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Attributions of Negative Partner Behaviour by Men who Physically Abuse Their Partners

Santina Tonizzo
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**Attributions of Negative Partner Behaviour by Men Who Physically
Abuse their Partners.**

By

Santina Tonizzo

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of
Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) Honours
Faculty of Health and Human Sciences,
Edith Cowan University

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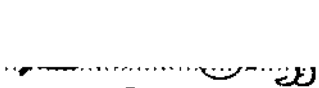
Abstract

Conflict in close relationships is associated with specific patterns of attributions (Bradbury & Fincham 1990). The objective of this study was to investigate if violence would be associated with particular type of attributions made for negative partner behaviours. Three groups of men were classified using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) as physically violent (in Domestic Violence Intervention Programs), ($n = 19$), non-physically violent in (counselling), ($n = 17$), and non-physically violent in the (community), ($n = 31$). The Relationship Attribution Measure (RAM) by Fincham & Bradbury, (1992) was used to assess the attributional dependent variables of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame. A one-way MANOVA revealed a significant overall difference on the six attributional dimensions between the physically violent and non physically violent men. Post hoc comparisons showed that physically violent men were more likely than the non physically violent men (counselling) to attribute the negative behaviour of their partners to unchangeable, intentional rather than unintentional, selfishly motivated and blameworthy causes. Further, the physically violent men were more likely than the non-physically violent (community) to make attributions that globally affected other areas of the relationship, as well as attributing their negative partner's behaviour to be intentional, selfish and blameworthy. When the effect of marital satisfaction was controlled using a one-way MANCOVA, the group difference on attributional measures disappeared. This suggested that marital satisfaction was likely to account for the attributional differences between the groups, rather than the violence per se. Practical implications for men in Domestic Violence

Intervention Programs are suggested. A number of methodological issues are discussed and directions for future research are considered.

Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgment, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Signature: .....
Date: *5th February, 1997*.....

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Estimates of spouse abuse

In the last two decades, communities in the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia have identified domestic violence or spouse abuse as a social problem of significant proportions (Hart, 1995). The incidence of domestic violence is difficult to determine, because of the lack of reliable data. No adequate national survey has been conducted in Australia. However, Straus and Gelles (1995) have attempted to measure the incidence of spouse abuse in nationally representative samples in the US. The first survey in 1976 in which 2,143 families were surveyed, found 16% of the sample had experienced some kind of violent incident in the last year. The second survey in 1985, with a sample of 6002 families, yielded similar results, with 6.3% having experienced *severe* violence during the same period. These statistics are not reflected in the estimates of incidents reported to the police, or other service providers such as general practitioners and hospital emergency services. In a report by the US Department of Justice (1994) females had experienced over 10 times as many incidents of violence by an intimate as males. (Note intimates refer to sexual intimates, spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends). The total population of women studied had reported over 572,000 violent victimizations by an intimate compared to approximately 49,000 incidents reported against men by an intimate.

There have been some attempts to collect data on the incidence of domestic violence in Australia, with results consistently indicating that women are victims of family violence. The results of surveys conducted by the phone-in technique, around Australia revealed that women were 98.3% of victims in Queensland, 92.1% of victims

in Western Australia, 94.4% of victims in Victoria, and 98% of victims in Canberra (Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce (1991). Other surveys that have been conducted in Australia have not been designed specifically to measure the incidence of domestic violence, but rather crime victimisation which had included domestic violence in a particular state. The first Crime Victims Survey was undertaken by the Government Statistician's Office in Queensland in 1992 and involved face-to-face interviews of 6,315 females over the age of 15. The results indicated that 8 per 1000 had been assaulted over the last 12 months and 1.8 per 1000 had been assaulted with a weapon. The second survey, in South Australia, sampled 3,000 females in married or defacto relationships and found that 103 per 1000 had been assaulted by a partner or ex-partner. Moreover, the survey also indicated that women who were separated and divorced were more vulnerable to domestic violence indicating a rate of 42.8 per 1,000 (Ferrante, Indermaur, Morgan & Harding, 1995). A recent survey conducted in Western Australia (Ferrante, et al. (1995) estimated the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence conducted by the phone-in technique was less than 20 per 1000.

Further statistics on the more serious form of domestic violence, such as homicides, have been provided by Ferrante, et al. (1995). The study reports figures between 1992-1994, of 187 homicides in WA, one quarter being the result of domestic violence. More specifically, exactly half (41/82) of females (43.9% of total), in contrast (6/105) to males (5.7%) were the result of domestic violence. An Australian study by Easta, (1993) during 1989-1991, revealed 19.3% of intimate murders were committed by women.

A report by the US Department of Justice, (1994) revealed that 70% of females were intimate murder victims, compared to 4% of male murder victims in 1992, but the report did not indicate specifically if they were the result of domestic violence.

In terms of cost, violence against women has substantial social and economic consequences (Hart, 1995). At a recent seminar in Canberra, a paper was presented by Dobash and Dobash (1996, p. 1) which detailed the personal, social and financial costs of violence against women. They quote recent estimates by the World Bank that “ violence against women accounts for one out of five healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age.”

At the 1996 National Conference on Domestic Violence, held in Perth, a number of international and national presenters expressed concern about the impact of domestic violence. Strategies and policies were developed during the conference proceedings in an effort to stop the violence and protect abused women and children. More recently strategies have been proposed involving community intervention. Existing community interventions include the justice system, both civil and criminal law, community-based shelters, and counselling programs for battered women and children, as well as the education /treatment programs for men that batter.

In Australia the Government has recently made new policies on domestic violence. In Western Australia 16 regional committees on domestic violence have been established. These committees consist of government officers such as representatives from Family and Children Services, Corrective Services, Homeswest, Police and the community. The plan is to audit the services that already exist and redirect or establish new services. A protocol for all involved with domestic violence has been established. In addition, training programs designed specifically for aborigines have been

established, allowing for cultural diversity. Furthermore, plans have been made for a large community education program to increase awareness of domestic violence at a local level through media campaigns. It is of particular interest, that the Australian Government is now funding perpetrator programs (W. Cullen, personal communication, October 24, 1996). Two providers of such programs in W.A. have been granted \$1.8 million for the next four years.

Perspectives on spouse abuse

“Domestic violence,” as referred to above, predominantly involves violence against sexual partners, but by definition also includes abuse of parents, siblings and other relatives (Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce, 1991). The use of the term domestic violence received much criticism at the 1996 National Domestic Violence Conference. Eastaerl (1996) asserted that the word “domestic” minimises the violence implying for example that “its just a domestic” and also connotes that it is a private matter. “Family violence,” the preferred name for spouse abuse for some workers, has been studied from a number of perspectives. These include: the feminist, the social structural and the individual psychological. Firstly, the feminist explanation focuses on unequal power within the relationship, the patriarchal system, sex roles and issues of power and control (Dutton & Browning 1984; Walker, 1984). The majority of domestic violence intervention programs in Western Australia, Australia, New Zealand and USA use this framework of power and control referred to as the “Duluth Model” (Pence & Paymar, 1986). Secondly, the social structural explanation emphasises the family’s economic conditions, the patterns of interaction within the family (Dibble & Straus 1995), stress and substance abuse (Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce, 1991). The individual psychological is the third perspective. This examines

the characteristics of men who batter, including other variables such as self-esteem and social skills (Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Geffner & Rosenbaum, 1990; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). This approach often involves establishing typologies (Gondolf 1988; Straus, 1993; Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart 1994)

There also exists a psychosocial perspective which links childhood exposure to violence either through reported physical abuse and/or perceived abuse of parental discipline to physical violence in adulthood (Cummings, 1993). A study is presently examining self report of violent offenders in relation to childhood exposure to violent behaviour from their caregivers and observed violence between the caregivers (Dockerill, 1996). Some have implicated physiological/biological factors such as: attention deficit disorder, (Miedzian, 1992); hormones eg., testosterone, (Archer, 1991; Kemper, 1990); and brain injuries, (Buck, 1988) in relation to men and violence. Figure 1. shows a diagrammatic representation of the various perspectives on family violence. It demonstrates the complex and intricate nature of this area and the many possible factors contributing to family violence.

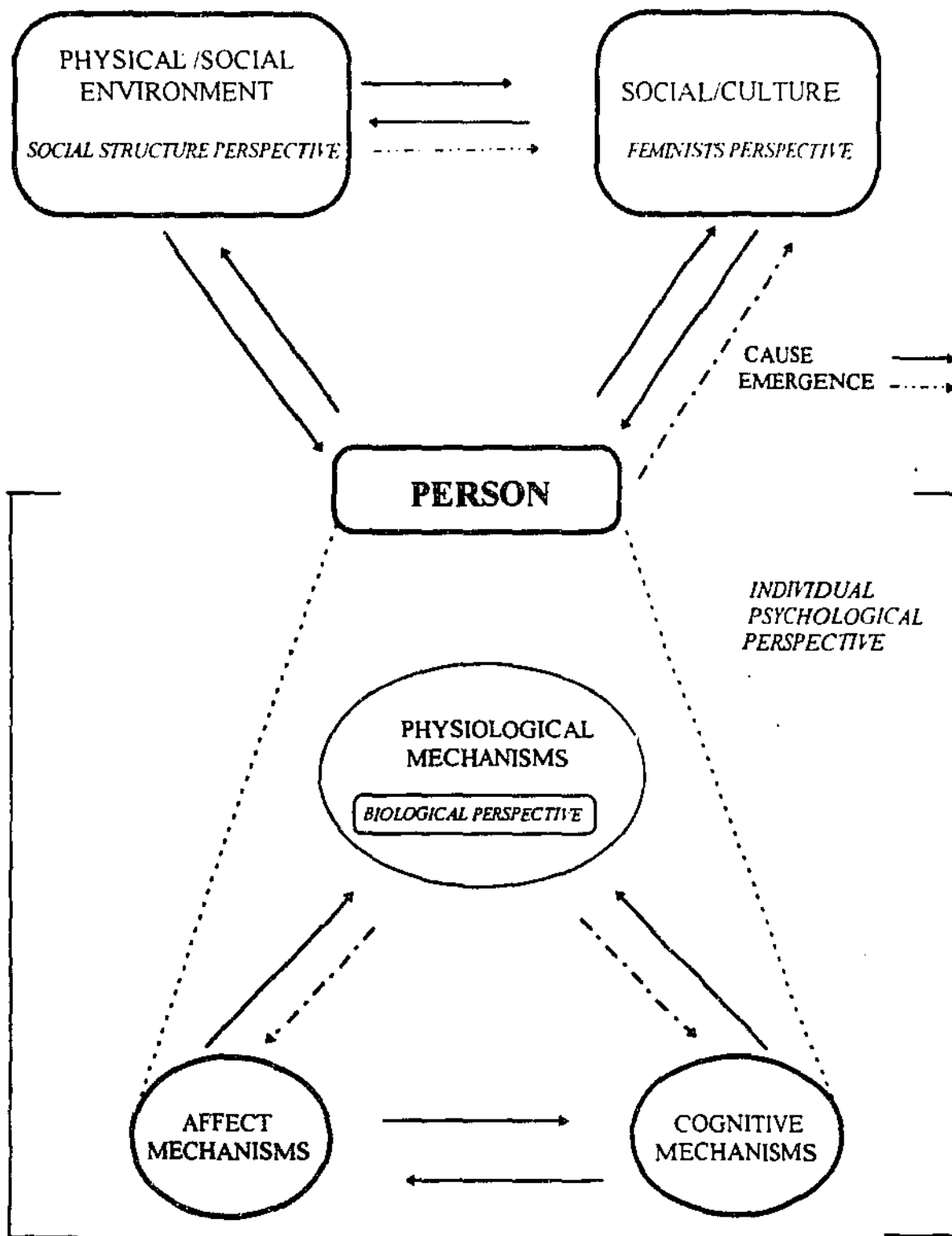


Figure 1.

Diagrammatic representation of the different perspectives of family violence. Adapted and revised from an "Overview of Research" by Smith, 1996

The main focus of the present study is to examine spouse abuse from the *individual psychological perspective* in terms of attributions of negative partner behaviour by men who physically abuse their female partner. Before discussing attributions and men who abuse their partner, it is important to define the term abuse/violence.

Definition of Abuse/Violence

Men who abuse their partners are defined in the literature as males who persistently or seriously verbally, economically, socially, physically or sexually harm their spouse/partner (Relationships Australia 1994; Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce, 1991). The present study focuses only on physical abuse. The latter will be referred to interchangeably as physical violence.

Physical abuse/violence refers to overt aggressive forms of behaviour in which tissue damage may occur. Such behaviours include pushes, shoves, slaps, punches, kicks, bites, chokes or usage of an object or weapon. The consequences may be bruises, abrasions, lacerations, broken bones, including teeth, and more severe types of physical injuries.

Individual Psychological Studies of Spouse Abuse

Studies of the characteristics of men who abuse their partner have reported low self-concept and low self-esteem (Dutton & Strachen, 1987; Neidig, Friedman & Collins (1986). In a study by Rosenbaum & O'Leary, (1981) abusive husbands were differentiated from non-abusive husbands with marital difficulties on three variables: abusive husbands were less assertive with their wives, they were more likely to have experienced abuse as children and were more likely to have seen parents abuse each

other when compared to non abusive husbands. The lack of effective and assertive communication skills was also reported by Hotaling and Sugarman, (1986).

Studies of men who abuse their partner have reported elevated scores on standardised measures of psychopathology and personality (Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). Perpetrators of spouse abuse have been described as possessing egocentric personality traits, and as being depressed and angry and as experiencing high levels of stress (Sonkin, Martin & Walker, 1985).

Personality typologies have been developed using scores on the Million Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI). Personality disorders such as Borderline, Narcissistic or Antisocial personality disorders are common (Hamberger & Hastings 1988).

Studies of Attributions of Men Who Abuse

Attribution researchers in the last decade have examined retrospective explanations and accounts of the violent behaviour by interviewing the men who abused their partners. The aim of these studies was to understand the *causes* that men gave for their violent behaviours and the strategies they used to justify them. (Bograd, 1983; Dutton, 1986; Shields & Hanneke, 1983.) These perceived causes of one's own or another's behaviours are defined as *attributions* (Weary, Stanley & Harvey, 1989).

