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The Experience of Latina Victims of Domestic Violence in Seeking Support Services

Jeanine Chuya
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Jeanine Chuya

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Review Committee

Dr. Robin Friedman, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Jane Lyons, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Bonnie Nastasi, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

The Experience of Latina Victims of Domestic Violence in Seeking Support Services

By

Jeanine Chuya

MA, Sage Graduate School, 2008

BS, York College, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influence the decisions among Latina victims of domestic violence as to whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Various studies have found a higher rate of domestic violence among Latinas than other ethnic minority groups. A review of the contemporary literature demonstrated that little is known about factors influencing these women's decisions about whether to seek support services post domestic violence experiences. Intersectionality and structural violence theory constituted this study's framework. The research questions explored the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies and their reasons for not seeking support services. Semistructured interviews of 8 self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence were conducted. Data were analyzed using Moustakas' steps in transcendental phenomenology. The findings revealed 5 core themes of the participants' experiences: Theme 1: Rationale for not Seeking Support Services, Theme 2: Family's Influence on Help Seeking, Theme 3: Cultural Constraints, Theme 4: Reasons for not Calling the Police, and Theme 5: Financial Constraints. Recommendations include additional studies to explore additional studies on how to address the causes for not seeking support services that were identified by the participants in this study. More culturally competent services for minorities struggling with domestic violence need to be offered. The findings can foster positive social change by providing an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon, including improving services provided by antidomestic violence agencies.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all my family members, particularly my mother, Leonne, my late father, Rosemond, my sister, Marjorie, my brother, Frantz, my nieces Marj and Christelle, my nephews, Mendel and Jovani, my sister-in-law, Mama and my brother-in-law, D for their unconditional support throughout this journey. To my co-workers, Alba Ardila and Luisa Diaz, I am forever grateful for your tremendous support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Latina is the feminine form of the word, so for this study the term, *Latina* was used to refer to women of Latin descent. Intimate partner violence (IPV), commonly known as domestic violence, specifically against Latinas, constitutes a major concern. Compared with their non-Latina counterparts, Latinas are disproportionately affected by the occurrence and aftermath of domestic violence (Sabina, Cuevas, & Zadnick, 2015). Kulkarni, Racine, and Ramos (2012) emphasized the need for researchers to remain proactive with regard to investigating the effect of cultural perceptions related to domestic violence and the role of social networks in facilitating Latina victims of domestic violence leaving abusive relationships. The findings of this study might lead to positive social change by providing to psychologists, antidomestic violence advocates, policy makers and other mental and health care professionals additional insights about factors that influence the decisions of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence and how to better empower these women

In this chapter, I discuss the following content: (a) background, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose of the study, (d) research question, (e) theoretical framework, (f) nature of the study, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, (i) scope and delimitations, (j) limitations, and (k) significance of the study. There is a summary at the end of this chapter.

Background

Domestic violence against women constitutes a major social problem. Various studies found that compared with other ethnic groups, domestic violence rates are greater for Latinas (Black et al., 2011). Curvas, Sabina, and Millosi (2012) indicated that 53.6% of Latinas who were surveyed experienced at least one type of domestic violence. Brabeck (2008) and Yashioka and Choi (2005) agreed that one of the key challenges for Latina victims of domestic violence is that they are more likely to reside in communities that lack adequate resources.

Flicker et al. (2011) maintained that the reluctance of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek support services is to a great extent the result of their cultural beliefs in terms of privacy. Perilla, Serrata, Weinberg, and Lippy (2012) affirmed that diversity within the Latino community and the effects of many problems Latino groups encounter make it difficult for service providers to competently help these populations. Previous studies revealed numerous and interconnected impediments that Latina victims of domestic violence encounter when determining to seek help (Bhuyan & Velagapudi, 2013).

Similarly, Marrs Fuchsel, Murphy, and Dufresne (2012) posited that a variety of obstacles such as cultural expectations, economic and cultural dependency prevent victims from disclosing to informal or formal support networks. Ahrens, Isas, Rios-Mandel, and Lopez (2010) argued that in addition to cultural beliefs, gender role ideologies and traditional beliefs regarding marriage as well as respect for authority play a significant role on discouraging Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help.

Gonzalez-Guardia et al. (2012) asserted that machismo and marianismo, which promote traditional gender roles within the Latino community, are major factors engendering various stressors related to immigration and acculturation process, including the obligation not to bring shame upon the family.

Tracy and Rosano (2013) argued that maintaining closed relationship with both immediate and extended family members, including prioritizing family's interests instead of individual ones, constitutes the key value of familismo. Ingram (2007) posited that another major challenge for Latina victims of domestic violence is that despite their immigration status, language barriers, and lack of awareness regarding available resources, their status as members of an ethnic minority group may contribute not only to their victimization, but also to their resistance with regard to seeking help. Falconier et al. (2013) found that there is a need to expand domestic violence research on Latina victims who have never contacted any type of advocacy service to understand the experiences that influences their decisions.

In my review of the research literature, I did not find studies about the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services. I filled this gap in the literature through this phenomenological study. This study might lead to the discovery of strategies that antidomestic violence agencies can use to facilitate Latina victims of domestic violence to seek support services. In addition, information related to Latina victims of domestic who do not seek support services can play a significant role in raising awareness of this issue to mental health professionals providing services to victims of domestic violence, particularly Latinas and developing appropriate

treatment interventions for these women. Finally, the results might augment the information accessible about Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services.

Problem Statement

Studies have reported that lifetime physical IPV among Latinas range between 19.5 and 35.2% (Black et al., 2011). Truman, Langton, and Planty (2013) contended that among serious violent crime such as domestic violence, including crime in which weapons and or/injury are involved, the rate is higher within the Latino population than the Caucasian population. Meanwhile, Dichter and Gelles (2012) maintained that the majority of women victims of domestic violence do not solicit formal social services.

Mookeriee, Cerulli, Fernandez, and Chin (2015) maintained that compared with their White and African American counterparts, the rate of violence against Latinas is higher. However, among the many challenges for Latina victims of domestic violence is their reluctance to seek help. Even though previous studies have provided some explanations about women victims of domestic violence and their help-seeking behaviors, a gap in the research exists about the lived experience of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not to seek support services.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. A primary focus of this study was to describe the perceptions of Latina victims of domestic violence about their decision not

to seek support services. The lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in their decisions not to seek help from antidomestic violence agencies were captured through the use of semistructured interviews.

Research questions

The central research question that was explored in this study was:

What are the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies? A secondary question was: How do Latina victims of domestic violence describe reasons whether or not to seek support services?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Intersectionality theory provided a framework for understanding why Latina women may not seek help when involved in domestic violence. Introduced in 1989 by Crenshaw, intersectionality is a methodology of investigating the relationships among multiple aspects and modalities of social relationships and subject formations (McCall, 2005). The core issue for intersectionality theory is the understanding that women experience oppression in varying orders and degrees of potency (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013).

The point remains that while all women potentially experience oppression based on gender, women are differentially oppressed by the varied intersections of other systems of oppression and discrimination. For instance, intersectionality includes various systems of power and discrimination such as sexuality, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and ability and is concerned with the manners in which constructed identities interface to form numerous selves or aspects of individuals (Cramer & Plummer, 2009).

Jones and McEwen (2000) and Abe, Jones, and McEwen (2007) affirmed that intersectionality is compatible with the perspective of multiple identities, which entails that identities such as gender, race and class are interconnected. Additionally, the application of intersectionality theory (Veenstra & Patterson, 2016) played a significant role in determining whether these women's language, cultural identity, religious beliefs, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, and immigration status contribute to their decision to not seek help from any antidomestic violence agency. In addition, structural violence was used as a second theory to frame this study. Structural violence constitutes a thorough framework to describe the system through which social forces such as poverty, language barriers, economic, immigration status and gender inequity become integrated as individual experiences and access to social services (Galtung, 1990).

A structural violence framework concedes and examines intersecting inequalities in the concealment of human capacity and can be a helpful instrument in structuring an intersectional examination of the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help when involved in domestic violence (Qureshi, 2013). Therefore, an understanding of whether or not all of the potential factors overlap was imperative. The failure to simultaneously focus on all these factors might lead to a lack of understanding of the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not to seek help from any antidomestic violence agency. A more detailed explanation of intersectionality theory and structural violence theory is in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a phenomenological approach. I applied transcendental phenomenology because the purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who may not seek help from antidomestic violence agencies. Greenhalgh and Taylor (1997) explained that phenomenological methodology is an appropriate means of investigating the thoughts and perceptions that shape individuals' behaviors. Therefore, I used a phenomenological approach to obtain the core of the experience of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services.

Through this study, I attempted to gain the essence and meanings of these women's experiences about their decision not to seek support services. I recruited a purposive sample of 8 Latina victims of domestic violence who met the inclusion criteria from churches in the state of New York. I examined the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence using semistructured interviews, which was composed of open-ended questions.

The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and I recorded them. Participants had the option to stop at any time during the interview process. This method of interviewing led to detailed qualitative descriptions of these women's lived experiences. In order to analyze the data, a transcendental phenomenological method was used (Moustakas, 1994). Following Moustakas's (1994) steps, the horizons and invariant constituents were identified and clustered; the invariant constituents were grouped into

themes and a composite description was developed reflecting the essence of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services.

Definitions

In this study, the following key terms were crucial for better apprehension.

Domestic violence. Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners (Schechter & Ganley, 1995).

Gender. In this study, the term *gender* is in conformity with the socially constructed definition, which entails either being a woman or a man (Lerner, 1986).

Help-seeking. The disclosure of victimization to receive some assistance (Mays, Caldwell, & Jackson, 1996). In this study, the concept of support services is defined as available community agencies from which victims of domestic violence can receive psychological and emotional help, law enforcement agencies such as police stations where victims can go to seek protection and community legal services.

Latino/a. The U.S. Bureau of Justice defines *Latino/a* as “individuals who consider themselves as Mexican American, Chicano, Mexican, Mexicano, Puerto-Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American, as well as people who come from other Latino cultures regardless of care” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). *Latina* is the feminine form of the word so for this study the term *Latina* will be used to refer to women of Latin descent.

Lived experiences. Lived experience means the individual apprehension of a group of people involving in a distinct and complicated phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Machismo. The masculine force, which one way or the other drives all masculine behaviors (Andrade, 1992).

Victims. For the purpose of this study, this refers to those who have experience domestic violence (Bourke, 2007).

Assumptions

The assumption was that Latina women victims of domestic violence who may not seeking support services and would honestly answer interview questions about this issue. It was anticipated that the use of semistructured interviews was adequate to understand the lived experience of the participants. It was also assumed that participants would provide rich descriptive data about their lived experiences of seeking services after instances of domestic violence.

Scope and Delimitations

The lived experience of Latina victims of domestic violence who may not seek support services was the focus of this study. The aim of this study was to explore factors that may contribute to their decision not to seek support services. A purposeful sample of eight to 10 self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence, 21 years old and older; living in the state of New York; English speaking and who experienced domestic violence in a relationship within the past 2 years were interviewed. A delimitation of this study was that the findings of the study were not expected to be generalizable to all Latina victims of domestic violence or to the larger population of women who have

experienced domestic violence. Aanstoos (1984) maintained that the focus of phenomenological research is not on making generalization of findings, but rather on the descriptions of experience.

Limitations

This study had two major limitations that were addressed because the study sample was restricted only to Latina victims of domestic violence and who do not obtain support. The first limitation was about ethnicity and location. A second limitation was that a small sample of participants was used with this phenomenological study and the findings may only be relevant to these participants. A third limitation was that as a woman, it is possible for me to sympathize with participants and such sympathy might lead me to using some leading questions. Creswell (2009) maintained that for researchers to report the experiences of participants correctly, it is important not to inflict biases into the study data and analysis. I used bracketing to address any personal bias by making sure that I gathered the data without any preconceived attitudes, beliefs or opinions of participants' experiences.

Significance

The significance of this phenomenological study is that it will make an original contribution to the research literature by helping to fill the gap about Latinas who are victims of domestic violence yet do not seek support services. The potential findings of this study could lead to positive social change by creating awareness of these women's views. Understanding these women's perceptions of domestic violence and the necessity to address factors that may contribute to their decision not to seek support services was

imperative. This study provided a unique opportunity to listen to these women and highlight the need for additional debate about this crucial issue.

In addition, the findings from this study might help antidomestic violence advocates and policy makers to thoroughly understand these women's perceptions and perhaps take appropriate steps to encourage all women victims of domestic violence, particularly Latinas to seek support services. Psychologists and other mental health professionals need to understand factors that influence these women's decisions not to seek advocacy or other services, to improve outreach and services to this group (Goodman, Fauci, Sullivan, DiGiovanni, & Wilson, 2016). Moreover, this study might shed light on the necessity for antidomestic violence agencies to develop programs that are more accessible to Latina victims of domestic violence.

