairs. The numbers 1 to 9 were used in the Saaty scale to indicate the preference of one factor over another. The research

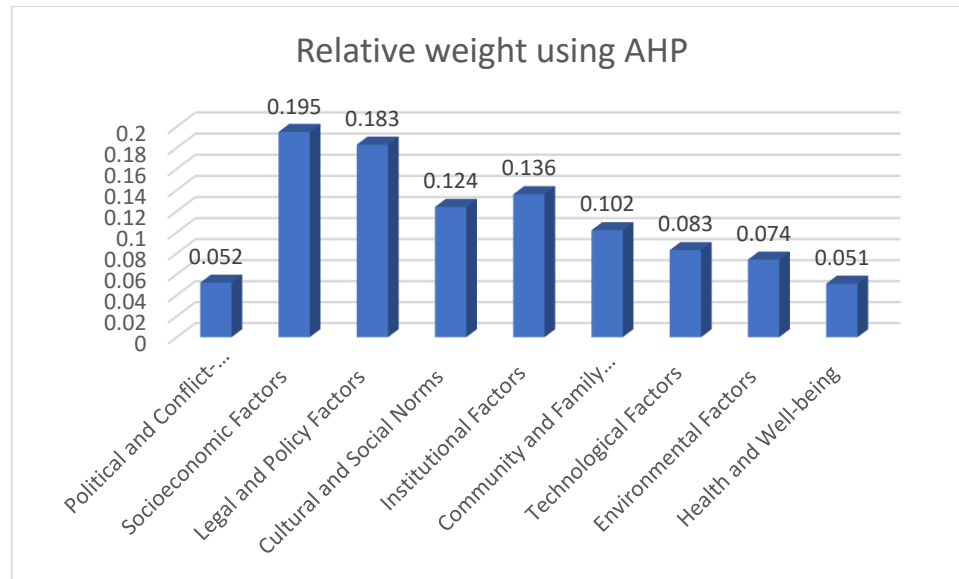
questionnaires were distributed among 15 experts. The inconsistency rate in all comparisons was less than 0.1, indicating the necessary validity of the questionnaire results. The weights of each influencing factor, obtained using the AHP method, are presented in the following:

**Table 4.** Weights of All Categories of Factors and Specific Factors (Aggregated Results)

Main Factors	Relative Weight	Sub-Factors	Relative Weight	Overall Relative Weight	Rank
Political and Conflict-Related Factors	5.2%	B <sub>11</sub>	30.25%	1.57%	25
		B <sub>12</sub>	44.25%	2.30%	19
		B <sub>13</sub>	25.50%	1.33%	26
Socio-Economic Factors	19.5%	B <sub>21</sub>	46.65%	9.10%	1
		B <sub>22</sub>	27.60%	5.38%	5
		B <sub>23</sub>	25.75%	5.02%	8
Legal and Policy Factors	18.3%	B <sub>31</sub>	34.10%	6.24%	4
		B <sub>32</sub>	36.55%	6.69%	2
		B <sub>33</sub>	29.35%	5.37%	6
Cultural and Social Norms	12.4%	B <sub>41</sub>	33.80%	4.19%	10
		B <sub>42</sub>	25.45%	3.16%	14
		B <sub>43</sub>	40.75%	5.05%	7
Institutional Factors	13.6%	B <sub>51</sub>	35.15%	4.78%	9
		B <sub>52</sub>	47.90%	6.51%	3
		B <sub>53</sub>	16.95%	2.31%	20
Community and Family Dynamics	10.2%	B <sub>61</sub>	39.20%	4.00%	11