In the last five years, researchers into marital violence have examined attributions offered by violent husbands for non-violent relationship events in an effort to understand the escalation of marital conflict to marital violence. (Murphy, Vivian, O'Leary & Fincham, 1989; Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenbach, & Fruzzetti 1992; and Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993).

Before discussing in detail attributions by men who are physically violent to their partner, the following will be reviewed: a) attributions in close relationships, b) attributions and marital conflict and c) physical violence in relation to hostile attributional biases.

Attributions in Close Relationships

The attribution process in close relationships differs from the process between “actors” and “observers” in strangers (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985). That is, a “stranger” is more likely to attribute another’s behaviour/event to the characteristics, or personal traits of the other. On the other hand, a spouse is more likely to attribute the same behaviour of their partner as situational.

According to Kelley, et al. (1983), the actor-observer differences and the self-serving bias of attribution theory (Jones & Nesbett, 1977), are transformed in the context of close relationships because the partners know each other well, and are interdependent. This interdependency refers to 4 features of dual activities within a close relationship, such as; the frequency, the impact, the diversity and the length of time the couples have with each other.

It follows that, with time in close relationships, people tend to develop an expectancy of the other’s behaviour because familiar situations lead to automatic information processing (Bargh 1982) without attributional questioning (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985). Heider (1958) explains the major function of attribution is to create a predictable world and hence the development of expectancies.

Another explanation of this changed actor/observer attribution in close relationship may be the categorisation of self and intimate partner into “a single

cognitive category”, (ie. think as one) (Hogg & Turner, 1987, p.241). Aron, Aron Tudor and Nelson (1991), examined cognitive processes in close relationships and their study suggests, confusion between self/other with spouse.

Automaticity and/or the degree of fusion of self with the other are two possible explanations as to why attributional processes may differ between “strangers” and close relationships. However, these studies do not explain the style or frequency of attributions in close relationships.

Frequency and Styles of Attributions in Close Relationships

Very few studies have examined when and how often attributions occur in close relationships. A study by Berley & Jacobson, (1984), examining attributional activity amongst married partners, showed that, particularly when an incident was unexpected or striking to the subject, attributions were more likely to be made. Holtzworth-Munroe and Jacobson, (1985) examined the rates of attributions in relation to particular events with couples in marital conflict as well as provide information about the nature of attributions (ie type, style). Twenty non distressed couples and two groups of distressed couples, 11 from the community and 11 from a marital therapy clinic participated. Direct and indirect probes about partner’s negative and positive behaviours were requested to elicit cognitive activity by listing thoughts and feelings. Participants were classified as distressed and non-distressed by the use of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale¹ (DAS; Spanier, 1976). Couples qualified as distressed only if the combined sum of both partners scored below 200². The negative and positive events were taken from the

¹ The literature interchangeably also refers to couples as maritally satisfied -dissatisfied - in marital conflict, classified using this scale.

² Note that the scale is used to classify individuals as distressed if a score is below 100.

Spouse Observation Checklist, which comprises 354 items. Participants rated the frequency of the items, as "never" to "very often" occurring in their relationship and the impact of each item on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (very negative) to 3 (very positive). Each partner had twenty individualised partner initiated behaviours selected at random from the checklist to fall equally into the four categories of frequently occurring positive events, infrequently occurring positive events, frequently occurring negative events and infrequently occurring negative events. These events were presented to the participants in random order for indirect probes. The responses were coded to a criterion by trained undergraduate students, who were naive to both marital distress levels and the experimental hypotheses. It was the first study in which the attributional activity of married couples was measured without specifically asking for causal attributions, using indirect probes. The results of the study supported the theory that negative events elicited more attributional activity than did positive behaviours. Dissatisfied husbands were more likely to report attributional thought than satisfied husbands, whereas the wives in the two groups did not differ. The distressed couples also provided a higher percentage of distress-maintaining attributions for their partners' negative behaviour than their non distressed counterparts, using the indirect probe measure. Distressed couples attributed the negative behaviours to the partners' personality traits and saw the behaviour as voluntarily intentional. The negative behaviour was perceived to be unchangeable and as generally affecting other areas of the relationship. The reverse responses were made by non-distressed spouses for their partners' negative behaviour. Non - distressed spouses also gave maximum credit for positive events and dismissed the negative behaviours.

Other studies measuring attributions have used hypothetical events and dependent measures of locus, globality, stability, and blame (Fincham, 1985); blame, (Madden & Janoff-Bulman, 1981) with community and clinic couples. However, these studies have been limited to assessing constructs relating to causal attributions and/or blame, and have not examined the responsibility attributions.

The Entailment Model of Attributions and Marital Conflict

More recently, attribution dimensions and functions have been elaborated to produce a more comprehensive theoretical formulation of attributions in intimate relationships and marital conflict (Fincham & Bradbury, 1985; Fincham and Bradbury, 1987; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Fincham and Bradbury, 1992).

A specific measure of attributions in close relationships has been developed to explore the nature of distressed and non distressed couples, using a standardised self report measure - The Relationship Attribution Scale, (Fincham and Bradbury, 1992). Fincham and Bradbury extended the construct of attributions beyond causality and blame to include the mediating attribution of responsibility.

Attributions of causality establish who or what caused an event, and include the dimensions of locus, stability and globality. The *locus dimension* in the literature on marital dissatisfaction has been examined using a number of sub-components: partner, self, outside circumstances, partner in relation to self and the relationship (Fincham, 1985; Newman, 1981). However, according to Fincham, et al (1992), making *partner* attributions rather than self, the relationship or outside circumstance, has more implications for marital satisfaction. It also has further implication for subsequent behaviour towards the partner. Previous studies suggest, *partner* attributions produced

the most consistent results. The *stability* dimension refers to the likelihood of the perceived causes being unchangeable while *globality* is seen to affect other areas of the relationship, rather than the specific situation.

Attributions of responsibility establish accountability for an event by comparing the behaviour with normative criteria (Fincham, Beach, & Baucom, 1987) and includes dimensions of intent and motivation. *Intent*, as it implies, refers to the behaviour being performed on purpose and the *motivation* dimension attributes the behaviour to selfish needs. *Attribution of blame* constitute an evaluative judgement, involving fault and liability.

This theory of attributions and conflict in close relationships of Fincham and Bradbury (1987, 1992) has been validated by other researchers. Lussier, Sabourin & Wright, (1993) have empirically supported the theoretical concepts of attributions and conflict in close relationships (Fincham & Bradbury 1987), sometimes referred to as the “entailment model”. Using a sample of 206 couples (whereas Fincham & Bradbury, 1987 used 34 couples) this revealed that attribution of causality leads to judgement of responsibility, which in turn determines assignment of blame. The assignment of blame then determines marital adjustment (ie. satisfaction versus dissatisfaction). See Figure 2, showing the path for the attributional dimensions of marital conflict.

From the conceptual analyses and empirical evidence, it appears that marital conflict and attributions result in behavioural and cognitive patterns that are distinct in nature, for maritally satisfied and maritally dissatisfied couples. The entailment theory has guided researchers to standardise constructs and compare findings in particular to the area of attributions in distressed and non-distressed couples.

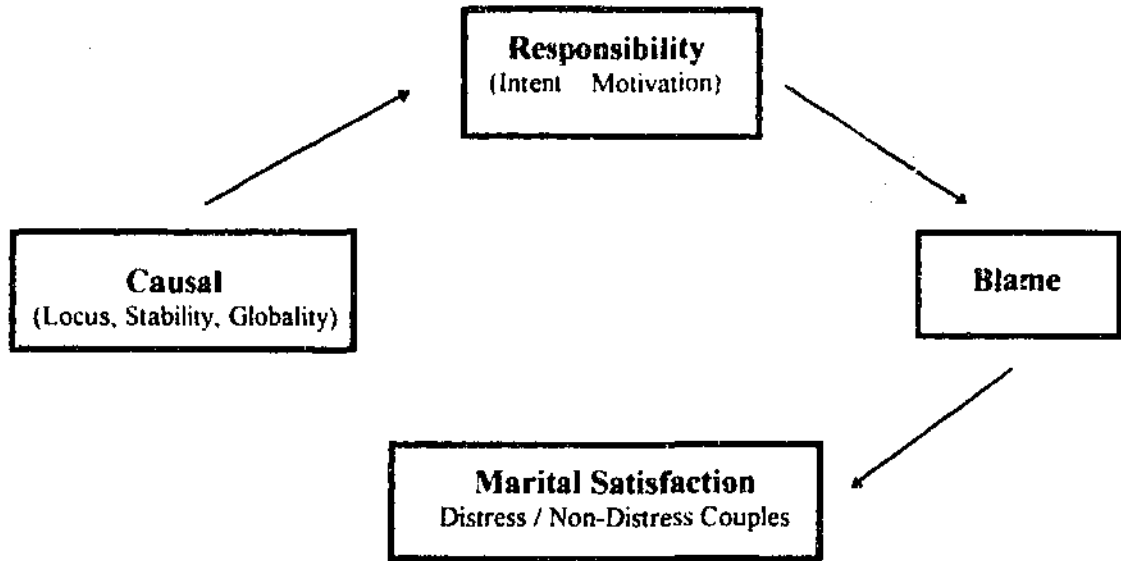


Figure 2.

A diagrammatic representation of Fincham & Bradbury’s “Entailment Model” of Conflict in Close-Relationship. (Developed from Lussier, Sabourin & Wright 1993)

Attributions in Distressed and Non-Distressed Close Relationships

Marital distress has long been known to have detrimental effects on the physical and emotional well-being of spouses (Andrew & Brewin, 1990; Fanslow, 1992) and /or the psychological and developmental aspect of their children (Davis & Cummings, 1994). The research studies have gone beyond behavioural patterns in difficult

relationships and, as already been mentioned, have examined attributions in distressed relationship. Studies have shown an association between attributions and marital satisfaction for both positive and negative events, and differences in styles of attributions between distressed and non-distressed couples (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Fincham, Beach & Baucom 1987; Fincham & O’Leary, 1983; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985)

According to Fincham, Beach and Nelson, (1987) these attributional differences between distressed and non-distressed spouses are consistent with the early work of Kelley and Michela, (1980), who stressed that attributions mediated behaviour. (Refer Figure 3. for the general model of attribution field of Kelley and Michela).

Fincham’s early studies of causal attributions, as discussed in Fincham, Beach and Nelson (1987), were related to self-reported affect following positive behaviour, but no relationship was found between attributions for negative behaviour and affective reaction. Furthermore, causal attributions for behavioural intentions was weak and the results suggested that there was mediation through affect. These early studies, together with the clinical observation of distressed couples in therapy, have led to an increased emphasis on responsibility attributions in marital dysfunction.

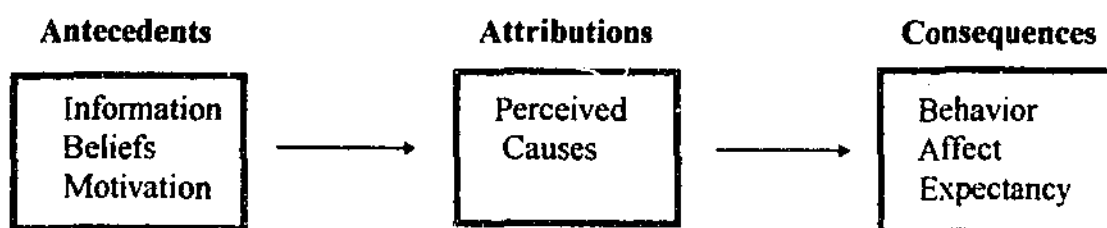


Figure 3. General model of the attribution field (from Kelly & Michela, 1980).

Causal and responsibility attributions for spouse behaviour were examined in couples seeking therapy and compared to a non-distressed community group by Fincham, Beach and Nelson, (1987). The results for the causal attributions were less clear-cut than those for responsibility. The only causal dimension which indicated differences was globality. That is, the distressed spouses were more likely to perceive the causes of negative partner behaviour as non specific to the situation, and as generalizing to other areas of their relationship. Further, the distressed couples considered their own behaviour to have more positive intentions and to be unselfishly motivated. This differed for the non-distressed couples, who were more likely to view *their partner's behaviour* this way (ie. on having positive intentions and unselfishly motivated) and to be more praiseworthy than their own behaviour.

In short, distressed couples have been found to experience a greater frequency of conflict, more negative events and to have more distress-maintaining attributions than happily married couples (Bradbury & Fincham 1990).

Further, longitudinal studies have validated the association between relationship satisfaction or dissatisfaction and attributions for relationship events and have excluded possible confounds due to depression (see Beach, Sandeen, & O'Leary, 1990; Robins, 1988). Fincham and Bradbury, (1993) examined 130 community couples responding to mailed questionnaires within a 12 months period. The initial *attributions* and the degree to which couples made non-amiable attributions for negative partner behaviour predicted lower marital satisfaction levels one year later.

Summary of attributions in distressed and non-distressed close relationships

The empirical data and theories developed to examine attributions of distressed and non distressed couples indicate some consistency of attributional patterns. So far, the studies point to a) the frequency and b)the style of attributions that might accentuate or minimise the effect of spouse behaviour in distressed and non-distressed couples. Given that distressed couples are more likely to make negative causal, responsibility and blame attributions, over time, these couples may be at a high risk of relationship satisfaction deteriorating (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993). Similarly, Patterson (1982) described this pattern as a “coercive” interaction style and as more likely to result in conflict escalation. Howe, (1987) suggests that escalation of marital conflict may involve a developmental process with blame predominating in the relationship and a tendency to “rigidify” (p. 1127) over time.

Relationship Conflict - Escalation to Relationship Violence

Conflict in general is an inevitable part of all human interaction according to Straus (1979). In intimate relationships, a degree of conflict appears functional. According to Gibson (1958, p. 102) “Conflict and love are inseparable, for without conflict one cannot find personal intimacy”. How much conflict is desirable is an important question. (Note: measures of marital conflict use a score of 100 as a cut off to classify individuals as distressed or non-distressed) By avoiding conflict, relationships may become stagnant. Yet high levels of conflict can be very distressing and affect the psychological well-being of a person (as discussed above). Hostility may develop out of frustration or anger leading to attempts to threaten or to hurt the

other through verbal aggression or physical abuse in an effort to resolve the conflict (Straus, 1979).