Aldarondo and Mederos (2002) posited that the most efficient antidomestic violence agencies that provide services to Latinas are those that strongly focus on reaching out and engaging women which lead them to trust institutions. Kulkarni et al. (2012) highlighted the need for researchers to remain proactive about investigating the effect of cultural perceptions related to domestic violence and the role of social networks in facilitating Latina victims of domestic violence leaving abusive relationships. In terms of positive social change, the result of this study might play a fundamental role in improving services provided by antidomestic violence agencies.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence the decisions of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support

services after experiencing domestic violence. This phenomenological study helped fill the gap in the research literature to understand this phenomenon. The theoretical framework that guided this study is intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989). In terms of data collection and analysis, I used semistructured interviews to collect rich data from the participants. This data, which I transcribed verbatim, led to a textural and structural description of participants' lived experiences that engendered a greater understanding of their common experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The findings of this study provided additional insights regarding the lived experience of Latina victims of domestic violence who may not seek support services. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature regarding the theoretical framework and key concepts such as culture, family, language barriers, immigration status, and gender roles, which may influence the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence when seeking support services.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence the decision among Latina victims of domestic violence of whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. The existing literature is replete with research studies regarding domestic violence against women of various ethnicities, including their help seeking behaviors (Enosh, Leshem & Buchbinder, 2016). The current literature also shows that there is limited research regarding the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help (Rodriguez et al., 2018). There is a need for ongoing research to investigate this understudied phenomenon.

In this chapter, I present a review of the literature related to Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help. Reina, Maldonado, and Lohman (2013) contended that Latina victims of domestic violence seem to be less apt to seek either formal or informal help. Aysa-Lastra, Rojas, Dillon, Duan, and De La Rosa (2012) posited that domestic violence constitutes a determined strategy purposely used by family members to harm the victim both physically and or psychologically. Breiding et al. (2014) found that, in the United States, one in three Latinas have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. Therefore, it is important to highlight various factors that contribute to this problem.

Mookerjee et al. (2015) argued that there is a lack of understanding regarding the impact of sociocultural factors on women's experiences of domestic violence, including how they manage to cope with it. Reina et al. (2013) contended that although there is a pattern within the contemporary literature for domestic violence among various

immigrant communities to be linked to culture, little attention has been given to how the entrenchment of culture and social structure determines immigrants' life conditions and struggles. Therefore, reviewing the content of the literature regarding this entrenchment was vital.

A review of research literature by Cheng and Lo (2016) indicated that domestic violence is a social problem and illuminated how the intersection of various factors, such as family, culture, language, immigration status, education, acculturation, gender roles, formal and informal help-seeking behaviors, machismo, and domestic violence programs may contribute to the reluctance of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek help. Existing research studies failed to address factors influencing the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help (Reina et al., 2013). Exploring the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help facilitated an understanding of sociocultural factors that influence women's decisions and helped fill this gap in the literature. Perilla et al. (2012) argued that the perpetuation of power imbalance that continues to support the subordination of women to men is the root of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that characterize domestic violence. To better understand this argument, intersectionality theory by Crenshaw (1989) and structural violence theory by Galtung (1990) were the theoretical framework for this study.

Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) and structural violence theory (Galtung, 1990) were merged to form the theoretical framework to understand how sociocultural factors such as culture, formal and informal help seeking, machismo and marianismo, family involvement, immigration, domestic violence programs, gender roles, and

acculturation influence women's decisions. Intersectionality and structural theories, which constitute the theoretical framework, were originally developed to offer insights on a different but related phenomenon, oppression against women, primarily African Americans in the United States. Despite its original intent, this theoretical framework can provide a lens to explore the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help.

I present information about the theoretical framework with detailed analysis of its two major components. I discussed key concepts related to the problem, including issues related to domestic violence as a social problem, help seeking and culture, formal and informal help seeking patterns, machismo and marianismo, family involvement, acculturation and gender roles, domestic violence program, and immigration status. A summary and conclusion end the chapter.

Literature Search Strategy

The aim of the literature review was to provide a context for this study through the establishment of a theoretical framework guiding the research process and the examination of relevant concepts that shed light on the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help. Databases searched for this study included EBSCOhost, CINAHL, SAGE Journals Online, and Taylor Francis from which a significant number of peer-reviewed articles were published within the past 5 years.

The following list of key words and phrases were used in the literature search:
domestic violence against women, intersectionality, structural violence, structural theory, perceptions of domestic violence, Latina victims and help seeking behaviors, Latina

victims of domestic violence and culture, Latino culture and machismo, Latina immigrants and acculturation, domestic violence, Latinas, and immigration status, domestic violence, Latinas, and religious beliefs, and domestic violence programs. These terms were used to identify peer-reviewed journal articles related to the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help. Various research approaches were used by other researchers to justify the research methodology that will be used in this study. Each of the peer-reviewed articles was reviewed to confirm that the content was consistent with the context and significance of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory is used to investigate relationship and subject formation (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory is the study of intersections between various forms or systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, colonialism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism (Crenshaw, 1989). With this theory, race, class, and gender interact with each other, which often leads to multiple dimensions of disadvantage (Macionis & Gerber, 2011). Hulko (2009) argued that intersectionality facilitates debate regarding the personal sphere of suppression aiming to have a deeper understanding of the effect of structural relations of dominance.

To address not only legal failures, but also rhetorical and political failures within feminism and antiracism, intersectionality was used to draw attention to a variety of ways that Black women were excluded from employment in different places, especially in industrial arenas that were segregated by both gender and race (Crenshaw, 1989).

Therefore, intersectionality sheds light on various ways women of color used to be discriminated against in the labor force. Crenshaw (1989) maintained that beyond the intersection discrimination, the combination of race and gender policies, there was a structured intersectional form of discrimination, which was sustained by the discrimination of the court that prevented discrimination cases from moving forward because these Black women had to combine two cases of action so that they could prove to the court that they were discriminated against. Crenshaw posited that although the court's excuse was about avoiding given special preference to any particular group, both White men and women did not have to combine two cases of action for their discrimination to be understood.

Therefore, intersectionality explains how structures make certain identities the vehicles for vulnerability (Crenshaw, 1989). Historically, identities such as gender and race, which are socially constructed, have been used as the means of oppression. For example, women have been traditionally portrayed as the weaker sex, incompetent, unintelligent; in the same way, individuals of ethnicities other than White Caucasian are usually perceived as inferior. In this study, intersectionality theory was used to demonstrate how the intersection of various characteristics such as immigration status, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and language barriers contribute to the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help.

Mohantry (1984) posited that intersectionality has established itself as a framework outlining ideas from various groups engaged with understanding and transforming inequalities, including those concerned with low and middle-income

countries and has been greatly applied in health systems research. Moreover, Mohantray argued that instead of portraying a specific social group as systematically negative, intersectionality focuses on people's ability to concurrently encounter and symbolize advantages and disadvantages as various social orders merge in diverse models across time and various places. For instance, Latinas experience domestic violence differently because of their gender, language barriers, immigration status, and their place in the United States social structure.

Within this context, Hulko (2009) maintained that intersectionality helps demystifying the dynamic nature of the advantages and disadvantages that pervade health systems and impact health, as it concentrates on the interaction of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability, ability, migration status, and religion as various social categories, including the power structures that underpin those categories at various levels. Even though the intersection of various social inequalities remains the essential component of intersectionality theory, Nygren and Olofsson (2014) and Ravindran (2014) argued that far from being a simple analytical method for understanding how different social inequalities fuse, intersectionality is viewed as an extensive philosophy underlying research and activism. In this study, I used intersectionality as a tool to address how the intersection of multiple discriminations might play a role in the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help and provide an increased understanding of how different sets of identities impact access to rights and opportunities.

As a theoretical approach, intersectionality explains how the relationships among various aspects and procedures of social relationships underscore the experiences of women who not only have been marginalized, but also have been made invisible in the dominant discussions about abused women (Kanuha, 1960). However, there is disagreement among scholars about using gender ideology primarily as the key explanatory model of domestic violence, as they advocated for the exploration of how different types of inequality and oppression, such as racism, ethnocentrism, class privilege, and heterosexism intersect with gender oppression (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Therefore, in this study, intersectionality theory provided a framework for understanding factors that may influence the decision of Latinas not to seek help when they experience domestic violence. The core issue for intersectionality theory is the understanding that women experience oppression in varying orders and degrees of potency (Choo & Ferree, 2010).

Although many women potentially experience oppression based on gender, women are, differentially oppressed by the varied intersections. Within this context, McCall (2005) referred to intersectionality as the core theoretical foundation for studies related to women's studies. Within this context, the application of intersectionality theory played a significant role in determining whether these women's language, cultural identity, religious beliefs, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, and immigration status contributed to their decision not to seek help from any antidomestic violence agency. An understanding of how potential factors overlap was imperative. Failure to focus on all of

these factors might lead to a lack of understanding of the decision making of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help from antidomestic violence agencies.

Structural Violence Theory

Compared with interpersonal violence, structural forms of violence are invisible because they are located within the social, political, and economic structure of society, while sustaining inequalities between different groups of people (Richard, 2012). In this study, structural violence theory was useful for identifying and understanding the interplay of potential structural factors that influence the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help. Although Yllo (1993) affirmed that conventional feminism portrays violence against women as the result of socially constructed and culturally endorsed gender inequality, Jenkins (1990) contended that structuralist theories emphasize the need for changes within both the social structures and cultural norms and ideologies, so that violence against women can be reduced.

However, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argued that although it is evident that domestic violence against women may be justified by using culture, considering the culture's role in domestic violence as an exclusively gloomy force constitutes a risk. Galtung (1975) referred to cultural violence as the political, economic, and social conditions of a society that prevent individuals from fulfilling their full potential in life. The argument made by Sokoloff and Dupont is self-evident, because whenever there is the perceived or real threat of violence in society, individuals become understandably preoccupied with concerns regarding theirs and their family well-being to the exclusion of thoughts about effectively fulfil their various roles in that society.

In addition to intersectionality theory, I used structural violence theory as framework for understanding this study. Galtung (1990) argued that there is a difference between structural violence and personal violence or direct violence, specifically because of the indirect nature of structural violence. Richard (2012) maintained that because the violence is established within the structure and clearly demonstrates inequalities in terms of power and opportunities, the occurrence of interpersonal violence may be inexistent.

The contrast is that although there is a tendency within our society to condemn domestic violence, it is likely to be normalized by the existing social structure. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to recognize that factors such as unemployment, starvation, military occupation, racism, sexism, ageism, and denial of access to medical or social services serve as an extension of cultural violence, which entails the deprivation that the structure imposes on people who are disenfranchised by those in power (Galtung, 1990). In agreement with Galtung, Mann and Grimes (2001) contended that for studies in the areas of domestic violence to keep evolving, there must be a major focus on both individual and structural examinations of race, class, and gender inequality and marginalization in communities that are culturally diverse.

Galtung's (1990) argument is that although personal or direct violence is subjective, structural violence is objective. The point remains that personal or direct and structural violence are justified by cultural violence (Confortini, 2006). In addition, Confortini posited that through the theory of violence, Galtung reaches out to theorists and practitioners in the field of violence against women, by presenting them a framework that helps exploring violence against women through a broader lens of societal violence.

Within this context, Monstesani (2015) contended that there is one relevant United Nations Declaration, which initially offers an international statement defining violence against women through a broader lens that look at gender, family, community, including the state, as leading entities where gender-based violence occurs. Based on the United Nations' declaration, Monstesani (2015) maintained that gender-based violence entails any violent act, whether it injures women physically, sexually, psychologically, or takes away women's freedom privately or publicly. Monstesani's contention is that the rationale for the invisibility of structural violence is that it relates to institutions.

Monstesani's argument is that, it is more difficult to transform the system in which the violence is embedded than to appeal to particular individual criminals who engage in direct violence. Galtung (1990) affirmed that the way cultural violence functions is by sustaining the visibility of the acts of violence, or at last minimizing the nature of the violent acts. For instance, with regard to direct violence, the global or national rate of homicide, domestic violence, or sexual assault can be empirically verifiable, as it is open to statistical analysis, compared to structural violence in which the focus is on the system allowing the emergence of these violent acts (Confortini, 2006).

It is important for scholars to recognize that although direct violence involves intentionality, in structural violence, the system is independent of intentionality, which constitutes a facet of human cognition. Galtung (1990) posited that cultural violence portrays both direct and structural violence in a way that makes them appear to be normal, or at least not bad. Therefore, there must not only be an understanding, but also the creation of a system which can help identify the threat of violence.

