HAITIAN WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE

INFLUENCE OF THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

A Dissertation

by

MARIE B. LAMOTHE-FRANÇOIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2008

Major Subject: Counseling Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Haitian Women and Domestic Violence: An Assessment of the Influence of the Mother-

Daughter Relationship.

(August 2008)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Michael Duffy

The current study uses a structured survey with a sample of 97 Haitian women

who are or have been involved in violent domestic relationships, to examine the impact

of the daughters' levels of differentiation from their mothers, cultural expectations,

religious beliefs, and other potential intervening variables that may mediate the decision

to stay or leave the abuser.

Analyses were conducted to ascertain whether characteristics of the mother-

daughter relationship, level of individuation/fusion, culture, and/or religion plays a

significant role in the women's decision making process. It was hypothesized that

daughter's decisions regarding the relationship would be highly influenced by the type

of relationship that they have with their mothers, hence, influencing them to remain or

leave the perpetrator.

Findings from the current study supported the second hypothesis that there would

be a significant negative correlation between the degree of differentiation of a daughter

from her mother and the likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship. Correlations were

performed with the Personal Authority in the Family Systems Questionnaire and the

Differentiation of Self Inventory and the findings from the tests revealed that women who obtained higher scores on the DSI were less likely to remain with their abusers. Furthermore, when the PAFS and the DSI were combined, they were a significant predictor of the outcome. Additionally, the hypothesis that women who are highly influenced by cultural factors will be more likely to stay in an abusive relationship than women who are not highly influenced by such factors, was not conclusive. There was no relationship between adhering to cultural beliefs and the decision regarding an abusive relationship. Findings regarding the influence of the women's religious on their decision regarding the abusive relationship were also inconclusive.

The discussion and conclusions focus on the clinical significance of the study's findings. Implications for treatment with this population, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research are also addressed.

DEDICATION

I would like to especially thank my family and husband who have been unconditionally supportive as I continue on my journey.

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There are a number of individuals that I would like to thank for their guidance, support and unwavering encouragement. Needless to say, this journey would not have been as rewarding without them.

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Finally, to my family who may at times not understand the motivations of this journey, but always remained supportive, my sincerest thanks. To my dearest brother whose visits to Texas made it easier to be so far away from home, you truly are the best. To my husband, who put his life on hold and stood by me as I journeyed towards my dreams, "Ou exceptionable".

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Introduction

Violence against women is perpetrated in various ways in society, ranging from verbal abuse to physical abuse. While the problem of domestic violence has been relatively well researched, researchers are still perplexed by women who remain in abusive relationships, asking the perpetual question, "Why do they remain?" Although there is ample research literature on domestic violence in other countries such as the United States, Europe (Kury, Obergfelt-Fuchs, Woessner, 2004; Loewenberg, 2005) Asia (Radford & Tsutsumi, 2004) and the Caribbean (Arscott-Mills, 2001; Danns & Parsad, 1989; Fischbach & Herbert, 1997; Gopaul, Morgan & Reddock, 1994; Haniff, 1994), one group of women who have a high rate of domestic violence has been neglected by the literature. This group is Haitian women.

Domestic violence or domestic abuse are terms that are commonly used to describe acts of abuse on a spouse or romantic partner (Hampton, Oliver & Margarian, 2003), although recently researchers have begun to use the term intimate partner abuse to describe abuse between individuals who are or have at some point in time had some type of intimate relationship (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), as the terms domestic violence

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This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

or domestic abuse are sometimes used to refer to elder or sibling abuse (Gelles, 1997). However, for purposes of the current paper, which will analyze married, single, and cohabitating couples, we will refer to this behavior as 'domestic violence'

Studies investigating domestic violence with non-immigrant groups and the reason women remain is relatively well understood. However, immigrant women's experience with violence in the home is a new area and still requires a great deal of attention. Hence, while few studies exploring immigrant women's experience with violence have surfaced in the past decade (Bui, 2003; Bui & Morash 1999; Mama, 1993; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Morash, Bui & Santiago, 2000; Nayaran, 1995; Preisser, 1999) few or no studies have focused on the plight of Haitian women and their reasons for remaining in violent relationships. Researchers remain baffled by the apparent paradox of an abused woman choosing to stay with her perpetrator. Furthermore, these studies do not agree on the reasons why an abused woman stays, suggesting reasons ranging from psychological problems (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Walker, 1979) to economic reasons (Rennison & Welchans, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

The present study focuses on Haitian women who are currently or have been abused. This study investigates what factors influence the decision of the woman to either leave or stay with the perpetrator. The main focus is on the mother-daughter relationship, as well as cultural or religious influences.

The Problem of Domestic Violence

Significant efforts have been made by social science researchers, political and community leaders, educators, and social workers to address the phenomenon of domestic violence over the past three decades. Yet, domestic violence remains a very prevalent and long-standing problem and one of the most underreported and underestimated crimes in society (Huang & Gunn, 2001). Consequently, finding a solution to this problem is a laborious and overwhelming task (Brice-Baker, 1994) and its eradication from society has proven to be difficult.   While the elimination of domestic violence is a daunting task, social science researchers have shown a great deal of interest in the phenomenon, offering hope of amelioration in the future.

Domestic violence was not always considered a crime. Until the late nineteenth century partner abuse used to be considered a private matter, and marriage was commonly perceived as a means of ownership. As a result, a woman could be abused without the partner receiving punishment from the state (Huang and Gunn, 2001). According to Langley & Levy, 1977, p. 38 as quoted in Gellen et al. 1984), "The rule of thumb referred to the right of a husband to beat his wife with a stick 'no thicker than his thumb". Wife beating was accepted as a norm, with most states adopting the rule of thumb policy in conjugal relationships. The tolerance for wife abuse is best described in a ruling by a North Carolina court in 1864, stating "unless some permanent injury be inflicted or there be an excess of violence…..the law will not invade the domestic forum and go behind the curtain" (Langley & Levy, 1977, p. 38 as quoted in Gellen, et al., 1984).

Although the United States and other industrialized countries began to see domestic violence as a crime, eventually prosecuting perpetrators with stiff penalties, developing countries in the world often lagged behind due to ingrained social norms and traditions concerning a husband's perceived right to control and/or discipline his wife (Haniff, 1994; Lazarus-Black & McCall, 2006) . One of these nations is Haiti, whose diverse cultural influences (including those of African cultures and France) have kept alive rigid gender roles and patriarchal power structures in the family (Charles, 1995; Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). As a result, Haitian women who are being abused must grapple with their own cultural norms and traditions as well as their abusive husbands.

Various perspectives and theories have attempted to explain the phenomenon of survivors of domestic violence remaining with their perpetrators. While the contribution of those theories have been valuable and insightful, researchers are still not clear about the specific dynamics that lead to female abuse survivors remaining involved in such destructive relationships.

Although wife to husband abuse is surfacing more and more in the literature, the greatest proportion of partner abuse centers on husband to wife abuse (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000) with women experiencing more frequent injuries by intimate partners (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

In the quest to prevent domestic violence, researchers have focused on analyzing the motivation behind the violence. This has led to findings that establish gender differences for perpetrators. For example, Straus (1999) found that women tend to use

violence against their partners as a means of self-defense or frustration (cited in Lawson, 2003); while men, on the other hand, tend to engage in violence in order to control their partner (Gelles, 1995). Although the motivations may be quite different, the impact of partner abuse is detrimental to both partners and to the well-being of the community as a whole.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the basic factors that influence Haitian women who are being abused by their partners to remain in or leave her violent relationship. These factors fall into three areas: family influences, specifically, the relationship between mothers and their daughters, cultural influences, and religious influences.

A particular focus of the study is on the mother daughter relationship: whether it is a key influence in the daughter's decision to leave a violent relationship. This relationship has traditionally been extremely important for Haitian and Haitian women, for information, emotional support, financial assistance, advice, and other important elements that the mother provides for her daughter. In examining this relationship, particular attention was placed on the relationship between the daughter's level of differentiation/fusion and her mother's degree of influence on daughter's decisions.

In addition, aspects of Haitian culture and religion pertaining to domestic violence were examined. Understanding the reasons why women remain in abusive relationships is thought provoking, and although the current scholarship is incomplete, there is an understandable increase of interest in this area.

Rationale of the Study

The present study is groundbreaking in several ways. First, this is the first study to explore factors that influence Haitian women's decision regarding violent relationships. Second, it brings the importance of the mother-daughter relationship into focus as a determining factor regarding the daughter's perceptions of and decisions concerning the abuse. Third and finally, it provides important data on the problem of domestic violence for women in developing countries.

Research studies exploring the reasons women remain in abusive relationships have pointed to the various ways women rationalize their reasons for remaining with their abuser: for instance, financial dependence (Okun, 1986; Pagelow, 1981; Strube, 1988) children (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983), and mental problems of the survivors (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Walker, 1979). The exploration of the mother-daughter relationship as an influential factor is uncharted territory. In addition, little or no research has taken place addressing the plight of Haitian women who suffered domestic abuse. This study will be likely relevant not only for Haitians, but also for women in developed countries.

Research that investigates the reasons Haitian women remain or walk away from abusive relationships is crucial because of the high degree of spousal abuse that they experience in their relationships and its prevalence in Haitian communities. As will be elaborated on further in the paper, Haitian women, in comparison to women on neighboring islands in the Caribbean, experience spousal abuse at a much higher rate (Fonrose, 2003).

Several theories have been proposed to explain the reasons why abused women choose to stay in or leave an abusive relationship. But few specifically focus on the predicament of abused women in developing nations. Counselors, clinicians and other mental health professionals often apply these various theories (all of which were generated by researchers in industrialized nations such as the U. S.) and related techniques indiscriminately to their work although it is difficult to know whether these theories and studies can be applied to non-U.S. populations, in this case, Haitian women.

Studying Haitian women's reasons for remaining in violent relationships will help researchers demarcate possible differences between previously studied groups and Haitians. Discovering those differences will also be beneficial to mental health professionals by aiding in developing alternative means of helping women of Haiti obtain better assistance in their predicament, as well as immigrant women from Haiti, a group which continues to expand in the United States (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). Information obtained from the findings of the study will be extremely useful for policymakers, community leaders, designers and directors of treatment programs for abused women, shelters, mental health practitioners, social workers, clergy, and others who work with women who are or have been abused, not only in Haiti, but in other developing nations as well. And, as previously highlighted, since the U.S. Haitian immigrant population is growing (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002) the United States might also benefit from the current study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1:

Does the mother daughter relationship influence the daughter's decision to remain or leave a violent relationship?

Hypothesis 1:

There will be a significant positive relationship between type of relationship between mothers and daughters and the decision the daughter makes regarding the relationship.

Research Question 2

Does the level of fusion/differentiation of the daughter from her mother influence the Haitian daughter's decision to remain in or leave a violent relationship?

Hypothesis 2:

There will be a significant positive relationship between the degree of differentiation of a daughter from her mother and the likelihood of her leaving the relationship.

Research Question 3:

Do cultural factors significantly influence the decision the woman makes to remain or leave the abusive relationship?

Hypothesis 3:

Haitian women who are highly influenced by cultural factors will be more likely to stay in an abusive relationship than Haitian women who are not highly influenced by such factors.

Research Question 4:

Do religious factors significantly influence the decision a Haitian woman makes to remain or leave the abusive relationship?

Hypothesis 4**:**

Haitian women who are highly influenced by religious factors will be more likely to stay in an abusive relationship than Haitian women who are not highly influenced by such factors.

Definitions

The operational definitions used in this study are: *Domestic violence or Domestic abuse:* Acts of abuse on a spouse or romantic partner (Hampton, Oliver & Margarian, 2003).

Fusion/differentiation: Fusion and differentiation are opposite poles of the same scale (Bowen, 1978). Fusion implies closeness, while differentiation implies autonomy, from primary caregivers. "The concept defines people according to the degree of fusion, or differentiation, between emotional and intellectual functioning" (Bowen, 1978, p. 362).

Intimate partner violence or *Intimate partner abuse:* Abuse between individuals who are or have at some point in time had some type of intimate relationship (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Partner abuse: "Any physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse occurring between partners" (Roth, 1997, p. 503).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the current literature regarding domestic violence, its impact on women from developing countries, family-of-origin issues, and aspects of Haitian culture that are relevant to domestic violence in Haitian households. First, a summary of important research findings on domestic violence will be provided. Second, research pertaining to the reasons women remain in abusive relationships, as well as the characteristics of battered women will be discussed. Third, a review of family-of-origin issues, including mother-daughter relationships, will be provided in order to highlight the dynamics involved in such relationships and how it can influence the woman's reaction to the violence. Fourth, a summary of research regarding Haitian women, as well as women from other developing nations, and domestic violence will be presented to examine the effects of domestic violence on this population and its relevance to the current study. Fifth, an overview of Haitian culture and religion will be provided along with aspects that are relevant to potential violence against women.