Walker, (1979), interviewed over 420 battered women and developed the "cycle of violence" theory, describing how family violence/spouse abuse can occur as part of the escalation from marital conflict to marital violence. Figure 5 summarises the cycle of violence.

The cycle consists of three stages: 1) The tension building, which often includes a "stand-over phase", 2) The acute battering incident and 3). Kindness and contrite loving behaviour, which involves remorse and begging for pardon (Walker, 1979).

According to this model, it appears that spouse abuse behaviour is like other habit disorders [For example, alcohol and drug abuse (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992), and sexual abuse (Larsen, Hudson & Ward, 1995)] in that it recurs in a cyclical form.

Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross, (1992), have developed a process of change model referred to as the transtheoretical approach. This model of change, which is used in the area of substance abuse, has some links to the phases of violence, and appears appropriate as a model of change for men who physically abuse.

Unfavourable attributions during the various stages of the cycle of violence may be seen as contributing to the abuse. Challenging cognitive distortions, maybe seen as a way of breaking the cycle. Larsen, Hudson & Ward (1995), evaluating attributional changes in a relapse prevention program for child molesters, made suggestions as to the use of attributional assessment as a measure of progress with regards to motivation for reoffending.

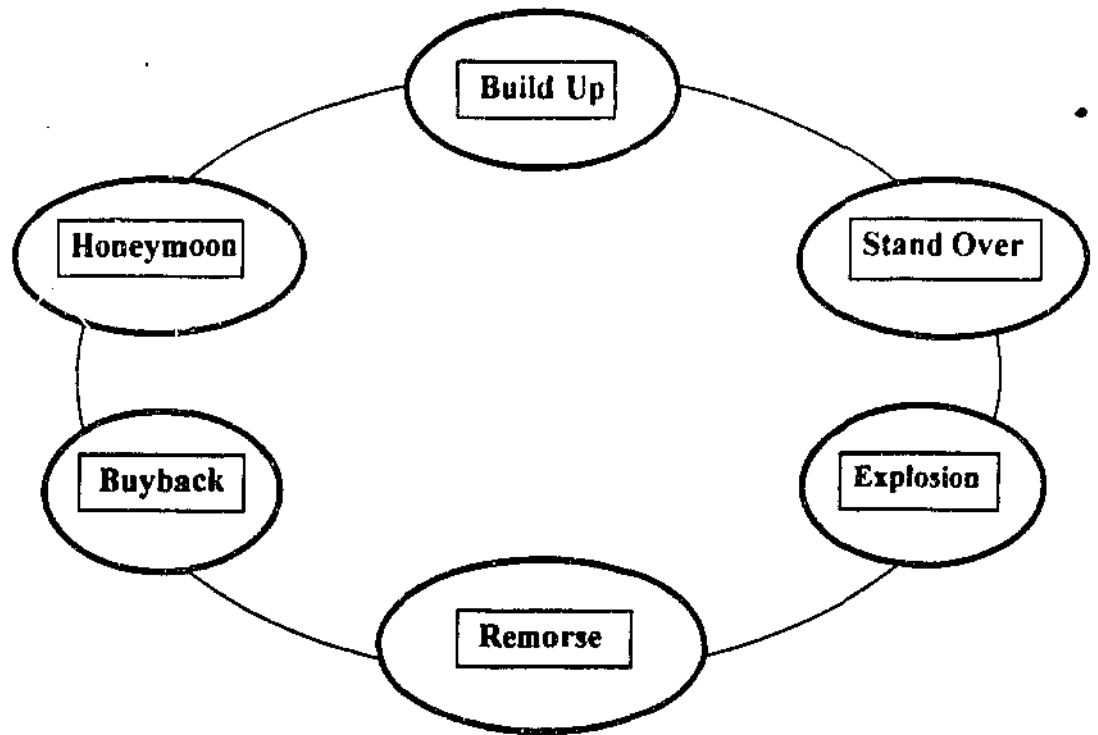


Figure 5. A diagrammatic representation of the “Cycle of Violence” theory (Walker, 1979).

However, an examination of the literature on marital conflict and marital violence reveals one particular study comparing “equalitarian” [ie.same as egalitarian] couples with male and female dominant couples. Coleman & Straus (1990) used data from the 1975 Family Violence Survey by Straus. Of 2,143 couples, (20%) marital conflict was found in equalitarian couples experiencing the lowest rates of violence. Further, even when conflict was present, these couples had the greatest resilience to violence ie. more strategies to resolve conflict before it escalated to violence than male dominant and female dominant types. Although the male dominant (39%) and female dominant relationships (33%) experienced the highest amount of conflict , the

difference was reduced if the couples had reached agreement on that arrangement. Otherwise there was a greater risk of violence than in the equalitarian relationship.

Although this study explains the different ways in which some couples handle conflict without violence, it explains it in terms of unequal power and acceptance. The present research asks *what other factors contribute* to this process of intimate/close relationship *conflict* to relationship *violence*.

The literature on attributions discussed so far has focused on understanding distressed and non distressed couples and marital satisfaction. However, empirical studies in another areas of research have examined attribution in relation to violence and it appears to have some relevance to this area of men who physically abuse their partner.

The Rationale for Linking Attributions and Physical Violence

The Social Information Processing Theory (Dodge, 1981) provides the rationale for linking attributions and men who physically abuse their partners. A number of studies by Dodge and his colleagues have examined the social cognitive *biases* and *deficits* in different subgroups of children. An early study involved 551 students from two public elementary schools and elicited responses to a detective game. This involved three stories describing 3 hostile and 3 benevolent acts and children responded to taped testimonies that either implicated or counter-indicated the involvement of a peer in the incident. The taped testimonies were a way to accumulate evidence in order to decide whether a peer in the story had acted benevolently or with hostility. Dodge, (1981) explored two aspects of cognitive processing (See Figure 3) that might be related to attributional bias: a) speed of decision making (ie. from Step 1. - Step 5.) and b)

selective recall of hostile cues (Step 1). The study found that aggressive boys responded more quickly and with less attention to available social cues than non-aggressive boys. In addition the aggressive boys were more likely to make hostile attributions in situations where it was uncalled for than non-aggressive boys. Selective recall was also related to biased attributions for both groups of boys.

The practical implication of this study as suggested by Dodge, (1981) is that training aggressive boys to respond more slowly and recall all cues non-selectively could lead to fewer biased attributions.

Further examination of social information processes in four groups of 117 socially rejected boys, classified as: reactive aggressive, proactive aggressive, reactive-proactive aggressive and non-aggressive , revealed that only the two groups of reactive aggressive (angry) boys displayed biases and deficits in interpretations of the hypothetical provocation stimuli within video recorded vignettes. No significance was found for proactive aggressive behaviour such as bullying or for instrumental aggression (Dodge & Coie, 1987).

Another evaluation by Dodge et al (1990) of the social information processing theory and violence explored an older population of adolescent boys. These boys, aged 14-19 years old, were from a maximum security prison for juvenile offenders. The “hostile attributional biases” were shown to be related to undersocialized aggressive conduct disorder, reactive-aggressive behaviour and a number of interpersonal violent crimes. In addition, the “hostile attributional bias” was still present when controls were made for race, intelligence and socioeconomic status.

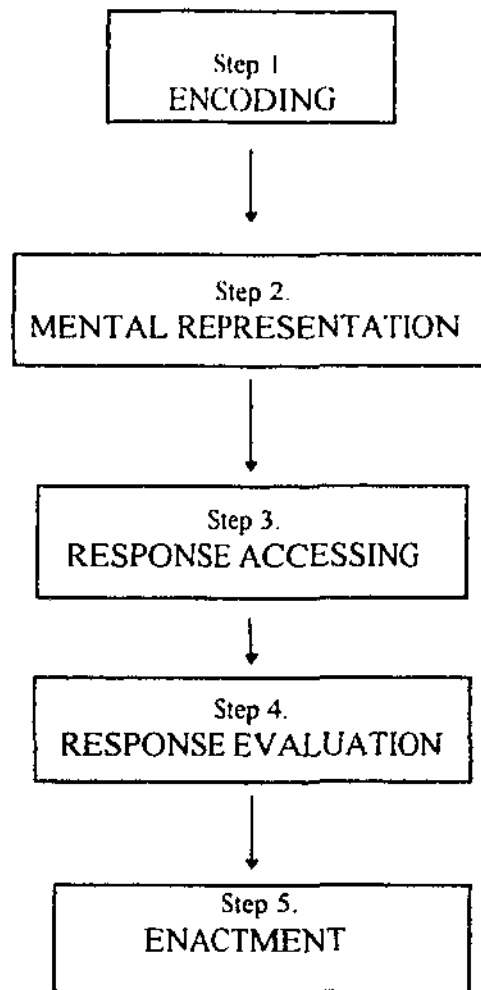


Figure 5. Diagrammatic representation of the sequential nature of processing a single cue⁴ relating to the social-information processing theory. Adapted from Dodge, 1993.

From these studies presented so far, it appears that the social information processing theory explains how young reactive-aggressive, undersocialized, boys are more likely to attribute hostile intent in unwarranted circumstances (ie. with proactive cues) and respond more quickly with aggressive/violent behaviour. This is represented by Figure 3 with the omission of the middle stages of the decision-making process of the model, and the encoding stage.

⁴ Note. The process in reality is not so sequential. The information-processing system is involved with a number of cues at different steps at the one time.(Rumelhar & McClelland, 1986 in Dodge, 1993.)

This theory offers another perspective as to *how*, rather than *why* the attributional styles of physically violent men and non-physically violent men may differ. Only one research study in the area of family violence has examined attributions in relation to hostile attributional biases and men who physically abuse their partner (Holtzworth-Munroe, 1993)

Attributions and Men who Physically Abuse their Partner

Prior to discussing Holtzworth-Munroe's (1993) study, a more detailed discussion of the early research of attributions, will highlight the need for more development in this area. These studies, (Bograd, 1988; Dutton, 1986; Shields & Hanneke, 1983) analysed the attributions offered by the men, for their own violent behaviours. To elicit the attributions, interviews were conducted. The responses were then interpreted and rated by the researcher. Generally the findings were consistent with the husbands not attributing the cause of their violence to themselves. One of the shortfalls of these studies was the limited number of attributional dimensions assessed. Only attributions for locus and blame dimensions were included.

More recently, with the development of theory and more sophisticated self administered measures of attributions, studies have examined 1) attributions offered by spouses for negative non-violent and violent behaviour of self and partners (Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenbach, Fruzzetti 1992); 2) attributions of negative intent to wife behaviour of maritally violent and non-violent men (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993).

One of the first studies to use a standardised questionnaire to compare attributions offered by spouses in violent relationships for violent and non-violent

behaviours was conducted by Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenback and Fruzzetti, (1992). Men were recruited from both Family Therapy Programs (FTP) and the Domestic Violence Programs (DVP). A total of 24 violent husbands participated, 16 and 8 respectively. These two subgroups of men were considered not to be different on demographic variables, marital satisfaction level, and dimensions of violence. The wives of 10 of the men in DVP and 8 from FTP participated. This study included a comprehensive locus construct of: me, partner, relationship, outside circumstances, and other constructs of intentionality, trait- state, [ie. the extent to which a behaviour reflects personality trait or temporary state] globality as well as a measure of attitude towards partner. However the results of this study must be interpreted with caution since the overall MANOVA was found not to be significant. It was predicted that spouses would explain violent and non-violent events in a similar manner, with both husbands and wives demonstrating a “distress-maintaining” attributional pattern .

One of the main shortfalls of this study was the fact that the two subgroups of violent men from the DVP and the FTP were reported as not significantly different on demographic items, but were not compared on the attribution dimensions, before combining the two groups as one.

Finally, the investigation by Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson (1993), using the framework of the social information processing theory, examined the negative intent attributions of maritally violent and non-violent husbands for their wives’ negative behaviours. The study compared three groups of husbands: 22 maritally violent and distressed, 17 non-violent but maritally distressed and 17 non-violent and non-distressed. Two measures of attributions included: 1) The Responsibility Attribution Questionnaire (RAQ) which was adopted from the Relationship Attribution Measure

(RAM; Fincham & Bradbury, 1992) but only the *responsibility* dimensions of intent, motivation and blame were used. 2) The Negative Intention Questionnaire (NIQ) was specifically designed to obtain attributions that maritally violent men might make regarding the wife's possible negative intentions. These included;

“make me angry, hurt my feelings, put me down,”
 “get something for herself, and pick a fight.”

(Holtzworth-Munroe, 1993, p. 208).

This study needs to be acknowledged as being the first to examine attributions offered by violent, distressed and non-distressed husbands for negative wife behaviours. However it has a number of limitations with regards to some aspects of methodology and flaws in the interpretations of the results.

1) The physically violent group was made up of men of whom the “majority” were court referred, indicating that there were some men who were not court referred and possibly self referred, hence making the group non-homogenous. A study by Dutton (1986) in which 75 men were interviewed to examine attributions for their violence, included 25 self-referred and 50 court referred men and found differences in their attributions. The court referred men were more likely to blame partner while the self-referred men blamed themselves. Holtzworth-Munroe, et al's (1993), study only examined the responsibility construct. However, Fincham and Bradbury's entailment model stresses that causality leads to responsibility then to blame. It can be inferred then, that the court referred men are more likely to attribute high responsibility to the partner as well as causality and blame. Combining men from the two referrals into one group and then measuring responsibility attributions appears to confound the study, even when other factors such as their demographics and types and frequency of violence indicated no significant differences.

2). The non-violent, distressed/ non-distressed husbands were recruited differently than the violent distressed husbands for data collection, but more importantly, the violent men completed the total questionnaire in the laboratory session. This included: demographics, the Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT; Locke-Wallace, 1959) (which is another marital satisfaction measure) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) (which reports the frequency of the types of behaviours used in the last 12 months to resolve conflict with partner. Refer to method section.) This questionnaire was completed in the laboratory session *just before* listening to the stimulus events to measure attributions via a narrator on audio recoding. The control group, on the other hand, completed these questionnaires via telephone interview and were *later* asked to the laboratory to complete the attribution measures. The time delay that the two control groups had before responding to the attributions may have had some effect on the results but would be difficult to detect. Further, the effects of responding to the Conflict Tactics Scale first, before the attribution measures, may also influence the responses that followed (Fauikner & Cogan, 1990). Therefore, given the difference in the time delay between the violent and non-violent men and the sequencing of the questionnaire, it may be anticipated that there could be differences in the responses that follow. However, no comments were made on these obvious differences in the study.