Queseda, Hart, and Bourgeois (2011) asserted that although structural violence, as a concept, has been mainly applied with the purpose of shedding light on oppression and economic injustice of a particular class, cultural violence has also incorporated gender inequality and racism as cultural factors. For example, from a structural violence perspective, unequal access to resources is not only historically structured, but is also frequently radicalized, gendered and socially categorized, leading to disparities in social services (Monstesani, 2015). Austin and Kim (2000) affirmed that even though there has not yet been a scientifically proven causal connection, it is common among feminist researchers to link gender inequality to various other cultural roots, such as poverty.

To understand what prevents Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help, one should take into consideration social, political, and financial structural inequalities, which constitute the genesis of domestic violence, access to appropriate services, and these women's decision not to seek help. Galtung (1990) posited that disparity in domestic violence programs are a form of structural violence, because although native-born or English-speaking women victims of domestic violence have access to services, many Latina victims of domestic violence have either limited or no access to services, due to language barriers. Accordingly, Parson et al. (2016) argued that the more this type of structural violence remains a normal pattern, the less noticeable are the barriers to services.

With regard to domestic violence, although there is a common history among White people and women of color who have been violated by men, it is important for White women to recognize the benefits they receive simply because they are White

(Collins, 1998). Even though Gultang's (1990) structural violence theory plays a significant role in terms of contextualizing domestic violence against Latinas and their decision not to seek help, Quesada, Hart, and Bourgois (2011) maintained that there should not be any assumption that only Latino immigrants are linked to cultural vulnerability. People who are poor, medically uninsured, and struggling with drug and alcohol dependency are also affected. Therefore, to better understand potential factors influencing Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help, I analyzed social and structural attributes of their milieu.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Domestic Violence as a Social Problem

Domestic violence constitutes a leading multifaceted health, social, criminal, and human rights problem (Campbel, 2001; World Health Organization, 2005). Galvez, Mankowski, and Glass (2015) explained that domestic violence is nothing but a widespread social problem facing the United States. According to Galvez, Mankowski, and Glass, domestic violence presents insecurity to women's health, links to higher percentage of mortality, injury and disability, inadequate health care, and other health-related repercussions.

Approximately \$5.8 billion is spent every year in areas such as medical and mental health, as well as loss of fecundity related to domestic violence (Stockman, Hayashi, & Campbell, 2015). Cuevas, Sabina, and Milloshi (2012) posited that domestic violence constitutes a critical phenomenon, which impacts the lives of over half of Latinas. Accordingly, Nava, Mcfarlane, Gilroy, and Maddoux (2014) argued that while

immigrant women victims of domestic violence in the United States experience insufficient resources, social isolation, and lack of social support, they also have to deal with cultural, economic, and legal challenges that non-immigrant women victims of violence do not have to address.

However, although the acts of violence against women by their partners do not discriminate, regardless of women's racial and ethnical backgrounds, De Santis, Provencio-Vasquez, Mancera, and Mata (2016) maintained that as of 2013, the number of Hispanics in the United States accounted for approximately 50.5 million individuals. Cuevas, Dawson, and Williams (2016) asserted that the number of Hispanic is estimated to expand to approximately 29% of the populace by the year 2050. Black et al. (2011) found, that compared to 43.7% of African American and 37% of Hispanic women, 34.6% of White women have been victims of rape, domestic violence, and/or stalking.

In spite of the expansion of research in the domain of domestic violence, the current literature lacks information about Latina victims of domestic violence who do not to seek help from antidomestic violence agencies. Reina et al. (2013) argued that, besides prioritizing the occurrence of domestic violence against White American women, it is imperative for researchers to devote more resources and time investigating the occurrence of domestic violence against minority groups, especially Latinas. The rationale remains that as national boundaries related to ethnic diversity continue to be less defined, due to increasing globalization, the number of Latinas in various cultural contexts keeps increasing. Therefore, studies related to domestic violence should not be limited only to women from ethnic majority groups. In view of this fact, it is fair to argue that additional

research investigations regarding this phenomenon will add valuable contributions to the contemporary literature.

Falconier et al. (2013) indicated that there is an inclination among Latina victims to seldom use formal services offered at various domestic organizations, clinics, social service agencies, and law enforcement institutions, including the criminal justice system. Falconier et al. also explained that lack of sensitivity towards Latino values, restricted availability of programs in Spanish, as well as the inability of service providers to acknowledge the role that sociohistorical contextual factors play in domestic violence have been considered as the primary criticisms of services and domestic violence programs. The argument made by Falconier et al. is consistent with that of Reina et al. which asserted that there should not be disparity among women victims of domestic violence. Instead there should equitable commitment of resources to studies related to domestic violence against women.

The findings of a focus group conducted by Reina et al. (2013) revealed that in addition to feelings of shame that Latina victims of domestic violence are struggling with, inadequate Spanish speaking service providers, lack of understanding of American cultural profundity of domestic violence against women, and limited information regarding suitable services. For instance, Grieco et al. (2012) affirmed that when comparing native-born Americans to various immigrant groups, first-generation immigrant Latinos are presumably in the weakest position in terms of education, income, household size, English proficiency, and health coverage. Since these constitute the

additional currency for upward mobility in a society, it is, therefore, understandable that any group without these means would indeed be in extremely weak position.

Natsuaki, Chang, and Chen (2013) argued that women from ethnic minority groups who are victims of domestic violence are vulnerable in terms of facing tremendous cultural and structural obstacles such as lack of insurance coverage, stigma and restricted competence with regard to speaking English. Natsuaki et al. (2013) also affirmed that from these identified barriers emerge discrepancies in mental health services, leading to a deferment in treatment. Similarly, Lawson and colleagues (2012) maintained that domestic violence constitutes a disproportionate impediment for Hispanics, Blacks, and women, because obstacles related to soliciting medical services is a significant factor in terms of victims' access to appropriate help. Within this framework, Reina et al. (2013) proposed that there should be more studies regarding Latina victims of domestic violence who not to seek help.

Reina et al. (2013) argued that, compared to White women, Latinas are more vulnerable to domestic violence as evidence of previous studies, particularly those conducted during the 1990s which revealed the significance of formal and informal networks in detecting the feasibility for undocumented Latinas to get access to appropriate help which can facilitate them leaving their abusive partners. Given the various factors mentioned by Falconier et al, the status of being undocumented engenders emotions, fear, and uncertainty which constitute tremendous barriers which prevent these women from seeking needed help. These women although being abused by their partners often view these men as protectors.

Latina Victims of Domestic Violence and Help Seeking and Culture

Randell, Bledsoe, Shroff, and Pierce (2012) found that other people's interventions usually play a crucial role in the help-seeking process of women victims of domestic violence, although these interventions are not always successful. Ben-Goodley and Fowler (2006) observed that Latina victims of domestic violence can seek help from family, various kind of organizations such as human services and religious, and law enforcement. However, Chen and Ulman (2010) contended that because of lack of services for minority groups, only some Latina victims of domestic violence reported positive experiences of seeking help.

Similarly, Gonzalez-Guarda, Ortega, Vasquez, and De Santis (2010) maintained that absence of community outreach related to disenfranchised communities, especially Immigrant Latina victims of domestic violence, tremendously impact help-seeking. Sabina, Cuevas, and Schally (2012) argued that limited access to competent linguistic services places these victims at a disadvantage position, thereby perpetuating their victimization. Vidales (2010) explained that Latinas' lack of fluency in English plays a critical role in their vulnerability to domestic violence and their isolation.

Murphy-Erby, Stauss, and Estupinian (2013) posited that the development of culturally competent programs needs to do more than making sure that those programs and evaluation materials are translated in different other languages. For instance, Ryan and Siebens (2012) explained that when comparing Latinos with other minority ethnic groups, Latinos' level of education is lower. Silva-Martinez and Murty (2011) emphasized the significance of researchers and service providers becoming familiar with

the cultural, social, and economic backgrounds of these women, both in their countries of origin and in the United States.

Zarza and Adler (2008) advocated for domestic violence service providers to evaluate cultural, linguistic, and programmatic obstacles that preclude Latina victims of domestic violence from receiving adequate services. Within this context, Reina et al. (2013) found that due to the role of society and culture in ascertaining the type of networks for undocumented Latinas, compared to those with formal networks, Latina victims of domestic violence who belong to more informal networks have less access to appropriate help. According to Reina et al., having less access could facilitate their departure from the violent relationship.

Further, Reina et al. (2013) asserted that these types of informal networks constitute structural barriers making it more difficult for Latina victims of domestic violence to exit their violent relationships. However, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argued that there has been a long pattern of blaming culture as the key factor in examining violence and oppression in communities of color, leading to stereotypes against entire groups. Edelson et al. (2007) claimed that some unambiguous factors in Latino communities may impact Latina victims of domestic violence and that cultural insiders are more apt than service providers from the dominant culture to participate in cultural debates regarding the meaning of domestic violence.

Kulkarni et al. (2012) contended that there should be a focus on the cultural definition of domestic violence. Within this context, Kulkarni et al. (2012) suggested that, as a concept, there has not been a conventional agreement about the definition of

domestic violence, which varies across cultures. For instance, within the Latino community, there is not a consensus whether behaviors such as verbal aggression and stalking should be considered as domestic violence.

Meanwhile, Agoff, Herrera, and Castro (2007) revealed that a significant number of Mexican women who are victims of domestic violence were reminded by older women that the occurrence of violence within victims' families is part of the sacrifice that they have to undergo for the well-being of their family and children. Within this context, Kulkarni et al. (2012) recommended for current community outreach services related to domestic violence to be more inclusive in terms of establishing a partnership with the Latino community, which might lead to the emergence of more innovative programs. Vidales (2010) highlighted the necessity for educational, governmental, social, and medical institutions to work as a team to develop programs and policies that are more culturally inclusive and take into consideration the needs of Latina victims of domestic violence.

Vidales (2010) maintained that more than 20% of these women identified their limited ability to speak English as one of the key obstacles to seeking help and getting adequate services. However, D'Orazio, Taylor-Ford, and Meyerowitz (2014) posited that while exploring sociocultural beliefs and values of Latinos, one should be mindful that even Latinas tend to be placed into a homogenous group, within-group diversity should not be dismissed. Arguably, Murphy-Erby, Stauss, and Estupinian (2013) highlighted the significance of understanding the existence of various traditions, cultures, and beliefs within the Latino populations residing in the United States. In addition, D'Orazio et al.

maintained that this within-group diversity is not only complex, but also contains various facets, since it cannot always be differentiated through county of origin because of racial dissimilarities, language, class, and religious affiliations.

Formal and Informal Help Seeking

Kyriakakis (2014) advocated for more studies regarding how Latino victims of IPV seek help and assistance, so that interventions intended to extend services to this vulnerable population can improved. McCart, Smith, and Sawyer (2010) argued that studies related to social and cultural influences on help-seeking are limited. Rizo and Macy (2011) affirmed that many studies revealed that, compared to White women, Latino women usually are less eager to seek formal help for their victimization.

Klevens (2007) maintained that even though it is true that Latina victims of domestic violence are in need of both informal and formal help sources, some of these victims do not ask for help or wait for a long time before doing so. Lewis et al. (2005) posited that although several studies found the occurrences of domestic violence within the Latino community are high, for many Latinos, domestic violence is a family or marital issue, as opposed to a social problem. Contextually, Brabeck and Guzman (2008) argued that some people within the Latino community tend to view domestic violence as normative behaviors, which plays a fundamental role in discouraging Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help.

However, Kyriakakis, Dawson, and Edmond (2012) found that social characteristics such as social isolation, humiliating languages and rude attitudes, loss of personal freedom, and internalized feeling of being worthless, from the views of Latina

immigrant victims, constitute the definition of domestic violence. Ahrens et al. (2010) explained how the effect of traditional beliefs and gender role ideologies play a key role preventing immigrant women from seeking help. Due to such lack of consensus among members of the Latino community about the kind of behaviors that should be classified as domestic violence, Kulkarni et al. (2012) proposed that researchers should be more proactive in terms of exploring the effect of cultural perceptions related to domestic violence and the role of social networks in facilitating Latinas to leave their abusive partners.

Part of the argument made by Kulkarni et al. is that cultural barriers play a meaningful role in promoting stigma and self-blame, which are major factors in keeping Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help. However, Gomez and Speizer (2009) disagreed with Kulkarni et al. (2012) suggesting that as long as the socioeconomic conditions of women are improved, ethnoracial dissimilarities are irrelevant. Cuevas and Sabina (2010) maintained that a contemporary study regarding Latina victims of domestic violence revealed that only 20% of these women sought formal help due to their skepticism about disclosing to formal help sources. Concurrently, 58% of Latina victims of domestic violence were more comfortable disclosing to their parents, family members, friends, and neighbors as informal sources of help (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010).

Rodriguez et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of support from family members as a precautionary consideration in the process of seeking help. Contrary to Rodriguez et al. (2010), Vidales (2010) posited that divulging intimate problems such as

domestic violence might be regarded as disgraceful from the perspective of Latino women.