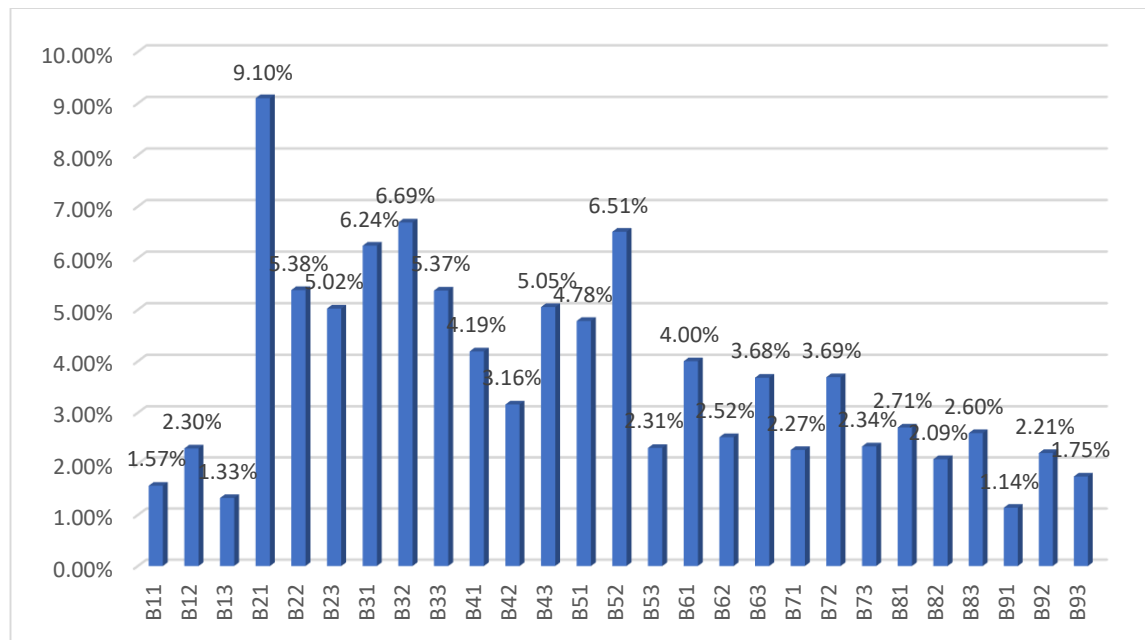
		B <sub>62</sub>	24.75%	2.52%	17
		B <sub>63</sub>	36.05%	3.68%	13
Technological Factors	8.3%	B <sub>71</sub>	27.35%	2.27%	21
		B <sub>72</sub>	44.40%	3.69%	12
		B <sub>73</sub>	28.25%	2.34%	18
Environmental Factors	7.4%	B <sub>81</sub>	36.60%	2.71%	15
		B <sub>82</sub>	28.30%	2.09%	23
		B <sub>83</sub>	35.10%	2.60%	16
Health and Well-Being	5.1%	B <sub>91</sub>	22.35%	1.14%	27
		B <sub>92</sub>	43.25%	2.21%	22
		B <sub>93</sub>	34.40%	1.75%	24



**Figure 1.** Relative Importance of Main Factors Influencing Women's Security

Based on the results, the main factors in order of priority are: socio-economic factors (relative importance = 0.195), legal and policy factors (relative importance = 0.183), institutional factors (relative importance = 0.136), cultural and social norms (relative importance = 0.124), community and family dynamics (relative importance = 0.102),

technological factors (relative importance = 0.083), environmental factors (relative importance = 0.074), political and conflict-related factors (relative importance = 0.052), and health and well-being (relative importance = 0.051).



**Figure 2.** Relative Importance of Factors Influencing Women's Security

The factors are ranked as follows: economic empowerment and financial independence (relative importance = 0.091), access to legal remedies and justice systems (relative importance = 0.0669), effectiveness of law enforcement and justice institutions (relative importance = 0.0651), gender-sensitive laws and implementation (relative importance = 0.0624), and access to education and employment opportunities (relative importance = 0.0538) are ranked first to fifth, respectively.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the factors influencing women's security in society using Thematic Analysis and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Thematic Analysis and prior studies were first used to identify the factors affecting women's security. A pairwise comparison questionnaire was then utilized as the data collection tool. Fifteen experts, all sociology professors from universities in Isfahan, completed the questionnaires. The AHP method was subsequently employed, integrating the input from these 15 experts to rank and determine the relative importance of the factors affecting women's security.

This study explored various dimensions of women's security, including socio-economic factors like income inequality and access to resources; legal and policy factors related to gender equality laws and enforcement mechanisms; cultural norms impacting women's safety; institutional factors affecting institutional responsiveness to

gender-based violence; community and family dynamics shaping women's safety within their social networks; technological factors influencing women's access to safety tools and resources; environmental factors contributing to the prevalence of gender-based violence; political and conflict-related factors exacerbating risks to women's security; and health and well-being factors affecting women's overall safety.

Through Thematic Analysis, this study identified key themes and patterns in the existing literature and empirical data related to women's security, while the AHP method was used to prioritize these factors based on expert judgments and pairwise comparisons, aiming to develop comprehensive strategies to enhance women's security in society. Thematic Analysis revealed the key dimensions of women's security, and their relative importance was determined using AHP. Socio-economic factors ranked highest (relative importance = 0.195), followed by legal and policy factors (relative importance = 0.183). Other important factors, in descending order, included institutional factors (relative importance = 0.136), cultural and social norms (relative importance = 0.124), community and family dynamics (relative importance = 0.102), technological factors (relative importance = 0.083), environmental factors (relative importance = 0.074), political and conflict-related factors (relative importance = 0.052), and health and well-being (relative importance = 0.051).

Several similar studies have identified factors influencing women's security in society. Forsdike et al. (2024) found that

public transportation service providers often avoid acknowledging safety issues and may refrain from informing the public about safety deficiencies in public transit [14]. This paper's findings align with Carpentieri et al. (2023), who showed that digital data could effectively support urban planning initiatives to create safer environments for women in cities [18]. Additionally, Naved et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of innovative security systems based on artificial intelligence technologies for identifying and preventing potential threats to women's safety [20]. Furthermore, Harman et al. (2021) explored how access to COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination campaigns affected women's health, economic security, and overall well-being, further emphasizing the connection between health issues and women's security [21].