3) The two measures RAQ and the NIQ appear to be measuring the same construct in both scales. For example we find in the RAQ's "wife had acted with selfish motivation" and in the NIQ "get something for herself". Correlations between the two measures are reported to be $r = .71$. Comparing the results of the two scales used produced inconsistencies and made interpretation of the study inconclusive.

4) The marital satisfaction levels were different between the three groups with $F(2, 53) = 32.05, p < .001$. See Table 1. with details of the means scores for the three groups for marital satisfaction, RAQ and NIQ. Attention must be drawn to the violent group's mean marital satisfaction score, since it is higher than the distressed non-violent group. No comment was made for this mean score and no standard deviations were provided to gain some understanding of the variance in this particular group for marital satisfaction. Further examination established that the distressed groups did not differ significantly from each other on marital satisfaction, but both groups differed from the non-distressed group.

Interestingly, the results on attributions using the RAQ that is from the marital conflict area, found significant differences between violent distressed and non-violent non-distressed groups and no difference in attributions between the non-violent distressed and non-violent non-distressed. The findings are inconsistent with the marital distress research. These results may have been due to the average score being used, providing a limited range (1-6) for the total scores for RAQ, and NIQ. See Table 1. for composite attribution scores and for a more detailed account of the results.

The findings on the NIQ revealed significant differences between groups, and more specifically the violent distressed group was different to both the distressed and non-distressed non-violent group. The non-violent groups did not differ from each other on the negative intent attributions towards their wife, but were reported to differ on marital satisfaction.

Table 1.

Summary of Mean Scores for Marital Satisfaction and Attributions of the Three Groups⁵ of Men (Adapted from Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993)

	Violent Distressed <i>n</i> = 22	Non-Violent Distressed <i>n</i> = 17	Non-Violent Non-Distressed <i>n</i> = 17
Marital Satisfaction	71.95	60.41	120.59
RAQ	3.87	3.37	3.21
NIQ	3.60	2.90	2.67

RAQ = Responsibility Attribution Questionnaire range 1-6.
 NIQ = Negative Intent Questionnaire range 1-6.

Although this study is the first to explore attributions of violent distressed and non-distressed husbands for negative wife behaviour, and used stimulus events reported to elicit attributions unique to violent husbands, the study requires a cautious interpretation due to a number of shortcomings as well as results inconsistent with previous research.

Rationale

Since the conceptual framework of Fincham and Bradbury’s Entailment Model of marital conflict has been investigated, and findings of the empirical research have been consistent with specific attributional styles for distressed and non-distressed couples, it seemed appropriate to *extend* this research and theory to the area of relationship violence and examine the attributions of men for their partners’ negative behaviour. Rather than examining and extending the attributions that men make for their own physical violent behaviour towards their partner, it was decided to examine

⁵ Note. No total means for NIO and RAQ were provided on Table 1. by Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993.

attributions of negative partner behaviour in order to obtain a better understanding of the process of conflict escalation to violence.

Furthermore, the studies using the Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) linking hostile attributional biases and violence suggest the valuable contribution of examining the attributions made by physically violent men for their partners' negative behaviours.

In light of these two theories, the empirical research that has supported them and more specifically the research examining the negative intent to wife behaviour by Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, (1993), it appears that men who physically abuse their partner may have a distinct pattern of attributions. However, limited research has been conducted and as already discussed, existing studies have a number of methodological flaws. In addition, the dimensions examined so far have been limited to either causality or responsibility.

No study has yet examined the specific dimensions of both causality and responsibility offered by Fincham and Bradbury (1987 & 1992) including locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame. The Relationship Attribution Measure which has been developed by Fincham and Bradbury (1987,1992) to elicit attributions in couples with marital conflict has not been reported to have been extended to the area of physically violent men.

Hence, given that attributions of causality, responsibility and blame represent fundamental concepts in Fincham & Bradbury's models in the explanation of marital distress (Lussier, Sabourin & Wright, 1993), it appears that these concepts may give rise to an understanding of how some men use physical violence in close relationship to resolve conflicts while other men refrain from using physical violence.

Moreover by examining the specific dimensions of these core concepts of causality and responsibility, a consistent attributional style/pattern may be associated with men who physically abuse their partner.

The Present Study

The present research was designed to extend Fincham and Bradbury's "Entailment model" (1987, 1992) of marital conflict to the domain of physical violence to female partners. The purpose of the study was to investigate the attributions of physically violent and non-physically violent men and it was expected that differences between the groups would support the model.

A cross-sectional design study was used to test the research hypotheses, using a self report inventory. Men were classified as physically violent and non physically violent as the independent variable and the effects observed on the specific attributions of causality and responsibility. These included the six dimensions of; locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame as the dependent variables.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1. (General) Physically violent men will make more *unfavourable (distress maintaining)* attributions of their partners' negative behaviour than will non-physically violent men.

More particularly: *Hypothesis 2.* Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute partners' negative behaviour to characteristics of their partner rather than to the situation (locus).

Hypothesis 3. Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute their partners' negative behaviour to factors which do not change (stability).

Hypothesis 4. Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute their partners' negative behaviour to general rather than specific causes (globality).

Hypothesis 5. Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute their partners' negative behaviour as intentional rather than unintentional.

Hypothesis 6. Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute their partners' negative behaviour as selfishly motivated.

Hypothesis 7. Physically violent men will be more likely to attribute their partners' negative behaviour as blameworthy.

Hypothesis 8. Physically violent men will still differ on attributions made for their partners' negative behaviour when marital satisfaction (distress) is controlled for as a covariate.

METHOD

Participants

Eighty four male participants, mainly recruited from service providers and the community in the Perth metropolitan area of Western Australia, volunteered to be part of the study. Over 50 counsellors in organisations providing for men's groups around Australia's capital cities were approached for this survey by telephone and/or fax. The three groups studied comprised a physically violent (Group 1) and two non-physically violent groups- men in counselling (Group 2) and men in the community (Group 3).

For men to qualify for the study, the criteria included: commencing a Domestic Violence Intervention Program - Group 1, commencing counselling - Group 2, no counselling - Group 3. In addition, all participants had to be over the age of 18 years, have an education equivalent to year eight high school, to be or have been in a heterosexual relationship married/defacto or living together for at least 12 months, have no serious psychiatric disorders reported or apparent, and no serious learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities that are evident or reported.

Physically violent group Nineteen physically violent men who qualified for the Domestic Violence Intervention Program and were classified as physically violent by the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) participated in the study.

Non physically violent groups Two groups of non physically violent men were recruited 1) A purposive group of 22 men voluntarily participated. These men were seeking counselling for the first time and fulfilled the above criteria for the study. This group was used as a control group of non-physically violent men. Five of the men were classified as violent using the CTS and were deleted from the study. Further, to control

for the relationship distress factor in the study, it was considered appropriate to have other control group of men. 2) A second group of non physically violent men recruited from the community who were not seeking therapy and fulfilled the criteria were asked to volunteer in the study. Of the 40 men who were asked, 36 responded by mail, making a response rate for this group of 90 % (Note a response rate for the men in the DVIP and the counselling groups was not available). However, five men from the counselling group were also deleted from study, since they were classified as violent, using the CTS.

Appendix A shows the demographic means for age, education, ethnicity, income, in/out of a relationship, separation time, length of the relationship and alcohol/drug problem for the three groups of men.

Overall, the demographic characteristics of the three groups of men differed. This was confirmed by the Kruskal Wallis test (Appendix B). The extent to which the demographics differences affected the attributions was further investigated using correlational analyses. No significant correlations were found between the six attributional dimensions -(dependent variables) -locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame and the demographic characteristics.

Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire was used in this study to survey men attending a Domestic Violence Intervention Program (Group 1) or counselling (Group 2) for the first time. Towards the end of the first interview, counsellors asked men who met the criteria above if they would like to participate in the research study (Refer to Figure 6. showing a flow chart of the procedure. Those clients that volunteered to participate in the study were asked to read, date and sign the consent form. A copy of the

consent letter and questionnaire is included in Appendix C. Counsellors also signed and dated the consent form. These signatures were then stapled into clients, files, which were locked in a filing cabinet for confidentiality and anonymity. Only the counsellor knew the identity of the participants. Participants were reassured of confidentiality and anonymity at all times. They were informed that the information gathered would be part of the research study and not part of their on going program or counselling.

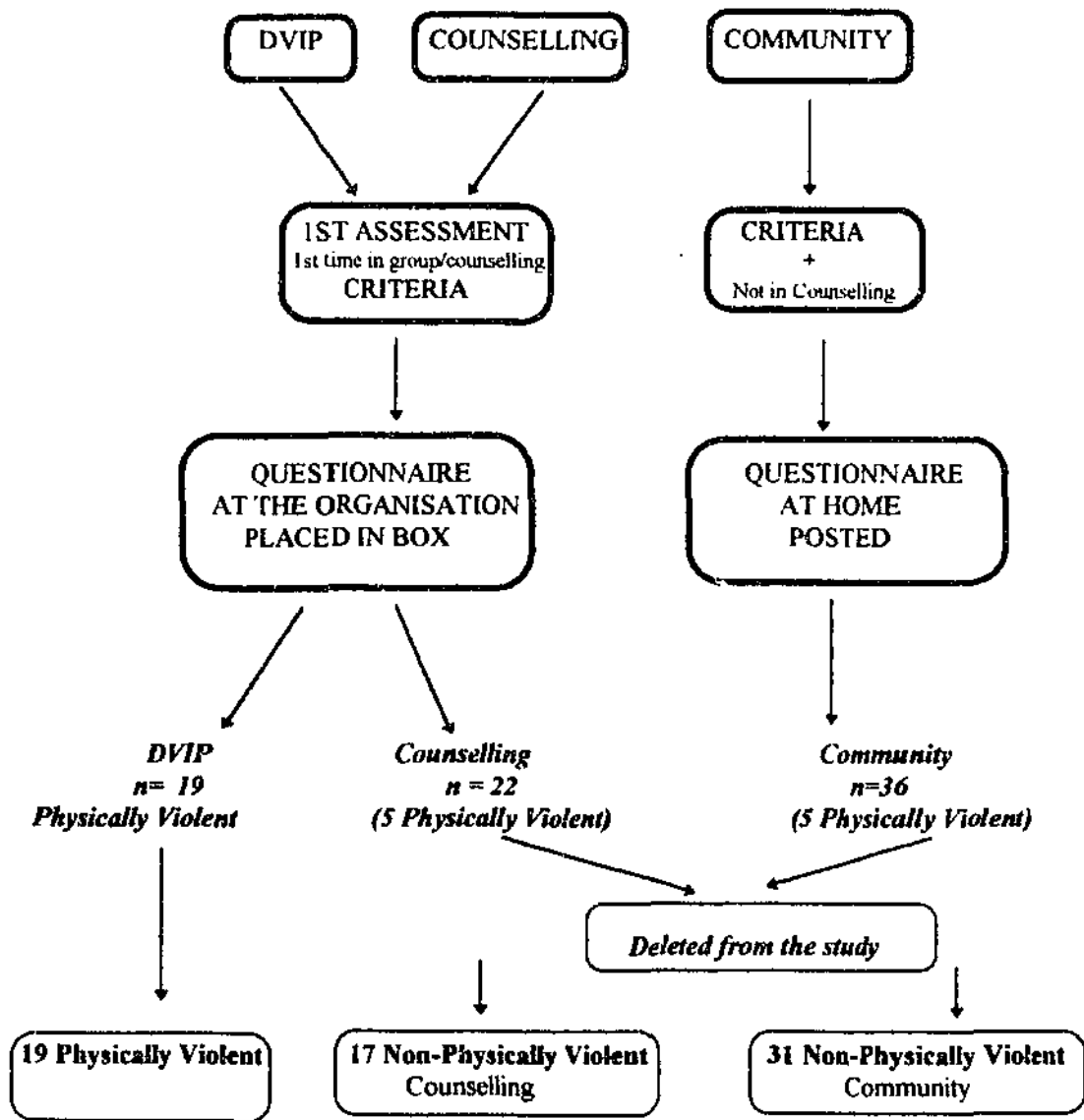


Figure 6. Flow Chart of the Procedure.

The questionnaires were given to participants after the first interview. They were completed by the client without the presence of the counsellor and without discussion with partner/friend and then placed in an envelope provided and deposited in a sealed box at the organisation, for collection by the researcher. For the men in the community group the researcher approached male acquaintances who were not seeking therapy/counselling, and who met all of the criteria. They were informed as per the consent letter in the DVIP and counselling groups. Those that volunteered to participate in the study were instructed to answer the questionnaire without discussion (eg. with partner) and given a stamped addressed envelope to be posted immediately after completion. Men who were in the counselling or the community group and reported any physical violent behaviours on the CTS (ie Items K to S), were deleted from the study

The Questionnaire used in the study comprised 4 parts: 1) The Relationship Attribution Measure, 2) A Marital Satisfaction rating, 3) The Conflict Tactics Scale and 4) Demographics questions.

Material

The *Relationship Attribution Measure* (RAM; Fincham & Bradbury, 1992), was used to measure the dependent variables. A copy of the inventory is included in Appendix C. It consists of 8 hypothetical negative partner behaviours (eg. "your spouse criticises something you say"). Negative events were used since they have been found to be more strongly and consistently correlated to marital satisfaction than are attributions for positive events. These behaviours were adapted from the Spouse Observation Checklist (Weiss & Perry cited in Fincham & Bradbury, 1992) on the basis of being common enough to allow participants to imagine them occurring in their relationship. Two positive partner behaviours are used as filler items. Participants are

instructed to *imagine* that the behaviour has just occurred in the relationship. The negative event is followed by six questions tapping the six attribution dimensions of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame and counterbalanced for each event. On a 6-point scale, participants made a rating ranging from disagree strongly to agree strongly, coded from 1-6. The possible score for each dimension ranges from 8 - 48. The high scores indicate attributions are due to the trait of the partner, unchangeable, global, intentional, selfishly motivated and blameworthy. The lower scores of attributions are due to the situation, changeable, specific, unintentional, unselfish and praiseworthy. Further operation of causal attribution can be measured by the addition of the three dimensions : locus, stability, and globality . Similarly, the responsibility attribution. can be measured with the addition of intent motivation and blame dimensions. Reliability was established by Fincham & Bradbury (1992). These authors reported high internal consistency and demonstrated adequate test-retest reliability over three weeks. The reliability alphas' range from .75-.90 for all subscales. To test the validity of the scale, Fincham & Bradbury conducted three studies which showed causal and responsibility attributions scores correlated with a) marital satisfaction; b) attributions for marital difficulties and c) attributions for real partner behaviours reported by spouses. Responsibility attributions were related to a) reported anger to stimulus behaviour, and b) displayed anger by wives during a problem-solving interaction with their partners.