An Overview of Domestic Violence in the United States

Seriousness of the Problem

Domestic violence is a nationally prevalent and long-standing problem that cuts across all socioeconomic and racial/ethnic lines (Brice-Baker, 1994), accounting for a total of 22% of violent crimes experienced by women (Rennison & Welchans, 2000).

These figures only represent cases that have been reported. Hence, the true numbers are likely to be much higher, since many cases go undetected due to lack of official reporting by the survivors. In the last few decades, the seriousness of partner abuse was made clear by researchers to a public that was in many ways unaware of the depth of the problem. Straus et al. (1980) stated: "With the exception of the police and the military, the family is perhaps the most violent social group, and the home is the most violent social setting in our society" (p. 15). This revelation to the public of the seriousness of the problem was an awakening for America. It suggested that domestic violence is a dangerous threat to our national well-being, viciously creeping into our communities and our lives. Furthermore, social theorists have begun to see partner abuse as a major threat, not only to the well-being of family members, but also the status and self-concept of women (Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Langford, 1996).

Approximately one woman out of six is affected by domestic violence in American society (Straus, 1999). This violence can be psychologically, physically, emotionally, socially, and financially devastating to the survivors, their families, and society at large. As a result, a number of researchers have focused their attention on preventing, assessing, and designing interventions to combat domestic violence (Brice-Baker, 1994; Celani, 1999; Daniels & Murphy, 1997), and to discern the dynamics underlying the phenomenon.

Physical Impact of Abuse on Women

The physical impact of domestic violence on women has also received a great deal of attention from researchers. Investigations have led to a tremendous amount of disturbing revelations regarding the nature of physical abuse the women experience, and how it impacts their lives (Attala, Weaver, Duckett & Drapper, 2000; Follingstad, 1991). According to O'Leary (1999), violence is generally preceded by emotional abuse: "Psychological aggression generally precedes physical aggression" (p. 19). Hence, the abuse cycle may begin with insults and ridicule, but eventually gives way to a violent cycle of physical attacks.

The physical impact of domestic violence on women is tremendous. According to Attala et al. (2000) battered women experience bruising, fractures, abrasions, and soft tissue damage, with upper extremeties, head, breast and abdomen trauma as the typical areas targeted for injury. According to Follingstad et al. (1991), in their study of a community sample, 65% of abused women suffered from stomach and gastrointestinal problems, heart and blood pressure difficulties, fainting, and/or headaches.

In a survey conducted by Tjaden & Thoennes (2000) there is an estimation of 1.3 million women who experienced physical assault from an intimate partner, with a large percentage resulting in a serious injury to the survivor. It was also reported that for approximately 39 % of the women it was their most recent attack.

Emotional Impact of Abuse

Follingstad et al. (1990) in their investigation of abused women, reported that the battered women in their study confided that one of the most distressing part of the relationship was that of emotional abuse, more so than the physical assault they experienced at the hands of their batterers.

Women's Reasons for Remaining in Abusive Relationships

Although the effect of domestic violence has been thoroughly researched in the past few decades and is fairly well understood, one significant aspect of domestic violence which continues to perplex researchers is the reason(s) why many women remain with their abuser. In the last few decades, abundant research on domestic violence has brought about greater understanding of the risks associated with the violence, including the physical (Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus et al., 1980), social (Straus & Gelles, 1986; Nielsen, Endo, & Ellington, 1992) and psychological (1979) impact that it has on women. While structural factors (Rusbult & Martz, 1995) and a woman's satisfaction and commitment (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992) to a relationship are highly relevant and deserving of attention, looking closer and deeper into the root of the phenomenon is critical in understanding the dynamics underlying a woman's decision to remain in an environment which is not conducive to her well-being; a decision which often baffles friends and family members alike.

While some pertinent features of domestic violence have been investigated with both western Caucasian women (e.g. Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992; Gelles, 1976; Rusbult &

Martz, 1995; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) and minority women (e.g. Bui, 2003; Bui & Morash, 1999; Gallin, 1992; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002) in the United States, there is still no consensus among researchers as to why some women are able to remove themselves from a violent relationship, while others remain in the abusive environment for years (Anderson, Gillig, Sitaker, McCloskey, Malloy, & Grigsby, 2003).

Although many women are able to walk away (Okun, 1998) or seek outside assistance from their abuser, a sizable percentage (about 50%) of these women return to the abusive relationship (Strube, 1988).

Current studies investigating the reasons why battered women remain with the perpetrator have generated a wide array of explanations from researchers (e.g. Barnett, 2001; Herbert, Silver, & Ellard, 1991). Speculations emphasized both external and internal factors. For instance, some external explanations range from homelessness, lack of social support, having no place to go for help, lack of money, control, and the abusers' promise to change (Anderson , et al., 2003), and intimidation (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997). Internal factors may include love for the abuser, believing the abuser's promise of change or apologies, as well as the woman's own psychological problems (Attala et al., 2000; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Humphreys et al., 1999, Walker, 1979).

Barnett (2001) also highlighted internal and external factors which may influence a woman's decision to remain or leave an abuser. In reference to the external factors, Barnett found that some women remained in violent relationships because of the lack of support or inadequacy of information provided from the woman's family members or coworkers, healthcare practitioners, counselors, and community agencies. In terms of

internal hindrances, this researcher reported that the woman's gender role socialization, beliefs, attributions, and perceptions were primary.

Researchers have also proposed that violence in the woman's family of origin is a significant factor in the battered woman's decision to stay or leave, suggesting that women who witnessed abuse growing up are more likely to experience abuse in their own adult relationships (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Mihalic & Elliot, 1997). Women's exposure to family of origin violence was also found to be the best predictor of her actions against violence (Gelles, 1976).

Strube's (1988) groundbreaking research on differences in characteristics between women who remain in abusive relationships and those who choose to leave concluded that women who are less severely abused and were financially and emotionally dependent on their partners are more likely to remain and withstand the abuse. These findings by Strube paved the way for subsequent studies investigating the motivations of women who remain with a partner who causes them physical and/or psychological harm.

According to Anderson et al. (2003), the pattern of going back and forth in an abusive relationship is quite common for battered women. For an abused woman, making the decision to finally leave the abuser can be drawn out and "characterized by small changes over a period of time before a larger change occurs ending the relationship" (Anderson et al., 2003, p. 225). This ambivalence that women experience has been likened to the cycle of change experienced by substance abusers, smokers, and those involved in sexual behaviors that are considered to be precarious (Anderson et al.,

2003). Typically, family and friends are the first witness to this predicament and

sometimes blame the victim for their behavior, and can become unsympathetic to her

dilemma.

Theoretical Interpretations Regarding the Reasons Women Remain

Researchers have developed several viable models that seek to explain the

reason(s) why battered women remain in the abusive relationship.

Investment Model

The investment model (Rusbult, 1980) proposes that the most influential aspect

of deterrence for an individual revolves around the perceived rewards and costs which

are associated with the relationship. According to this particular perspective, there are

three components at play when determining relationship stability: the degree of

satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and magnitude of investments. Hence, commitment

to the relationship depends on the combination of the three variables. This commitment

signifies the undercurrent of the leave and stay decision.

Exchange Theory

Considering that nearly half of the women who leave the abusive relationships

return to their abuser, the exchange theory provides a different approach to the possible

reason(s) why women return to the violent relationship (Gelles, 1983, Johnson, 1992).

This theory asserts that a comparison of costs and benefits in a relationship is

made by all women in order to decide whether to remain in the relationship. This theory

proposes that the abused woman weighs the costs and benefits of being inside and

outside the relationship. If the costs of being out of the relationship outweigh the costs

of being in the relationship, there is a strong likelihood that the abused woman will more often than not return to their abuser (Gelles, 1983).

Dependence Model of Breakup

The dependence model of breakup (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992) which expanded on the interdependence theory of Kelley & Thibaut (1978), proposes that the degree of dependence in a relationship is the main issue that needs to be addressed in order to understand a woman's decision to leave a relationship. According to the dependence theory, when certain needs that are being met in the relationship are not able to be gratified elsewhere, dependence becomes most important. Consequently, the woman may decide to remain in an unsatisfying relationship due to this high degree of dependence.

Learned Helplessness

The concept of learned helplessness is based on the work of Seligman (1975), who proposed that individuals tend to feel helpless and eventually give up trying when their efforts are unsuccessful. Due to the individual's learning that reinforcements are independent of responses, there is a subsequent decreased motivation in initiating additional responses.

Like the investment model, learned helplessness theory has been adapted in order to elucidate why some women remain with their abuser. Learned helplessness theory was modified by Walker (1979) to analyze the situation of the abused woman. According to this perspective, a battered woman, after a number of failed attempts, learns to expect undesirable outcomes for her behavior. The women in such a situation

experiences feelings of being helpless, which emotionally handicaps them and prevents them from taking the initiative to seek protection and leave their abuser. Thus, in essence, they have become psychologically paralyzed. A woman that finally finds the courage to leave will only return back due to feeling helpless when she has to cope on her own.

Characteristics of Women Who Remain in Abusive Relationships

One highly relevant aspect of researching women's reasons for remaining in abusive unhealthy environments is investigating the characteristics of those women (Gelles, 1976). Clearly, there is a need to identify relevant factors which play a role in a battered woman's decision to remain in or leave an abusive relationship. This is especially noteworthy because such understanding will serve to inform program directors, counselors, healthcare providers and social workers regarding the most appropriate methods of assisting and providing therapeutic interventions to battered women.

To this end, researchers have attempted to identify the characteristics of women who remain in abusive, violent relationships (Gelles, 1976). As early as 1979, investigators described abused women as a group burdened by a lack of self-confidence, and having low self-esteem (Star, Goetz, & O'Malia, 1979). The majority of these studies took place at shelters or centers which cater to abused women.

A number of these researchers reported the various psychological difficulties experienced by battered women. Researchers have found that battered women were prone to depression and other mental illnesses (Follinstad, et al 1990; Gleason, 1993;

Goodstein & Page, 1981; Oleary, 1999; Star, Goetz, & O'Malia, 1979) such as

Borderline Personality Disorder (Gilman, 1980). Abused women tend to endorse

submissiveness and are readily accepting of traditional cultural roles (Wetzel & Ross,

1983). In addition, Martin (1981) found that, for abused women, sex-role conditioning

was prominent.

Findings also revealed that abused women commonly struggle with issues of low

self esteem (Bowen, 1982; Star, Goetz, & O'Malia, 1979); self-confidence and

interpersonal skills (Star, Goetz, & O'Malia, 1979); and fear, dependency, learned

helplessness, and psychological neediness (Bowen, 1982).

Gellen et al. (1984) examined both abused and non abused women residing at a

treatment center for distressed women using the MMPI, and found distinct differences in

the personality profiles between each group. Both abused and non-abused women had

similar results on the hypomania (Ma) scale and the Masculinity-Feminity (Mf) scales,

but scored markedly different scores on the other eight scales of the MMPI. Gellen et al.

stated that "Abused women evidence a greater propensity toward a manifestation of

characteristics associated with a variety of personality disorders" (p. 602). Specifically,

pathological conditions as measured by the Pd, D, and Hs scales were more likely to

occur with the abused than non abused groups when compared. Hence, it appears that

women who remain in violent relationships either suffer a great deal of emotional

problems as a result of the abuse or had these problems before the abuse occurred.

These findings were supported by Cascardi & O'Leary (1992) in a sample of 33

currently battered women seeking counseling and assistance at a community agency.

These researchers reported that 52% of the sample obtained scores on the Beck Depression Inventory that indicated a severe degree of depressive symptomatology, as well as extremely low levels of self-esteem. In addition, depressive symptomatology increased, and self-esteem decreased, as the degree or level of violence increased in the relationship.

Gleason (1993) conducted a study on 62 women receiving assistance from an agency for battered women. Of this sample, half of the women lived in the shelter, while the other half lived at home. This researcher found that, for both residential and non-residential participants, there existed a high degree of Generalized Anxiety Disorder, major depression, OCD, PTSD, and psychosexual dysfunction.