While some studies support these findings, others offer different perspectives. Madjdian et al. (2024) found that a media consumer awareness campaign had a positive impact on food safety behavior and behavioral determinants among women in Dire Dawa and Harar, Ethiopia, highlighting the importance of consumer-focused interventions in enhancing women's security [15]. In contrast, Zhang et al. (2023) emphasized the significance of urban planning and design in ensuring women's safety, particularly in informal settlements, underscoring the need for structural changes to improve safety [19]. Additionally, Razavi (2021) examined how women's expertise and perspectives shape national security policies and practices, challenging traditional concepts of security and expertise in the context of counterterrorism [22]. Bhandari (2017) explored how women's empowerment and equality contribute to food security outcomes, emphasizing the need to address gender inequalities in agriculture, nutrition, and food distribution as fundamental aspects of women's security [24].

Several significant recommendations for improving women's security are presented. First, strengthening legal frameworks to ensure gender equality and provide robust protection against gender-based violence is essential. This includes enforcing laws and penalties criminalizing such acts and establishing support services for survivors. Moreover, increasing women's access to education and economic opportunities is crucial, as it empowers them economically and socially, reducing their vulnerability to violence. Public awareness campaigns are also vital for challenging harmful cultural norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based violence. Enhancing law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women is also critical. Urban planning and

infrastructure must be improved to create safer public spaces for women, including well-lit streets and accessible transportation. Gender-sensitive policies and practices should be promoted in workplaces and educational institutions to prevent discrimination and harassment. Technological solutions, such as mobile apps for incident reporting and GPS tracking devices for personal safety, can also play a significant role. Engaging men and boys as allies in combating gender-based violence through education and awareness programs is necessary. Finally, supporting grassroots women's organizations and local initiatives that address the root causes of gender inequality and violence against women can lead to sustainable change and improved security for women in society.

In addition to the mentioned recommendations, leveraging social media and television platforms can significantly contribute to enhancing women's security. Social media campaigns can raise awareness about gender-based violence, promote gender equality, and provide information on available support services for survivors. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can amplify women's voices, share stories of resilience, and challenge harmful stereotypes. Television programs and documentaries can also play a crucial role in educating the public about the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence, showcasing positive role models and examples of successful interventions. Furthermore, the media should be encouraged to report on issues related to women's security responsibly, avoiding sensationalism and victim-blaming narratives. Collaborating with influencers and celebrities to advocate for women's rights and safety can also help reach a broader audience and facilitate social change. By harnessing the power of social media and television, we can engage diverse communities in discussions about women's security and work toward creating a safer and more equitable society for all.

Despite the comprehensive approach used in this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research heavily relies on the availability and quality of existing literature and data related to women's security, which may vary across regions and contexts. Second, the use of Thematic Analysis and the AHP method involves subjective judgments and interpretations, which may introduce bias into the findings. Third, the study's scope may not cover all possible factors affecting women's security, and some nuances or dimensions may have been overlooked, impacting the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the results. Fourth, only English-language articles were included

to ensure the topic's inclusivity. If articles in other languages were considered, the factors influencing women's safety might differ. Finally, the generalizability of the findings may be limited to the specific context or population studied, and caution should be exercised when applying the results to broader contexts.

Based on the study's findings, several research and practical recommendations are provided to enhance women's security in society. First, more empirical research is needed to validate the identified factors and explore the relationships between them across different cultural and socio-political contexts. Second, policymakers and stakeholders should prioritize implementing gender-sensitive legal and policy reforms to address systemic inequalities and discrimination against women. Third, community-based interventions and awareness campaigns should challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive social norms that prioritize women's safety and well-being. Fourth, investing in technology-based solutions and infrastructure improvements can increase women's access to safety tools and resources, particularly in urban and vulnerable areas. Fifth, environmental planning should prioritize creating safe and inclusive public spaces that reduce the risk of gender-based violence. Finally, collaboration between government institutions, civil society organizations, and grassroots movements is crucial for effectively coordinating efforts and resources to address women's security concerns.

Three key suggestions for future research are provided based on the study's findings. First, conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in the factors affecting women's security over time would offer valuable insights into the dynamics of women's safety and well-being. Second, comparative analyses between different regions or countries to assess variations in factors influencing women's security could help develop tailored strategies to address context-specific challenges. Third, qualitative research to gain deeper insights into women's lived experiences with security issues would complement quantitative findings, providing a more nuanced understanding of the complex nature of women's security concerns.

#### Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

#### Acknowledgments

Authors thank all participants who participate in this study.

#### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

#### Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

#### Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards. This paper is derived from a doctoral dissertation with the thesis code 183348812808914916017162592615 at Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch. All ethical principles have been observed in this article. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and its implementation steps. They were assured that their information would remain confidential and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, the research results will be made available to them upon request.

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