Marital Satisfaction (Distress) Measure Participants were asked to make a rating using Likert type scale (1-10), 1 = Very Dissatisfied and 10 = Very Satisfied. "Considering all areas of your relationship in general, how satisfied are you/ were you

in your relationship" (See Appendix C. Question 61). This measure was used as a covariate in one of the subsequent analyses.

Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Form R; Strauss, 1979) This scale was chosen as one of the measures to define the independent variable - physically violent versus non-physically violent men. The Form R was a revised version of Form N and was used in the 1985 National Survey. The CTS scale is still the most widely used inventory of intrafamily conflict and violence. It consists of an 19-item self-report scale, of behaviours that might be used to resolve conflict. (See Appendix C) Factor analysis of the CTS suggested three factors: 1) non-violent- reasoning (eg. "discussing the issue calmly") 2) verbal aggression (eg. "Yelling insult") and 3) violent (eg. " used knife or gun") (Straus, 1979). The Alpha coefficient of reliability for *physical violence* of husband to wife was 0.83, *verbal aggression* .80 and *reasoning* .50 (Straus 1979). The difference is largely a function of the number of items in the subscales. The reasoning and verbal aggressions scales were not used in the present study.

Three other studies have replicated the factors underlying the CTS items of marital violence and, although there are some differences, all found factor structures similar to the three originally postulated. Jorgensen,(1977) and Barling et al (1987) found three factors, reporting alpha reliability coefficients for reasoning of .50, verbal aggression .62 and physical aggression .88. Hornung et al (1981) obtained 4 factors similar to those found in the above studies, including a separate factor for life-threatening violence (the threat or use of a weapon). However, due to the low incidence of such severe behaviours, another subscale was not warranted for the present study.

Participants responding to the CTS indicated on a Likert Scale the behaviours engaged in during the last year⁶ towards their partners' - 0 = never, 1 = once that year, 2 = twice, 3 = 3-5 times, 4 = 6-10 times, 5 = 11-12 times, 6 = more than 20 times. Participants who scored Items K to S were classified into the physically violent group. The CTS items can be weighted in accordance with the frequencies indicated by respondents. ie. substitute for the scale 0 - 6, with 0, 1, 2, 4, 8, 15, and 25. This was not required for this study.

Concurrent validity of the CTS has been reported in a study by Bulcroft & Straus (1975) (cited in Straus, 1979) in which students in sociology courses responded to items on the CTS indicating how often during that year had their father and mother had done each of the items. Further, parents were mailed separate questionnaires to assess their responses to items on the CTS. The results indicated low correlation between students and parents for the Reasoning scale and high correlations for the Verbal and Violent scales.

A number of other studies have assessed construct validity for the CTS. One study found consistent responses between the use of the CTS and responses to the catharsis theory of aggression-control (Straus, 1974a cited in Straus, 1979). High rates of socially undesirable behaviours both verbal and physically aggressive with previous in-depth interview studies have also correlated with responses on the CTS (Gelles, 1974 cited in Straus 1979) Further studies have examined correlations between socioeconomic status and violence, within different sample groups and found consistent results (Straus, 1979).

⁶ Note: One year was used as a referent period for marital violence since a rate approximately 16% during a one-year period is relatively low. According to (Straus & Gelles, 1995) the distribution is so skewed that if a shorter period was used it would be more of a problem than recall errors.

These examples of concurrent studies also give an indication of the wide use of the CTS. It is worth noting that since the first use of the CTS, now more than two decades ago, over 200 papers and five books have been published (Straus 1995).

However, although the CTS has been widely used, it has not been without strong criticism (Browning and Dutton 1986; Dobash, Dobash Wilson & Daly, (1992) because it shows "sexual symmetry in marital violence" (Dobash et al 1992, p.71) CTS surveys have shown that men suffer violence as frequently as women in relationships. However, these findings do not correlate with responses and reported incidences from police records and hospitalisation of violence. Another criticism of the CTS is that the scale lacks "context" in which the violence occurred, thus "focuses on the acts and ignores the motivation, intention or interpretation" (Dobash et al 1992, p.76) of the physical violence. For the purpose of this study, context is not important, since the CTS is used as a classification of the acts used in resolving conflict on the part of the husbands.

Another issue in using the CTS is the socially undesirable nature of reporting acts of violence. However, Resick & Reese (1986) examined violent and non-violent couples identified by the CTS and correlated scores with the Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability scale. The results of the study found asymmetry in power within the relationships, with violent couples, responding to high conflict, lack of organisation as well as lack of sharing pleasurable activities. Yet another study by Saunders and Hanusa (1986) highly recommended a method of adjusting scores on self-report measures to remove the social desirability bias. Saunders et al measured anger, depression, attitudes about women, and jealousy in 92 men who battered and over half of them admitting to severe forms of physical violence on the CTS. Social desirability

adjustment was recommended, especially when behaviour measures based on the partner's report were not available. In the present study, a social desirability measure was considered, but was not included because of the need for brevity.

However, despite all its limitations and criticisms, Aldarondo & Straus, (1994) highly recommend the CTS as a tool for counsellors to identify physical violence, in marriage and family therapy, which would otherwise go undetected. Occasional instances of pushing or shoving for example may be trivialised or tolerable and may not be considered important enough to bring up in therapy. It is acknowledged that the CTS is a self report scale and brings with it the limitation that self report scales have in general.

RESULTS

This chapter reports on the data screening and analysis of the responses that participants made on the questionnaire, in order to test the hypotheses. The hypotheses are that physically violent men will make more *unfavourable (distress maintaining)* attributions about their partners' negative behaviour than will non-physically violent men on the six attributional dimensions of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation, blame. In addition, it was predicted that there will be a significant difference between physically violent and non-physically violent (counselling and community) men when marital satisfaction is taken into account and controlled for as a covariate.

The Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows was used for all data screening and data analysis procedures. (See separate file for computer printouts of data screening, statistical analysis and microfloppy disk with a copy of the data)

Data Preparation

Some participants who either refused to answer questions, or accidentally omitted to respond, were problematic for the analysis especially in two cases. Missing values on the Conflict Tactics Scale made it impossible to classify these participants as physically violent or non-physically violent. On one of these questionnaires, the respondent, a 50 year old man who had been married for 2 years, noted "No major disagreements to this stage" and did not complete any questions on the Conflict Tactics Scale. Four other participants left large numbers of questions unanswered on the RAM scale, while one was found to be suffering from with manic depression. These seven participants of a total of 84 were deleted from the study. Other random missing data

omitted from the RAM scale and the Marital Satisfaction Question were replaced with the mean for the item of the group in which the participants had been recruited (Tabachnick & Fidell 1989) A total of 20 items were replaced in all three cells.

The Reliability of the Relationship Attribution Measure

The research using the Relationship Attribution Measure (RAM; Fincham & Bradbury, 1992) is limited because it is a relatively new scale. Furthermore, no studies have been documented using the scale with all the hypothetical stimulus events to examine and compare physically violent and non-physically violent men in counselling and community. Hence it was considered appropriate to analyse the scale to obtain estimates of the internal consistency reliability and check the generalisability of the original coefficient.

The Cronbach's alpha for the 60 item scale using 8 negative and two positive hypothetical stimulus events was $\alpha = .96$. The specific attribution indices were also highly reliable with alpha - locus = .87, stability = .89, globality = .88, intent = .88, motivation = .94 and blame = .85).

Data Screening

Data were screened to evaluate the assumptions for conducting a MANOVA and MANCOVA. Firstly the one-way MANOVA (Physically Violent and Two Non-Physically Violent Groups) was conducted to test the hypotheses on six dependent variables; locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame. Secondly a one-way MANCOVA followed, to controll for marital satisfaction for the men in the three groups on the six dimensions.

Four univariate within-cell outliers were shown on the stem and leaf plots (not the z-scores) in the community group, three for the dependent variable stability and one

for intent. A fifth extreme score was found in the counselling group on the dependent variable blame. All were modified by recoding the scores to one unit smaller or larger than the next most extreme score (Tabachnick & Fidell 1989). Normality was still violated with respect to the stability measure after adjustment to the extreme scores in counselling and community cells. Shapiro-Wilk's statistics indicated $W = .030$ and $W = .045$ respectively. Normality was also violated for the dimension-intent in the community group, Shapiro-Wilks was $W = .041$. However after modifying the extreme score in the cell, normality was within acceptable range.

No multivariate outliers were revealed using a Mahalanobis distance values at $\alpha = .001$, or at $\alpha = .025$. Scatterplots showed acceptable linearity. However there was indication of high multicollinearity in Cell 2 (physically violent group) on motivation with locus (.911) and stability (.907); as well as blame with stability (.902). Table 2. summarises the correlation matrices of the three cells.

Assumptions of homogeneity of variance of the univariates were violated for stability, intent, and motivation, while the other dependent variables were acceptable. The multivariate Box's M tests for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was satisfactory ($\alpha = .01$).

The mean scores and standard deviations of the dependent variables are summarised in Tables 3. The physically violent men obtained the highest scores on all attributional dimensions and the non-physically violent community had the lowest scores overall.

Table 2.

Correlation Matrices for the Three Groups: a) Physically Violent b) Non-Physically Violent (Counselling) and c) Non-Physically Violent (Community) with Standard Deviations on the Diagonals.

a)

<u>Physically Violent</u>						
Attribution dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Locus	9.36					
2. Stability	.83	10.85				
3. Globality	.87	.85	10.32			
4. Intent	.75	.83	.81	10.60		
5. Motivation	.91	.91	.87	.88	12.28	
6. Blame	.76	.90	.76	.73	.86	8.45

b)

<u>Non-Physically Violent (Counselling)</u>						
Attribution dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Locus	6.91					
2. Stability	.73	7.82				
3. Globality	.39	.11	7.61			
4. Intent	.42	.40	.74	6.87		
5. Motivation	.52	.44	.71	.76	8.17	
6. Blame	-.001	.19	.47	.55	.56	6.48

c)

<u>Non-Physically Violent (Community)</u>						
Attribution dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Locus	7.01					
2. Stability	.38	6.27				
3. Globality	.21	.45	7.19			
4. Intent	.35	.58	.56	5.50		
5. Motivation	.51	.60	.62	.81	6.13	
6. Blame	.57	.51	.36	.57	.73	6.82

MANOVA Analyses

A cross-sectional design, using a one-way between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance was performed on six dependent variables: locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame. The independent variable was the classification into physically violent and non-physically violent (counselling and community) groups.

Given that a number of statistical assumptions of the MANOVA were violated, the Pillai's criterion was used. It is considered to be the most appropriate statistic, because it is robust to violations of assumptions and still has acceptable power (Bray & Maxwell, 1985). The three groups, physically violent and non-physically violent (counselling & community) were found overall to be significantly different on the combined dependent variables using Pillai's criterion, $F(12, 120) = 0.385, p < .01$.

These results reflected a moderate association between the classification of men in the three groups and the combined dependent variables, $\eta^2 = .19$. That is 19% of the variance in the best linear combination of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame was accounted for by classification (physical violence and non-physical violence). Individual effects for each of the dependent variables are: η^2 -locus = 12 %, stability = 17%, globality = 17%, intent = 31%, motivation = 24%, and blame = 27%.

A summary of the univariate results of physically violent/non-physically violent men on the six dependent variables is shown in Table 4 using a Bonferroni-type adjustment ($\alpha = .008$). This is recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (1989) to control for the increase Type 1 error due to multiple testing.

⁷ Note a number of analyses were performed with $n = 25$ and $n = 17$ to reach an acceptable ratio of 1 : 1.5, and equalise the groups. This was achieved by random deletion of cases in the community group. All analyses were found to be significant on the multivariate analyses of variance using Pillias criterion. Hence it was decided to retain all the cases for the main study.

Table 3.

Mean Attribution Scores, Standard Deviations and Univariate Effects for Physically Violent and Non-Physically Violent Men (Counselling and Community) for Negative Partner Behaviour.

<i>DV</i> Attribution	CLASSIFICATION									
	<i>Physically Violent</i> DVIP			<i>Non-Phys Violent</i> Counselling			<i>Non-Phys Violent</i> Community			<i>Univariate</i> <i>F</i> (2, 64)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>(n)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>(n)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>(n)</i>	
Causal										
Locus	33.42	9.36	(19)	27.41	6.91	(17)	27.06	7.01	(31)	4.40*
Stability	30.50	10.85	(19)	22.19	7.82	(17)	22.45	6.27	(31)	6.75**
Globality	34.42	10.32	(19)	28.42	7.61	(17)	25.64	7.19	(31)	6.62**
Total	98.35	28.95	(57)	78.03	17.31	(51)	75.26	15.66	(93)	7.91**
Responsibility-Blame										
Intent	31.78	10.60	(19)	23.25	6.87	(17)	20.00	5.49	(31)	14.38***
Motivation	29.68	12.28	(19)	20.65	8.17	(17)	18.41	6.13	(31)	10.08***
Blame	29.68	8.45	(19)	22.37	6.48	(17)	19.58	6.82	(31)	11.61***
Total	91.16	29.53	(57)	66.93	19.62	(51)	58.39	17.38	(93)	13.29***

Significance level **p* < .05. ***p* < .008 Bonferroni Adjustment. ****p* = .000

Post Hoc comparisons were conducted among the three cell means, (refer to Table 3) using Tukey’s HSD. These revealed that the means between the counselling and community (Non-Physically Violent) groups were not significantly different on all the six attributional dimensions of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame. However, significant differences were found between the physically violent and the counselling group as well as the physically violent and the community group. The physically violent and the counselling group differed on the attributional dimensions made towards their partner’s negative behaviour on stability, intent, motivation and

blame but not globality. That is, the mean scores revealed higher unfavourable attributions in the physically violent group, refer to the Table 3. Further significant differences were indicated between physically violent and community on all the dependent variables excluding locus. Summary of post hoc comparisons are shown in Table 4. (Note that the locus dimension was not included because the univariate anova did not reach the Bonferroni adjusted alpha.)