Aguilar & Nightingale (1994), in a study comparing 48 battered to 48 non-battered women, found that the abused women in the study suffered from lower self-esteem in comparison to non-battered women. In sum, these researchers discovered that the self-esteem of the survivor was the variable most affected by the abuse. Self-esteem of battered women was also explored by Sackett and Saunders (1999), who conducted a study with 60 individuals receiving assistance from a shelter for abused women and found that psychological abuse, as well as physical abuse, contributed independently to battered women's problems with low self-esteem and depression. According to the researchers "psychological abuse can also help to maintain the abusive relationships" (Sackett & Saunders, 1999, p. 105).

Women of Developing Nations and Domestic Violence

Due to the paucity of studies investigating Haitian women's struggle with domestic violence, limited analogous literature on immigrant women from developing nations will be reviewed. Although research studies are increasingly addressing issues of domestic violence, prior studies of domestic violence in immigrant women's communities are negligible (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dobash et al., 1992; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Increasingly, however, researchers are developing an interest in immigrant women and their experiences with domestic violence (Bui, 2003; Bui & Morash, 1999; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Nayaran, 1995; Preisser, 1999), offering hope to the plight of abused immigrant or foreign women. Although these developments are promising, there remains a gap in the literature on rates of domestic violence in the immigrant community (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002).

In recent years, researchers have studied domestic violence in such developing immigrant communities in the U. S., such as Vietnamese women (Bui & Morash 1999), Caribbean women (Mama, 1993), South Asian women (Preisser, 1999), and Mexican American women (Morash, Bui & Santiago, 2000). This research is especially salient since these groups' way of dealing with this problem may be unlike non-ethnic immigrant women. For instance, in attempts to investigate the motivation behind an immigrant woman's decision to remain in an abusive relationship, researchers found that ethnic minority women have the tendency of coping differently with the abuse (Abraham, 2000; Gondolf, 1997; Lee & Au, 1998; Preisser, 1999).

Without a doubt, studies focusing on immigrant populations are pertinent since the U.S. immigrant population is growing (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). One such growing population is the Haitian immigrant group, numbering about a million throughout the United States (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002).

Comparative investigations have revealed that Haitian women tend to experience domestic violence at a more elevated rate in comparison to their Caribbean, Latin, and U.S. counterparts. For instance, 54.8% of Haitian women in Haiti were reported to have experienced physical assault in a given year (Fonrose, 2003) in comparison with other women living in developing nations, such as Nicaraguan women (52%), Uruguayan women (22.7%), Chilean women (40%), Costa Rican women (35%), and Colombian women (20%) (Morrison & Biehl, 1999).

In regards to the experience of violence, the rates are alarming for all of the foreign women previously mentioned; however, the occurrence rate for Haitian women is substantial and quite disturbing.

Theoretical Interpretations of Domestic Violence

Over the years, a number of theories have been proposed to explain the cause or causes of partner abuse. The following section provides a summary of major theoretical viewpoints that are commonly used by researchers to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory has been the leading theoretical perspective on the issue of partner abuse. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that much of an individual's learning takes

place through the process of imitation (modeling), and maintained through social contingencies that bring consequences for that particular behavior. According to this theory, the growing child will observe the interaction patterns of his or her family of origin and will learn from these. For example, in terms of partner abuse, the child might be exposed to familial and sociocultural patterns of behavior that support violent behavior, aggression, and gender inequities . This exposure will provide the initial learning experience that will enable the child to perceive these patterns of behavior as the appropriate manner of behaving in intimate relationships . Bandura's theory was extended by Gelles (1997) to the realm of domestic abuse, stating: "The first place where people are exposed to abuse is in the home" (p.128). Fonrose (2003) in her study investigating the prevalence rate of domestic abuse in Haiti, states that

"Social Learning Theory is relevant to domestic violence in the Haitian population because children of Haitian ancestry experience for the most part a punitive upbringing that uses not only detention but also physical punishment to influence behavior. Male children observe frequently the interaction between mother and father, and they learn at an early age that to be male means to have more power" (p. 39).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory, being mostly sociopolitical in nature, focuses on the acculturation of men and women and their taking either submissive or power positions in its main explanation for the occurrence of partner violence (Zosky, 1999). Basically, the violence not only occurs but is sustained by the status quo of patriarchal conceptions, which have the tendency to debilitate the inherent power possessed by the abused

woman. This cycle then produces deleterious outcomes. This particular theory is highly

relevant to Haitian women as Haiti has a patriarchal system and Haitian women tend to

be influenced by this aspect of the culture. Special rights are afforded to Haitian men

who in turn take advantage of such privileges (Charles, 1995). In the Haitian culture,

early in life, Haitian men learn that they are the gender endowed with absolute control

and are likely to feel threatened if the Haitian woman challenges these ideas (Fonrose,

2003). Hence, the consequence of questioning this system is very costly for the woman.

Family Systems Theory

        Family systems theory, being more interpersonal in nature, provides an

explanation for the occurrence of partner violence that revolves around the concepts of

reciprocity, circular causality, and maintaining homeostatic violence (Zosky, 1999).

According to the family systems approach, in order to fully understand the abuse that

takes place in such relationships, it is pertinent to observe both the interactions and

actions of the couple (Bograd, 1984). This is important since the violence is typically

the result of repeated provocations from both parties involved. Eddleson et al. (1991)

assert that these couples have a tendency to harbor unrealistic expectations and have

interactions consisting of negative affect and contents, leading to violence.

Object Relations Theory

        Object relations theory, although not as frequently applied as the previously

mentioned theories, offers some fresh and interesting theoretical perspectives to the

ongoing problem of domestic violence. Over the years, a number of researchers (e.g.

Celani, 1999; Gillman, 1980; Zosky, 1999) have explored object relations theory as a

means of providing some enlightenment for the complexities of partner abuse. In recent years, this theory has begun to have an impact and become very instrumental in providing an understanding of the complications of partner abuse (Zosky, 1999).

Zosky (1999) found that individuals who experience partner abuse are ultimately involved in object relationships with pathological attributes, which indicate possible pathology during the developmental years. In her study, this researcher found that 81% of men who abused their partners witnessed partner abuse, as well as experienced childhood abuse (Zosky, 1999). This aspect of the theory is relevant to the Haitian community in that many Haitian men grow up observing violent interactions between their parents (Fonrose, 2003) as their father try to assert power and authority over his partner.

According to object relations theory, a child's adjustment and healthy development stem from the 'well of unconditional love': a sense of security and gratification provided by the mother. Consequently, a child who lacks access to that unconditional love and acceptance will search for it through tragic means, such as abusive partners. This concept is reflected in Zosky's (1999) statement: "Dependency needs that have been unmet in childhood will continue to be a need on a primitive level as an adult" (p. 58). The dependency needs referred to by Zosky ultimately lead to desperate ends and very submissive behaviors. Basically, adults burdened with feelings of being unloved and unaccepted as a child will have the tendency to experience a great deal of distorted internalized representations carried well into adulthood.

According to Zosky (1999), maladaptive patterns of relating transfer to the adult individual's current relationships with partners. Ultimately, these patterns shape their anticipations and interpretations in interpersonal relationships. This process comes about because the adult individual erroneously perceives current relationships using a previous negative internal working model. Additionally, such an individual may have trouble soothing themselves in times of difficulty and anxiety, thus is unable to appropriately handle emotional responses during such times. This process is evident in the aggression and violence that may be used when the individual is frustrated with the partner.

Object relations theory helps researchers to understand the reason an individual endures continuous abuse from a partner (Celani, 1999). The appropriate partner for a potentially abusive individual is one who will withstand an unpredictable and chaotic relationship and who shares comparable characteristics: "Both partners must withstand repeated discharges of rage toward each other and they must both have split-off libidinal egos that can be de-repressed and return to a dominant position after the abuse is over" (Celani, 1999, p. 66).

The object relations approach sees adults burdened with feelings of being unloved and unaccepted as a child as later having the tendency to experience a great deal of distorted internalized representations as adults (Zosky, 1999). These maladaptive patterns of relating transfer to the adult individual's current relationships with husbands and partners. Ultimately, these patterns shape their anticipations and interpretations in interpersonal relationships. This process is due to the fact that the adult individual

erroneously perceives current relationships using a negative internal working model. These adult individuals will also have trouble soothing themselves in times of difficulty and anxiety, and are likely to be unable to appropriately handle emotional responses during such times.

Research on the topic of domestic violence has provided clarification of personality type and the integral part it plays in interpersonal violence (Gillman, 1980). According to Gillman (1980), there are two primary personality types of abused women: the neurotic and the borderline. The difference between the neurotic and the borderline stems from the quality of their object-relations. For example, while the good and bad objects integrate in the neurotic type; in borderline individuals the objects continue to be split. Without the occurrence of the splitting, the woman would more readily leave the relationship. Thus, the splitting sustains the rejecting and sometimes fulfilling relationship between the couple (Gillman, 1980).

Women involved in domestic violence relationships are perceived to basically be involved in an object relationship, transferring to their partner developmentally pathological experiences learned in early childhood with their primary objects (Zosky, 1999). Object relations theory provides an understanding of the borderline women who remain in the abusive environment. They will typically have a history embellished with continuous rejection of their needs (Celani, 1999). The borderline abused woman experiences basically two separate representations: She rejects the potentially good objects and accepts bad objects. As noted by Zosky (1999), these representations stem

from interpretations of earlier introjections from these women's relationships with their primary caretakers.

According to object relations theorists, battered women are not interested in forming a relationship with normal men (Celani, 1999). Rather; their interest is in those individuals who will meet the requirements of their libidinal subego, which finds 'nice' men unappealing and lacking in excitement. These women are also attempting to meet the requirements of their antilibidinal ego, which warrants an object that brings disappointments and frustration. This type of relationship promises to keep her internal battle alive; thus, the constant search for men who can fit these expectations. This concept is well stated by Framo (1982): "Life situations in outer reality are not only unconsciously interpreted in the light of the inner world, resulting in distorted expectations of other people, but active unconscious attempts are made to force and change close relationships into fitting the internal role model" (p.26).

Hence, battered women seek out men who are capable of behaving in an unpredictable manner, offering love one moment and a great deal of aggressiveness and abuse the next (Celani, 1999). Thus, they seek men who can promise them love and also treat them with an abundance of physical cruelty. This type of man is said by object relations theorists to hold similar internal conflicts as the woman he abuses. According to Zosky (1999), recent developments investigating domestic violence found that abusive men also experienced rejection and abuse during their early developmental stages.

Many researchers posit that abusive relationships stem from internal object relations pathology occurring in both partners (e.g. Gillman, 1980; Kernberg, 1974; Young & Gersen, 1991). For instance, Kersner, Julian, and McKenry (1997) found men's perceptions regarding care and nurturance with their primary objects correlated highly with aggressive behaviors towards their partners.

In Fairbairn's (1962) perspective, a female child learns, during her developmental period, to control her rage against the bad object for fear of abandonment. In adulthood, this control continues to manifest itself in intimate relationships. As a result, even with extreme physical violence from an abusive partner, the abused woman remains in the relationship because the abusive relationship is better than being completely alone: "Despite this inhibition toward her original objects, the enormity of the rage in her antilibidinal subego, as well as the enormity of hope in her libidinal ego, demand expression" (Celani, 1999, p. 66).

Consequently, the adult woman has to find an object that can make promises of enormous love, and, at a later time, reject and abuse her; but without abandoning her (Celani, 1999). As previously stated, the appropriate male partner who will withstand such an unpredictable and chaotic relationship would be one who shares comparable characteristics with the female partner: "Both partners must withstand repeated discharges of rage toward each other and they must both have split-off libidinal egos that can be derepressed and return to a dominant position after the violence is over" (Celani, 1999, p.66).

The battered woman's splitting defense has a bigger task at hand. The awareness of her partner as a continuously violent and brutal rejecting object must be repressed by her ego and replaced by the libidinal idea that her partner is an exciting object. This is necessary for the two to remain in the relationship together. Celani (1999) states that the libidinal ego of the woman must be very powerful (as well as impractical) in order to believe, not only that the violence will not occur again, but also that it never took place at all. Furthermore, the abusing partner's antilibidinal ego must also shift back to his libidinal ego, subsequent to experiencing this antilibidinal fury at the woman. This cycle is very taxing for both the woman and the man, for their subegos are in a constant internal battle.