Help Seeking, Machismo, and Marianismo

Fernandez-Esquer, Diamond, and Atkson (2010) posited that through concepts such as machismo and marianismo, beliefs about Latino gender roles are manifested. Therefore, the crucial role of cultural concepts such as machismo and marianismo in these women's help-seeking behaviors should not be ignored. Although both machismo and marianismo, in the Latino culture, constitute significant cultural and social constructs that shape people's perceptions and behaviors (Ortiz-Torres, Serrano-Garcia, & Torres-Burgos, 2000), Sears (2008) referred to machismo as cultural norms and values that underline the traditional role of men as families' defenders and caretakers.

Peragallo et al. (2012) defined marianismo as a supplement of machismo's norms and values fostering women's sexual purity, submissiveness, and obedience. Although Messing, Becerra, Ward-Lasher, and Androff (2015) contended that the patriarchal systems of power, which are embedded in the social structure, serves as a catalyst for the sustenance of structured power and control of women by men and usually encompass physical and sexual violence, MarrsFuchsel, Murphy, and Dufresne (2012) argued that a variety of principles relating to machismo and marianismo may guide the behaviors of both men and women involved in a relationship. Meanwhile, Vidales (2010) alleged that while families and friends are occasionally considered strong sources of support, at other times they are viewed as hurdles. Postmus et al. (2014) claimed that cultural and

community norms such as machismo are considered some of the most important barriers to help seeking.

Casey and Lindhorst (2009) maintained that any attempt to effectively address the needs of Latina victims of domestic violence should clearly identify culturally applicable standards such as machismo and marianismo, as well as the cultural definition of abuse. Vidales (2010) refers to machismo as Latinos' expected way of behaving, although many people link the term machismo to perceived negative attributes such as the possession of fierce sexual aptitude, consumption of much alcohol, or being belligerent. Nevertheless, concepts such as honor, courage, responsibility, and obligation to the family are viewed as positive aspects of machismo.

However, consistent with Vidales (2010), Ojeda and Pina-Watson (2014) affirmed that machismo constitutes the negative characteristics of masculinity within the Latino culture, which is grounded in hypermasculine attributes such as control, aggression, and chauvinism. Marianismo refers to the set of beliefs regarding how Latinas are expected to act, including traits such as submissiveness, deference to others, and self-sacrificing behaviors (Gonzales-Lopez, 2007; Marrs Fuchsel, 2013). Furthermore, based on this cultural ideology, women are socialized to neglect their personal needs and desires, so they can strive to nurture and care for others, particularly men (Sabina, Cuevas, & Schally, 2013).

Nunez et al. (2016) maintained that although there is a tendency for previous studies to focus primarily on bravery, honor, dominance, aggression, sexism, sexual prowess, reserved emotions, and more as negative characteristics of masculinity, there is

another aspect of machismo, known as traditional machismo, which encompasses chivalry, bravery, and family as positive images of gender role. Sastre et al. (2015) argued that while the secular concept of marianismo promotes women's submissiveness, which incorporates attributes common to all countries in Latin America, it allows men more sexual freedom to boast about their prowess. For example, Sabina et al. (2013) explained how the concept of respeto, or respect, is a powerful concept clarifying the unequivocal power of the father in families.

In a study conducted by Monlina and Abel (2010) regarding Latina victims of domestic violence and culture, it was found that the majority of participants believed that culture was unhelpful in their struggle to remove themselves from their abusive relationships. Within this context, Kyriakakis (2014) affirmed that the reluctance of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek help may be associated with Latino family and gender-based expectancies such as marianismo and deference. Gonzalez-Guarda, Florom-Smith and Thomas (2011) affirmed that machismo, marianismo, and respeto have such an integrating impact on Latino families that they primarily shape the effect of domestic violence on victims. Hence, it is imperative to explore what the existing literature discloses about domestic violence agencies and Latina victims who do not seek help. Therefore, there is an intertwining relationship between machismo and marianismo regarding promoting social constructs delineating socially admissible standards and values that sustain traditional gender roles underlying a patriarchal system (Nunez et al., 2016). Thus, the exploration of help-seeking behaviors of Latina victims of domestic violence, as well as family implications was essential.

Help Seeking and Family Involvement

Cho and Kim (2012) affirmed that the failure to seek available help constitutes one of the key challenges relating to the underreporting of domestic violence among Latinas. Falconier (2013) found that most Latino victims of domestic violence usually do not seek help, and when they seek help, they mostly reach out to their local churches or agencies providing services, particularly to Latinos. Reina and Lohman (2015) maintained that despite the significance of obstacles such as financial insecurity, limited access to transportation, lack of information about available services, and willingness to maintain the abusive relationship, family comprises the essential factor in the decision making process of Latina victims of domestic violence.

Cruz-Santiago and Ramirez Garcia (2011) argued that while Latino families are far from being a homogenous group, familism is among the most common cultural values they share. To concur with this, Leavell, Tamis-LeMonda, Ruble, Zosuls, and Cabrera (2012) posited that some studies revealed that familism promotes considerable dependence on, including spending more time with parents and family members. Reina and Lohman (2015) maintained that the Latino culture places high value on family unity and that the inclination to preserve family dignity reinforces the tolerance of domestic violence.

Gloria and Castellanos (2012) maintained that Latinos strongly believe in interpersonal connections, supportive relationships, and shared responsibilities for the benefits of family and community from which emerge the power and worth of interconnections and interdependence. Within this framework, Rossello, Bernal, and

Rivera-Medina (2008) asserted that the concept of familismo within the Latino culture entails that family needs always have priorities over individual needs. Compared to Reina and Lohman (2015), Chang, Natsuaki, and Chen (2013) argued that although there is a tendency among Latino Americans to depend on extended family members for emotional support, the concept of familism which encompasses interrelated values such as loyalty, mutual respect, and emotional support is commonly known to play a protective function or attenuate the need for family network support.

Arguably, Sabogal et al. (1987) identified that familial obligations which entail allegiance to supply material and emotional help to family, perceived support from family, which is about perception of family members as dependable supplier of assistance and support resolve problems; and family as referents which is about family members serving as role models as the three vital tenets of familism. Within this framework, Vidales (2010) argued that Latinas tend to link the well-being of their children to family unity. Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas and Engel (2005) contended that there is a belief within the Latino culture that the initiative to seek help is equivalent to ending the relationship. This explains the decision of some family members to remain uninvolved (Chang, Natsuaki, & Chen, 2013). Therefore, Latinos' tendency to strong cultural values that are embedded in family and community cohesion should not be undermined.

Kaltman et al. (2011) posited that usually, instead of providing Latina victims of domestic violence with appropriate support so that they can get out of their abusive relationship, some family members often emphasized the significance of being a wife and the necessity for children to be with their father. Within the same vein, Pescosolido

(2011) contended that help seeking constitutes a process responsive to social influence.

Therefore, looking at what the present literature discloses about Latin victims of domestic violence, acculturation, and gender roles was critical.

Acculturation and Gender Roles

Galvez, Mankowski, and Glass (2012) insisted that there is a significant relationship between acculturation and violence against women. Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, Caetano-Vaeth, and Harris (2007) referred to acculturation as the process of transitioning and adapting from one's native culture to one's adopted culture typified by the adoption of the new language and acceptance of and adherence to the norms and values of the adopted culture. Cho, Velez-Ortiz, and Parra-Cardona (2014) posited that many studies found that country of origin is considered a probable antecedent for domestic violence among Latinos. For example, Falconier (2013) maintained that there is a possibility for Latinos who are more committed to traditional gender role to feel challenged in the United States where, not only egalitarian relationships are encouraged but also often essential for meeting economic needs.

Accordingly, Beauchamp et al. (2012) asserted that although the male partner who has been culturally accustomed to being the sole protector of household integrity may feel uneasy about accepting any changes related to female role, in this process of adapting to the new environment, the female partner who, before, has been submissive to domestic violence may be willing to reject it by completely challenging any attitudes that can sustain it. Falconier et al. argued that although this more liberal gender role perspective in the United States can empower Latinas to demand changes in the

relationships, it can engender more conflict and violence. Understanding how such demand for relationship changes can be a potential source of conflict and violence between Latina victims of domestic violence and their male partners is important.

Cho, Velez-Ortiz, and Parra-Cardona (2014) argued that the way Latinas perceive the severity of domestic violence may be shaped by their country of origin and may guide their help-seeking behaviors predicated on fear of retaliation from their families.

However, Estrada-Martinez (2011) emphasized the necessity to avoid viewing Latinos as a homogenous group. Similarly, Dupont-reyes, Fry, Rickert and Davidson (2015) maintained that researchers must be cautious about portraying Latinos as a homogenous group, while undermining heterogeneity among regional groups in terms of their level of acculturation, country of birth, impoverishment, and particular cultural norms.

Gender Roles

In terms of gender roles, Aguirre and Turner (2011) argued that although it is true that the presence of Mexicans in the United States is accounted for over 200 years, Latino's diversity and ongoing migration to the United States have fostered an assortment of various experiences, and, consequently, identities. Within this context, Gloria and Castellanos (2012) advocated for the acknowledgement of the significant role of history, gender ideology, including sociocultural and sociopolitical systems and procedures, in numerous aspects of identity. Meanwhile, Sabogal et al. (1987) and Steidel, Lugo, and Contreras (2003) found that Spanish colonization and the Catholic Church, two institutions that foster a male-centered structure of society, constitute the idiosyncratic root of Latino gender norms.

Nunez et al. (2016) emphasized the need for recognition that most of the information within the current literature regarding male gender roles has been gathered from research participants who are college students and non-Hispanic Whites and has not been consistent in term of considering cultural components of gender roles. Fernandez-Esquer, Diamond, and Atkinson (2010) argued that not only is the persuasiveness of Latinos to the effect of norms evident as the result their allocentric alignment to family values and relationships, it is also possible for greater social cohesion to expand the potentiality of dispersing information and fortifying norms in Latino social networks. Fernandez-Ezquer, Diamond, and Atkinson maintained that gender norms sway different facets of sexuality, sexual relationships, family planning, contraception, and domestic violence.

Accordingly, Ruiz (2012) contended that determining the magnitude of the impact of gender roles on Latina immigrants is contingent on their ethnicity, class, migration status, level of acculturation, family and household characteristics, sexual orientation, and environment. Sabina, Cuevas, and Schally (2013) maintained that applying the native countries' ways of handling domestic violence may complicate help-seeking, since compared to the United States, violence against women usually does not bear the same repercussions as countries of origin. However, Harris, Firestone and Vega (2005) discovered that Latinas who mostly adhered to traditional gender role beliefs, whether born in Mexico or the United States, were less eager to disclose abuse to researchers than those who barely followed gender role constructs.

Ma and Malcom (2016) affirmed that factors such as acculturation and family, as well as gender roles appear to play a significant role in domestic violence among Latinos. Sastre et al. (2015) posited that it is feasible for Latinas' views of gender roles to be transformed as they start acculturating to different expectations from women within the new culture. Sabina, Cuevas, and Schally (2013) found that, opposite to the common views that gender roles, family, and culture sustain domestic violence; recent studies revealed that Latinos orientation seems to preserve women from victimization. However, differently from Sabina et al. (2008), Oliffe and Phillips (2008) explained the possibility for gender socialization to influence the willingness of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek services related to their emotional and psychological well-being.

Vasconcellos (2005) contended that studies regarding domestic violence on Latinos might be biased, viewing them as one homogenous ethnic group. For instance, although fewer acculturated Latinas are more open to submit to traditional values and norms linked to machismo, Latinas who are highly acculturated tend to be more forthcoming, in terms of resisting oppressive and patriarchal norms (Sabina et al. 2013). Sabina et al. (2012) found that as there is a decrease in language barriers and an increase in acculturation, immigrant Latino women are more apt to recognize and report domestic violence.

Within this context, Gonzalez-Guarda et al. (2013) affirmed that the intertwining relationship between cultural norms and values in Latin American societies, which underline the significance of family and community bond, may preclude victims of domestic violence from seeking help from formal institutions. Furthermore, Gonzalez-

Guarda argued that while Latinas born who are U.S. born are more inclined to view domestic violence as a crime and acknowledge their legal rights to report abuse, Latinas born in Latin America may view domestic violence, which is highly accepted in various Latin American countries, as normal behavior. This argument resonates with Ruiz (2012) who posited that although it is true that challenges such as poverty, unemployment, lack of health care, language barriers, acculturation, discrimination, and undocumented legal status may significantly affect Latina immigrants generally, it is important to recognize that Latinas endure all these aforementioned challenges with regard to traditional gender-based dynamics that empower males. Thus, examining the role of religious beliefs and cultural values in the decision of these women not to seek help was a necessity.