Table 4.

Summary of Post hoc Comparisons Between the Three Groups - Physically Violent (PV), Non-Physically Violent (NPV) Counselling and Non-Physically Violent (NPV) Community

CLASSIFICATION			
DV	<i>PV vs NPV (Counselling)</i>	<i>PV vs NPV (Community)</i>	<i>NPV Counselling vs NPV Community</i>
Locus	-	-	-
Stability	*	*	ns
Globality		*	ns
Intent	*	*	ns
Motivation	*	*	ns
Blame	*	*	ns

** Indicates significant post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD*

MANCOVA Analyses

Given the empirical evidence of the association between attributions and marital satisfaction, there was concern for the independence of marital satisfaction and physical violence. Hence marital satisfaction was controlled for by using it as a covariate.

Marital satisfaction means and standard deviations for the three groups were: physically violent $M = 4.44, SD = 3.14$; non-physically violent (counselling) $M = 6.81, SD = 2.13$; and non-physically violent (community) $M = 8.22, SD = 1.43$. $F(2, 67) = 17.26, p = .000$. Post hoc Tukey-HSD tests showed a significant difference on marital

satisfaction between the physically violent and non-physically violent counselling, as well as between the physically violent and non-physically violent community. There was no significant difference on marital satisfaction between the non-violent groups, counselling and community.

Finally to test Hypothesis 8, that the physically violent men will make more distress maintaining attributions than non-physically violent men after controlling for marital satisfaction, a MANCOVA was performed. Homogeneity of regression for the relationship between the dependent variables and the covariate- marital satisfaction, were satisfactory. The adjusted within cell correlations are shown in Table 5. and are also satisfactory.

Table 5.

Adjusted Within-Cell Correlations with Standard Deviations on the Diagonal.

Attribution dimension	1. Locus	2. Stability	3. Globality	4. Intent	5. Motivation	6. Blame
1. Locus	7.50					
2. Stability	.62	7.52				
3. Globality	.47	.47	7.63			
4. Intent	.49	.59	.65	6.70		
5. Motivation	.66	.66	.71	.79	7.96	
6. Blame	.47	.53	.45	.54	.69	6.65.

The omnibus MANOVA using the Pillias criterion to identify differences between the three groups without the covariate was significant $F(6, 58) = .268, p = .005$. The covariate had a significant effect on each of the dependent variables.

See Table 6. for a summary of the univariate results. The MANCOVA using marital satisfaction as a covariate showed there was no difference between the physically

violent and non-physically violent counselling and community $F(12,118) = .15332, p >.1$ All the univariate tests also indicated no significance.

The covariate-marital satisfaction reflected *high association* of the combined (attributional dimensions) dependent variables, $\eta^2 = .27$. That is 27% of the variance of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame was accounted for by marital satisfaction (distress). On the other hand, the multivariate effect size for classification was $\eta^2 = .08$. That is only 8% of the variance, when marital satisfaction was used as a covariate. Table 6. includes a summary of the effect size (η^2) for marital satisfaction and classification for the MANCOVA analysis on each of the dependent variables.

Table 6.

Summary of the Univariate Effects of the Covariate-Marital Satisfaction and Classification, including η^2 for the Six Attributional Dimensions.

Effect	DV	Univariate		
		F	df	η^2
Covariate (MS)				.27
	Locus	5.38*	1/63	
	Stability	12.64**	1/63	
	Globality	12.49**	1/63	
	Intent	19.07**	1/63	
	Motivation	14.46**	1/63	
	Blame	12.89**	1/63	
Classification				.08
	Locus	.94	2/63	.03
	Stability	1.57	2/63	.05
	Globality	.62	2/63	.02
	Intent	2.8	2/63	.08
	Motivation	1.78	2/63	.05
	Blame	2.31	2/63	.07

Significance level * $p < .05$. ** $p < .008$. Bonferroni adjusted alpha. *** $p < .001$

A summary of the observed and adjusted mean scores are reported in Table 7. The scores are also plotted on Figure 7. for locus and Figure 8. for stability. Figures for globality, intent, motivation and blame are included in Appendix D.

Table 7.

The Observed and Adjusted Mean Scores of the Six Attribution Dimensions for the Covariate Marital Satisfaction on the Three Groups of Men.

<i>DV</i> Attributions	CLASSIFICATION								
	<i>Physically Violent</i> DVIP <i>n = 19</i>			<i>Non-Phys Violent</i> Counselling <i>n = 17</i>			<i>Non-Phys Violent</i> Community <i>n = 31</i>		
	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>
	Observed	Adjusted		Observed	Adjusted		Observed	Adjusted	
Locus	33.42	31.40	9.35	27.41	27.72	6.91	27.06	28.77	7.08
Stability	30.50	27.40	10.84	22.19	22.68	7.82	22.45	25.07	6.27
Globality	34.42	31.29	10.31	28.42	28.91	7.61	25.64	28.29	7.19
Intent	31.78	28.40	10.60	23.25	23.78	6.87	20.00	22.87	5.49
Motivation	29.68	26.17	12.27	20.65	21.20	8.17	18.41	21.38	6.13
Blame	29.68	26.92	8.44	22.37	22.80	6.48	19.58	21.92	6.82

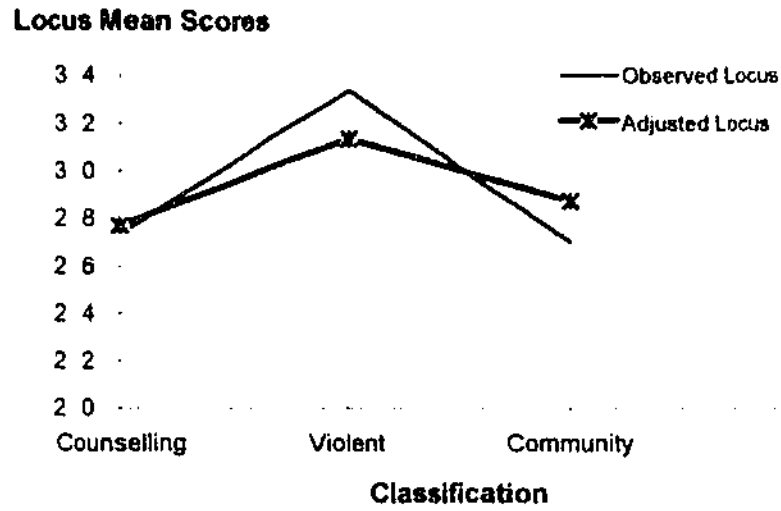


Figure 7. Locus means (observe and adjusted) for the covariate marital satisfaction

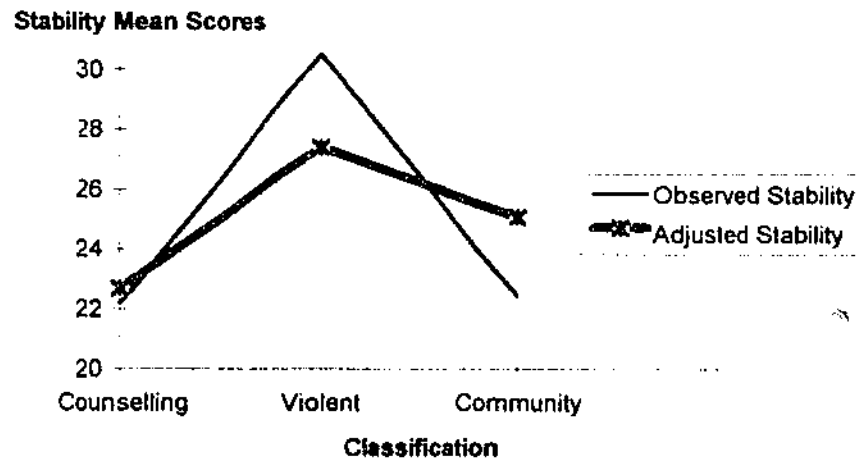


Figure 8. Stability means (observed and adjusted) for the covariate marital satisfaction

DISCUSSION

Attributions of causality, responsibility and blame have formed the fundamental framework for research into maritally distressed couples. In addition, the entailment model of Fincham and Bradbury, (1987,1992) has been systematically validated and supports previous researchers' prediction that attributions of causality lead to attributions of responsibility, which, in turn, determine the allocation of blame (Lussier, Sabourin, & Wright, 1993). The present study is the first to investigate specific attributions of causality and responsibility, including locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame in men who physically abuse their partners.

The author hypothesised, firstly, that physically violent men would make more *unfavourable, (distress maintaining)* attributions towards their female partners' negative behaviour than non-physically violent men. It was anticipated that significant differences on attribution dimensions of locus, stability, globality, intent, motivation and blame to negative partner behaviours would result.

Hypothesis 1. The data *did* support an overall difference in the attributions made by the three groups of men, physically violent, non-physically violent - (counselling) and non-physically violent - (community) for their partners' negative behaviour. Further investigation revealed that the physically violent men differed from both the non-physically violent counselling and community groups on particular attributions, supporting the findings from the marital conflict research (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). However, there were no differences found between the counselling and community groups in their attributions. The mean scores for these two groups indicated that the

counselling group obtained higher scores than the community, but not to a statistical significant level.

Hypothesis 2., that physically violent men would be more likely to attribute negative partners' behaviour to the traits of the partner rather than situation was not supported by the data (*locus*). Three possible explanations may account for this finding. Firstly, the wording on the inventory may have been ambivalent. Men gave unsolicited written feedback on the RAM indicating their ambivalence to the wording on the questions tapping the locus dimension (eg. the type of person she is, the mood she was in; Refer to Appendix C). Consequently, unreliable responses may have resulted in the non significant findings for the locus dimension. Secondly, the distinction between internal and external concepts of locus may be problematic. Fincham (1985), Holtzworth-Munroe et al (1992),and Newman, (1981) used the locus external dimensions in close relationships to include: the relationship, outside circumstances as well as the partner. With this understanding of the concept of locus in close relationships, it is possible that the men found it difficult to make are forced response to only two possibilities, that is partners' trait and the mood she was in. If this were so responses might be unreliable. This is supported by the findings of Fincham's (1985) study, in which he made independent assessments of locus to self, spouse, relationship and circumstances, suggesting that distressed spouses are more likely than non distressed spouses to see their partner *and* the relationship as the cause of their marital difficulties. In addition, the study by Hotzworth-Munroe, et al. (1992) explored the same independent assessments of locus, but the results were inconclusive. Finally, the lack of a significant difference on the locus dimension found in the present study, may be accounted for by the concept of including "other" in the "self". Aron, et al.'s (1991)

interpretations of the findings suggested self/other confusion with the spouse. Thus, the degree of confusion with the partner may be a good predictor of the responses to the internal-external dimension of locus in close relationships. This is a very interesting issue for future research. It may be hypothesised that the greater the overlap in the relationship, the more external the attributions will be.

Hypothesis 3., that physically violent men would be more likely than non-physically violent men to attribute partners' negative behaviour as unchangeable was supported by the data. The physically violent men differed from both non-physically violent groups, the counselling and the community men. This is inconsistent with some of the research findings on maritally distressed and non-distressed couples (Fincham, Beach & Nelson, 1987). Fincham, et al. (1987), explains that for their study, only distressed couples in therapy were included, whereas, in the past, distressed couples from the community were also included in the group. Their finding on stable versus unstable failed to differentiate distressed from non-distressed couples. However, the interpretation was a valid one (ie. seeking therapy means you can change the situation). This was not the case in the present study.

A further confirmation of the significant finding for this hypothesis comes from first hand experience with coordinators of the men's groups. They reported, that men start the DVIP with the belief that if the partner changed, all would be well, and they believe that the only way to change the partner, is to be physically violent.

Hypothesis 4., that physically violent men would be more likely than non-physically violent men to attribute the partners' negative behaviour to non-specific situations, that is, generalise to other areas of the relationship, was supported for the comparison between the physically violent and counselling but not between the

physically violent and community group. It is possible, of course, that attributing negative behaviour globally is the reason for them being in counselling in the first place. Men in the community, however, perceive the negative behaviour as situational. In short, both physically violent and non-violent counselling men attribute their partners' negative behaviour globally. The present data is consistent with other findings. According to Bradbury and Fincham, (1990) out of 10 studies examining negative events and marital satisfaction, the most consistent effects were found on the specific verses globality dimension. The maritally dissatisfied couples had a tendency to perceive the negative partners' behaviour as globally influencing the relationship, rather than as limited to specific situations. This is similar to the pattern found for physically violent men, and the men in counselling in the present study.

To sum the overall findings for the causal attributions-*ie.* (locus, stability and globality) the data suggests a difference only on the stability dimension between physically violent and non-violent counselling men. Between the physically violent and non-violent community men, differences were indicated for the stability and globality dimensions. No differences were found between the counselling and community men. However, this *does* support the literature of marital conflict and marital satisfaction, (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990). Given that the mean scores on marital satisfaction for the two groups are: counselling- $M = 6.81$ and community - $M = 8.22$ and having established no significant differences on marital satisfaction between the two groups, attributions would not be expected to differ (*ie.* attributions have been consistently associated with marital satisfaction).

Hypothesis 5., that physically violent men would be more likely than non-physically violent men to attribute *intent* to the partners' negative behaviour was

supported by the data. This finding confirms both the theory and research on marital conflict and the social information processing model (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Dodge & Newman, 1981; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Dodge, et al. 1990; and Holtzworth-Munroe, 1993). Distressed couples are more likely than non distressed couples to attribute negative partners' behaviour to be intentional rather than unintentional. Similarly, the physically violent men in the present study who are more distressed than the non-physically violent men (counselling and community) attributed the partners' negative behaviour as intentionally. Further, these findings of intentionality are similar to the findings with the aggressive, chronic reactive boys and juvenile offenders (Dodge & Newman, 1981; Dodge & Coie, 1987; and Dodge, et al. 1990;). The present data adds validity to this concept of intentionality since it explains more of the variance when compared with each of the dependent variables. This strongly suggests that physically violent men are more likely than non physically violent men to perceive the partners' negative behaviour by encoding and responding to selective cues (biases and deficits). They perceive their partners' behaviour as being intentionally negative and quickly respond with violence, as so the aggressive boys in Dodge's studies.