Another pertinent aspect of this theory relevant to the Haitian community is the idea that individuals whose needs were not met as children often develop negative or distorted concepts of relationships, which may impact them as adults. DeSantis and Thomas (1994) in their study looking at the childrearing styles of Haitian mothers found that many of the Haitian mothers in their study had to obtain outside employment, which allowed for a limited amount of interaction and care for their children. Consequently, there are certain childhood needs that are curtailed due to the financial needs of the family, which can create feelings of neglect and abandonment in the child. Hence, Haitian women who may not have developed healthy attachments to their mothers growing up may look for such affection and connection with their mates as adults.

Summary of Theoretical Viewpoints

While social learning theory and object relations theory have the advantage of offering a logical explanation for the multigenerational transmission of domestic violence, feminist and family systems theories offered interesting explanations rooted in the family and cultural systems.

Each of these theories cannot by itself thoroughly explain the phenomenon of why an abused woman returns to or remains with her partner, yet object relations has the advantage of taking the analysis a step further by placing the focus on the intrapsychic determinants that influence the abused woman's behavior and, consequently, her need to remain attached to an object that continues to violate her rights as a human being. What is remarkable about this theory is the fact that it provides insight regarding the psychological state of the partner, assuming a shared pathology between the individuals involved in such relationships, which no previous theory has applied as an explanatory analysis of domestic violence.

The Influence of Fusion and Differentiation on Adult Behavior

Bowen's family systems theory has been used by researchers to explain adult behavior in such cases as a young adult's career decision making (Larson & Wilson, 1998), adjustment of college students with disabilities (Smith, Ray, & Wetchler, 1998), job stress response of nurse managers (Hanson, 1998), relationship enhancement (Griffin & Apostal, 1993), and the psychological well-being of married men (Bohlander, 1999). This theory can also be utilized to explore the motivations and decisions that a woman may make in response to experiencing abuse.

Differentiation/Individuation of Self

The core foundation of Bowen's (1978) family systems theory is the ability of an individual to differentiate themselves from their family of origin. This theory is based on the assumption of life forces. An important life force, rooted in instinct, is differentiation or individuality. This life force, possessed by human beings, drives us to grow into emotionally separate persons, with the ability to feel, think, and behave for ourselves. Another and equally important life force involves togetherness and drives us to maintain the emotional connectedness and mutual reaction to those in our family of origin. Hence, this force causes a child and family members to behave, think and feel as one (Bowen, 1978). In that case, the children of the family are not likely to realize full emotional separation from their parents and siblings since their emotional connectedness or attachment with their family of origin remains unresolved. The child's unresolved attachment or inability to differentiate from parents determines their future functioning (Klever, 2003). These individuals are also more likely to imitate their parent's behavioral patterns. Family members, through interaction, project the previous difficulties in their lives onto other individuals in the family system (Charles, 2001).

The level or amount of emotional separation that an individual can achieve from their family of origin is considerably different from one person to the next (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). There are two factors which play a role in those differences: 1) the degree to which the parents of the child realized complete emotional separation from their respective parents; and 2) the quality of an individual's relationship with their own parents, siblings and relatives. According to Kerr & Bowen (1988), parents have the

tendency to function in a manner which would propel their children to maintain relatively the same level of emotional separation from them, as they were capable of attaining from their own parents.

According to Sharf (1996), the mental and emotional functioning of grandparents, great grandparents and other relatives is very likely to influence the functioning of individuals in the nuclear family. Furthermore, Nichols & Schwartz (1998) found that individuals with similar types of differentiation tend to relate (couple) well with one another in the nuclear family; hence, daughters and mothers with low levels of differentiation would understandably become fused. This is relevant to the potential role a mother plays in their battered daughters' decision to leave or remain in a domestic violence relationship.

Fusion

Fusion consists of becoming overly involved with significant others during times of decision making and experiencing difficulty devising any opinions or ideas independent of the significant individuals in their lives (Bowen, 1978). Basically, fused members of a system have the tendency to internalize the belief and values of others completely (Skowron & Schmidt, 2003). Fusion is believed to be the result of low levels of differentiation, while individuation is believed to be due to high levels of differentiation of self (Charles, 2001). Differentiation refers to a process. It describes the course by which individuality and togetherness are managed by a person and within a relationship system.

Individuals who are perceived to be highly differentiated possess a sense of security about their identity, seek meaningful goals, maintain close relationships, and are more apt to attain success in their lives (Wilie, 1991). Conversely, individuals who are perceived to be low differentiated (fused) find difficulty in separating themselves physically and emotionally from their family of origin, and thus struggle to obtain emotional maturity and independence (Bowen, 1978).

When a child has difficulty differentiating, this pattern is likely to be carried into the next generation, affecting their own children (Wilie, 1991). With greater levels of intergenerational fusion, individuality is less developed, thus self regulation is done more by the other, with reactivity and emotional sensitivity becoming more intensified. The emotional reactivity can manifests itself in terms of conflict, distancing, over involvement with or dependence on the parents (Wilie, 1991).

The most relevant and significant aspect of Bowen's theory to the current study is the premise that psychological dysfunctions exists that influence the interactions occurring in the family for generations (Sharf, 1996).

While the theory of fusion and individuation was used with Haitian women from a collectivistic culture, the concepts of the theory of fusion and differentiation of self were developed for an individualistic culture and as a result, some aspects of this theory may not be very relevant or applicable to explain the dynamics involved in the Haitian mother-daughter relationship. Conversely, it should be noted that this does not imply that fusion doesn't exist in the Haitian culture, or that it's necessarily pathological when it occurs.

Mother-Daughter Relationships

Bowen (1978) theorized that the level of fusion/differentiation of an individual with their primary caregivers has a tremendous impact on that individual's decisions, behaviors, and perceptions. This section focuses on this crucial relationship.

Until recently, most parent-child relationship research was done on fathers and sons, with little emphasis on mother-daughter relationships (Phillips, 1996). However, the mother-daughter relationship is salient (Chodorow, 1978; Cochran, 1985), empowering, (Caplan, 2000, Chin, 2002; O'Reilly & Abbey, 2000), and valuable for both women involved (Cochran, 1985; Eichenbaum & Orback, 1988; Fischer, 1991; Friday, 1977; O'Connor, 1990); and provides a dyad with a great sense of support and unification (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990). Clearly, there are some significantly unique characteristics to the mother-daughter relationship. This is confirmed by Fischer (1991) reporting that, mother-daughter dyads are of the highest intensity relative to other intergenerational relationships, due to the emotional connectedness, interdependence, and deep bond that exists between the women.

The relationship between mother and daughter is both unique and complex in nature, which is reflected in the literature regarding mother-daughter dyads (Shrier, Tompsett, & Shrier, 2004), leading to differing opinions that have begun to emerge within the last decade. Traditional work on mother-daughter dyadic relationships focused on either the earliest interactions between mother and daughter or the latest interaction taking place during the mother's elderly years, with little research being done on middle-age dyads (Shrier, Tompsett, & Shrier, 2004). Researchers are currently

offering theories and data on the nature of the relationships, particularly, the long lasting

emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal patterns which can be traced throughout the

lifespan of the individual (Charles, 1999, Cortina, 1999). As the relevancy of early

dyadic relationships to subsequent relationships is becoming more evident (Charles,

Frank, Jacobson, & Grossman, 2001), with more studies being performed analyzing the

dynamics of such a relationship (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1988; La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990;

O'Connor, 1990; Rastogi & Wampler, 1999), the behavior of adult women can be more

profitably examined in terms of being influenced by that relationship.

There are a number of theories which are relevant to the mother-daughter

relationship. Attachment theory (e.g. Bowlby, 1988) suggests that the mother-daughter

relationship offers a "secure base" and a "safe haven" for each member of the dyad.

This theory not only provides researchers with a wealth of knowledge regarding the

mother-daughter dyad, but is also useful for clinicians and mental health workers

(Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van Ijzendoorn, & Juffer, 2003; Wood, 2002) who provide

therapeutic interventions to women who are experiencing conflict with members from

their family of origin, especially their mother. Bowen (1978) theorized that the

relationship occurring between a female child and her mother was significant in that it

represented the conduit through which intergenerational conflict and various family

patterns, including enmeshment, detachment, and closeness was transmitted.

While the mother may not continue to be the primary attachment figure for a

daughter in adulthood, she continues to be a significant attachment figure in the life of

her daughter (Collins & Read, 1990), influencing her perceptions regarding "her body,

self-esteem regulation, career choices, and relationships to men" (Fenchel, 1998, p. 16).

Firman and Firman (1988) suggested that the mother's personal identification with her

daughter brings forth an "increased two-way intimacy to that special relationship" (p. 4).

Another theory applicable in explaining the dynamics of the mother-daughter

dyad is object relations feminist theory. According to object relations feminist theorists,

the primary caregiver role that women assume is due to patriarchal influences. For

instance, our social institutions, economic structures, gender based labor divisions,

traditional gender role expectations (Schechter, 1982) and disproportionate distribution

of power (Leisring, Dowd, & Rosenbaum, 2003; Torres, 1991) all result from

multigenerational transmission emanating from a patriarchal society. According to these

theorists, during the developmental process the relationships between mothers and their

sons and mothers and their daughters begin to shift. This shift is characterized by many

male children abandoning their primary love-object (mother) in order to identify with

older males (fathers); while girls experience a lack of individuation, becoming

increasingly more connected with their mothers (Chodorow, 1978)

As women care for other individuals, typically their family, they soon find their

own needs and wants taking a backseat to the needs of others. Hence, growing up, with

their own needs typically unmet and unrecognized, eventually these women's neediness

will be projected onto their daughters (Chodorow, 1978). This is understandable since

the women are the primary caretakers, thus serving as a role model for their daughter

and primary object for identification.

Object relations and attachment theories both offer an alternative manner of examining the mother-daughter relationship (Collins & Read, 1990; Goldberg, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1994); and in the process help to fill some of the gaps existing in the mother-daughter relationship literature. Unfortunately, studies examining such relationships with different cultures, such as non-western Caucasian women, are lacking (Rastogi & Wampler, 1999), with no body of research providing any in-depth analysis of immigrant or foreign mothers and daughters.

Furthermore, in reference to Haitian mothers and daughters, there is a paucity of research studies on this dyad. As previously stated, the current study focuses on the influence of Haitian mothers on their daughters, hence, in such a case, one way of ascertaining the manners in which mothers influence their daughters is by exploring the Haitian culture. Western cultural values which celebrate individualism are in contrast to that of Haitian culture, which values collective behaviors and thinking (Yapo, 2005). Consequently, in Haitian culture, the focus is not on individual achievements and personal gains. Growing up, the Haitian cultural influences are entrenched in the minds of Haitian women who received the message that they ought to act, think and behave differently than men, particularly, in regards to their sexual expressions (Yapo, 2005). In her qualitative study of working with a young Haitian woman, Field (2006) stated that "conformity and obedience are expected and the community supports these expectations" (p. 139).

According to (2005), in the Haitian culture "a person brings either pride or shame not only to oneself, but to family members as well (p. 20). Haitian families are quite

concerned about other's perceptions of them, in their search for acceptance from other members of their community. She related that Haitian parents have the tendency to remind their children of their "Haitianness", stating "This simply means that the children must adhere to cultural expectations, such as the way Haitians greet each other, acceptable table manners, how one walks, speaks, address elders, the degree one can express one's feelings, the degree of independence one has, one's level of self- assertion, and so on" (p.20). DeSantis and Thomas (1994) confirmed this concept, stating that Haitian children are socialized to adopt the self perception of being subordinate to family authority as well as behave in an obedient manner with their parents and their kin. As a result, parental influence, especially from mothers as they are the ones who care for the children and the home, is highly prevalent. Basically, it appears that parenting practices in Haiti, do not promote a child's self-expression, independence, or individuation (Field, 2006). Since the current study focused on the influence of the mother-daughter relationship, it sought to ascertain whether mother's influence on their daughters would also generalize to the daughter's decision to remain or leave her abuser.

For the current study, it is important to outline that Haitian culture, not unlike various other non-western cultures, does encourage closeness with family of origin. The focus in the current study is also to investigate the women's level of differentiation/fusion with one another and whether this can result in an abused Haitian woman's decision to remain with her abusive partner. Therefore, an examination of the elements of Haitian culture that impact family relationships would be relevant for this analysis.

Haitian Culture and Its Influence on the Perpetuation of Violence

The Importance of Culture

One's culture can be perceived as encapsulating all "beliefs, practices, values, and behaviors that are shared by members of a group (Sullivan & Rumptz, 1994, p. 567). An individual's perceptions and worldview are connected to their culture (Taylor, Magnussen, & Amundson, 2001). The characteristics of a culture are transported from generation to generation, carrying with it various attributes valuable to that particular culture.