Domestic Violence Programs

Lawson, Laughon, and Gonzalez-Guarda (2012) posited that although both Hispanic and Black women victims of domestic violence are in great need to access health-related services, one should be aware of a variety of obstacles that restrain these women from that access to standard and culturally sensitive services. These obstacles are not limited to lack of knowledge about where and how to get access to services, cultural and linguistic barriers, but also to strong feelings of distrust about health and social services (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010). Likewise, Belknap and VandeVusse (2010) affirmed that while barriers such as language, isolation, immigration-induced economic changes, and legal status, to help-seeking for domestic violence in the Latina community are high, the help-seeking process may be even more complex, since Latinas tend to use their home countries as key frames of reference.

The rationale remains that in these women's home countries, the consequences of domestic violence are less harsh than those of in the United States (VandeVusse, 2010). Ruiz (2012) emphasized the significance of reaching out to less acculturated Latina immigrants in a way that reflects their cultural values, so that reciprocally empathetic relationships can be established. Falconier, McCollum, Austin, Wainbarg, Hasburn and Mora (2013) emphasized the need for domestic violence programs to develop culturally competent interventions, taking into consideration the views of victims, abusers, and including those providing services within the Latino community. Therefore, taking a deeper look of what the current literature reveals about the immigration status of these women and their help seeking behaviors was important, as it may offer greater apprehension of these women's decision.

Immigration Status and Help Seeking

Stockman, Hayashi, and Campbell (2015) contended that although domestic violence against women continues to be a major problem in the United States, women who migrated from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean are more likely to be victimized than those born in the U.S. Within this context, Stockman et al. (2015) maintained that the vulnerability of those who were not born in the United States is the result of poverty, social isolation, disparities in economic and social resources, including immigration status. Similarly, Cho et al. (2014) contended that undocumented Latina victims of domestic violence often rely on their abusive partners for financial support and view reporting their situation to law enforcement as a liability in terms of the possibility to be deported or go to jail.

Contextually, Menjivar and Abrego (2012) maintained that opposite to other punitive laws that primarily focus on people's behavior, a specific category of people without any social characteristics like language or physical means can make them becoming the primary target of the existing immigration laws and their application. Belliveau (2011) and Salcido and Menjivar (2012) maintained that the junction of culturally constructed concepts such as gender, family, racial discrimination, ethnicity and cultural diversity, language, citizenship status, and socioeconomic status has a divergent influence, not only on Latinas' fear of deportation, but also on trust of the systems designed to shield them against violence, thus impacting their inclination to report offence. Menjivar and Abrego (2012) posited that, to some extent, laws that have violent effects, including immense repercussions are passed by legislators and politicians, regardless if their impact might be viewed as a form of structural and symbolic violence, they constitute legal violence due to their insertion in legal sanctioned practices, actively enacted using traditional methods, and accepted as normal laws.

Marrs Fuchsel et al. (2012) underlined the probability for Latinas' intuitions of the relevance of reporting victimization to be impeded by the fact that they are not only residing in sexist and patriarchal society, but also one in which legal immigration status is a major concern. For instance, Rhodes et al. (2015) argued that it is possible that because of the increased enforcement of immigration policies, immigrants might be less willing to seek needed care, which can only not negatively impact them but also the public health. Nevertheless, on the one hand, Sokoloff and Dupont (2006), Wing (2003), Bograd (2006), and Crenshaw (1995) contended that there is a consensus among liberal and racial

feminist activists, including many theorists, that all women are vulnerable to gender violence.

Sokoloff and Dupont (2006), Wing (2003), Bograd (2006), and Crenshaw (1955) also argued that despite this consensus regarding women's vulnerability to gender violence, not all women have the same capability to withdraw from abusive relationships when their racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and immigration, sexual, religious and political backgrounds are taken into consideration. There is an agreement among Androff and Tavassoli (2012), Falcon (2007), and Villalon (2010) that the criminal justice system's asymmetrical treatment of Latina immigrants, including the brutality of the immigration detention process, illegal incarceration of immigrants, as well as other human right violations can serve as justification of Latinas' fear and lack of trust, with regard to the fairness of the criminal justice systems. Arguably, Phillips and Sobol (2010) highlighted the historical pattern of police using legal standards as a scapegoat to elude conventional response to domestic violence against women.

However, Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga and Flores-Ortis (2000), Erez (2000), Menjivar and Salcido (2002), and Rivera (1994) are all in agreement that factors such as language barriers, ethnic discrimination, and sexism constitute some of the primary stumbling blocks that prevent Latinas from seeking assistance from law enforcement agencies. Rizo and Macy (2011) argued that among the many barriers to help seeking faced by Latina victims of domestic violence, fear of deportation is considered to be crucial. In agreement with Rizo and Macy (2011), Bailliard (2013) identified distrust in

government institutions and law enforcement as the primary factors determining Latina immigrants' decision not to seek help.

Rizo and Macy (2011) argued that although women from other ethnic groups who are victims of domestic violence also face similar barriers regarding help seeking, language barriers and fear of deportation seem to be more related to Latinas. In addition, Rizo and Macy maintained that these women victims' fear of being discarded by their abusers in a country in which they are new residents constitutes a major barrier to help seeking. For example, Gradstein and Schiff (2006) and Canales (2007) argued that the stricter enforcement of laws related to immigration led to the intensification of individual uncertainty, prejudice within the labor force, and segregated communities.

Rhodes et al. (2015) argued that although barriers such as languages, lack of culturally sensitive services, restricted health competency, little public transportation, and inadequate awareness of available services should not be underestimated, fear of deportation, lack of legal forms of documentation, interaction with law enforcement personnel, and racial profiling are key factors preventing Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help. Queseda, Hart, and Bourgois (2011) underscored the passage of the Arizona Senate bill in 2010 allowing police officers to apprehend people perceived to be undocumented solely based on their image, as concrete evidence of xenophobia, which negatively impacted many Latino immigrants. Arguably, Villatoro, Morales, and Mays (2014) affirmed that Latinos may be more eager to use family members as substitutes to mental health professionals, with regard to seeking help and support, since they have stronger trust and confidence in these family members.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, various potential interconnected factors that shape the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help were explored. Two theoretical perspectives, intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) and Structural violence theory (Gultang, 1990) which form this study's conceptual framework, were addressed.

The conceptual framework facilitates an understanding of how potential factors such as culture, formal and informal help seeking, machismo and marianismo, family involvement, acculturation, gender roles, domestic violence programs, and immigration might influence the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help. The review of the contemporary literature also showed domestic violence, as a serious health and social problem, affects the lives of more than a half million Latinas. Further, the literature review indicated a link between the reluctance of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek help and a variety of cultural barriers such as adherence to family norms and values (Ortis-Torres, Serano-Garcia, & Torres-Burges 2000), gender socialization (Sabina et al., 2012), and powerful cultural constructs such as machismo and marianismo (Vilades, 2010).

Moreover, the review of the literature showed how compared with their White counterparts, Latina victims of domestic violence are less willing to seek formal help (Kyriakakis, 2014) and expressed feelings of distrust for social services (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010). Finally, the review of the literature shared light upon the fear of deportation (Rizo & Macy, 2011), linguistic barriers (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010), and immigration status (Stockman, Hayashi, & Campbell, 2015) were among many factors

influencing these women's decision not to seek help (Campbell, 2001; World Health Organization, 2005). Therefore, the absence aspect of the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help is exactly the gap in the contemporary literature this study intended to address.

Overall, the findings which emerged from the perspectives of Latina victims of domestic violence who may not seek help fulfilled the gap by enhancing the existing literature and providing to mental health professionals working with Latina victims of domestic violence, especially those in the field of psychology with additional insights about potential factors influencing these women's decision not to seek help. In Chapter 3, there is an explanation about how this study was conducted, including the recruitment of participants. In addition, a justification for using the phenomenological methodology as the relevant model for examining the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek help was offered. Moreover, the types of methods that were used to organize and analyze the collected data, as well as ethical considerations and trustworthiness will be addressed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence the decision among Latina victims of domestic violence of whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Chapter 3 includes research design, the participant selection criteria, the research instrument, data collection procedures, type of data analysis, the role of the researcher, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services. The current literature lacks enough information about the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek help. The central question that guided this phenomenological study was: What are the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies?

A secondary question for this study was: How do Latina victims of domestic violence describe reasons for not seeking support services?

In the process of answering the central question and fulfilling this study's purpose, I used a qualitative research methodology, particularly a phenomenological research design. The rationale for using a qualitative methodology is that the objective of qualitative research is to explore a phenomenon. Patton (2002) asserted that the effectiveness of qualitative approaches is that they are more effective about investigating data that is difficult to be quantified, especially participants' personal experiences

described by first-hand descriptions. Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom (2008) argued that the aim of phenomenology is to describe a phenomenon as it is lived and experienced by individuals or groups. In this study, the focus was on the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies.

This study reflects the holistic, expectations of qualitative inquiry, which emphasizes the understanding of different correlations among dimensions that emerge from the data instead of making assumptions or enumerating a hypothesis regarding the symbiotic or sequential relationships (Moustakas, 1994). I used phenomenology as the research design because it facilitated the use of participants' own categories of meanings as they related to their lived experiences to have a greater understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Merleau-Ponty, 2000).

Moustakas (1994) maintained that the focus of phenomenology is an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences. Other qualitative methods were considered. Narrative research weaves together a sequence of events. It is about exploring what a participant's story means and the lessons to be learned from it (Creswell, 2013). Grounded theory seeks to provide an explanation or theory behind the events. In grounded theory, the researcher primarily interviews and existing documents to build a theory based on the data (Corbin & Straus, 1994). Case study involves a deep understanding through multiple types of data sources. For instance, it is feasible for case studies to be explanatory, exploratory, or describing an even (Creswell, 2013). Meanwhile, in ethnography, the researcher learns and describes the culture's characteristics. Ethnographical method often immerses the researcher as a participant for

extended periods of time (Creswell, 2013). These methods do not fit the purpose of this study which is the exploration of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies. The appropriate method for exploring the lived experiences of the participants is using transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I served as the observer. This role encompassed data collection, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative research. I used simple language for participants to fully understand potential risks and benefits of this study. I signed the informed consent form, along with the participants, and gave a copy to each research participant to ensure the continued consent of research participants. More importantly, I was empathetic to the research participants' stories.

Although it was not possible to extinguish my own views of the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence, I was as objective as possible. I assured that the writing was consistent with participants' views of their experiences, without any feelings of marginalization. I wrote the results of this research study in a simple manner to avoid any misinterpretations from readers.

Errasti-Ibarrondo et al. (2018) affirmed that the concept of bracketing entails the process of keeping the focus of a researcher on the study's topic and phenomenon by remaining aware of instances when personal views and anticipations are already influenced by any part of the research methodology, particularly throughout the recruitment process, data collection and analysis. I used bracketing to control my biases

and preconceived views regarding Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services (Moustakas, 1994). The use of epoche played a significant role in terms of increasing my competency in examining the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence and who do not seek support services with a fresh perspective and contributed to my openness to receive new insight and information (Moustakas, 1994).

Moustakas (1994) wrote that it is not feasible for a researcher to eradicate all his or her influence, particularly as it relates to the interpretative nature of qualitative research. Through the use of transcendental phenomenology, I used epoche, which is a process of provisionally suspending the researcher's own biases, preconceptions, and assumptions about the phenomenon to obtain the purest description of the phenomenon under inquiry (Moustakas, 1994). I kept a reflective journal in which I wrote about the awareness of bias. Using epoche was important to accurately present the voices of these women. I did not have any personal or professional relationships with participants, or supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over the participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

In this study, the targeted population was Latina victims of domestic violence who did not seek support services. Polit and Beck (2012) argued that researchers must set clear criteria that define the study population. The sample consisted of eight to 10 self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence, 21 years old and older; living in the state of New York; English speaking and who experienced domestic violence in a relationship within the past 2 years.

I used a purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling entails a nonprobability sampling method in which the researcher selects participants based on personal judgment about which ones will be most informative (Gibbs, 2002). The sample size in a qualitative research is based upon data saturation, which means collecting qualitative data to the point where a sense of closure is attained because new data yield redundant information (Gibbs, 2002). Polit and Beck (2012) asserted that to reach data saturation, most qualitative research studies require a sample size of 10 to 20 participants.

In this study, I collected and analyze data from eight to 10 Latina victims of violence who do not seek support services. This sample size is aligned with the recommended guidelines for phenomenological studies (Polkinghorne, 1988). Merriam (2009) contented that the use of purposive sampling provides more flexibility for qualitative researchers to collect data and since participants are more disposed to participate in a research study and dispense appropriate information for the study. All eight to 10 participants were recruited by flyers, which contained my name, phone number, and email address, and were placed in three local churches in New York City frequently attended by Latinos (see Appendix A).