Hypothesis 6 & 7. Physically violent men would be more likely than the non-physically violent men to attribute their partners' negative behaviour to be selfishly motivated and blameworthy were also supported by the data. Consequently, the responsibility attributions -(intent, motivation and blame) show an overall difference between physically violent and non- physically violent men and are consistent with previous marital distress and the hostile attributional biases research as discussed above.

In contrast, Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson's study (1993) only partially supports the two theories. The results for their Negative Intent Questionnaire supported Dodge's work, while the responses to the Responsibility Attribution Questionnaire, taken from Fincham & Bradbury (1992), were reported not to support the marital distress research. This finding is inconsistent with the present study, which does support both Dodge's findings and the marital distress research using the Relationship Attribution Measure. Holtzworth-Munroe et al (1993) used unique events for maritally violent men. By using these unique events, differences were found on attributions of responsibility (which included the sum of intent, motivation and blame) between maritally violent distressed men and non-violent non-distressed men. However, no differences were found between the maritally violent distressed and non-violent distressed, as well as between non-violent distressed and non-violent non-distressed. Holtzworth-Munroe's study made mention of the overlap between marital distress and marital violence groups and controlled for this by having two non-violent comparison groups to identify attributional patterns unique to maritally violent men. However, the authors did not report that the attributions made by maritally violent men for negative intent of wife behaviour may have been due to marital satisfaction (ie. distress levels). Even more confusingly, the findings did support the marital distress research when the means for the non-violent distressed men on the marital satisfaction scale were significantly different to the non-violent non-distressed with $M = 60.41$ and $M = 120.59$ respectively. (Note that attributions in marital distress are associated with marital satisfaction)

Unlike Holtzworth-Munroe's study, this present study has used a standardised measure of attribution and taken into account and controlled for marital satisfaction as a covariate in the analysis.

Hypothesis 8., that physically violent men would be more likely than non-physically violent to differ on their attributions for their partners' negative behaviour when marital satisfaction was controlled for. This hypothesis was not supported. No differences were found between the physically violent and non-physically violent groups in the covariate analysis. Comparing results for observed and the adjusted means leads to the conclusion that the physically violent and non-physically violent group differences on the attributional dimensions are not likely to be accounted for by classification (violent - non-violent). The variance is more likely to be accounted for by the covariate -marital satisfaction. This was also indicated by the strength of association between, classification (violent - non-violent) with the covariate and the six attributional dimensions. This accounted for only 8 % of the variance. However, the effect size for marital satisfaction *alone* accounted for 27% of the variance (see Table 6). An examination of the adjusted and observed mean scores for the six attribution dimensions are shown in. Figure 7. , Figure 8. and those in Appendix D. They display a flattening pattern, with the physically violent group, suggesting that as marital satisfaction increases, attributions are decreased, which then supports the marital conflict research.

In summary, the findings suggest attributional differences between the three groups in the main study (Hypothesis 1). However, in light of the unsupported finding using marital satisfaction as the covariate, the study indicates the tentative nature of these findings. The addition of the covariate to the design, (Hypothesis 8) casts doubts

as to the robustness of attributions in relation to violence/abuse but rather, suggests an association with marital satisfaction.

Therapeutic Implications

The particular attributional patterns found in this study of physically violent men, suggest it may be useful to assess cognitive/attributional variables in this population and to address them in therapeutic programs. As Dodge (1981) suggested with the boys in his study, it may be appropriate to retrain physically violent men, to use more benign attributions and to make less rapid and selective judgments. A cognitive/attributional module for a therapeutic program would complement the already existing "Duluth Model", which uses a feminist framework (Pence & Paymar, 1986). Kelley and Michela's (1980) model, (see Figure 4.) proposes that the antecedents to attributions are-information, beliefs, and motivation (attitudes). The latter variables are addressed in the Duluth Model. It may also be appropriate to include cognitive/attributional modules as part of the program. Cognitive/attributional therapy could be part of a relapse prevention program. This is similar to the suggestion made by Larsen, Hudson & Ward (1995) in relation to child molester programs. The objective of the program would be to develop adequate self-management skills so that men can be held responsible for their behaviour and enhance their motivation by using their skills when faced with challenging circumstances. In addition, physically violent men could be educated about the cycle of violence, (Walker, 1979) to highlight the different stages, so that specific attributions can be assessed and challenged at various stages, so as to break the cycle and refrain from using violence.

Marital Satisfaction Within the Physically Violent Group

A closer look at the responses made by the physically violent men on the marital satisfaction question has led the author to examine the data in detail. It indicated that approximately 21% of the physically violent men reported their relationship to be very satisfying that is they scored greater than 8 on the marital satisfaction item (Range from 1 to 10.). However, the mean score for the physically violent men still remains low ($M = 4.4$). Although this present study does not set out to address this issue, the variability of violent individuals on marital satisfaction is striking. As discussed in the introduction, very few studies have examined attributions of physically violent men, and the empirical research so far has not reported levels of marital satisfaction in men who are physically violent to their female partner. This would seem to be an important issue. Interestingly, the study by Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1993), reported a higher mean score on marital satisfaction for the maritally violent distressed men than the non-violent distressed men, using the Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT; Locke-Wallace, 1959), (Refer to Table 1.). This was not the case in this present study, possibly because of the different method of assessing marital satisfaction.

Several possible explanations could be given for some physically violent men reporting high satisfaction in their relationship. Firstly, when men commence the DVIP they may be at a stage of "denial" to cope with the crisis they are undergoing, and are not fully in touch with the reality of their relationship. On the other hand they may be well in touch with reality, but because they have total/ high control of their partner they report and perceive themselves to be in very satisfying relationships

Methodological Issues

Methodological Limitations of the Present Study

The participants in this study were not randomly selected (ie not selected by chance), hence a biased sampling may have occurred for both violent and counselling groups. The community group was also a selected sample. The difficulty of recruiting participants, especially for the physically violent group and the counselling group made matching subjects for each of the groups impossible.

Hence, the present study revealed significant differences between the three groups on the demographic items. However correlational analysis revealed that there were no significant correlations between the demographics and the six dimensions. The previous study by Holtzworth-Munroe (1993) was able to match the demographics of the participants in the three groups. Factors contributing to low availability of participants in the present study included: "political" issues in the organisations approached, unwillingness of the organisation to participate because the study was from an individual psychological perspective, groups having already commenced the 18-27 week program, the limited time frame to carry out the project, and other research projects being conducted at the same time with the same population. However, over 50 coordinators of men's groups were contacted around Australia in an effort to carry out the project.

Other methodological issues not addressed in the present study were the gender of the researcher/counsellor, social desirability and supervision. Participants in the community group were not supervised in completing the questionnaire and were approached by a female researcher and asked to volunteer in the study, whereas the

DVIP and the counselling groups were approached either by a male or female counsellor. So it is unclear whether gender of the counsellor /researcher make a difference on responses to attributions and on the reporting of violent behaviour. It is also unclear whether the presence of a partner encourages socially desirable reports. These interesting issues were not addressed in this study, or in other studies and may need to be investigated in future research.

It is possible that men in this study responded in a socially desirable way for two reasons: a) the request for participation was from a female researcher and b) completing the questionnaire in the presence of wife/partner. Studies of self reports on marital violence do report the minimisation of violent behaviour by men (Arias, & Beach, 1987; Edleson & Brygger, 1986; Jouriles & O'Leary, 1985), but no study has looked at the effects of the gender on attributional judgment. A social desirability scale was considered for the study but was not used because it would extend testing unduly.

Further, an assumption was made that the men in the community group would be able and willing to follow the instruction on the questionnaire, and would not discuss the questions with their wife/partner and would mail the data back to the researcher. Interestingly, Fincham and Bradbury (1992) found no difference between data collecting through the mail and data collection under supervision in the laboratory.

Methodological Strengths of the Study

Despite the limitations discussed above, a number of methodological strengths are also to be acknowledged in the study. These were: a) sequencing of the questions, b) selection of physically violent men from DVIP's, c) specific criteria for the men to

qualify for the study, d) the use of two non-violent groups to control for violence and distress and e) the inclusion of a covariate - marital satisfaction in one of the analyses.

a) Sequencing of the questions

The present study took into consideration the order in which all participants responded to the questionnaire. That is, the attribution inventory was placed first followed by the marital satisfaction measure, then the CTS inventory, while the demographic items were left last. Faulkner and Cogan (1990), found that undergraduate participants who had reported at least three incidents in which they battered their partner, scored significantly higher on the Shame Proneness Scale when they had completed the Conflict Tactics Scale first. Studies such as Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson (1993); Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson Fehrenback & Fruzzetti (1992), which investigated attributions in violent relationships, report the CTS was used first followed by the attributional measures in their methodological section.

b) Selection of the Physically Violent Men.

Previous studies using violent groups have combined violent men from counselling (Holtzworth-Munroe, et al. 1992) and others have combined men that have been court referred with self referred (Holtzworth-Munroe, et al. 1992). It appears that although the groups are usually matched samples on demographics and violence variables, possible attributional differences are not taken into consideration between subgroups. Dutton's (1986) study, found a difference between court referred and self-referred men and the attributions they made for their violent behaviours. This present study avoided combining physically violent men from different settings, thus ensuring a more homogeneous group.

c) Specific Criteria

Previous studies have not adequately specified criteria for men to qualify for inclusion. The present study addressed this issue and five criteria were adopted. These included 1) men had to be over the age of 18 years, 2) an education of at least year eight at high school or equivalent, 3) need to have been in a relationship, ie. Married/Defacto/Living together for at least 12 months, 4) no serious psychiatric disorders reported or apparent, 5) no serious learning disabilities, or intellectual disabilities that were evident or reported. By having these criteria, confounds to the study can be reduced.

d) Two control groups

The present study used two control groups from different settings, to differentiate issues of violence and distress. The purposive sample of men in counselling, but not violent may have been distressed so a second control group of men in community was considered to control for the issue distress.

e) The Inclusion of a Covariate

Previous research on maritally distressed and non-distressed couples, suggested marital satisfaction need to be used as a covariate in the present study. Since particular patterns of attributions are associated with marital dissatisfaction, and attributional biases are associated with aggression it was considered important to control for marital satisfaction.

Methodological Issues for Future Studies

Motivational Base

It has become apparent that men in the DVIP have a different motivational base. For example, some men that were approached by counsellors to volunteer in the study

were under possible threats of the partner leaving the relationship. Others were there because they had accepted some degree of responsibility for their violent behaviour. It was considered in the procedure of the study to approach men before commencing therapy/counselling to avoid any effect on the attributions. However, the variability of individual motivation was not considered, but became evident with feedback from the counsellors. This motivational base may also explain the high marital satisfaction for some in this violent group. Nevertheless, the results still showed significant differences.

It appears relevant to refine the research on attribution and men who are physically violent to their partner. It seems appropriate to apply the transtheoretical stages of the process of change model (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992) to make an assessment of the men's motivation for change, at the beginning of the program. This may be done using both motivational interviewing and perhaps by developing an operational measure to assess the stages empirically. This would refine future research in relation to attributions and support Kelley and Michela's model (1980). This model depicts motivation as preceding attributions. (Refer to Figure 4.).

Conceptual Issues

The conceptual and structural basis of the entailment model, so far has been that attributions are associated with marital satisfaction. Further, some longitudinal studies have found that nonbenign attributions have resulted in low marital satisfaction after a 12 month interval (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993). It has been suggested that given deteriorating levels of marital satisfaction it could be predicted that couples would make increasingly negative responsibility attributions (Fincham, Beach &

Nelson, 1987). Development of the model needs further investigation, before such predictions can be made.

Reality versus Attributions

Another, interesting and perhaps controversial issue which has arisen from this research is the extent to which attributions conform to reality. Are they always, as described by Bradbury and Fincham (1990, p. 16), a "*psychological phenomena*"? In other words are the attributions made by the men genuinely due to the reality of the wife's characteristics, that she is not likely to change, that it does genuinely effect all areas of their relationship? Is it that she intentionally behaves in a negative way for selfish reasons and that she is to blame? Or is it only a perception? This issue goes beyond the scope of this study and further research needs to develop a better understanding of the interactive nature of attributions in close relationships and violence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the specific attributions that physically violent men are likely to make for their female partners' negative behaviour. The present data can be interpreted as confirming, in both the entailment model and the social information-processing model. The findings would seem to have implications for the assessment and treatment of abusive and physically violent men. Clearly, future research needs to address a number of methodological and conceptual problems that have been discussed above.

Finally, longitudinal rather than cross sectional methods may have an important role in future research. Longitudinal studies may improve insight into the processes of relationship conflict, to escalation of violence and marital satisfaction.

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Appendix A

Demographics for the Three Groups of Men

	Physically Violent <i>n</i> = 19		Non-Physically Violent <i>n</i> = 17 Counselling		Non-Physically Violent <i>n</i> = 31 Community	
	M	Range	M	Range	M	Range
Age	36.9	(25-50)	39.9	(21-61)	40.5	(28-59)
Completed Education	17% Primary 39% Secondary 16% Year 12 11% Technical Trade 11% Yr.12 & T/ Trade 6% Some Sec./Tertiary		30% Some Secondary 18% Year 12 18% Technical Trade 11% Some Tertiary 23% Tertiary		7% Some Secondary 3% Year 12 3% Year 12/Tech Trade 17% Tech Trade 3% Tech/Tertiary 10% Some Tertiary 7% Yr 12/Some Tertiary 50% Tertiary	
Ethnicity	78% Australian 17% English 5% Italian		62% Australian 12.5% English 6.3% Irish 6.3% Caucasian 6.3% Anglo-Brumese 6.3% Anglo-Celtic		50% Australian 19% English 11% Caucasian 8% Italian 4% Indian 4% Scottish 4% Filipino	
Employment						
Working		W = 58%		W = 59%		W = 94%
Unemployed		U = 42%		U = 41%		U = 6%
Income		\$10-20,000/year		\$30-40,000/year		\$40-50,000/year
In/Out Relationship	27% In 73% Out		70% In 30% Out		100% In	
Separation Time (Mths)	5 (1-36) ^a		1.3 (1-18) ^b		Nil	
Length of Relationship (Yrs)	8 (1-23)		15 (1-40)		17 (2-34)	
Alcohol problems	53%		71%		6%	

a. Only two participant 36, 18 months the rest less than 6 months

b. Only one participant 18 months the rest less than 2 months.