Haitian culture is quite fascinating and complex in nature. Haitian people are perceived as optimistic and courageous on one hand, yet shameful on the other (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). This ambiguity is not so difficult to comprehend when one looks beyond the smiling faces and pride. The culture of Haiti is rich and colorful, but also carries a heavy burden of poverty and violence. In order to understand the influence of the Haitian culture on its women, it is pertinent to be familiar with and comprehend the culturally defined gender role of the Haitian woman.

Haitian Power Structures and Women's Roles

In Caribbean cultures, women in general are perceived to be inferior to all men, by God and the law (Hurston, 1938). Theorists assessing the correlation between abuse and culture have found that the abuse is a result of "cultural values, rules, and practices that afford men more status and power than women" (Torres, 1991, p.115), values patriarchal in nature and widely accepted in society. This concept is in alignment with the feminist perspective of Yllo (1983), who asserts that partner violence isn't a mere

personal conflict tactic which is gender neutral, but rather, tactics that are gendered in nature accompanied by feelings of entitlement.

Researchers investigating cultural influences of abuse have found a correlation between level of violence against women and patriarchal societies (e.g. Yllo, 1984; Yllo, & Straus, 1984). Thus, the roots of domestic violence may be found in society's reinforcement of male privilege of control and power over women (Leisring, Dowd, & Rosenbaum, 2003). Cross-cultural studies have also shown that in various patriarchal societies, wife abuse was a common experience (Gallin, 1992; Lateef, 1992; Madhurima, 1996).

Adherence to strict patriarchal ideologies oftentimes lead members of a society, men and women alike, to minimize or become oblivious to the significant contributions of the women in their culture. This concept was confirmed by Charles (1995) stating that in Haiti, a patriarchal society, women's efforts and contributions to the work force are often trivialized (Charles, 1995). According to Charles (1995), women's employment in Haiti generates a large labor contribution in the areas of agriculture (49%), and manufacturing (70%). Overall, women make up 48% of the work force in Haiti. Without women's contributions, the Haitian economy would simply disintegrate (Steady, 1981). Hence, it is understandable why many refer to the Haitian woman as the *Potomitan*, the center post to various sectors of Haitian society (Steady, 1981). Unfortunately, women in Haiti continue to be perceived as second class citizens (Charles, 1995).

Women are the primary support and head of 70% of households in Haiti, with children's health and education numbered among her important duties as the caretaker of the family (U.S. Department of State, 2000). Yet Haitian women are said to be "poorer, more illiterate, and less powerful than their [male] counterparts" (Fonrose, 2003, p. 14).

Societal Oppression of Women in Haiti

The oppression of women in Haiti is not unlike that observed in women in other parts of the world who struggle with sex discrimination (Fonrose, 2003). Magalie Marcelin (cited in Rosen & Conly, 1998), a representative for Kay Famn, a woman's organization in Haiti, asserts that the repression that Haitian women is both enduring and generalized: "Whether it was before, during, or after the military regime, gender violence is something that is very prominent, male domination stems from the very root of the society. Discrimination against girls and women continue to hinder our progress" (p. 3).

Bellegarde-Smith (1990) asserts that the responsibilities and obligations placed on Haitian women, especially peasant women, have always been overwhelming. Evidently, a Haitian woman's wings are not allowed to surpass the circumference of her home and designated domestic duties.   Even women whose financial contributions sustain the entire household are not considered the voice of authority of the household; such a voice is still afforded to the men.

Clearly, Haiti has a patriarchal culture (Charles, 1995) that upholds and defends such gender-biased cultural traditions as women's restricted position in society. This aspect of the culture can exert a powerful influence on a woman's reaction to a violent

relationship, since she may not have the support she needs. In addition, the violent

actions of the man are implicitly sanctioned by his culturally prescribed dominance in

the household.

Similar to the influences of culture, religion will be investigated in order to

determine its role in intra-familial conflicts, specifically relating to domestic violence.

The following section will examine the role of religion in Haiti and how it can influence

a woman's decision to remain in or leave an abusive relationship.

Religion in Haiti

The Religions of Haiti

The main religion in Haiti is Catholicism; however, Haitians also practice

various Protestant religions and voodoo (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). While

Christianity was brought to the island by the Spaniards, Voodoo was brought by the

Africans, receiving additional elements from the native peoples who inhabited the island.

Despite the influence of Voodoo, Christianity remains the prominent religion in Haitian

society (Desrosier & St. Fleurose, 2002). Therefore, for the current analysis, the religion

of influence that will be focused on is Christianity.

The Impact of Christianity on Battered Women in Haiti

Cultural influences of Haiti are quite rigid and unwavering, but the influence of

Christianity can be even more compelling, coercing the devout battered woman to yield

to religious beliefs and ideas about submission even in the face of insecurity and malice

(Nason-Clark, 1997). The inner conflict experienced by the battered Christian woman is

well reflected in the words of Nason-Clark (1997): "With the Bible on their side,

churches argue that god planned for men and women to choose partners for life and to share life's journey, in good times and amid trials" (p. 1).

According to Menjivar & Salcido (2002), the battered woman struggles to respect religious beliefs while maintaining personal safety. Even with family and friends being supportive, "Orthodox views about marriage and gender roles tend to take over" (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002, p. 904), thus propelling others to perceive the violence as behaviors acceptable to society. Based on the previously mentioned gender biased cultural traditions (Bellegarde-Smith, 1990; Charles, 1995), it is evident that during the developmental years, a young Haitian girl learns to take care of and uphold the male-dominated household (either of her parents or her spouse) and, most importantly, accept the concept that marrying is for life, regardless of marital difficulties.

The Impact of Religious Loyalties on an Abused Woman's Decisions

According to Ferraro & Johnson (1983), leaving a violent relationship is far from easy for the battered woman, especially when she must take into account religious and traditional loyalties of her family, the perpetrators' family, and the livelihood of her children and herself. This is due to the powerful social conditioning of members of society where women are encouraged to adhere to religious convictions and customs that continue to influence them throughout their lives (Dylan, 1998).

Religious Influences in Haiti

According to Fonrose (2003), religious influences exist in every aspect of life, including social and cultural systems. For the Haitian people, religion is perceived to be the "source and standard for all meaningful activity—including the quest for political power and position" (McCord, 2003, p. 37). Hence, the importance of religion in Haitian culture is great.

Since religion is such an overwhelmingly influential part of the Haitian culture, its not surprising that religious leaders have a great interest in the lives of the families that visit their church on a weekly basis, and vice versa. For the abused woman, this affiliation and camaraderie has its advantages and its disadvantages. One advantage of having such a relationship is that religious leaders tend to be very supportive in times of difficulties and unrest, especially in a country ragged with political turmoil. Religious affiliation represents a safety blanket to individuals who at times have nowhere else to turn. Unfortunately, the trusted religious leaders can at times intervene in a situation, such as marital conflict, in a manner which is detrimental to the woman's well-being in order to maintain allegiance to religious principles (McGlinchey, 1981). Some of these religious representations at times emphasize and solicit the submission of women to hierarchical gender-based interactions (Nason-Clark, 1997).

The Implicit Legitimacy of Domestic Violence by Religious Leaders

Research in this area has revealed that societal leaders at times perpetuate domestic violence as a result of their strong religious belief (Nason-Clark, 1997). In such cases, it is not necessarily that the leaders ignore the occurrence of abuse; rather, they are hopeful that reconciliation will occur.

While there is no proof that religious leaders convince battered wives to remain in abusive relationships, clergy often highly underestimate the occurrence of spousal abuse in church-attending family members (Nason-Clark, 1997). Hence, in this study, the role and consequence of adhering to religious beliefs and principles will be evaluated in order to determine the influence of religion in the woman deciding to leave or remain in an abusive environment.
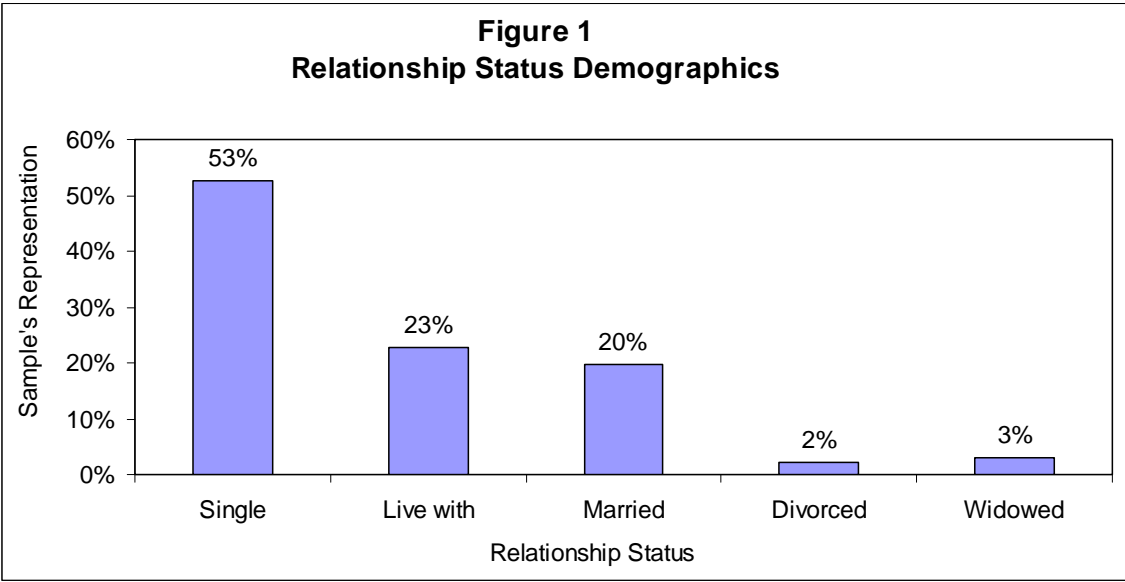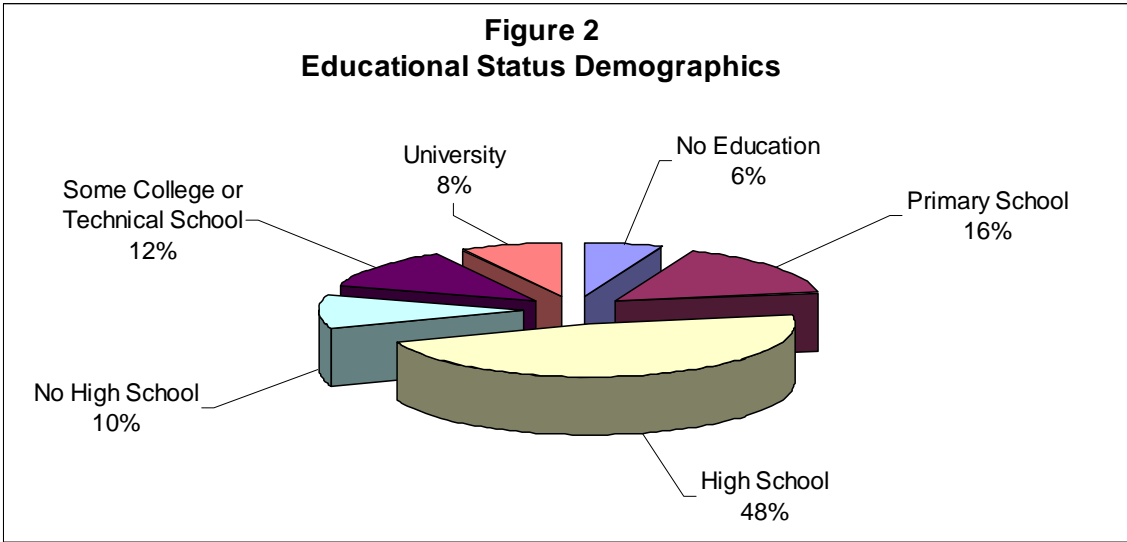
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of 100 women living in Haiti who are or have been abused by their spouse or partner. The study began with 100 participants, but three were dropped due to incomplete packages. The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 75 (*M*= 34.13, *SD*= 8.11). The sample consisted of married, co-habitating, divorced, widowed, and single women. Figure 1 provides an outline of relationship status information. In reference to religion, 60.8% of the sample (n=59) consisted of Catholics; 23.7% (n=23) protestants; 6.2% (n=6) Pentacostals; 1 % (n=1) Vodoo; with 2.1% (n= 2) claiming Other, hence they did not report any religion. Participant's levels of education were reported with the highest percentage being those who completed high school and the lowest being those individuals who reported having graduated from University (see Figure 2). Of the total sample, only 33% (n=32) reported being employed, while 46.4% (n=45) reported that they were currently unemployed.