The flier was specific about self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence, 21 years-old or older, living in the state of New York, English speaking, and who were in a domestic violence relationship within the past 2 years. Participants were offered a \$10 gift card to offset any expenses related to attending the interview, such as transportation. When a potential participant contacts me, I reviewed the criteria for participation through a short screening questionnaire (Appendix B).

Instrumentation

I conducted semistructured, face-to-face interviews with Latina women to gather rich and in-depth data necessary for this phenomenological research study as proposed (Moustakas, 1994). I conducted the semistructured interviews using open-ended questions that guided by the interview protocol. The interview protocol (Appendix C) contained the interview questions that I created to gather the data. I also addressed these women's perceptions of the types of services provided to victims of domestic violence, particularly Latinas, and their views about the role of culture, immigration status, and gender ideology in their decision not to seek help. Within this context, I formulated interview questions which led to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies. I submitted the interview protocol for review by my dissertation committee members so that the credibility and validity of the instrument could be verified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The committee appraised the organization, content, and language of each element of the instrument so that they could establish their correctness to the study and authenticate their overall accuracy as a method of collecting pertinent data, making criticism which I built upon to enhance the interview protocol.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I scheduled interview appointments in a public library where there was a private room which provided a sense of privacy, comfort and was free of interference for participants. I provided a copy of the informed consent for each research participant to review prior to each interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. I interviewed

eight to 10 Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services using open-ended and follow up questions. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

I started each interview with an introduction reviewing the content of the informed consent form with each participant. The consent forms were signed prior to the start of the interviews. I asked questions based on the interview protocol, and asked follow up questions when needed. I provided participants the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification or convey any concerns they had. At the end of the interview, I provided a \$10 gift card to each participant. I transcribed each taped interview verbatim so that I could maximize the level of credibility and confirmability of the data. I conducted member checks to ensure content validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by providing each participant a summary of their interview transcript so that misinterpretations could be corrected, or any additions could be made.

Data Analysis Plan

I analyzed the data using Moustakas's (1994) steps in transcendental phenomenology. I began with the epoche process where I acknowledged my biases and preconceived views about the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services by journaling all my biases before the interview and data analysis process. This process of assuaging the potentially prejudicial consequences of prejudgments which has also been called bracketing, helped me to set aside my personal views and attitudes about these women's experiences so that I could look at the data with unbiased eyes. Moustakas' (1994) eight-step data analysis process was used:

1. **Horizontalization:** In this step, I listed all relevant expressions pertaining to Latina victims of domestic violence who do not seek support services, through the development of a list of non-repetitive and non-overlapping notable statements.
2. **Reduction and Elimination:** I appraised the assertions, eliminate or revise all information that does not meet specific requirements, including any repetitive, unclear and overlapping words. My evaluation of all assertions was based on whether an assertion is associated with the experience so that it can bring further understanding about the experience and whether the assertion can be captured and named to become a valuable element of the experience. This process resulted in the invariant constituents of the experience.
3. **Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents:** In this step, I clustered related invariant constituents and then labeled these clusters as the themes of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies.
4. **Validation:** In this step, after generating all the themes, I began to examine them against the dataset. This was a way for me to ensure that my themes were representative of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies and help tell the participants' stories.

5. Development of Individual Textural Descriptions: I used verbatim examples from the transcripts to present the textural descriptions of the experience.
6. Development of Structural Descriptions: I used verbatim examples from the transcripts to present the structural descriptions of the experience.
7. Development of Textural-Structural Description: In this step, I created a textual-structural description of the experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies.
8. Composite Description: I developed a composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience representing the group as a whole.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In this study, to address issues of trustworthiness, a precise and thorough procedure, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability will be used as suggested Lincoln and Guba (1985). The rationale remains that these four criteria are considered to be counterparts of the positivist's criteria of internal validity, reliability, objectivity, and external validity (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Credibility

Through the lenses of Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility entails credence in the veracity of the data and interpretations of them. From the views of Lincoln and Guba, it is imperative for qualitative researchers to attempt to demonstrate truth in the results for the

specific participants and circumstances in the study. Within this context, triangulation, member checking and saturation were applied.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that triangulation constitutes various sources of data collection. Creswell (2013) maintained that the use of three different sources of data collection can facilitate the genuine application of triangulation. Within this context, I used member checking. I ensured that the three elements of triangulation confirmed that the themes that emerged came from the data collection and analysis.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the transcriptions regarding the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies, I used member checking (Moustakas, 1994). This was a significant part of the study because I was able to bring the data back to the participants. Participants were able to check for accuracy and add to the credibility of the experience (Creswell, 2013). Participants were asked to provide feedback about the transcripts. Polit and Beck (2012) affirmed that member checking is about confirming the credibility of qualitative data. Participants received a summary of their transcribed interview to propose any changes or add information.

Similar to most of qualitative research studies, in phenomenological research, the researcher continues to interview participants until saturation is reached. Charmaz (2006) contended that in every facet of qualitative research, the focus of the research is more on the depth of the data instead on the quantity of participants. Saturation was reached once no new data emerged from the interviews.

Transferability

The concept of transferability constitutes the potentiality for the results to be transferred to or can be replicated in other settings (Polit & Beck, 2012). Because the results of qualitative research studies are distinct to not only specific environments but also a small number of participants, it is not feasible to demonstrate that the results and conclusions can be applied to other conditions and populations. Maxwell (1992) maintained that compared to quantitative research studies, qualitative research studies are not commonly generalizable since their results usually connect to a targeted and small number of participants or environments.

Korstiens and Moser (2018) argued that it is not feasible or constructive to show that results or conclusions from qualitative research studies can be applied to other populations. Transferability does not necessitate extensive assertions, but instead invites readers to establish relationships between various components of a study and their personal experience, using thick descriptions was imperative.

I used rich, thick description of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies to increase the study's transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as well as enable the reader to get a full and clear understanding of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I also used detailed descriptions of lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies and settings. Patton (2002) argued that detailed descriptions will help me to transfer the meanings and essences of my study to other locations as a way to determine the applicability of the results to other Latinas who have

been victims of domestic violence and who do not seek support services. In addition, I used various participants' quotes as suggested to describe the details about their views.

Dependability

Dependability plays a significant role enhancing trustworthiness since it demonstrates the level of consistency and repeatability of the findings of the study Polit and Beck (2012) asserted that without dependability, it is not possible for the researcher to obtain credibility. Within this context, it is vital for the researcher to ensure that there is consistency between the results and the collected raw data (Cypress, 2017). Although a variety of techniques could be used to establish dependability, in this study, I maintained an audit trail and used triangulation.

As previously mentioned, triangulation is about using numerous sources so that the data can be validated through cross verification (Patton, 2002). Polit and Beck (2012) alleged that through triangulation, the researcher can apprehend a more complete and contextualized picture of an essential event. I used method triangulation through interviews so that I could get a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies Patton (2002) contended that method triangulation is about the utilization of a variety of methods of data collection about the same phenomenon.

Confirmability

Polit and Beck (2012) explained that confirmability is about objectivity which means that the study's results are congruent with participants' narratives instead of the researcher's biases, motivations, or viewpoints. To establish confirmability in this study,

I used reflexivity. Reflexivity is a valuable procedure in qualitative research, particularly in phenomenological research. Wascher et al. (2017) argued that reflexivity is about assessing the impact of the researcher's personal background, conceptions and interests on the study. Koch (2006) maintained that using a reflexive journal, the researcher can establish confirmability. Within this framework, I kept and maintained a reflexive journal to reflect on the progression of the research process as it relates to my values and interests.

Ethical Procedures

I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB prior to the data collection process. I ensured that participants were fully aware of their rights to withdraw at any time from the study without any fear of retaliation. I provided each participant the informed consent form for their signature. Once confirming their willingness to participate in the study, each participant was given a copy of the informed consent form.

With regard to maintaining the confidentiality and protecting the identity of participants, I provided my phone number and personal email address so that participants could reach me with questions or to receive communications such as the informed consent form, establish the interview time, or receive the summary for member checking. I replaced all participant names with a code such as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8. I did not share the identification of participants to anyone at any time. For security purpose, the interview transcripts, the digital recording device, notes, data sheet, and other forms were stored in a locked and fire-safe cabinet inside my personal and private office. Information on my computer was password protected. I was the only one with

access to the research materials. The data and information were kept for 5 years after the completion of the research study. After 5 years, all the materials were destroyed through burning, shredding or permanent deletion. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that there would be no retaliations if any participant declined to participate in the study or left the study at any time. Each participant received a \$10 gift card to cover any possible expenses for participating in the study, such as transportation costs to attend the interview.

Summary

This transcendental phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies. Participants were recruited through the use of purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence, 21 years-old or older, living in the state of New York, English speaking and who were in a domestic violence relationship within the past 2 years ago. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, using an interview protocol that was reviewed by my dissertation committee before using it. Each interview was transcribed, and member checked, and data was analyzed by using Moustakas' (1994) eight-step process for analyzing phenomenological studies. Chapter 4 contains a detailed account of the findings from the study.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. The central question that guided this study was: What are the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies? A secondary question was: How do Latina victims of domestic violence describe reasons whether or not to seek support services?

The data that emerged from the research questions divulged a variety of factors that influenced their decision for not seeking support services. In the course of the interviews, participants' descriptions of their lived experiences led to further comprehension of the phenomenon. In this chapter, the findings constitute the outcome of the analysis of the ensuing constituents: Setting, demographics, data collection data analysis, trustworthiness of data and data results.

Setting

The setting for participants' interviews was a public library where there was a private room which provided a sense of privacy, comfort, and freedom of interference for participants.

Demographics

In this study, a total of eight self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence participated. The participants' age ranged from 28 to 43 years old. All the participants revealed that they reside in the State of New York, they were in a domestic violence

relationship within the past 2 years and they did not seek support services. To maintain their anonymity, names were not used and replaced by codes such as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P8.

Data Collection

For the purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study, I collected data through the use of semistructured interviews of eight participants who met the inclusion criteria to get a better understanding of the factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Throughout the interviewing process, I followed all ethical procedures which are outlined in Chapter 3. Before the interviews, each participant signed a consent form. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was audio recorded using a digital voice recorder. I asked questions based on the interview protocol and asked follow up questions when needed. I transcribed each taped interview verbatim to maximize the level of credibility and confirmability of the data.

Data Analysis

I started analyzing the data by transcribing each participant interview word by word as well as organizing each file for additional analysis. I reviewed each transcribed interview for the purpose of accuracy and clarification. I coded the data to identify patterns and themes. By following Moustakas' (1994) steps in data analysis, I used horizontalization and highlighted notable statements to understand the factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Codes, terms, and phrases were

highlighted with different colors, which allowed me to sort and group the data by taking into consideration the number of times a code or phrase appeared in each participant's transcript. As such, I was able to identify factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence.

From the identified codes, I identified patterns. The identified patterns led the way to the development of meaning units. The way Creswell (2013) described clusters of meanings is that they constitute units such as words, phrases, and patterns that are noteworthy to the topic, and assemble these units jointly. From the meaning units, I identified emerging themes from the participants' experiences. I used the themes to write both textural and structural descriptions. Finally, I combined the descriptions to provide the essence of the phenomenon. I identified five themes: (a) rationale for not seeking support services, (b) family's influence on help seeking, (c) cultural constraints (d) reasons for not calling the police, and (e) financial constraints. However, I looked for discrepant cases from the themes, which revealed that only one participant believed that her *religious beliefs* mostly influenced her decision not to seek support services and only one participant declared that *language barrier* was the key factor for not seeking support services.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In this study, to address issues of trustworthiness, a precise and thorough procedure, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability was used as suggested Lincoln and Guba (1985). The rationale remains that these four

criteria are considered to counterparts of the positivist's criteria of internal validity, reliability, objectivity, and external validity (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Credibility

Through the lenses of Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility entails credence in the veracity of the data and interpretations of them. From the views of Lincoln and Guba, it is imperative for qualitative researchers to attempt to demonstrate truth in the results for the specific participants and circumstances in the study. Within this context, I applied triangulation, member checking and saturation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that triangulation constitutes various sources of data collection. Creswell (2013) maintained that the use of three different sources of data collection can facilitate the genuine application of triangulation. Within this context, in addition to the collected data, I used member checking and I kept reflective journals which provided me additional levels of detail about the data. I ensured that the three elements of triangulation confirm that the themes that emerged came from the data collection and analysis.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the transcriptions regarding the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies, I used member checking (Moustakas, 1994). This was a significant part of the study because I was able to bring the data back to the participants. Participants were able to check for accuracy and add to the credibility of the experience (Creswell, 2013). Polit and Beck (2012) affirmed that member checking is about confirming the credibility of qualitative data. Participants received a summary of their transcribed

interview to propose any changes or add information. Similar to most of qualitative research studies, in phenomenological research, I continued to interview participants until saturation was reached. Charmaz (2006) contended that in every facet of qualitative research, the focus of the research is more on the depth of the data instead on the quantity of participants. Saturation was reached once no new data emerged from the interviews.