Note: Analysis including and excluding these participants did not affect the results. However further studies may need to include a criteria of less than 3-6 months separation.

Appendix B

Kruskal-Wallis Anova on the Demographics.

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	χ^2
Age	61	2	2.05
Education	65	2	15.41**
Ethnicity	60	2	4.51
Employment	66	2	7.94*
Income	59	2	18.07**
In/Out of Relation	63	2	27.56**
Length of Relation	60	2	9.41*
Separation Time	63	2	28.33***
Alcohol/Drug Problem	66	2	24.95***
Significance level	* $p < .05$,	** $p < .001$	*** $p < .0001$

Survey in the way men think about their partner's behaviours.

Dear Participant,

YOUR ASSISTANCE WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED

This study is being conducted as part of my Fourth Year Psychology (Honours) degree at Edith Cowan University (Joondalup). The purpose of the study is to look at the possible ways that men think of their partner's behaviours, and I would be grateful for your assistance. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be required to answer questionnaires with rating scales, which may take approximately 20 + minutes of your time.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Some of the questions are of a sensitive nature, and if you wish to withdraw from the study at any time, you are free to do so. (Note that this study is separate to your on going counselling/program)

It is anticipated that the information obtained from this research will be applied to enable men in counselling to build better relationships.

The information obtained from you will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will remain anonymous. There is no need for you to record your name or any other information that could identify you. The data will be pooled and identification is not possible in any way. Once you have completed the questionnaires place in the envelope provided to retain confidentiality and deposit it in the sealed box.

Should you wish to find out about the results of the study, please feel free to write to me requesting a summary. If you have further questions and would like to contact me, or my University supervisor Associate Professor Kevin Howells regarding this research please contact the university on Telephone. 400.5551

Thankyou for you participation, it is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

S. Norman

For Client ↑

✂

For Counsellor ↓

- I, (Participant).....have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time.
- I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

.....
Signature of Participant

Date

.....
Signature of Researcher/Counsellor

Date

For office use only

1

2

3

4

Answer all Questions in relation to your present relationship if over 12 months or the previous relationship which was over 12 months.

This questionnaire describes several things that your wife might do. Imagine her performing each behaviour and then read the statements that follow. Please circle the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement, using the rating scale below:

DISAGREE	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	AGREE
Strongly		Somewhat	Somewhat		Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6

Note: wife - implies or partner marriage- implies or relationship

YOUR WIFE CRITICISES SOMETHING YOU SAY:

1. My partner's/wife's behaviour was due to something about her (e.g. the type of person she is, the mood she was in).
1 2 3 4 5 6
2. The reason my wife criticised me is not likely to change
1 2 3 4 5 6
3. The reason my wife criticised me is something that affects other areas of our marriage
1 2 3 4 5 6
4. My wife criticised me on purpose rather than unintentionally
1 2 3 4 5 6
5. My wife's behaviour was motivated by selfish rather than unselfish concerns
1 2 3 4 5 6
6. My wife deserves to be blamed for criticising me.
1 2 3 4 5 6

YOUR WIFE COMPLIMENTS YOU:

7. The reason my wife complimented me is something that affects other areas of our marriage.
1 2 3 4 5 6
8. The reason my wife complimented me is not likely to change
1 2 3 4 5 6
9. My wife deserves to be praised what she did.
1 2 3 4 5 6
10. My wife complimented me on purpose rather than unintentionally.
1 2 3 4 5 6
11. My wife's behaviour was due to something about her(e.g., the type of person she is, the mood she was in)
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 12 My wife's behaviour was motivated by selfish rather than unselfish concerns.
1 2 3 4 5 6

YOUR WIFE BEGINS TO SPEND LESS TIME WITH YOU:

13. The reason my wife began to spend less time with me is not likely to change
1 2 3 4 5 6
14. My wife's behaviour was due to something about her (e.g. the type of person she is, the mood she was in).
1 2 3 4 5 6
15. My wife's behaviour was motivated by selfish rather than unselfish concerns.
1 2 3 4 5 6
16. My wife deserves to be blamed for what she did.
1 2 3 4 5 6
17. My wife spent less time with me on purpose rather than unintentionally.
1 2 3 4 5 6
18. The reason my wife spent less time with me is something that affects other areas of our marriage.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Please turn over

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something the other person does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reasons. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. There is a list of some things that you might have done when you had a dispute, and **if you could circle for each one how often you did it in the past year.**

		Never	Once	Twice	3-5 Times	6-10 Times	11-20 Times	More than 20	Ever Happened		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Yes	No	
										1	2
1. a	Discussed the issue calmly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
2. b	Got information to back up your side of things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
3. c	Brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
4. d	Insulted or swore at partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
5. e	Sulked and/or refused to talk about it	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
6. f	Stomped out of the room or house (or yard)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
7. g	Cried	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
8. h	Did or said something to spite the partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
9. i	Threatened to hit or throw something at partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
10. j	Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
11. k	Threw something at the partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
12. l	Pushed, grabbed or shoved partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
13. m	Slapped partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
14. n	Kicked, bit or hit with a fist	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
15. o	Hit or tried to hit with something	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
16. p	Beat up partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
17. q	Choked	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
18. r	Threatened with a knife or gun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	
19. s	Used a knife or gun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	

Please turn over to fill in details.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Date.....

1. Age:.....

2. Country of Birth:

3. Ethnicity:

4. Tick level of Education Completed:

Primary 4.1 Some Secondary 4.2 Completed Yr.12 4.3 Tech Trade 4.4
 Some Tertiary 4.5 Completed Tertiary 4.6 Other 4.7

5. Circle present employment status Working Unemployed

6. Circle present Income \$/year:

- \$10,000	10-20,000	20-30,000	30-40,000	40-50,000	50-60,000	+ 60,000
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7. 1) Do you consider yourself to have any problems relating to Alcohol/Drug Use ?
Yes No

7.2) Circle how many **standard drinks per week** you would drink?

• Standard Drink = 1 middy beer or 1 nip spirit

More than 50 drinks	40-50 drinks	30-40 drinks	20-30 drinks	10-20 drinks	5-10 drinks	less than 5 drinks
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8. Circle present marital/relationship status:

Married Never Married Defacto Divorced Married-Separated
 Defacto-Separated Remarried Other (Please qualify).....

9. How long have you been/ or were in your marriage/relationship?..... (years).

10. How long (if applicable) has it been since you separated or divorced?..... months

11. Circle which referral source helped you decide to come for counselling/program?

Self Partner Family G.P Friend Courts Other

If other, please name source e.g. Media/Books etc.

12. Have you done any other counselling, programs, personal development workshops or other before coming here? 12.1) Yes No

12.2) If yes please list where, type of workshop etc. and how long ago.

e.g. Holyoake, dependency program, 12 months ago: Centrecare, relationship counselling, 2 weeks ago.

13. Circle your initial purpose for seeking this service. Did you come for:

Couples Counselling	Individual Relationship Counselling	Domestic Violence Program	Other..... Please specify.....
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Your Participation is Greatly Appreciated

For office use only

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Appendix D

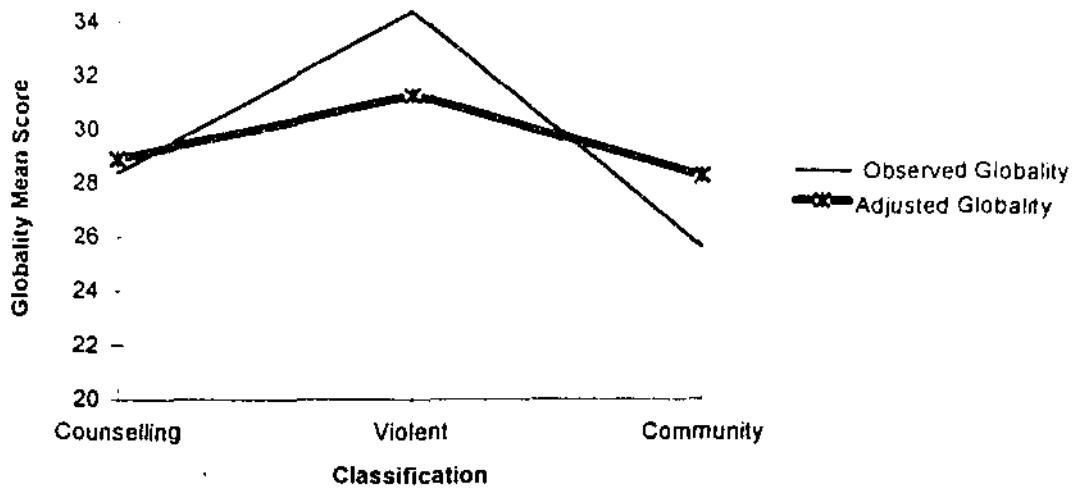


Figure A. Globality means (observed and adjusted for the covariate marital satisfaction)

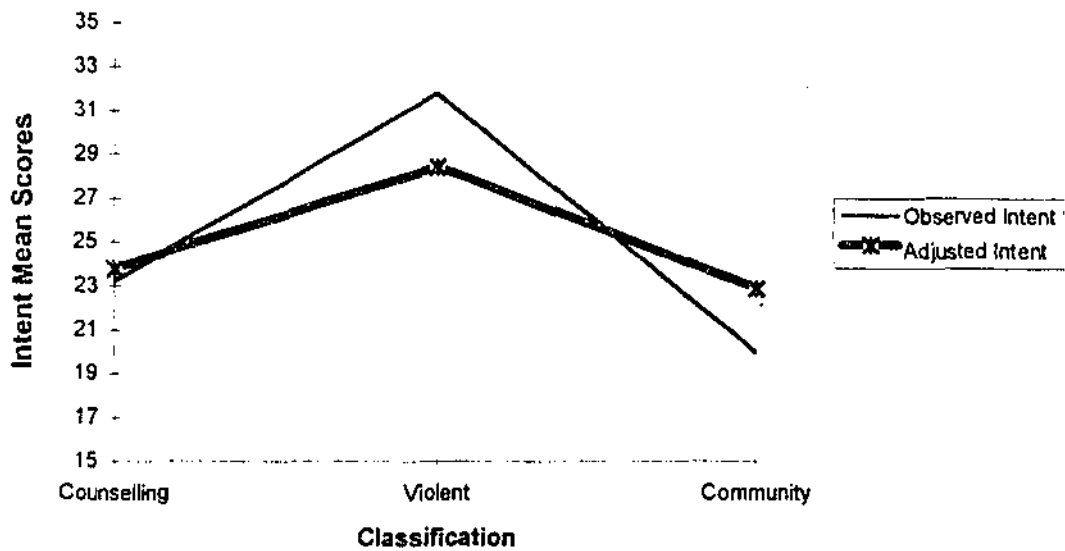


Figure B. Intent means (observed and adjusted) for the covariate marital satisfaction

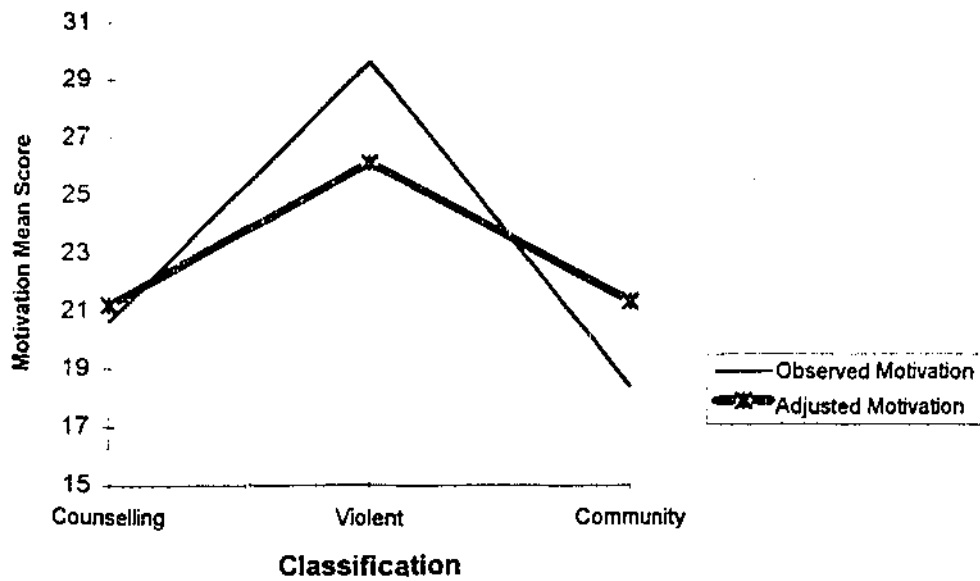


Figure C. Motivation means (observed and adjusted) for the covariate marital satisfaction

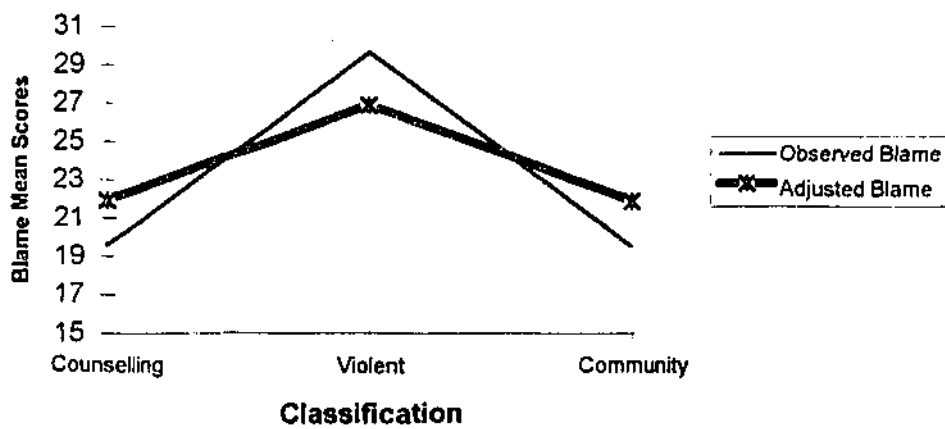


Figure D. Blame means (observed and adjusted) for the covariate marital satisfaction