In the Mother Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire, participants described the type of abuse they experienced with their partner. It was reported that they struggled with verbal abuse, physical abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse; and mental abuse (See Table 1). Furthermore, the women identified the specific manner in which their partners abused them, acknowledging that they were hit; kicked; pushed; slapped;

Figure 1
Relationship Status Demographics

Note: Demographic information outlining the relationship status of the sample.

Figure 2
Educational Status Demographics

University
8%

No Education
6%

Some College or
Technical School
12%

Primary School
16%

No High School
10%

High School
48%

Note: Demographic table which provides description of the educational status of the sample as measured by the Demographic Form.

Table 1
Type of Abuse Experienced by Daughters

Verbal	74%
Physical	97%
Sexual	24%
Financial	19%
Mental	49%

a.   Type of abuse experienced by daughters as measured by the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire.

punched, and had their hair pulled (see Table 2). 100% of the participants confessed to being hit more than once by their partner.

Daughters also reported the type of abuse in their mother's experience, as well as the manners in which their partner's battered them. Daughters reported their mothers experiencing verbal abuse, physical abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse; and mental abuse (see Table 3). In reference to the specific manners in which they remembered their mother's partners abusing them, the participants noted their mothers were hit; kicked; pushed; slapped; punched; and had their hair pulled (see Table 4).

The literature provides information regarding the struggle for women to leave abusive relationships, stating that many leave the relationship temporarily, only to return. It was reported that approximately 50% of the time battered women returned to their abusers (Strube, 1988). Findings from this study confirmed this percentage, with approximately 52% of the sample reporting having left temporarily (n=50) and the other 48% reported never attempting to leave temporarily (see Figure 3).

Table 2
Manners in Which Daughters Were Abused

Hit	71%
kicked	22%
Pushed	60%
slapped	68%
Punched	22%
Hair Pulled	29%

a. Manners daughters were abused as measured by the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire.

Table 3
Type of Abuse Experienced by Mothers

Verbal	51%
Physical	64%
Sexual	21%
Financial	24%
Mental	22%

a. Type of abuse experienced by mothers as measured by the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire (MDIVQ).

Table 4
Manners in Which Mothers Were Abused

Hit	36%
kicked	36%
Pushed	40%
slapped	49%
Punched	14%
Hair Pulled	6%

a. Manners mothers were abused as measured by the Mother Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire (MDIVQ).

Figure 3
Temporarily Left Relationship

Never Left Temporarily, 48%

Temporarily Left, 52%
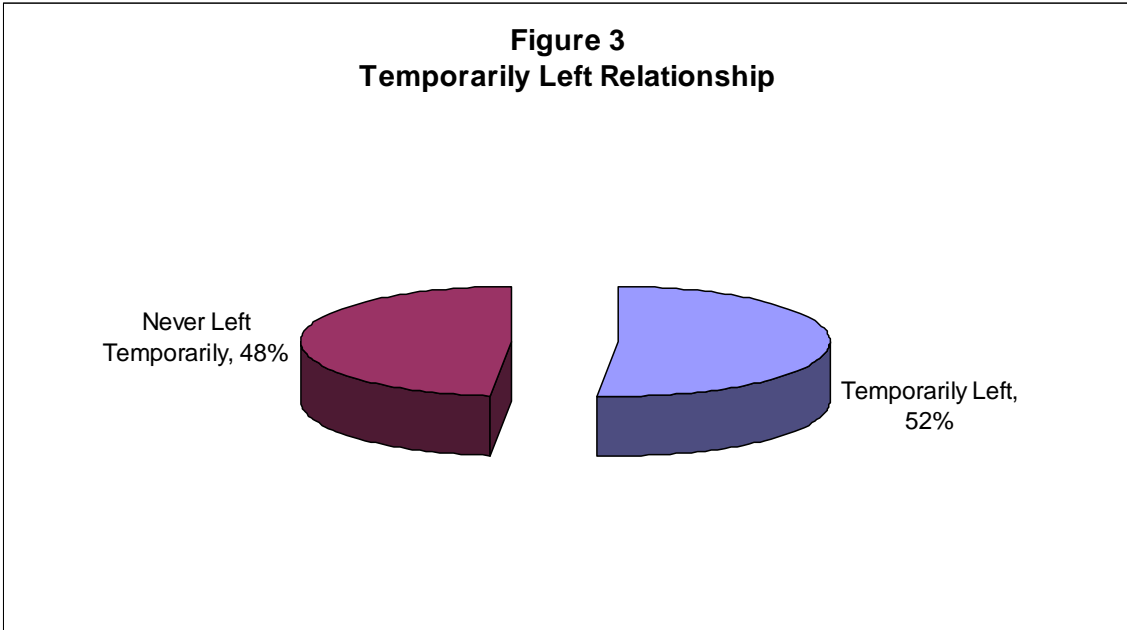
Demographical information regarding mothers and daughters who left the relationship temporarily as measured by the Demographic Questionnaire.
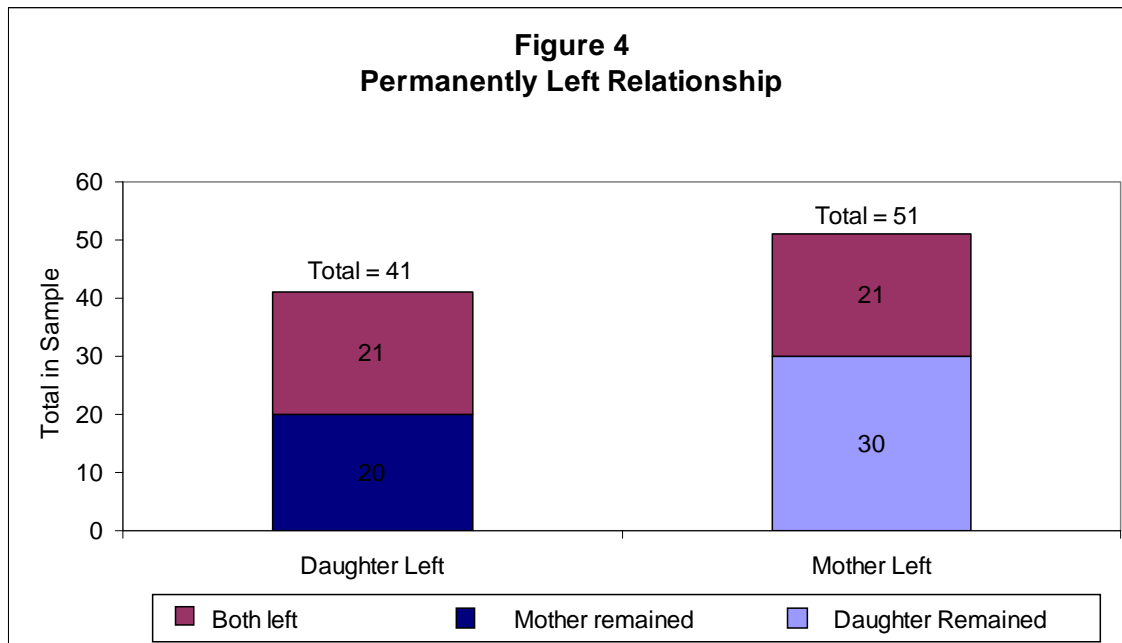
Figure 4
Permanently Left Relationship

- Demographical information regarding mothers and daughters who left the relationship permanently as measured by the Demographic Form.
- Out of the 41 participants who left their relationship permanently, 21 reported that their mother also left their abusive relationship.
- Out of the 51 mothers who left the relationship permanently, only 21 of their daughters actually left their abusive relationship.

While this is the case for many battered women, it is evident that about half of the women do in fact leave the violent relationship permanently. In reference to findings for the current study, there were 41 out of the 97 participants who left the relationship permanently and 51 out of the 97 participants reported their mothers leaving the abusive relationship permanently (see Figure 4).

For the current sample, it was pertinent to ascertain participant's primary caregiver. For instance, it was necessary to know whether the participants grew up with their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, or other individuals. For the current participant pool, 62.9% grew up with their mothers; 22.7% grew up with their aunt; 15.5% grew up with their grandmothers, with 1% claiming other as their primary caregivers. Figure 5 provides demographical information of the participant's primary caregivers.

Participants were obtained through a convenience sampling method, recruited through selected domestic violence shelters, churches, and women's organizations in Haiti. Participants were compensated through the possibility of winning prizes through a lottery.

Measures

A packet consisting of 6 separate measures and two forms (information sheet, recruitment flier) was provided to each participant in this study. All measures were translated into the Creole language, forward and back translated in order to increase the validity of the measures with the population. Also, all materials, forms, and instructions were in the Creole language. Each packet included the following:

1. The Intergenerational Fusion/Individuation Scale (INFUS) of the Personal Authority in the Family System (Bray et al., 1988)

2. The Fusion with Others Subscale of the Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998)

3. The Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire

4. The Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire

5. The Familial Perception Questionnaire

6. A Demographic Form, an Information Sheet, and Recruitment Flier

Figure 5
Primary Caregivers of
Daughters Who Remained When Their Mothers Left
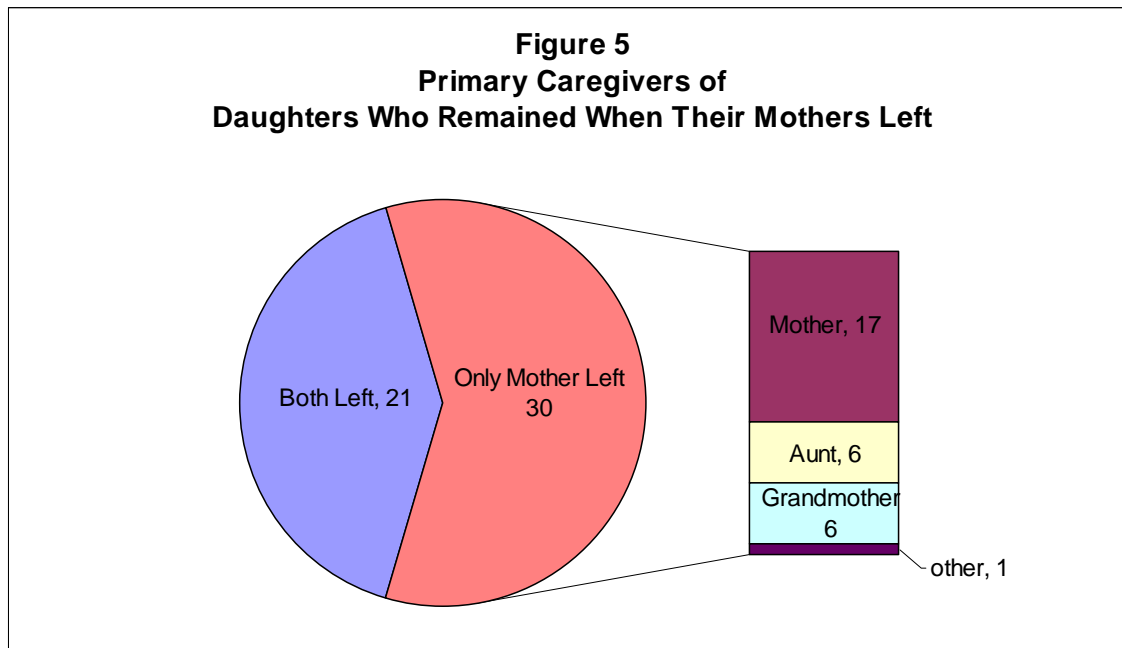
- Demographical information regarding primary caregivers of daughters who remained in the abusive relationship while their mothers left as measured by the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire.
- Among the 51 mothers who left the abusive relationship, 21of their daughter also left their abusive relationship.
- The data also shows that, among the 30 daughters who stayed in the relationship while their mothers left, only 17 of them were actually raised by their mother and the other 13 were raised by either their aunt or grand mother.