Transferability

The concept of transferability constitutes the potentiality for the results to be transferred to or can be replicated in other settings (Polit & Beck, 2012). Because the results of qualitative research studies are distinct to not only specific environments but also a small number of participants, it is not feasible to demonstrate that the results and conclusions can be applied to other conditions and populations. Maxwell (1992) maintained that compared to quantitative research studies, qualitative research studies are not commonly generalizable since their results usually connect to a targeted and small number of participants or environments.

Korstiens and Moser (2018) argued that it is not feasible or constructive to show that results or conclusions from qualitative research studies can be applied to other populations. Transferability does not necessitate extensive assertions, but instead invites readers to establish a relationship between various components of a study and their personal experience, using thick descriptions was imperative. Moustakas (1994) emphasized the significance of a rich and tick description of the data which can lead to a full and clear understanding of a phenomenon. I also used detailed descriptions of lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic

violence agencies and settings. Patton (2002) argued that detailed descriptions will help me to transfer the meanings and essences of my study to other locations as a way to determine the applicability of the results to other Latinas who have been victims of domestic violence and who do not seek support services. In addition, I used various participants' quotes to describe the details about their experiences.

Dependability

Dependability plays a significant role enhancing trustworthiness since it demonstrates the level of consistency and repeatability of the findings of the study. Polit and Beck (2012) asserted that without dependability, it is not possible for the researcher to obtain credibility. Within this context, it is vital for the researcher to ensure that there is consistency between the results and the collected raw data (Cypress, 2017). Although a variety of techniques could be used to establish dependability, in this study, I maintained an audit trail and use triangulation. Patton (2002) argued that an audit trail is a significant strategy with regard to establishing the confirmability of the study's findings.

As previously mentioned, triangulation is about using numerous sources so that the data can be validated through cross verification (Patton, 2002). Polit and Beck (2012) alleged that through triangulation, the researcher can apprehend a more complete, and contextualized picture of an essential event. Beside the collected data, I used member checking and reflective so that I could get a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of Latina victims of domestic violence in seeking help from antidomestic violence agencies.

Confirmability

Polit and Beck (2012) explained that confirmability is about objectivity which means that the study's results are congruent with participants' narratives instead of the researcher's biases, motivations, or viewpoints. To establish confirmability in this study, I used reflexivity. Reflexivity is a valuable procedure in qualitative research, particularly in phenomenological research. Wascher et al. (2017) argued that reflexivity is about assessing the impact of the researcher's personal background, conceptions and interests on the study. Koch (2006) maintained that using a reflexive journal, the researcher can establish confirmability. Within this framework, I kept and maintained a reflexive journal to reflect on the progression of the research process as it relates to my values and interests.

Ethical Procedures

I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB (07-17-19-0420463) prior to the data collection process. I ensured that participants were fully aware of their rights to withdraw at any time from the study without any fear of retaliation. I provided each participant the informed consent form for their signature. Once confirming their willingness to participate in the study, each participant was given a copy of the informed consent form.

With regard to maintaining the confidentiality and protecting the identity of participants, I provided my phone number and personal email address so that participants could reach me with questions or to receive communications such as the informed consent form establish the interview time, or receive the summary for member checking. I replaced all participant names with a code such as P1, P2, P3. I did not share the

identification of participants to anyone at any time. For security purpose, the interview transcripts, the digital recording device, notes, data sheet, and other forms were stored in a locked and fire-safe cabinet inside my personal and private office. Information on my computer is password protected. I am the only one with access to the research materials. The data and information are kept for 5 years after the completion of the research study. After 5 years, all the materials will be destroyed through burning, shredding or permanent deletion. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that there would not be retaliations if any participant declined to participate in the study or leaves the study at any time. Each participant received a \$10 gift card to cover any possible expenses for participating in the study, such as transportation costs to attend the interview.

Results

Theme 1: Rationale for not Seeking Support Services

Throughout the interview sessions, most of the participants conceded being judged by antidiomestic violence agencies' staff members played a fundamental role in their decision not to seek support services. P1 asserted, "To me shelter is a short-term solution. I needed a solution that was long-term."

P1 explained, "Even though shelter services were available, but at the same time I was thinking about my children. I was still thinking about my safety. Therefore, I decided not to go to a shelter."

P2 stated,

It's not that I did not think about looking for help since my situation was horrible, but I was not confident at all about my English. In my mind, I would not be able to really share my story. I didn't want to look like a fool.

P3 maintained,

You know back then, my English was very limited because he did not let me go to school. Therefore, not only I was afraid that I was not going to be understood, but also I did not want people to look down on me.

P4 contended,

You know back then, I saw myself much more as an immigrant, Latina. Therefore, I was not sure that people working at those agencies would really understand my issues or whether they would judge me. You have to understand that getting beat up by a guy is very embarrassing.

P5 stated,

Look, I have to be honest! Beside everything else, my religious belief played a huge role in my decision to just deal with it without looking for help. It was hope that God could help us find a solution. I don't know if that makes sense?

P8 disclosed, "Shameful because as a woman, I did not want to get other people involved in my business. Scary, in a sense, that I was afraid that the police could get involved and I did not want that."

Theme 2: Family's Influence on Help Seeking

During the interview process, many of the participants acknowledged the influence of their family on their decision not to seek support services as one of the major

factors. P1 contended, “It was! On top of it, my brothers and sisters were not helpful, not because they don’t love me, but because they were more in favor of me to remain silent instead of looking for help.”

P2 revealed,

In addition, I was concerned about protecting the name of my family. For instance, I did not want to make any move that could be viewed as shameful for my family. I don’t know if that makes sense?

P3 stated,

Yeah, it was terrible because sometimes I would spend almost a week inside the house without going out. What made it even more difficult for me, believe it or not, it’s because my siblings wanted me to keep my lip tied. You get it?

P4 stated, “It was very difficult for me because I had to make a choice between my happiness and my family. It is all about my family first.”

P6 maintained, “Well! You just have to follow the rules. Your own family would tell you not to create problems. Can you imagine?”

P7 asserted, “On, my God! That would be my biggest crime that everybody, my dad, my cousin and my aunt from Columbia would start calling me not to support me but to blame me for leaving him.”

P8 said,

My family would immediately think that I was the one creating problems in the relationship, because I had the audacity to share with friends about what was going on in my bedroom. They would not forgive me for that.

Theme 3: Cultural Constraints

During the interview process, for most of the participants, their culture played a significant role in terms of constraining them from seeking support services as evidence of statements made by the following participants.

P1 states, “Yah, so, women’s voices have not been heard in our country like in other countries. My culture is a very macho culture. You know what I mean?”

P1 stated, “Uh, Latin men have the last word. So, if the man gets mad at you and treats you bad, it is because it is the woman’s fault. You know, what is the point?”

P2 contended, “Well, you are right about that, but in my culture, this is not something we believe in.”

P2 stated, “Well! In my culture, you really don’t get strangers involved into your family business.”

P4, contended, “This is confidential, okay! In my culture, we do not discuss things like that with strangers. You can imagine why I did not want to do anything.”

P4 stated, “I am sure you understand. We have a say in my country, what happens in Bogota stays in Bogota. That’s why I chose to stay in my corner.”

P5 maintained, “You see this is not something I believe in. In my culture,

P6 shared,

It is not a surprise in a sense that it is a macho culture in which women are really thought to obey their husbands and very few families would tell their daughters to defend themselves against their abusive husbands. These men are in control, they are real macho.

P7 commented, "I kind of understand why you may find it to be strange that I did not want to do anything. It is a cultural problem."

P8 shared, "As for reaching out to friends, I am not saying that we should not reach out to friends. However, I did not want to do that because I knew it would be harder for me."

Theme 4: Reason for not calling the Police

There was a consensus among most of the participants in this study, that fear of retaliation, fear of deportation; concerns about providing evidence of being violated as well as inaction were key factors that influenced their decision not to call the police. P1 contended, "Because I really tried, but they said that you have to show proof that he did something wrong to you. Come on! You're going to wait for him to kill me?"

Similarly, P2 commented,

Calling the police did not even cross my mind for many reasons. As I said, culturally this is a no, no, but also back then, I would not want to deal with the police. I think you should know how it is in this country for us, you know what I mean?

P 5 stated,

Once you call the police for someone, you really become the bad apple even though you were the victim. You see where I am from, we don't get police, or anybody involved in what is going on in our bedroom. Second, how would I survive if I reported him to the police? It is not as easy as people think. You understand what I am saying?

P6 stated,

When you don't have any paper, and you know that you can be deported at any time, you will think a million times before deciding to call the police. Unless someone is in this situation, it is not easy to understand.

P7 maintained,

It is kind of sad, but police officers over there are the products of the same culture. For example, they would want to know about if I did something wrong that led him to be violent. Well, not only I would not report it, but also if I reported it to the police, there would not be a big deal of a difference.

Theme 5: Financial Constraints

For most of the participants, financial constraints played a significant role in terms of influencing their decision not to seek support services. P1 explained, "That's not the only abuse, but there is the financial abuse when you cannot go anywhere because you depend on your partner's income for you and your kids to survive."

P2 argued,

Knowing what I know now, I would advise that person to report it and look for help. I know it would not be easy, especially if she is Hispanic and does not have any paper. You have to understand that you completely depend on that person because most of the time, you cannot even work. It is not easy; I am telling you.

P3 commented,

Well although for my first three years in the country, I did not have any paper and I had the obligation to pay my bills and send money to my family. I don't know if you understand. It was very difficult to get out of this situation.

P5 responded, “It is not easy in a sense that I was illegal, I was not working, and he was the main provider.”

P7 explained,

Well, I am happy to tell you! Not only he was very supportive to me financially, but also, he was the one sending money to my family almost every month. I did not think he deserved that. I went through a lot, but he helped me a lot financially.

Overall, every participant was able to talk about her lived experience of domestic violence and describe key factors that influenced their decision not to seek support services. Hence their answers led to the emergence of the five major themes that provided information on this phenomenon.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results from the 8 semistructured interviews that I conducted to answer the research questions. Although participants expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration about their overall experiences of being in domestic violence relationships without seeking help, they provided rationale for their actions. Participants believed that fear of deportation, financial dependency, family, and cultural values as well as shame constituted major factors that influenced their decision not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Religious beliefs and language barrier were the inconsistent cases emerged from the data. Although they would advise other women, particularly Latinas who are currently in domestic violence relationships not to follow their footsteps and to instead seek help. The findings’ interpretations are further discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. The nature of this study was to use a phenomenological approach to obtain the core of the experience of Latina victims of domestic violence who described their decision whether to seek support services related to the abuse. I collected data for the study through semistructured, in-depth interviews. I used purposeful sampling to recruit eight participants who identified themselves as Latina victims of domestic violence who chose not to seek support services. I performed my analysis of the data using the seven-step research analysis by Moustakas (1994). I identified five themes: (a) rationale for not seeking support services, (b) family's influence on help seeking, (c) cultural constraints (d) reasons for not calling the police, and (e) financial constraints. However, I looked for discrepant cases from the themes which revealed that only one participant believed that her *religious beliefs* mostly influenced her decision not to seek support services and only one participant declared that *language barrier* was the key factor for not seeking support services.

Findings from this transcendental phenomenological study delineate the perceptions of participants regarding how they viewed various factors that influenced their decision to seek support services after they experienced domestic violence. The findings from this study described participants' experience from a socio-cultural perspective in how they perceived and experienced domestic violence. In addition, the

findings revealed how the intersection of various oppressive factors that usually contribute to sustaining violence against women guided participants' decision not to seek support services post domestic violence experiences.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings Related to the Literature

Overall, the findings from this study validated the peer-reviewed literature as it relates to Reina et al. (2013) who argued that Latina victims of domestic violence tend to be less eager to seek either formal or informal help. The findings also are in line with the view of Aysa-Lastra et al. (2012) who maintained that domestic violence is a strategic way for family members to physically and or psychologically hurt the victims. In addition, the findings coincide with the position of Mookerjee et al. (2015) who asserted that there is limited understanding about the effect of sociocultural factors on women victims of domestic violence as well as their coping mechanisms. Moreover, the findings corroborated the position of Cheng and Lo (2016) who viewed domestic violence not only as a social problem, but also explained the role that the intersection of socio-cultural factors played in the unwillingness of Latina victims of domestic violence to seek help. All eight participants expressed their views regarding the role of various interconnected socio-cultural factors played in their decision not to seek support services.

As I scrutinized the data regarding participants' experience of domestic violence, I observed a pattern about their views regarding factors that prevented them from seeking support services. In this chapter, I reviewed and described the study's findings and how they are associated with the literature review in Chapter 2. In addition, I interpreted the

findings of the study to contrast them to the literature review to decide whether they substantiate, refute, or expand understanding of how Latina victims of domestic violence perceived factors that influenced their decision whether to seek support services.