The Intergenerational Fusion/Individuation Scale

The Intergenerational Fusion/Individuation scale (INFUS) of the Personal

Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS; Bray et al., 1988) was used in

order to test the participant's level of individuation from their family of origin;

specifically, their mother. In this context, individuation reflects the women's ability to

rely on self during times of decisions rather than relying on her mother. Scoring low on

the INFUS indicates a lack of individuation, hence, impaired functioning and inability to

take responsibility for one's self. The Fusion/Individuation scale (INFUS) of the PAFS

questionnaire consists of 8 items. All items were answered on a 5-point likert scale

ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (except one item, which was

anchored by "totally responsible" and "not at all responsible"). A reliability analysis

was conducted on the eight PAFS items, resulting in a low alpha of .45. Two items (item

1 and 6) had item-total correlation less than .10 and were not included in the scale

calculation. The final PAFS scale was computed as the average of the remaining six

items. The scale had a mean of 2.67 (SD = .65) and an alpha of .53. A factor analysis

was performed on the Personal Authority in the Family Systems Questionnaire in order

to examine the construct validity of the scale. More specifically, an Oblimin rotated

principle factor analysis was conducted and revealed one factor which accounted for

23% of the variance. Eigenvalue for the factor was > 1.0. For this particular scale, the

item loadings were as follows: item 3 (.37), item 4 (.49), item 5 (.45), and item 8 (.66).

Higher scores on the PAFS indicate greater individuation. Although the reliability of the

final scale was low, the scale was retained in further analyses due to its hypothesized

relationship with women's decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship.

The Fusion with Others Subscale

The Fusion with Others Subscale of the Differentiation of Self Inventory

(Skowron & Friedlander, 1998) consisted of 12 items assessing the extent to which the

women differentiated themselves from others in their life. All items were answered on a

6-point likert scale ranging from "not at all true of me" to "very true of me."

Representative items on the scale are as follows: "I often agree with others just to

appease them", I feel a need for approval from virtually everyone in my life" and "I want

to live up to my parent's expectations of me", and "I feel it's important to hear my

parents' opinion before making decisions". Higher scores on this scale reflect greater

differentiation of self and ability to take I positions, as well as behaving in a less

emotionally reactive manner. A reliability analysis was conducted on the 12 DSI items,

resulting in an alpha of .74. One item (item 9) had a negative item-total correlation and

was not included in the scale calculation. The final DSI scale was computed as the

average of the remaining 11 items. The scale had a mean of 2.43 (SD = 1.10) and an

alpha of .78. A factor analysis was performed on the Differentiation of Self Inventory in

a order to examine the construct validity of the scale. An Oblimin rotated principle axis

factor analysis was conducted and yielded one factor which accounted for 29% of the

variance. Eigenvalue for the factor was > 1.0. Item loadings for this scale were as

follows: item 1 (.68), item 2 (.56), item 3 (.39), item 4 (.50), item 5 (.46), item 6 (.36),

item 7 (.42), item 8 (.57), item 10 (.56), item 11(.55), and item 12 (.44).

Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire

The Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire (CREQ) consisted of 28 items assessing the women's cultural and religious viewpoints. All questions were answered with "yes" or "no" responses ("yes" coded as 1, "no" coded as 0). Sample representative questions on the CREQ were as follows: "Growing up, I was told that females cannot do what males can", and "A woman's place is with her husband", and "In my religion, it is believed that marriage is forever", and "I believe that a man should be the one to control the household". A reliability analysis was conducted on the 28 CREQ items, resulting in a reasonably high reliability (alpha = .73). However, four items (items 7, 8, 21, and 22) had item-total correlations of less than .10 and were not included in the scale calculation. The CREQ scale was computed as the sum of the remaining 24 items. Two participants were identified as outliers, with scores of 6, and were removed from the calculation of the scale. These individuals were considered outliers as their scores seemed highly unlikely. The final CREQ had a mean of 16.28 (SD = 4.08) and an alpha of .78. A factor analysis was performed on the Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire as a means of examining validity of the scale. An Oblimin rotated principle axis factor analysis was conducted and one factor emerged which accounted for 16% of the variance. Eigenvalue for the factor was > 1.0. Item loadings for this scale were as follows: item 1 (.44), item 3 (.36), item 4 (.53), item 6 (.390), item 12 (.50), item 14 (.57), item 15 (.59), item 16 (.47), item 19 (.64), item 23 (.46), item 25 (.59), item 26 (.64). Higher scores on the CREQ indicate a greater influence of culture and religion on the women's beliefs.

The Familial Perception Questionnaire

The Familial Perception Questionnaire (FPQ) consisted of nine items assessing the extent to which the women internalized their mothers' perceptions (e.g., "My mother taught me that I should never get a divorce") All questions were answered on a 6-point likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." A reliability analysis was conducted on the nine FPQ items, resulting in an alpha of .67. Five participants were identified as outliers, with scores equal to 1 or scores greater than or equal to 5.89, and were removed from the calculation of the scale. The final FPQ scale was computed as the sum of the nine items, and had a mean of 28.91 (SD = 9.76). A factor analysis was performed on the Familial Perception Questionnaire in order to determine the construct validity of the scale. More specifically, an Oblimin rotated principle axis exploratory factor analysis was conducted and revealed one factor which accounted for 29% of the variance. Eigenvalue for the factor was > 1.0. Item loadings for the scale were as follows: item 1 (.61), item 2 (.52), item 4 (.61), item 7 (.46), item 8 (.52), and item 9 (.56). Higher scores on the FPQ indicate that the women have a greater tendency of being influenced by their mothers to stay in the relationship.

Mother Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire

A questionnaire was created in order to determine the occurrence and type of spousal abuse suffered by women and their mothers. The questionnaire contained a total of 24 questions, to which the participant answered yes or no and selected from a list of choices.

Demographic Form

This form consisted of a list of demographical questions such as, age, employment, educational and religious status. The participants put a check or provided short answers to the questions.

Procedure

Participants were approached once they entered into a domestic violence shelter or having informed church or community organization regarding the abuse. After each participant consented to participate, the researcher provided her with a research packet containing an information sheet describing the study, directions on how to complete the questionnaires containing the various instruments, as well as details on compensation for participating (which consisted of a lottery where the participants had the opportunity to win a bedspread set).

Upon completion of the information sheet, each participant completed the questionnaires. After turning in the questionnaires to the researcher or assistant, the participants received a number entry into the lottery. All materials, instructions, and verbal interactions were in the Creole language. As necessary, participants were provided with additional assistance by the researcher or assistant. Participants were asked to complete and answer questions on the INFUS and the Fusion with Others measures based on their relationship with their mother, or the person who was their primary caregiver or nurturer. Participants identified the individual by responding to a specific question stating "Who did you grow up with". Response options included: "Mother", "Aunt", "Grandmother" and "Other".

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents statistical results that were obtained for the current study. The outcome measure of interest was item 10, which assessed whether the women terminated or remained in the relationship with the abusive partner. On the Mother-daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire, the item read "Are you still in a relationship with the partner?" and was answered with a "yes" (coded as 1) or "no" (coded as 0) response. All six scale scores, the Cultural and Religious Questionnaire, the Personal Authority in the Family System, the Family Perception Questionnaire, and Differentiation of Self Inventory, and type of relationship between mother and daughter were examined as predictors of women's likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship. A final predictor variable was examined as well, item 22 of the Spousal Abuse Questionnaire, which assessed whether the mothers of the participants left or remained in their own abusive relationships. This item read "Is your mother still in a relationship with this partner?" and was answered with a "yes" (coded as 1) or "no" (coded as 0) response.

It was hypothesized that the six predictor variables would be related to the outcome of daughters' decision regarding the abusive relationship in a systematic way. The CREQ was expected to correlate negatively with the outcome measure. That is, women who were more strongly influenced by culture and religion would be less likely to leave an abusive relationship. The PAFS was expected to correlate positively with the outcome, such that women who were more individuated from their families would be

more likely to leave an abusive partner. The FPQ was expected to correlate negatively

with the outcome, such that women who were more strongly influenced by their

mothers' perceptions would be less likely to leave an abusive partner. The DSI was

expected to correlate positively with the outcome (i.e. those who more strongly

differentiated themselves from their mother would be more likely to leave abusive

relationships). Finally, mothers' decision to leave abusive relationships ("Mleave") was

expected to positively correlate with daughters' decisions. That is, if mothers left,

daughters would display the same tendency.

Descriptive statistics for the measures are represented in Table 5. The

correlations between the six predictors and the outcome (i.e. daughters' likelihood of

leaving an abusive relationship) are displayed in Table 6. As the table reveals, only one

of the predictors had a significant relationship with the outcome. Specifically, higher

scores on the DSI is indicative of a greater ability to differentiate oneself from others,

thereby predicted a tendency not to remain in an abusive relationship, $r = .20$, $p < .05$,

consistent with the second hypothesis that there would be a significant negative

correlation between the degree of differentiation of a daughter from her mother and the

likelihood of her leaving the relationship. Although none of the remaining correlations

with the outcome reached significance, the correlations between the outcome and both

the CREQ and the PAFS were in the expected direction.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Measures

	Daughters Left		Daughters Remained	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
CREQ	0.63	0.23	0.69	0.15
PAFS	2.84	0.63	2.59	0.69
FPQ	3.39	0.96	2.99	1.18
DSI	2.77	1.15	2.26	1.07
PAFS/DSI	2.81	0.79	2.43	0.64

Table 6

Zero-order Correlations between Predictors and Outcome

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CREQ	-					
2. PAFS	0.084	-				
3. FPQ	-0.099	0.085	-			
4. DSI	-0.107	.241*	0.109	-		
5. Mleave	0.095	0.112	0.041	0.038	-	
6. M/D rel	-0.043	0.028	0.108	-0.028	-0.1	0.033
7. Dleave	-0.122	0.162	0.112	.204*	-0.023	-

Note: Mleave = item 22 from Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire.
Dleave = item 10 from the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire.

M/D rel = item 22.1 from Demographics. * p < .05

In the correlation analysis, entering the block of six predictors did not significantly improve accuracy of predicting whether daughters stayed or left their abusive relationship, and none of the entered variables themselves were significant independent predictors of the outcome, all ps > .10. However, as Table 6 reveals, the PAFS and DSI scales were significantly associated, r = .24, p < .05, so the shared variance between these two variables may have masked the significance of either one as predictors of daughters' likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship.

Given the overlap between the PAFS and DSI scales both conceptually, as each assesses degree of individuation or differentiation between oneself and one's close others, and statistically, as these scales were significantly correlated. These scales were combined to form a single PAFS/DSI scale (computed as the average of the two individual scales). The scale had a mean of 2.55 (SD = .70). An additional reliability analysis was conducted on this new scale, which verified that the items had substantial intercorrelations (Alpha of .77).

The new PAFS/DSI variable, along with the CREQ, FPQ, and Mleave, were entered into a logistic regression as predictors of daughter's decision to stay or leave her abuser. Although the block of four variables did not significantly improve the ability to predict the outcome, χ^2 (4) = 7.345, p > .10, PAFS/DSI was a significant predictor, β = .68, Wald = 4.58, p < .05. That is, higher scores on the PAFS/DSI, which is indicative of a greater tendency to differentiate or individuate oneself from close others, were associated with a greater likelihood of ending a relationship with an abusive partner. None of the other three variables were significant predictors of daughter's decision

Table 7
Logistic Regression with Four Predictor Variables

	Beta	S.E.	Wald
Mleave	-0.061	0.432	0.02
CREQ	-1.315	1.22	1.162
FPQ	0.154	0.2	0.59
PAFS/DSI	0.678	0.317	4.581*
Constant	-1.649	1.382	1.424

* $p < .05$

regarding the relationship. The results of the logistic regression analysis are displayed in Table 7.

The results of the logistic regression analyses provide partial support for the hypotheses. Although the PAFS and DSI were not independently strong predictors of women's decision to terminate an abusive relationship when entered into a model with all other predictors, the combination of these scales as a single variable (which was warranted, as indicated by correlational and reliability analyses) significantly predicted this outcome in the expected direction. However, neither the CREQ, FPQ, nor mothers' decision to leave their abusive partners was significant predictors of the daughters' decision to leave an abusive relationship.

Interestingly, women's tendency to leave vs. stay in an abusive relationship was predicted by whether they perceived their relationship to be violent ("perceive viol"; item 9 of the Violence Questionnaire: "Do you consider your relationship with your partner violent?"). Answers to this questions were correlated with women's decision to terminate the relationship with the abusive partner, $r = .27$, $p < .01$, such that women who considered their relationship to be violent were more likely to end it. Specifically, among those who did not perceive their relationship to be violent, only 16% left the relationship. However, among those who considered their relationship violent, 49% left the relationship: a threefold increase. Thus, when explaining women's tendency to leave a violent relationship, it appears important to examine whether the women, themselves, perceive their relationship to be violent. If, in fact, they perceive it so, they are more likely to end the relationship.