Theme 1: Rationale for Not Seeking Support Services

This theme reflects the existing literature which offers a variety of reasons provided by all the participants for their decision not to seek support services. For example, being afraid of being judged by staff members providing services at antidomestic violence agencies due to their inability to properly express themselves in English constituted one of their major justifications. Zarza and Adler (2008) emphasized the necessity for those agencies to have a review of the effectiveness of their services culturally and linguistically.

Another element of their rationale for not seeking help is not belonging to formal networks which can facilitate better access to relevant services. Reina et al. (2013) explained how these types of informal networks are not to their advantage in terms of moving away from their violent relationship. While Reina et al., argued that the informal networks to which Latino population for the most part belongs to are embedded in structural barriers that prevent Latina victims of domestic violence from exiting their abusers, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) maintained that society's history of placing blame on victims from communities of color also served as rationale for them not to seek help to stay away from stereotypes.

Theme 2: Family's Influence on Help Seeking

There was a consensus among most of the participants about the role of family on their decision not to seek support services as one of the major factors. This theme is congruent with Reina and Lohman (2015) who argued that Latina victims of domestic violence tend to be more open follow their family's wishes in terms of maintaining the abusive relationship. This argument is in line with Cruz-Santiago and Ramirez (2011) who asserted that familism is the key cultural value that keeps Latino families together.

Within this context, Gloria and Castellanos (2012) added that Latinos have a very strong sense of attachment to shared responsibilities regarding the benefits of family as well as their community, including relying on extended family members for emotional support (Change et al., 2013). Moreover, Gloria and Castellanos (2012) highlighted the significance of interpersonal connections, strong family support and common responsibilities are fundamental in terms of influencing Latina victims of domestic violence decision not to seek help, as Rossello et al. (2008) believed that the concept of familismo which is the backbone of the Latino culture is crucial in terms of influencing these women's decision not to seek support services.

Theme 3: Cultural Constraints

This theme reflects the existing literature because for most of the participants, their culture played a significant role in terms of constraining them from seeking support services. Accordingly, Chen and Ulman (2010) found that limited available services for minorities play a crucial role preventing Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help. In addition, Sabina et al. (2012) revealed a lack of culturally competent

services, particularly in terms of appropriate languages significantly contributed to the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking service. This argument made by Sabina et al. (2012) is supported by Vidales (2010) who argued that Latinas' limited ability to communicate in English also plays a significant role sustaining their vulnerability regarding domestic violence as well as remaining in isolation.

Within this context, Zarza and Adler (2008) and Reina et al. (2013) maintained that culture plays a fundamental role in constraining Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking support services from antidomestic violence agencies. Within the same spirit, Ahrens et al. (2010) emphasized the effects of tradition beliefs as well as gender ideologies regarding influencing the decision of Latinas victims of domestic violence not to seek support services. In support of Chen and Ulman (2010), Sabina et al. (2012), Vidales (2010), Zarza and Adler (2008) and Reina et. al. (2013), and Ahrens et al. (2010), Kulkani et al. (2012) advocated for researchers to further investigate the impact of cultural perceptions as they relate to domestic violence, including the role of networks permitting Latinas to get out of abusive relationships. Murphy et al. (2013) advocated for the development of antidomestic violence programs that are culturally competent and that can assist victims of various cultures and languages.

Theme 4: Reasons for Not calling the Police

This theme resonates with the literature as all participants claimed that calling the police for help was not an option which was corroborated by Rizo and Macy (2011) and Bailliard (2013) who contended that lack of trust from government institutions, particularly law enforcement constituted one of the determining factors that influenced

the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services. For example, Gradstein and Schiff (2006) and Canales (2007) maintained that strong enforcement of existing laws related to immigration also contributed to the decision of Latinas not to seek help after they experiences domestic violence since these laws tend to be biased against immigrants. For example, the Arizoan bill in 2010 which gave law enforcement officers the rights to arrest individuals who are perceived to be undocumented based on their ethnicity also played a crucial role influencing Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking help due to fear of deportation (Queseda et al., 2011).

Theme 5: Financial Constraints

This theme is in tune with the current literature in which several scholars attested that financial constraints significantly influenced Latinas' decision not to seek support services after they experienced domestic violence. Reina et al. (2015) linked financial insecurity as one of the main obstacles that influenced Latinas' decision. Ruiz (2012) identified poverty and unemployment as some of the key challenges that influenced the decision of Latinas' decision not to seek help. As part of this debate about the role of financial constraints in influencing these women's decisions, Grieco et al. (2012) explained how among other immigrant minority groups, Latinos are in a much more vulnerable situation regarding income compared with native-born Americans. Natsuaki et al. (2013) added lack of insurance coverage as the result of financial constraints that ethnic minority groups, including the Latino population contribute to these women's vulnerability regarding getting access to appropriate help.

Overall, the findings of this study are profoundly linked to the existing literature from which most of the studies established a relationship between fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values, including shame and their decision not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence.

Finding Related to Conceptual Framework

It is important to highlight that the findings of this study resonate with the conceptual framework which encompasses intersectionality theory by Crenshaw (1989) and structural violence theory by Galtung (1990). In terms of intersectionality theory, intersections existing between a variety of forms or systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, colonialism, ageism, and ableism (Crenshaw, 1989), the findings of this study confirmed how the intersection between different characteristics such as participants' race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration status, language barriers influenced their decision not to seek support services. All the eight participants affirmed that being Latinas contribute significantly to lack of access to appropriate services that could help them to leave their abusive partners.

Kanuha (1960) maintained that an important aspect of intersectionality is that it clarifies the interconnection between multiple facets and approaches of social relationship highlight not only what women are going through, but also the absence of a major focus on their oppressive experiences in a society mostly controlled by men. Contextually, aspects such as participants' fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values, including shame constituted the systems of oppression contributing to their decision not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. The

findings of this study also supported the argument made by Hulko (2009) in terms of how intersectionality plays a crucial role helping to demystify the dynamic nature of the advantages and disadvantages, as it focuses on the interaction of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability, migration status, and religion as multiple social classifications, which include the structure of power that establishes those classifications on multiple levels. Macionis and Gerber (2011) asserted that the interaction between race, class and gender frequently engenders facets of disadvantage. Although religious beliefs and language barriers were discrepant cases emerged from the data, the findings of this study are in harmony with intersectionality theory due to the intersection between fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values and shame that tremendously influenced these women's decision not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence.

From a structural violence theory perspective, the results of this study which confirmed the role of social and structural factors such as fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values, including shame in influencing Latina victims of domestic violence decision not to seek support are also in alignment with previous findings conducted by Vidales (2010) which emphasized that structural and institutional factors play a crucial role preventing undocumented Latina women victims of domestic violence from seeking support services. As argued Vidales (2010), language barriers, gender and economic inequality, lack of knowledge about laws and services supporting victims of domestic violence encompass some types of structural and institutional barriers which arguably played a vital role influencing these women's decision not to

seek support services. Therefore, there is compatibility between the findings of this study and the structural violence theory which stressed that instead of conveying a physical image, structural violence is an avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs (Galtung, 1990).

It is fair to argue that due to the invisible nature of structural violence, the findings of this study confirmed that factors such as fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values as well as shame are among some of its real characteristics, as they have played a significant role influencing the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. This argument is in support of Galtung (1990) who maintained that structural and direct violence such as family violence, gender violence, hate crime, racial violence, police violence, state violence, terrorism and war are interdependent.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study offered in-depth understanding of factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services, there were some limitations. The first limitation was about ethnicity and locality because the study sample was restricted only to Latina victims of domestic violence in New York and who do not seek support services. The second limitation was that the results of this study are relevant only to these eight participants. Since the results of qualitative research studies are specific to not only particular environments but also a small number of participants, this study is not able to show that the results and conclusions can be applicable to other circumstances and populations.

Recommendations

There have been similar studies conducted on these issues as evidenced by and not limited to Reina et al. (2013) who advocated for scholars investing in domestic violence among different immigrant communities to not simply associate it to culture, but also raise awareness of how the instilment of culture and social structure decides the living condition as well as struggles of immigrants in the United States.

Sabina et al. (2012) emphasized the imperativeness for further studies regarding factors influencing the decision of Latin victims of domestic violence not to seek support services after they experienced domestic violence to use a bigger sample so that their results can be generalized. This argument reinforces the position of Buchbinder et al. (2016) who called for more studies about domestic violence against women of different ethnic groups as well as their help seeking behaviors since the existing literature lacks studies about the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services (Rodriguez et al., 2018).

Therefore, additional studies to explore the views of this population about how to address those interconnected factors that influenced their decision not to seek support services are needed so that intervention strategies to encourage these women to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence can be developed. As revealed Chen and Ulman (2010), lack of available programs for ethnic minority groups is significant in the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services. In other to fill this gap in services, more culturally competent services for minorities struggling with domestic violence are needed. Sabina et al. (2012) found that

the unavailability of culturally competent services played a huge role in the decision of Latina victims of domestic violence not to seek support services. Finally, further studies about other women from other ethnic minority groups who may be in similar situations are also needed.

Implications

While domestic violence is a well-known social phenomenon that does not discriminate, the current literature shows ethnic minority groups, particularly Latinas have been facing tremendous challenges in terms of seeking help (Reina et al., 2014). The current study has demonstrated that these challenges are linked to a variety of interconnected social and structural factors contributing to prevent these women from seeking support services after experiencing domestic violence. Therefore, the results of this study might contribute to positive social change by not only creating awareness of these women's views, but also calling attention to the need for a coordinated social, political and legal action against these oppressive factors such as fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values as well as shame sustaining violence against these women. In terms of positive social change, this study's results might help antidomestic violence advocates and policy makers to have an in-depth understanding of these women's perceptions and conceivably to work on policies that encourage all women victims of domestic violence, especially Latinas to seek support services. This study's results might also play a crucial role in improving services providing by antidomestic violence agencies.

Conclusion

In this study, I used a transcendental phenomenological approach to explore the factors that influenced the decision of Latina victims whether to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence. Interconnected social and structural factors such as fear of deportation, financial dependency, family and cultural values as well as shame, fundamentally influenced the decision of Latina victims not to seek support services after experiencing domestic violence, as religious beliefs and language barrier constituted discrepant cases. The study's results reflect the existing literature regarding the decisive role of structural and institutional factors in preventing undocumented Latina victims of domestic violence from seeking support services (Reina et al., 2014; Vidales, 2010). These 8 Latina victims of domestic violence felt that they were repressed because their decision not to seek support services was influenced by social and cultural factors instead of their genuine wishes. As a change agent, I strongly believe that this study's results can lead to social and structural changes related not only to immigration and legal policies regarding Latina victims of domestic violence, but also law enforcement agencies' attitudes towards this population, as services provided by antidomestic violence agencies can become more inclusive and serve as a stimulus for Latina victims of domestic violence to seek help.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Confidential Study: Research Participation Opportunity

You are invited to participate in an important and confidential research study about the experience of accessing support services for Latina victims of domestic violence.

Researcher:	Jeanine Chuya
Research Location:	Private room at a local public library Information will be provided by researcher
Research Expectations:	You will be asked to participate in a 30-60 minute confidential interview, which will be about your decisions whether to seek support services.
Who is eligible to participate:	Self-identified Latina victims of domestic violence, 21 years-old or older, living in the state of New York, English speaking and who were in a domestic violence relationship within the past 2 years.
Research Compensation:	A \$10 gift Card will be given at the conclusion of the interview.

If you are interested in sharing your opinions, or have any questions or comments about this research study, please contact Jeanine Chuya at XXX-XXX-XXXXX

Appendix B: Screening Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions to help me better understand your eligibility to participate in the study.

1. Name
2. Contact Information
3. Do you live in the state of New York?
4. How old are you?
5. Do you identify as Latina?
6. Were you in a domestic violence relationship during the past 2 years?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

1. Describe your experiences of domestic abuse?
2. What agency or resources did you consider seeking help from?
3. Describe any services that you received?
4. What barriers to these services did you find?
5. What services would have been helpful for you to receive if you did not receive them?
6. If you talked with staff members at an antidomestic violence agency, how helpful or not was this experience?
7. What would have improved your experience in seeking services?
8. If you did not seek services from an agency, why not?
9. What aspects of Latino culture discouraged you from seeking services from an agency?
10. If you contacted law enforcement, describe this experience. If you did not contact law enforcement, explain your reasons for not doing this.
11. What family values do you have that either support or discourage you from seeking support services?
12. Describe if immigration status played a role in seeking support services?
13. What language barriers impacted your decision to seek or not seek services?
14. What other people or factors impacted your decision to seek or not seek services?
15. As a Latina victim of domestic violence, what services or supports would be helpful for you to receive?