An additional logistic regression analysis was conducted, in which both the combined PAFS/DSI score and the "perceive viol." variable were entered as predictors of Dleave (daughters' likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship). The model with these two predictors provided a significant improvement in the ability to predict the outcome as compared to a model without predictors, χ^2 (2) = 13.31, p = .001.

Whereas the model without any predictors could correctly classify the outcome 58% of the time (just above chance levels), the two-predictor model correctly classified 67% of the cases, a 16% improvement in the predictive ability of the model. Moreover, as displayed in Table 8, both PAFS/DSI (β = .75, Wald = 5.39, p < .05) and perceived violence (β = 1.70, Wald = 6.22, p < .05) were significant and unique positive predictors of the outcome. That is, controlling for levels of the other variable, women who had higher scores on the combined PAFS/DSI measure and/or who perceived their relationship to be violent were more likely to leave their abusive relationship.

However, given the somewhat surprising findings, whereby several of the hypothesized predictors were unrelated to the outcome, additional correlational analyses were conducted to examine whether any individual items from these scales were significantly associated with the outcome.

Table 8
Logistic Regression with Two Predictor Variables

	Beta	S.E.	Wald
PAFS/DSI	0.75	0.323	5.389*
Perceive viol.	1.696	0.68	6.217*
Constant	-3.658	1.084	11.379*

* $p < .05$

In the CREQ, items 4 ("A woman's place is with her husband.") and 19 ("According to the principles of my religion, a man controls and makes all the decisions in the home and the woman obeys." were both negatively correlated with the outcome (at r = -.26 and r = -.22, respectively, both ps < .05), such that women who agreed with either item were less likely to leave an abusive partner.

Item 7 on the PAFS ("I often get so emotional with my parents that I cannot think straight.") was related to the outcome, $r = .25$, $p < .01$, such that women who agreed with this item were more likely to leave their abuser. Item 7 on the FPQ ("I learned from my mother that its important to take care of your physical appearance.") was associated with the outcome, $r = .22$, $p < .05$, such that agreeing with the item predicted a tendency to leave one's abusive partner. Finally, item 8 on the DSI ("I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision." was related to the outcome, $r = .34$, $p < .05$, such that those for whom the statement was true were more likely to leave an abusive relationship.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The general intent of the current study was to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding Haitian women and their experience with domestic violence and what influences their decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Furthermore, the study had four research questions to answer, first of which was to determine whether the mother daughter relationship influenced the daughter's decision to remain or leave a violent relationship. The second research question was to ascertain whether Bowen's theory of fusion/individuation influenced a woman's decision to remain or leave an abuser. The third research question was to explore the existence of cultural factors that may influence the participants to remain with their perpetrator. Lastly, the fourth research question was to determine the influence of religion on a woman's decision regarding a violent relationship. The current chapter will highlight and interpret the study's findings, a discussion of treatment implications, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Research Question #1: Does the mother daughter relationship influence the daughter's decision to remain or leave a violent relationship? In regards to the primary goal, this study hypothesized that there would be a significant positive relationship between mothers and daughters and the decision the daughter makes regarding the relationship. It was expected that the daughter's decisions regarding the relationship would be highly influenced based on the type of relationship that they have with their mothers, propelling them to either remain with or leave the perpetrator. However, the

results from this study found no relationship between the type of mother daughter relationship and the decision to stay or leave an abusive partner. In addition, logistic regression analyses were performed to ascertain the influence of mother's themselves leaving their abuser and the role that may play in daughter's own decision to leave her abuser. It was found that mother's leaving of her abusive partner was not a significant predictor of daughter's decision to leave an abusive relationship. Thus, the theory that the mother daughter relationship is unique, supportive (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990) creating feelings of connectedness and interdependence (Fischer, 1991) as well as having the potential to influence her perceptions regarding various life choices including romantic relationships (Fenchel, 1996) does not appear to extend to romantic relationships. More specifically, it does not seem to influence the woman's decision regarding the violent relationship.

Research Question #2: Does the level of fusion/individual of the daughter from her mother influence the daughter's decision or remain in or leave a violent relationship? In general, the findings were supportive of Bowen's (1978) family systems theory of the importance of an individual being able to differentiate themselves from their family of origin or experience a lack of full emotional separation, which eventually will affect their future functioning. Bowen's idea was that individuation from primary caregivers has a tremendous impact in the individual's decisions, perceptions and behaviors. Hence, the hypothesis that there would be a significant positive correlation between the degree of differentiation of a daughter from her mother and the likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship was supported by the findings. Correlations were

performed with both the Personal Authority in the Family Systems Questionnaire's Fusion/Individuation subscale and the Differentiation of Self Inventory analyzing degree of fusion/individuation. The DSI assessed the degree to which the women in the study were differentiated or fused with their mothers. Correlations of the DSI indicated a significant relationship with the outcome. To further elaborate, findings from the tests revealed that individuals who obtained higher scores on the DSI measure, which indicated greater ability to differentiate from their mothers, were less likely to remain with their abusers ($r=.20$, $p<.05$). This finding was consistent with the hypothesis. Furthermore, while the PAFS did not reach significance with the outcome, the correlations between the outcome and the PAFS were in the expected direction. A logistic regression was performed combining the PAFS and DSI since they were both assessing the daughter's level of individuation and they were significantly correlated. When these two scales were combined, they were a significant predictor of the outcome of the daughter either remaining or leaving the abusive relationship. Basically, obtaining a higher score on the PAFS/DSI variable indicated a greater likelihood of leaving an abuser.

Research Question #3: Do cultural factors significantly influence the decision the Haitian woman makes to remain or leave the abusive relationship? The third goal of the study was to determine the degree to which the women's culture influenced their decision regarding the abusive relationship in which they were involved. It was hypothesized that women who are highly influenced by their Haitian culture will be more likely to stay in an abusive relationship, than women who are not highly influenced

by such factors. However, the results from this study found no relationship between adhering to cultural factors and decision to remain or leave an abusive partner. Hence, the theory that culture may be the root of domestic violence (Lateef, 1992; Leisring, Dowd, & Rosenbaum, 2003; Madhurima; 1996; Torres, 1991 Yllo, 1983; Yllo & Straus, 1984) encapsulating cultural values that are patriarchal in nature, affording men and women different statuses in society does not appear to extend to the sample of abused women in this study.

Research Question #4: Do religious factors significantly influence the decision the Haitian woman makes to remain or leave the abusive relationship? Regarding the fourth research question, the goal was to ascertain the degree to which the women's religious beliefs influenced their decision to remain in or leave her abuser. In this study it was expected that Haitian women who are highly influenced by religious factors will be more likely to stay in an abusive relationship than Haitian women who are not highly influenced by such factors. However, the results from this study found no relationship between the women's religious beliefs and the decisions they made to remain with or leave their abuser. It appears that the theory that the influence of religion can serve as the vehicle through which a woman is coerced to yield to specific religious beliefs and ideation, even when there are signs of insecurity and danger (Dylan, 1998; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Nason-Clark, 1997) may not be relevant to the current sample.

Additional Analyses

Further analyses were composed and an interesting finding was discovered in regards to what variable influenced the daughter's decision to stay or leave a violent relationship. Conversely, it was found that the women's perception regarding the relationship as being either violent or non violent, was a strong predictor of the outcome of staying or leaving. It was found that women who answered that they considered their relationship to be violent in nature were more likely to terminate their abusive relationship, while the women who answered that they did not perceive their relationship to be violent, were less likely to end the abusive relationship. Consequently, it appears that a significant aspect of the stay or leave decision is the woman's own perception regarding the relationship as being violent or non violent. In reference to additional analyses, a logistic regression was performed where the PAFS/DSI were combined with perceived violence in order to evaluate whether together they were able to predict daughter's likelihood of leaving a violent relationship and it was found that they were significant and positive predictors of the outcome of daughter leaving the violent relationship. Hence, women who obtained higher scores on the PAFS/DSI and perceived their relationship to be violent were more likely to end the relationship.

Further analyses were performed using the Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire and it was found that even though the CREQ was not a significant predictor of the decision to leave, it was found that women who answered positively to questions 4 ("A woman's place is with her husband") and question 19 ("According to the principles of my religion, a man controls and makes all the decisions in the home and

the woman obeys") were less likely to leave or more likely to remain with their abusive

partners. Item number 7 on the PAFS was also found to be a good predictor of women

leaving their abusive relationship. Item number 7 on the FPQ ("I learned from my

mother that it's important to take care of your physical appearance"), which looked at

the degree to which daughter's incorporated mother's perceptions into their own

worldview and consequently decisions, was assessed and it was found that it was

associated with the outcome in that when the women agreed with the question, they were

more likely to leave the relationship. Women who positively endorsed item 8 on the

DSI, stating "I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision"

were more likely to leave their abusive relationships.

Implications for Treatment

The findings of this study have significant implications for treatment of Haitian

women who are or have been involved in domestic violence relationships. The current

study provides proof to the theory that an individual's degree of individuation from

family of origin is highly significant and plays a great role in their ability to maintain

healthy relationships in the future. There is also clinical significance to this finding in

that when counseling abused Haitian women, a clinician must also take into account the

influence of the family of origin in that there may be unresolved attachment/enmeshment

issues that can play a significant role in how beneficial the assistance will be to the

person. For instance, when a woman has been able to individuate fully from her family,

she is more capable and able to make decisions regarding her relationships without

having the influence of any parental figure. On the other hand, someone who has not

been able to individuate, hence continue to be fused with a parental figure, will struggle to make a decision regarding an abusive relationship even when faced with danger and insecurity. It will be difficult to remove herself from the situation, as it will be a continuous struggle to gain independence and control of the maladaptive ways of behaving.

Based on the findings of the current study, another important implication of treatment modality with abused women that must be highlighted is the fact that the clinician must take into account the perception of the abused woman. For instance, the current study found that women were more likely to leave their abuser if they perceived the relationship to be violent in nature. Therefore, it may be apparent to the clinician that the individual is involved in a violent and dangerous relationship, but if the woman herself does not perceive it as such, treatment will be highly ineffective. It will be pertinent to first and foremost educate the women on the characteristics of an abusive relationship, as well as potential influence of family of origin.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of the current study. One particular weakness of the study is the fact that a greater portion of the participants from the study were obtained from a convenient pool of women from organizations catering to women in abusive relationships, hence thereby decreasing the generalizability. Furthermore, the fact that a large portion of the sample was from such an organization, the current findings may not be representative of other abused women from the community at large. In addition, a

notable weakness of the study stem from the fact that the sample was obtained through two large cities in Haiti, hence they may not be representative of the country as a whole.

Another limitation of the study is related to its methodology. The constructs used in the study were measured through participant self-reports of not only their own behaviors and experience with abuse, but that of their mother's as well. It is quite possible that their self-reports may have been slightly exaggerated in order to receive more attention and assistance from the organization. Also, the fact that daughters provided second hand data on their mother's experience with abuse is also another limitation of the current study since the information provided may have very likely been skewed. Further, social desirability may also have affected the participants' self-reports as the participants may have been reluctant to speak negatively about their mother. The Personal Authority in the Family Systems questionnaire, as well as the Differentiation of Self Inventory were measures that were developed to be utilized with a very individualistic culture, while Haitian culture is very collectivistic in nature, hence this also serves as another limitation of the study as the measures may not have captured the dynamics that are truly involved in the Haitian culture. Likewise, the Mother-Daughter Intergenerational Violence Questionnaire, the Familial Perception Questionnaire, and the Cultural and Religious Expectations Questionnaire were developed by the examiner for the current study and as a result, this is also a limitation as the scales have not been used with any other populations. Furthermore, the participant's relationship with the perpetrator may also influence the type of information they provided regarding that individual's behavior.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is hoped that both the knowledge and research base of studies focusing on the plight of Haitian women who have been involved in abusive relationships, as well as the factors that play a role in their decisions to leave their abuser, will continue to grow and expand. This is particularly important since, as previously stated, Haitian women's experience with violence is the highest in the Caribbean. Future studies should also focus on increasing the size of their sample in order to increase generalizability. Another aspect that future researchers should focus on is obtaining participants from different settings and cities, so as to increase generalizability of the study to the community at large. In terms of future research, it would be important to ascertain whether the PAFS/DSI would be influenced by acculturaltion upon comparing Haitian women of Haiti with those who currently reside in the United States. Since the current study focused mainly on the reason women leave, it would be vital and pertinent to investigate in-depth the reasons women remain in violent relationships, particularly researching the precise impact of women's religious beliefs on their chances of leaving.

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